

Fixer

by

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FADE IN:

INT. A MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The room is lit by a silent TV. The images on the screen are dark and violent and change in rapid-fire succession: a music video. The effect: a slow motion strobe.

Clothes are strewn on the carpet: a short skirt, a light colored halter top, sandals, bra and panties.

Neatly placed on the low dresser: a motorcycle jacket, a cap with a "Falcons" logo, dark slacks, a T-shirt, boots.

The SOUNDS OF PASSION...

...and then...a man and woman making love. They are visible from an angle, behind them. The woman on her belly, the man on top, sitting, straddling her thighs. The man has a head of dark curls and the body of Michaelangelo's "David".

His face in profile, shadowed...

A band of light from where the curtains don't quite come together cuts diagonally across the woman's back.

Her face is contorted, sideways on the bare sheet. GINNY WILDER is in her mid 20's, long blonde hair, perfect features. A gold leaf earring hangs sideways from her lobe.

GINNY

Jesus, we gotta stop.

The man ignores her and increases the intensity of his lovemaking.

GINNY (CONT'D)

(with difficulty)

Oh...God...You're gonna kill me.

Ginny's face grimaces...

MAN (O.S.)

Not yet.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - LATER

On unsteady legs, Ginny, coffee in hand, motel diner behind her approaches her car and clicks the key remote...

GINNY

(to herself)

Well, Ginny, you survived that maniac...

...but as she reaches for the handle a gloved hand grabs her arm and twists it behind her back, and as her mouth opens to scream, another gloved hand, holding a rag, covers the lower half of her face.

Her eyes open wide as if trying to take in one final look at life. She struggles, but the alcohol and lovemaking have exhausted her. The fumes from the rag make her eyelids heavy. She goes limp.

She is dragged by a dark-clad figure--motorcycle jacket, cap, boots--to a silver SUV.

EXT. ROADSIDE PARK - DAY

A small group of concrete picnic tables in a clearing alongside a highway. On both sides of the asphalt are marsh lands.

A Frisbee floats across the pale blue sky. It sails past its intended target--a TEENAGE BOY--and out over the marsh beyond the roadside park. It disappears into the reeds.

TEENAGE BOY

You throw like a woman!

YOUNGER BROTHER

(O.S.)

You are a woman.

TEENAGE BOY

Your mama's a woman.

The boy turns, laughing to himself, and rushes to the water's edge. He looks down at his old Nikes, then wades into the calm, shallow marsh. The water is just below his knees when he stops then starts to bend to retrieve the Frisbee.

He straightens, startled, backs up half a step, almost tripping over his feet.

YOUNGER BROTHER

(O.S.)

What's wrong, woman?

Through the reeds a woman's face is visible. She is on her back, inches below the surface. Her eyes are open but she is clearly dead.

Obscured by the reeds, she's nude. Dark hair the color of hers is scattered on the surface and clumped against the reed stalks where they emerge from the water. It is not attached to her.

A gold leaf earring hanging from one lobe catches the sunlight filtering through the water and at that instant a Rainbow Trout strikes the gleaming metal, exploding the surface.

The boy, who has been standing frozen, jumps back startled and falls over backward. The Frisbee floats beside him...

INT. ROBERT JAMISON SALON - DAY

...A spinning wheel. It is attached horizontally to a rectangular, gold colored machine. A hand places half of a haircutting shear, blade-side down, on the wheel and rocks it back and forth slowly. Like swells rocking a boat...

...like a lazy baker with a rolling pin.

VARIOUS SOUNDS: the QUIET BARITONE PURR of the scissor machine, the LOW HOWL of blow dryers, UNINTELLIGIBLE CONVERSATIONS, INTERCOM CLIENT ARRIVAL ANNOUNCEMENTS, BACKGROUND MUSIC.

The man sharpening the shears, CHRIS NETAN, 32, has dark brown curls and sensual features. He is a Greek god dressed in an unstructured Armani jacket, T-shirt and two hundred dollar jeans.

Watching him work--changing wheels, disassembling scissors, rocking the gleaming blades in the glare of his portable table light--is like watching a Ginsu chef at a hot table: entertaining, mesmerizing.

He closes his eyes for a moment, working, like a musician, he can still "see".

This is a large salon: black, white, and brushed steel. There is a continuous countertop that runs the length of the room. A mirrored wall is behind it.

Work stations are along this counter. Chris is set up at one of the stations. Stylists work on both sides of him. To his right a blow dryer SHUTS OFF as the stylist finishes her client.

VOICES become audible. To Chris's left, from under a waterfall of wet bang, PEGGY STERLING, 25, has been getting her hair cut while watching Chris in the mirror. Her stylist, NATHAN BIGGS, 30, overly excited, listens...

PEGGY

(to Nathan)

I'd like to disappear for a few days,
just drop off the face of the earth,
not let anybody know where I am.

NATHAN

Mark would squirt a brick--he loves you, Peggy. He's just concentrating on his career right now;...

Her look says, "Nonsense"

NATHAN (CONT'D)

...he's got long range plans for y'all.

PEGGY

Right. He loves golf more than he loves me. I called him in Seattle before I left work. He's playing next Saturday.

The redeye gets in at seven, his tee time's at nine.

Chris turns to his left, studies her a moment, catches her eyes behind the curtain of hair. She smiles, shyly.

He turns back to his work...

One side of his mouth turns up slowly, and then looking down at the task he's performing, almost to himself...

CHRIS

If he doesn't have plans for y'all for next weekend, then...he...?

PEGGY

Doesn't have long range plans for us.

Chris smiles and nods almost imperceptibly. He looks up from his work, their eyes meet in the mirror. His smile grows as he turns toward her and locks his gaze with hers. They are on the same plane; they both know it.

The room seems to quiet. A moment passes. Another moment.

It is almost quiet enough to hear a heartbeat, and then, returning to his wheel Chris begins to high-speed BUFF, sliding green rouge across the buffing pad and polishing the outside of the half shear he is working on.

But as he flips the switch and the wheel begins to slow...

PEGGY (CONT'D)

(to Nathan)

I don't know how to phrase the question to him.

Chris puts a finger under the slowing wheel and applies pressure until it stops.

He reassembles one of the shears and reaches for a device similar in size and shape to a hypodermic needle.

With it he oils the shear, then opens and closes it rapidly, adjusts the tension dial, then flicks it open and lets one side float down until it stops at the point he desires. The process has taken only a few seconds.

He looks at Peggy in the mirror. Her hair is off her face. He can see her now. Her cheeks are flushed, shiny, almost purple from the heat. Her eyes sparkle. She glows. She's beautiful.

Chris looks down again as he works.

CHRIS

If you're worried about how to phrase
the question, you won't like the
answer.

INT. ROBERT JAMISON SALON, RECEPTION DESK - MOMENTS LATER

Peggy, coifed and in her dark grey business suit, pays a receptionist. She is handed her change and she hands back a bill.

PEGGY

For Nathan.

A pretty young woman, FRANNY STERLING, 24, Peggy's younger sister, walks up.

Like all the assistants scurrying around the salon, she wears a chemical apron. Franny looks a lot like Peggy. Her hair is a little more layered, a little wilder.

FRANNY

Sissy!

PEGGY

Hey, Fran.

Franny reaches out to Peggy and pats a stray hair.

FRANNY

Nathan did a great job.
(playfully)

When you gonna let me do it, Peggy?

PEGGY

A year after you get your license--
if you ever get your license.

FRANNY

I'll get it.

PEGGY

Yeah, you'll get it, then you'll move on to something else.

Franny pinches Peggy's cheek playfully--sort of.

FRANNY

(baby talk)

Siiissy. You so cute when you act like Mama.

Both women's eyes momentarily mist, and Peggy smiles and Franny hugs her.

Peggy focuses across the room. Chris has been watching them in the mirror.

PEGGY

Franny, what's that scissor guy's story?

Franny starts to turn but Peggy holds her where she is.

FRANNY

Yummy, huh? I'd be a housewife for that. You have a man.

PEGGY

Just curious. He doesn't seem like the shear sharpening type.

FRANNY

Only hairstylist in Atlanta more overeducated than I.

(laughs)

Emory Med School. You're attracted to his brain? Sissy, look at him.

She is looking at him as he looks back; their eyes are locked in the mirror.

PEGGY

He's a hairstylist?

FRANNY

Used to be. He was married to Kati. You could get him to cut your hair next time...

PEGGY

Kati, next to Nathan...where he's set up right now?

FRANNY

...since you're never gonna trust me. I hear he was great. What? Yes, crazy Kati. He only comes in when she's not here.

Is Mark out of town, again?

Peggy smiles, her eyes as playful as Franny's.

PEGGY

'Til next Saturday. I'm going shopping. See you at home.

EXT. LENNOX MALL - DAY

Parking lots filled with expensive cars, the cherry trees are in bloom. It's Spring.

INT. LENNOX MALL - DAY

The mall is packed with couples, families, teenagers, and young working women with their Friday pay checks.

On the upper level the Gap is teeming with teens, but on the lower level...

INT. ANN TAYLOR - DAY

The boutique is nearly deserted. Peggy picks through black, gray, and white Angora cardigans.

She catches a glimpse of herself in a mirror by the front glass. Nathan has done a perfect job: her long, layered, blonde bob looks great. She smiles.

Her gaze leaves the mirror and goes beyond, out into the mall, across to the salon she was just in.

A head of dark curls is visible above the back of the reception desk--and then it's gone. Peggy watches through the glass a moment more. Nothing.

She looks at the colorless Angoras again, then moves to the next display and reaches for a red, cut velour pull-over.

She takes it into a dressing area and tries it on.

She looks at herself in the full-length, triple mirror, then takes out a redder shade of lipstick and applies it. She messes up her hair on top and smiles turning a honed hip toward the mirrors.

INT. MALL FOODCOURT - DAY

Peggy wanders from cuisine to cuisine, looking at menus. In front of The Big Easy she pauses, looks at the big tins of reddish brown Cajun cooking.

Her face says she is still not sure she wants to order. Behind her a head of dark curls appears. Then half a face whispering into her ear...

CHRIS
Number 13 looks delicious.

She shudders then smiles. A pause...then turning, her lips nearly brushing his...

PEGGY
Hi--Scissorman.

There is a slight smile on Chris's face.

CHRIS
Hey.

She turns back to the menu, reads, then turns back to him. Again their mouths nearly touch. Her top lip curls on one side.

PEGGY
Number 13 looks disgusting.

CHRIS
You've never had crawdads.

PEGGY
I don't think I could.

CHRIS
Think of 'em as little lobsters.

How 'bout if I buy dinner for both of us and if you don't like yours you can buy something you do like.

Peggy hesitates a moment, and then...

PEGGY
I have a boyfriend.

CHRIS
The guy you were talking about with Nathan? I don't think so.

PEGGY
No?

He shakes his head. She is looking at his lips, still only inches away.

PEGGY (CONT'D)
I'd love to have dinner with you.

CHRIS
(to the man behind
the counter)
Two #13s with dirty rice, and two
Beck's.

PEGGY
Since you're buying, Scissorman, I
should know...

CHRIS
(stepping on her last
word)
Chris Netan.

He presents his hand. She takes it. He places his other hand over the back of her hand and continues to hold it.

PEGGY
How did you know that was my question?
How do you know I didn't ask my
sister?

CHRIS
I was watching...
(he lowers his eyes)
...your lips.

She takes a slow breath.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
And...?

PEGGY
(not sure, then...)
Oh, I'm Peggy Sterling.

CHRIS
I know.

PEGGY
How do you know?

CHRIS
I know everything.

PEGGY

You heard me announced over the intercom when I arrived for my appointment--Oh! You heard Nathan...

CHRIS

(stepping on her last word)

And your last name?

PEGGY

(stepping on his last word)

'Cause you figured Franny and I were sisters and you know her.

It's a dance. He grins.

CHRIS

And...?

PEGGY

And what?

CHRIS

And is this a coincidence, us meeting here?

PEGGY

Is it?

She looks down at his hands still holding hers.

Their food is ready, he pays. They each pick up a tray. He smiles, a twinkle in his eye.

CHRIS

Come with me.

She follows him up a spiral staircase to a landing on the next level. It is less crowded here. They sit and arrange their meals on the small table.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

The coincidence thing?: "No".

INT. STERLING HOUSE - EVENING

Franny, in white boxers and a pale green undershirt, her hair messily up in a top ponytail, in the kitchen, waits for the microwave: DULL THUDS and RATTLES as popcorn erupts. Her cat rubs against her legs.

The phone RINGS. Franny answers.

FRANNY

Yo.
 (listening)
 I thought we weren't going to do
 this.
 (listening)
 Paul...Paul? It was your idea.
 (listening)
 I think it's a good idea.
 (listening)
 Paul...

Franny WHISTLES into the phone to get Paul's attention, the cat startles, and as the whistle subsides, the LONG HIGH SCREECH of the microwave announces the popcorn, sending the cat running from the room.

Franny takes the bag from the microwave, opens it carefully, and dumps the steaming popcorn into a glass bowl while she talks...

FRANNY (CONT'D)

Not that it's any of your business,
 but Peggy and I are going to spend a
 quiet evening at home. No men, no
 excitement.

She hangs up, grabs a handful of popcorn and stuffs it into her mouth, picks up the bowl in one arm, and with her other arm scoops up the cat who has returned to the doorway, and walks out of the kitchen swishing her hips side to side.

INT. THREE DOLLAR CAFE - NIGHT

Peggy and Chris on the dance floor. Talking Heads: TAKE ME TO THE RIVER (drop me in the water) blares from the speakers. Peggy is much looser than earlier.

EXT. THREE DOLLAR CAFE - NIGHT

Chris and laughing, stumbling Peggy, emerge.

EXT. CHRIS'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A full moon illuminates the grounds: Two acres of dogwoods, Bartlett Pears, azaleas...everything in full bloom. Lush greenery, ballpark lawn, old oaks, tall pines.

The house is a sixty-year-old brick Victorian set back from the cul-de-sac, buried in the landscaped forest, secluded.

INT. CHRIS'S HOUSE, THE DEN - NIGHT

The room is hunter green with walnut trim. Two large candles provide the only light.

Chris and Peggy are on the dark leather sofa. They each hold a brandy snifter. A bottle of Remy Martin XO is on the coffee table...

PEGGY

They were in Italy. My dad's present to my mom for their twenty-fifth anniversary. They were in Florence-- in a little rental car.

CHRIS

Did you get along with 'em?

PEGGY

Yes. What kind of question is that?

Chris takes a sip, studies her.

CHRIS

Just a question. Some people don't.

PEGGY

We were close. No childhood trauma. Like the Cleavers--but with girls.

CHRIS

That's nice. I think that's important.

He leans forward and with his free hand brushes her hair behind one of her ears. He lingers for a moment touching her cheek with his fingertips.

She blushes.

PEGGY

What about you?

She takes a sip emptying her glass; he pours her another and moves closer.

CHRIS

I was an only child--and my mother was no June Cleaver.

Just as proper, maybe, pearls and all...

With his fingertip he makes a semicircular movement on the skin at the base of her neck from collarbone to collarbone.

She shivers and draws in air.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

...but more...intense.

He raises his eyebrows and nods remembering, then downs his glass. He moves his lips to her ear and kisses lightly.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
(whispering)
You've seen "Leave it to Beaver"?

He smiles, his mouth on her ear. A moment passes...

He moves lower, kisses her jaw, her neck, her collarbone...

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Which one of y'all was the Beaver?

INT. STERLING HOUSE - NIGHT

Franny is passed out on the family room couch. The TV is on (BILL MAHER). The cat, curled on her lap, is awake, its ears attentive. It leaps up and runs to the front door and waits.

Franny stirs, sees the cat and goes to the door and looks out the glass panel adjacent to it. Tail lights pass from view.

She picks up the cat and rocks it as if it were a baby.

INT. CHRIS'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

One large candle illuminates the room. A huge dresser, an overstuffed chair, and a king bed are the only furniture. The bed is covered with a brick red comforter.

Peggy, in panties and bra, one strap down, is on the bed. Chris stands facing her, his back visible. She watches him, anticipates...

He removes his shirt. Her eyes, wide, are locked on him.

He places the shirt carefully on the dresser and unzips and steps out of his pants. He folds them slowly and places them neatly on the dresser with his shirt.

He is wearing dark silk boxers. He puts his hands on the waistband and pauses.

Peggy, motionless, holds her breath.

He steps out of his shorts and holds them in his hand, feels the material.

PEGGY
Oh, my. We're really going to do
this.

She blinks slowly, smiles stupidly. Peggy is loaded.

Chris sits on the bed, facing her. He rubs the silk boxers over her skin, playing. He places his free hand on her belly just above her panties and holds the silk shorts to her lips. She bites them, then LAUGHS.

PEGGY (CONT'D)
I'm really messed up, huh?

CHRIS
I put something in your drink--I
hope you don't mind.

She looks at him, puzzled, then grins stupidly. His hand moves into her panties...

PEGGY
What...did you put...in...

Again, she bites the silk boxers.

CHRIS
(whispering)
Tell me more about your childhood.

His hand strokes her and he begins to kiss her neck, her jaw...

PEGGY
(ignoring his request)
Where'd...you...learn...to do that?

CHRIS
(whispering)
Porn.

PEGGY
Oh, my God, I'm gonna pee.

She begins to sexually spasm and closes her eyes tightly. Silence...then the bed CREAKS as her back arches. Another silence...then she CRIES OUT.

She slowly opens her eyes. Held vertically six inches from her exhausted, embarrassed, content face is a hypodermic needle.

Chris pushes the plunger and it squirts a stream of liquid into the air. Peggy's hips are still squirming on the bed and it CREAKS again.

PEGGY (CONT'D)
You're gonna oil the bed? Now?

His hand works in her again and she closes her eyes tightly and contorts her face. When she opens them again she no longer sees the needle. Then she looks down at his lap and smiles.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

I think you're ready, Scissorman.

He smiles and looks down at her thigh. She follows his gaze. Imbedded there is the hypodermic needle.

CHRIS

I think we're both ready.

INT. STERLING HOUSE - MORNING

Bright sunlight comes through the bathroom window. Franny finishes her make-up.

She is dressed in black slacks and a sleeveless white blouse and her hair is pulled back in a ponytail.

The cat rubs up against her legs.

FRANNY

(like a machine gun
burst)

Okay, okay, okay.

She rushes out of the room, stops a few feet into the hall, and turns wide eyed.

FRANNY (CONT'D)

Come on.

The cat rushes after her.

INT. STERLING KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Franny pets the cat while it attacks its breakfast.

The phone RINGS.

FRANNY

Hello.

(listening)

No.

(worried)

I thought she was with you. I figured you came home a few days early and y'all hooked up last night.

(listening)

Mark, she wouldn't do that. I'm gonna call Paul.

(MORE)

FRANNY (CONT'D)

(listening)

Yeah, but he's a cop.

(listening)

Yeah, The Marriott, Seattle. Yeah,
downtown. Okay, bye.

She disconnects and begins to dial. The doorbell CHIMES.
She hangs up, runs to the door and unlocks it.

PAUL FURIO, 29, tall, dark, and normal, stands there clutching
a bouquet of carnations. He holds them out to Franny.

PAUL

Fran, I'm so sorry.

FRANNY

(alarmed)

Oh, God, No.

PAUL

I've been such an idiot.

Franny realizes this is not about Peggy.

FRANNY

You are an idiot. You scared the
shit out of me.

He is flustered. This clearly is not the first time he
doesn't fathom what she is talking about.

PAUL

Wha...Why?

FRANNY

Peggy didn't come home last night.

PAUL

Maybe...

FRANNY

--And she's not with Mark.

(overloaded)

Listen, I gotta get to work. Could
you...call around?

She waves him into the house then rushes from room to room
gathering her purse, her keys, a Tupperware container from
the refrigerator. They converse while she does this...

PAUL

You mean friends?

FRANNY
Friends, hospitals...

She pauses, her lip stiffens.

He's reading her mind this time.

PAUL
The morgues? Franny, don't you think
you're overreacting?

FRANNY
You say that once more in my
lifetime...

He tightens his lips...

PAUL
All right.

FRANNY
We always call. Ever since Mom and
Dad. It's almost nine; she's not at
Mark's. She would've called.

She waves him out the front door ahead of her...

EXT. STERLING HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

...and locks the house.

FRANNY
I hate carnations. They're funeral
flowers.

EXT. LENOX MALL - MORNING

SCARLET WOOD, 22, pretty, but with a sadness, sits in her
silver SUV and views the service entrance door to the mall.

SCARLET
Okay, Scar, stay cool.

She grips the wheel tightly, then relaxes, takes a deep
breath.

SCARLET (CONT'D)
Show time.

INT. ROBERT JAMISON SALON - MOMENTS LATER

Scarlet comes through the front door carrying two large boxes,
one stacked on the other. She is barely able to see over
the top of her load.

SCARLET
 (to the receptionists)
 Hey, y'all.

All four of them acknowledge, the two not talking into their headsets smile.

SCARLET (CONT'D)
 Is Andrea in her office?

The receptionist closest to Scarlet points to the upstairs level and mouths the words "Go on up, Scarlet", then resumes her conversation with the caller.

Scarlet walks through the shampoo area to the ground floor dispensary and break area and sees KATI MCGOVERN, 28. Kati, seated on a high stool, is dressed in a calf length black skirt, white sleeveless blouse, and black A-line pumps.

Her hair is a deep brown and burnt auburn shagged bob, her skin pale, her lipstick blood red. She is the kind of beautiful that makes your heart skip a beat and your breath catch in your throat. You would kill for this woman.

Kati eats a health bar and drinks a bottle of juice through a straw as Scarlet approaches.

Scarlet looks at Kati and smiles shyly, then manages a weak greeting...

SCARLET (CONT'D)
 Hey, Kati.

Kati puts up a hand acknowledging her but continues eating and drinking without a word.

Scarlet blushes and continues past her and, not being able to see her feet because of the boxes, tentatively moves up the back staircase.

SCARLET (CONT'D)
 (mumbling to herself
 and shaking her head)
 Hey, Kati, hey Kati.

She reaches the top of the stairs and walks past the bathroom to the open office door. ANDREA JAMISON, 49, a short, pleasant woman, sees her approaching.

ANDREA
 Come on in, Scarlet. Whatcha got
 for us?

SCARLET
 Hey, Andrea.

She sets the boxes down on top of other boxes, hands Andrea an invoice, and looks through the office's tinted glass wall down to the ground level where Kati is now standing by her station. She looks at Kati with love-sick longing.

ANDREA

Here you go, sweetie.

Scarlet's trance is broken. She looks back at Andrea who hands her a check.

ANDREA (CONT'D)

Your boss was just in here yesterday doing some sharpening.

SCARLET

Yeah, Friday--Kati's day off.

ANDREA

(kindly, sagely)

We all do what we have to.

Scarlet shrugs and manages a slight smile. She is looking out the glass again at Kati McGovern.

EXT. INTERSTATE HIGHWAY - DAY

Green hills, open fields. A silver SUV rolls down the black-top.

INT. SILVER SUV - DAY

Chris behind the wheel. A road sign: "SAVANNAH 164"

On his wrist is a plastic electronic device the size of a watch. Its tiny red light glows as he begins to talk...

CHRIS

(slowly)

In his sleep he hears a high, scratchy cry like a baby's cry or a woman pleading for something very important, perhaps her life.

He awakens to the sound of a mocking bird in the old oak tree outside his upstairs window.

His mind focuses: he remembers his evening, his night.

(different voice)

You made a mistake.

EXT. INTERSTATE HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

The silver SUV rolls through the green countryside.

CHRIS (O.S.)

I corrected it.

*Not really. It's okay. You've made
the game more complicated.*

INT. SILVER SUV - CONTINUOUS

Chris smiles and is silent a few seconds. The red light on the wrist recorder goes off; it glows again as he continues...

CHRIS

He knows this is true. He has made
it more complicated...this game.

INT. ROBERT JAMISON SALON - DAY

Franny, with brush and blow dryer, stands behind ROBERT JAMISON, 51. Robert has shoulder length, swept-back silver hair and is dressed in black and white like all his employees. He looks Hollywood, sounds Alabama.

Robert finishes the cut he has been doing, bends down, and with his mouth blows the cut hair from the nape of the middle-aged woman in his chair. She shivers. He LAUGHS.

Franny does not pay attention to any of this. She is deep in thought.

ROBERT

(to his client)

Thank you, darlin'. Franny'll finish
you up.

(playfully)

Oh, Franny, nap time's over.

He places his hands on the client's shoulders, smiles at her in the mirror, then quickly moves to the next chair where a wet-haired client waits.

Franny steps up to the woman Robert has just completed and turns on the BLOW DRYER.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ROBERT JAMISON BREAK ROOM - LATER

Franny is on the phone. The clock over the microwave shows 3:10.

FRANNY

So, why didn't you call me?
 (listening)
 So what!
 (listening)
 I don't care if you call me at work.
 (listening)
 I don't care if it's Saturday.
 (listening)
 Paul...Paul...You're a detective.
 That's insane. File it anyway--say
 she was missing Thursday night.
 (listening)
 Jesus Christ.

Franny shakes her head, then with the palm and fingertips of her free hand she savagely massages her scalp. She takes a deep breath.

FRANNY (CONT'D)

Mark didn't have any ideas? Nobody
 at her office?
 (listening)
 Something's wrong. She wouldn't do
 this.

EXT. DAYS INN (SAVANNAH) - DAY

Chris's silver SUV pulls up to the office.

INT. DAYS INN ROOM - DAY

The AIR CONDITIONER FAN is on "high". Chris, in running shorts, does sit-ups on a towel spread on the carpet. Face in a grimace, his body sweating profusely, he pushes far beyond where most would stop.

He rotates and does push-ups. Again, beyond normal limits.

EXT. DAYS INN POOL - DAY

Still blue water. CHILDREN LAUGHING (O.S.) A SPLASH (O.S.)...Chris's head emerges from the water. He flings his hair back, looks around, starts laps.

EXT. LENOX MALL - DAY

An asphalt sea of upscale cars and blossoming dogwood trees.

INT. LENOX MALL - DAY

From a distance...Franny enters The Limited, approaches the counter, speaks to the salesgirl, pulls a picture from her purse, shows it to the girl.

The girl shakes her head. Franny speaks again and the girl calls over another salesgirl, who shakes her head.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ANN TAYLOR - MOMENTS LATER

Franny talks to a saleswoman who nods her head and when shown the picture Franny hands her, nods again and takes her to the sweater display and shows her a red sweater like the one Peggy bought.

Franny asks her something else and the woman shakes her head.

INT. BUCKHEAD POLICE STATION - DAY

Paul, at his desk, works at his computer. On the screen: a list of female homicides reported that day in the greater Atlanta area.

He scrolls down the list and finds no one who remotely fits Peggy's description. He exits the screen and brings up a list of female homicides in Georgia excluding greater Atlanta. There are two, both black.

He exits the screen and pushes his chair back from the desk.

INT. MALL FOODCOURT - DAY

From a distance...Franny shows Peggy's picture to a woman at the Gyro place next to The Big Easy. The woman shakes her head.

Franny moves over a few feet until she stands in front of the same MAN who waited on Peggy and Chris the evening before.

She holds up the picture.

FRANNY

Did you see this woman last evening?
She was wearing a red sweater and
dark grey skirt.

MAN

Yeah, I think so. A pretty girl
similar to you about your size. Is
she okay?

FRANNY

(excited)
I don't know. Was she with anyone?

MAN

Yeah.

(MORE)

MAN (CONT'D)

A guy came up while she was lookin' at the menu. A smooth talker.

They didn't seem to know each other too good, but there was definitely somethin' there. You know what I mean?

FRANNY

(containing her excitement)

What did the guy look like?

MAN

Nice lookin'. Right outta G.Q. Curly hair, 'bout a thousand dollars worth of clothes: casual chic.

FRANNY

Armani jacket, T-shirt, jeans?

MAN

Yeah, that's right. He ordered for 'em. Two #13s. I remember 'cause I remember all the pretty ones...her not him. I ain't like that.

FRANNY

Did you hear his name? Was it Chris?

MAN

She called him somethin'--a nickname-- I don't remember.

FRANNY

Scissorman?

EXT. THE PLANK RESTAURANT (SAVANNAH) - EVENING

Waters Street filled with Saturday crowds.

INT. THE PLANK - EVENING

Chris, finishing his meal, sits alone at a small table by the bar. He talks to his WAITRESS who smiles and nods.

EXT. WATERS STREET (SAVANNAH) - NIGHT

Wandering, drunken crowds mill around street performers.

INT. THE PARROT BAR - NIGHT

A band PLAYS on the upper level deep balcony that overlooks the ground floor bar.

Chris sits at a barstool downstairs. He stands as his waitress from the restaurant approaches. She is dressed in slacks and a short top that reveals a navel ring. Her hair pulled back earlier is now down.

They sit and he signals the bartender.

INT. STERLING HOUSE - NIGHT

Franny and Paul on the couch, the cat in Franny's lap.

PAUL

We can't question him if he's not here.

FRANNY

How do you know he wasn't home? Maybe he's just not answering, maybe his car's in the garage. Why don't we just go look?

PAUL

We already did that.

FRANNY

No you didn't. You just rang his doorbell.

PAUL

He wasn't home. We tried twice. We left a uniform in front of the place. What else do you want us to do? Break in?

FRANNY

Why not?

PAUL

Franny, we aren't sure she's really missing and we don't know if this guy knows anything.

The microwave SOUNDS. Franny rises, dumps the cat to Paul.

FRANNY

(angrily)

She's missing. She wouldn't go off with some guy she doesn't know and not call me. She wouldn't.

PAUL

You said she was interested in him. She and Mark have been going nowhere. Maybe she just decided to do something spontaneous and wild.

FRANNY

The red sweater? That's your clue?

Franny goes into the kitchen.

PAUL

(loudly)

My educated guess is: she had dinner with him, had a good time, they went to some bar, had an even better time and decided to go off somewhere...

...to some romantic place for a weekend of more excitement than Mr. Software, Mark, is capable of providing her.

She's probably getting her brains screwed out properly right now.

EXT. DAYS INN - NIGHT

It is late. The Saturday night partiers have disappeared.

INT. DAYS INN ROOM - NIGHT

A music video silently strobes the darkened room. On the king bed Chris, in lotus position, energetically bounces the waitress straddling his lap. Her navel ring catches the light as she arches her back, hair hanging as she rides him.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DAYS INN ROOM - LATER

The waitress asleep in Chris's arms. His head propped on pillows, his face in a scowl, he stares at a violent video.

EXT. MARSH BENEATH A BRIDGE - MORNING

The sun is low, the shallows are salmon pink and glistening. A crowd has gathered on the bridge and looks toward the pilings nearest the muddy land on the east side.

A man points and everyone looks in the direction he indicates.

Closer...A woman's body floats in the reeds.

Closer...A glint of light from the woman's belly...
Closer...It's a navel ring.

A green road sign: "SAVANNAH CITY LIMIT"

INT. DAYS INN ROOM - MORNING

Chris asleep alone in the bed. A peaceful look on his face, almost a smile.

INT. FRANNY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Franny and the cat asleep. The phone RINGS.

Franny reaches for it and drags it to her.

FRANNY
(half asleep)
Hello.

INT. PAUL'S CAR - MORNING

Paul stares at his car's computer screen while shuffling papers with one hand.

PAUL
Franny. I'm sorry if I woke you,
but I got something. I'll be there
in a minute.

INT. STERLING HOUSE - MORNING

The doorbell RINGS and Franny in boxers and undershirt hurries to the door. She unlocks it.

Paul enters, a folder in his hand.

PAUL
I checked all the neighboring
states...

FRANNY
...like I told you you should.

PAUL
...yeah, Fran, let me get through
this, anyway, there was nothing but
then I checked Georgia again. They
found a girl at Tybee...

FRANNY
Oh my God!

PAUL
It's not Peggy. This girl was found
Thursday afternoon, a day and a half
before Peggy was seen at the mall.

But she's about the same age and
same build.

FRANNY

So what's that mean? What the hell are you scaring me for?

PAUL

It doesn't mean anything by itself. But a few minutes ago I got an e-mail from Savannah. There's another girl.

FRANNY

No.

PAUL

I don't think it's her, Franny, but they haven't made an I.D. yet. Peggy doesn't have a navel ring, does she?

FRANNY

(joyful, nearly crying)
No, of course not!

PAUL

I couldn't imagine she did, she's so--normal--but this girl's got the same general description, same approximate age.

And being in the water a few hours, it's hard to be sure looking...Anyway, here's the thing:

Both of these girls had their hair hacked off and thrown in the marsh with their bodies, and both were stabbed at the base of their neck...

...twice, paralyzing them, and, uh...both had their...joy button...removed, we think, while they were still alive.

FRANNY

Oh, my God, Peggy.

PAUL

She might just be gone for the weekend. I wouldn't have even told you this stuff, but you insisted I look around.

The guys think I'm nuts trying to make this tie in with somebody who's probably just partying.

FRANNY
 (angrily)
 Peggy isn't partying.

Paul tries to put his arms around her, but she pulls away. She gestures toward the folder he's holding.

FRANNY (CONT'D)
 Are those pictures?

He hands her the folder and watches her face.

She removes several sheets, most of them color printouts of the Savannah victim. Franny is horrified but can't take her eyes off them. She points to one of them.

FRANNY (CONT'D)
 What made those holes?

PAUL
 I don't know.

INT. BUCKHEAD POLICE STATION - MORNING

The handful of detectives on the day shift eat bran muffins and drink coffee. Franny stands in front of Paul who leans against his desk.

FRANNY
 (exasperated)
 What are you waiting for?

PAUL
 (taking a deep breath)
 The captain has to okay it.

The door to the captain's office opens and CAPTAIN PHILLIPS, 52, worn and ready for something else, appears, papers in hand.

CAPTAIN PHILLIPS
 Furio, Ngoyen, bring him in.

FRANNY
 I'm going with you.

PAUL
 You can't ride with us.

FRANNY
 I'll drive myself.

Paul shrugs "whatever" and he and ANGIE NGOYEN, 31, shiny black ponytail, half Vietnamese, all business, head out...

PAUL
(to Franny)
You're not coming to the door with
us.

EXT. CHRIS'S STREET - DAY

A gray Taurus followed by a Jeep Wrangler with a rag top enter the cul-de-sac. The two vehicles stop and the window of the Taurus comes down revealing Paul.

He speaks to DETECTIVE RAND BURLINGTON, 42, spiked, greasy hair, goatee, the driver of a forest green Chevy Impala on the opposite side of the street.

PAUL
We're bringing him in.

DET. BURLINGTON
He was only in there a few minutes.

PAUL
Shit.

Franny leans out the Jeep's window, listens, then slaps the side of her vehicle.

FRANNY
Damn it.

Burlington gives her a shrug.

DET. BURLINGTON
(to Paul)
Cap'n says we should try later.

He does a little half wave and puts his car in gear and pulls away.

Paul pulls forward into a driveway and turns around.

Franny hasn't moved. She's leaning out the window as he's about to move past her. She mashes the HORN.

FRANNY
What're you doing?

PAUL
Going back to the station.

FRANNY
Why didn't he follow him?

PAUL

That's not how this works, Franny.
You can't go on a gut feeling. He's
not a suspect. We don't even know
if there's a crime.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Burlington's been watching that house
as a favor to me--and you. We'll
try again later.

FRANNY

I'm staying.

PAUL

Franny...

She sets her jaw.

PAUL (CONT'D)

If you're right about this...he's
dangerous.

Her expression is unchanged. He shakes his head.

PAUL (CONT'D)

(resigned)
Be careful.

Her face softens with his concern...

PAUL (CONT'D)

Franny, use your head, not your gut.

...and then she grits her teeth and grips the steering wheel
so hard her hands shake.

EXT. STONE MOUNTAIN PARK - DAY

A panoramic view of the pale rock mountain and its surrounding
rich greenery.

EXT. STONE MOUNTAIN PARK, MAIN GATE - DAY

A silver SUV pulls up to the gate and is waved through by
the woman in the ticket booth. It winds toward the rock
mountain then along the perimeter toward the walkup trail
parking lot.

EXT. WALKUP TRAIL PARKING LOT - DAY

In running clothes Chris stretches next to his car.

EXT. SIDEWALK ENCIRCLING THE MOUNTAIN - DAY

At different points as Chris runs the five mile circle...every time a young woman passes going the opposite direction, he gives a slight smile and is returned one.

EXT. WALKUP TRAIL PARKING LOT - DAY

Chris finishes his run and opens the car door, retrieves a water bottle, and drinks while he walks and stretches. He opens the car door again and gets a towel and wipes the sweat from his torso and hair.

He pulls on a pair of sweat shorts over his running shorts and clips his micro-recorder to his waistband. He runs the micro-mic cord under his tank top and clips it to the neck opening.

Still drinking from the water bottle, he walks toward the public restrooms alongside the train track at the base of the trail.

EXT. WALKUP TRAIL - MOMENTS LATER

Chris tosses the empty bottle into a trash can by the track and begins to hike up the stone ascent.

At various points on the trail, he passes people, moving quickly and skillfully up the slope.

At the covered rest area at the foot of the summit assault, he stops and watches two young women, trim, dressed in shorts, sleeveless shirts and hiking boots, begin the steeper trek to the top.

He smiles and looks behind him down the trail. There is no one there.

CHRIS

(to the recorder)

He knows he's an animal. A smart animal. An upright, forward focusing, binocular biped. A predator.

He begins the summit assault watching the young women from below as he moves.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Hunger, again. Hunger, returning sooner...each time.

The young women move slowly, laboring, and he stops occasionally, keeping distance between them and him.

At a point that offers a magnificent view of the Atlanta skyline, the women stop. Chris approaches them.

SHAWN MEDLIN, 21, light brown curls pulled back under a backwards "No Fear" cap, pretty, looks out toward the city. KIM WRIGHT, 21, auburn hair tucked into a Nike cap, more delicate, reties her boots.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Beautiful, isn't it?

The young women turn. Kim, still crouched is at crotch level.

KIM
(stammering)
Yes.

CHRIS
City in a forest. Hard to believe
all the crime down there, huh? Looks
great from a distance.

KIM
Uh huh.

CHRIS
Everything looks great from a
distance.

Kim stands. Chris gestures toward the small binoculars that hang from her neck.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
May I?

She starts to remove them but with catlike finesse he places his hand on hers and turns them backwards. He holds them up to her eyes and smiles into them.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
See? Even me.

Shawn takes a step toward them, angles a shoulder in front of Kim.

SHAWN
I think you look fine right up close.

Chris smiles his electric smile.

CHRIS
Y'all go to school?

SHAWN

UGA. We're doing some bird watching
for a class.

CHRIS

One of my favorite activities.

SHAWN

Really?

His eyes dart down her body and then back to her eyes. He
smiles, slyly.

CHRIS

Really.

Kim watches, a bit jealous.

KIM

So where's Buckhead?

Chris gestures toward the distant skyline.

CHRIS

See the groups of big buildings?

He points with his index finger moving left to right.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Downtown, Midtown,
Buckhead...Dunwoody, Alpharetta...

He pauses and gestures over his shoulder with his thumb.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

...Athens.

SHAWN

We're not going back to Athens
tonight. We're staying at the Hyatt
in Buckhead.

Kim shoots Shawn a concerned look.

SHAWN (CONT'D)

We don't have class 'til four o'clock
tomorrow. Gonna do the bar thing.

CHRIS

I'm gonna do the frozen Coke thing.
Race you to the top.

He takes off jogging effortlessly up the rock slope as they
struggle, starting and stopping.

At the top they see Chris standing by the telescopes under the covered observation point by the summit's snack bar and museum.

He has three frozen cokes. He gives one to each young woman and they thank him and sip silently, catching their breath, while he sips his.

On the mountain's bare summit a couple flies a kite that loops and dives in slow arcs, and Chris, Shawn, and Kim watch for a moment.

Beyond the kite a large bird circles the mountain top. Kim puts the binoculars to her eyes.

KIM

I think that's a young Bald Eagle.

Shawn and Chris squint at the distant bird. Chris smiles and shakes his head.

CHRIS

Chicken Hawk.

KIM

Are you sure?

He nods, still smiling.

SHAWN

We'll be right back, Mountain Man.

The women head down the walkway toward the building.

INT. SUMMIT BUILDING LADIES ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Kim goes into a stall while Shawn sips her frozen coke.

SHAWN

Would you mind if I...

KIM (O.S.)

Why don't we wait and see who he likes?

Shawn moves to the door of the stall and peeks in the gap between the door and the frame.

SHAWN

You don't usually like my type.

KIM (O.S.)

Your type? This guy's everybody's type.

The toilet FLUSHES. The stall door opens.

KIM (CONT'D)
We don't know anything about him.

Shawn moves past Kim into the stall, and facing her with the door open, she holds the frozen coke cup with her teeth and whips down her shorts and panties in one motion.

SHAWN
(between her teeth)
Exciting, huh?

EXT. THE COVERED OBSERVATION POINT - MOMENTS LATER

Chris sips his drink and waits as Shawn and Kim approach.

SHAWN
So, what's your name?

CHRIS
Chris. And you...?

SHAWN
Shawn.

She presents her hand. He takes it, holds it a moment.

SHAWN (CONT'D)
This is my shy friend Kim.

Kim shoots her an "I could kill you" look and then offers her hand. He takes it and holds it a moment.

KIM
Hi.

SHAWN
So where do you live?

She looks at Kim as if to say, "Is that an okay question?"

CHRIS
Buckhead.

He points to the distant skyline.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Downtown, Midtown, Buckhead.

SHAWN
You have an apartment?

Kim frowns at the brazenness. Chris smiles.

CHRIS

A house.

SHAWN

You rent it?

Kim flashes her a look... "That's not an okay question".

CHRIS

I own it.

SHAWN

(to Kim)

He owns a house in Buckhead.

Kim is horrified at the inappropriateness.

CHRIS

Who's paying for the room at the Hyatt?

SHAWN

Daddy's Visa.

Chris takes a long sip.

CHRIS

Would y'all like to have a late lunch with me? If you don't have plans.

SHAWN

Yeah? Where you taking us?

Kim looks at Shawn...

KIM

(stammering)

I...don't know.

CHRIS

I think I'll cook for y'all.

He raises his brow and looks at each girl.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Is that all right?

SHAWN

(to Kim)

He cooks.

Chris raises his brow again.

CHRIS

Well?

Shawn looks at Kim. Kim shrugs.

KIM
We haven't eaten yet.

Chris looks at Shawn, she smiles.

SHAWN
You only live once.

Chris smiles back, his eyes sparkling.

CHRIS
My kind o' woman. Follow me.

He takes off across the summit's plateau and disappears down the steep slope.

EXT. CHRIS'S STREET - DAY

Franny's Jeep sits at the side of the street exactly where it was earlier.

INT. FRANNY'S JEEP - DAY

Franny asleep in the driver's seat. The cell phone RINGS. She jerks to consciousness grabs the phone, looks at it.

FRANNY
Paul.

INT. BUCKHEAD POLICE STATION - DAY

Paul, at his desk, is on the phone.

PAUL
I was worried about you.

INTERCUT CONVERSATION BETWEEN FRANNY AND PAUL

FRANNY
I'm fine.

She looks behind her toward Chris's house: No SUV in the driveway.

PAUL
Nothing, huh?

FRANNY
I don't think so. I fell asleep for a few minutes.

PAUL

He's probably left town. Why don't you go home. I'll get somebody to watch the house.

FRANNY

I'll wait 'til they get here.

PAUL

You know what, nothing's going on here, I'll come do it myself.

FRANNY

(very pleased)

Thank you, Paul.

PAUL

Go on, Fran. I'll be there in a few minutes.

FRANNY

Check the garage. He might have got past me while I was dozing.

PAUL

He's got two other cars registered to him. They're probably in the garage. Burlington says he parks in the driveway.

EXT. CHRIS'S STREET - LATER

The cul-de-sac is deserted; no Franny, no Paul.

Chris's SUV and a red Ford Fusion are in his driveway.

INT. CHRIS'S HOUSE - DAY

In the kitchen: evidence of a meal cooked: pots, pans, dishes...

In the sun room: Chris, Shawn, and Kim seated by the Jacuzzi. They hold drinks. Chris has rinsed off and has changed into chinos and a black T-shirt. All are barefoot.

Kim, heavy lidded, sips slowly.

KIM

I didn't drink enough to be this wasted.

CHRIS

I put a Valium in your last drink. Just a little one...to relax you.

KIM
Who said you could do that?

SHAWN
I'm really fucked up.

Chris sets his glass down slowly, stands up and takes off his shirt. He leans down, his mouth close to Shawn's ear.

CHRIS
(whispering)
I put a little something special in yours.

Shawn turns her head. Their lips brush as he pulls away, straightening. She looks at his body and then looks at Kim who hasn't blinked.

Chris strips off his pants, then his underwear, and steps into the Jacuzzi. The young women stare at him, mesmerized.

Shawn stands up, undresses, and steps a leg into the Jacuzzi. Chris reaches out and helps her in. She sits beside him.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
(to Kim)
Well?

She downs the rest of her drink, picks up Chris's unfinished one and downs it, waits two seconds, then stands shakily and strips while Shawn begins to LAUGH and Chris stares intensely. On his face is a hint of a smirk.

EXT. STERLING HOUSE - DAY

Franny's Jeep in the driveway.

INT. STERLING HOUSE - DAY

Franny asleep on the couch, the cat curled on her. The phone RINGS. She opens her eyes and immediately reaches for it.

FRANNY
Hello?
(listening)
You've got the wrong number.

She SLAMS the phone down then picks it up again and looks at the time and then punches a number.

FRANNY (CONT'D)
Paul. He hasn't come back?
(listening)
What? You said...
(MORE)

FRANNY (CONT'D)
 (listening)
 Damn it! I'm going over there.

EXT. CHRIS'S HOUSE - DAY

Paul and Detective Ngoyen stand at the front door. Franny, in her Jeep, pulls in behind their unmarked Taurus at the near end of the long driveway.

The door opens revealing Chris in a white robe.

PAUL
 Mr. Netan, I'm Detective Furio, this is Detective Ngoyen. We're with the Buckhead Police Department.

We're investigating the disappearance of a young woman, Margaret Sterling. You were seen with her Friday evening.

Chris pauses a moment, then opens the door wider.

CHRIS
 Why don't you come in.

He steps aside, lets them pass into the foyer.

INT. CHRIS'S HOUSE - DAY

CHRIS
 This way.

He leads them into the den and gestures toward the leather couch. The two detectives sit.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
 Can I get you anything? Coffee?
 Doughnuts?

He smiles. They don't.

NGOYEN
 No, thank you.

Paul shakes his head.

NGOYEN (CONT'D)
 We'd like you to come down to the station so we can ask you a few questions.

CHRIS
 Now?

They study him, waiting...

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Let me get dressed.

They stand.

PAUL
Nice house.

CHRIS
Make yourselves at home. I'll only
be a minute.

They all walk out into the foyer. Chris begins to ascend the stairs...

NGOYEN
(calling up to him)
Mind if we wander?

Chris turns and pauses.

CHRIS
Don't get lost.

He disappears into the upstairs.

INT. CHRIS'S BEDROOM - DAY

Shawn and Kim are on the king bed. Kim is naked face down passed out with the sheet covering half her bottom and Shawn in a bathrobe, her hair wet, is tentatively, gently, nibbling at the top of Kim's exposed butt cheek.

She looks up as Chris enters, LAUGHS and rolls over on her back as the robe falls partially open and then LAUGHS harder.

SHAWN
Girls. Who knew?

CHRIS
I've got to leave for a while. Don't
steal anything.

Shawn, still LAUGHING, rolls over again on her belly and runs her fingertips up and down Kim's spine.

INT. CHRIS'S STAIRCASE - DAY

Paul steps halfway up the staircase. He hears the LAUGHING coming from upstairs and ascends the last steps.

INT. CHRIS'S BEDROOM - DAY

Paul appears in the doorway. He sees Shawn kissing Kim's naked back. Shawn sees him, smiles, and continues.

Chris comes out of the bathroom dressed in warm-up pants and a t-shirt.

PAUL

I heard a woman. I apologize.

Chris stares at him seriously and then smiles.

CHRIS

You thought she was here?

INT. CHRIS'S KITCHEN - DAY

Ngoyen walks around the post-meal room. She looks out the sun porch into the enclosed, lush backyard. She pushes open a narrow kitchen door guarding a descending staircase and looks down it, sees only darkness.

PAUL (O.S.)

Angie.

She turns and sees Paul. Chris is behind him, his mouth smiling at her, his eyes intense...

CHRIS

Let's do it.

EXT. CHRIS'S HOUSE - DAY

The two detectives exit the front door with Chris behind them locking up. They all walk to the Taurus. Chris stares at Franny in her Jeep.

Franny scowls at him.

Paul opens the back door for Chris and Chris gets in.

INT. BUCKHEAD POLICE STATION INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Chris, Paul, Ngoyen, DETECTIVE JEROME WILLIAMS, 46, fat, sloppy, and Detective Burlington, sit at a long table, Chris in the middle.

The detectives have their chairs turned at an angle, Paul and Ngoyen next to Chris, a little too close.

PAUL

Can we get you anything? Coffee?
Doughnuts?

Chris smiles.

Captain Phillips comes into the room and hands Paul a folder.

Paul holds it a few inches from Chris but at an angle that doesn't offer him a view, opens it and reads for a moment and then looks up at Phillips who tilts his head Reagan-like and does an almost imperceptible "Beats me" shrug.

CHRIS
How 'bout a Peach Fresca?

DET. WILLIAMS
We have Sprite.

Chris looks at him.

CHRIS
I'm fine.

Captain Phillips exits.

PAUL
Was Friday evening the first time
you met Peggy Sterling?

CHRIS
Yep.

PAUL
Where did you go after you ate at
the mall?

CHRIS
The Three Dollar Cafe--the one here
in Buckhead. You already know
that...detective.

They all stare at Chris. You can't tell what they know by looking.

Paul passes the folder to Ngoyen who reads expressionless. She looks up from her reading.

NGOYEN
And after The Three Dollar Cafe?

She hands the folder to Burlington. Chris smiles and positions his right hand a fraction of an inch from her left hand resting on the table. She looks down at their hands, then resumes eye contact.

CHRIS
Shouldn't I have a lawyer here?

NGOYEN

You're not a suspect. We don't even know if there's been a crime; we're just helping out a concerned friend.

She glances up at the mirror.

CHRIS

Yeah, but wouldn't a smart person ask for a lawyer?

DET. WILLIAMS

Or a guilty one.

Chris smiles more broadly. He moves his little finger a fraction of an inch and brushes Ngoyen's finger. She doesn't flinch.

CHRIS

And a smart, guilty one would wave his right thinking that would fool you.

Chris stares into the long mirror directly in front of him and the corners of his mouth flatten.

INT. BUCKHEAD STATION OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY

Franny and Captain Phillips look through one-way glass into the interrogation room. Chris appears to be looking directly at Franny.

CHRIS

(slightly metallic,
through speakers)

We went to my place.

He purses his lips, still appears to look at Franny.

FRANNY

You son-of-a-bitch.

CHRIS

She was gone by two.

PAUL

What do you mean by "gone"?

Chris smiles.

CHRIS

She wasn't there anymore.

PAUL

She didn't go home.

CHRIS
That's what I hear.

FRANNY
(to Captain Phillips)
Are you going to arrest him?

CAPTAIN PHILLIPS
I told you you could watch this if
you kept quiet.

Franny's eyes open wide, her lips drawn tight...

CAPTAIN PHILLIPS (CONT'D)
We can't arrest him, yet. Let 'em
do their job.

INT. BUCKHEAD POLICE STATION INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Detective Williams holds the folder.

DET. WILLIAMS
Your old man owned Netanyahu's
Pharmacy, huh? I was in there a
couple of times.

That was the pharmacy in Buckhead
'til the chains came along. I bet
he made a fortune off those rich old
Jewish ladies.

Chris watches him, no longer smiling.

DET. WILLIAMS (CONT'D)
Put you through four years at Georgia
Tech and then a year of med school
at Emory.

Lemme guess: He wanted you to be
the surgeon he never got to be.

DET. BURLINGTON
But you wanted to be a hairstylist.
How'd he feel about that?

Chris's eyes narrow, the corners of his lips turn up.

DET. WILLIAMS
And now you've found a way to combine
the two.

Chris suddenly looks perplexed.

PAUL

Were you at Tybee Beach Wednesday night?

CHRIS

(puzzled)

What does that have to do with anything?

DET. WILLIAMS

Were you in Savannah last night?

CHRIS

(more puzzled)

You obviously know I was. So what?

Williams removes some photo printouts from the folder and tosses them down in front of Chris who studies them. A flash of terror widens his eyes.

DET. WILLIAMS

Your Wednesday night date.

He tosses some more pages in front of Chris. Again, the momentary terror.

DET. WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

Your Saturday night date. Looks like your education has come to fruition.

And I gotta say, Mr. Netanyahu--you don't seem to have legally changed your name--only costs a couple of bucks to do that, you know--

I gotta say you don't seem to be much of a hairstylist or surgeon.

CHRIS

I didn't do this.

PAUL

Where's Peggy Sterling?

Paul looks up at the mirror. He pauses.

PAUL (CONT'D)

(softly)

Is she dead?

INT. BUCKHEAD STATION OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY

Franny is in front of the glass. She holds her breath, shaking as her eyes fill up, waiting...

Chris looks up. He appears to make eye contact with her.

CHRIS
(through speakers)
She was alive the last time I saw
her.

He tosses the photo printouts back to Williams.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
And they were alive the last time I
saw them.

Everyone studies him. He appears to be telling the truth.

The door to the observation room opens and a receptionist enters and hands Captain Phillips a piece of paper. He reads it.

INT. BUCKHEAD POLICE STATION INTERROGATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Captain Phillips enters.

CAPTAIN PHILLIPS
Mr. Netan, thanks for coming in.

Chris stands and avoiding eye contact with the detectives, starts for the door.

CAPTAIN PHILLIPS (CONT'D)
Mr. Netan...

Chris opens the door and without turning...

CHRIS
I know, "Don't leave town."

CAPTAIN PHILLIPS
Actually, what I was going to say
was: Burlington and Williams will
drive you home.

Phillips nods to them. They follow Chris out as Franny stares at Chris, then rushes past them into the interrogation room.

FRANNY
(excited)
Why're you letting him leave?

Everyone turns to Captain Phillips.

CAPTAIN PHILLIPS
We don't have anything. Forensics
in Tybee and Savannah both came up
negative for prints and DNA...

FRANNY

He admits he knew them!

CAPTAIN PHILLIPS

...and the girl at Tybee Beach was seen leaving the motel he stayed at. Alone.

Franny looks at Paul.

PAUL

Captain, that doesn't mean anything. He's the guy. We've got two bodies and Franny's sister's been missing now for more than forty-eight hours.

CAPTAIN PHILLIPS

The D.A.'s already called Judge Uker and we've got a car on his street. He's not going anywhere without us knowing.

Paul looks at Franny, sadly.

PAUL

(to Captain Phillips)
Peggy might still be alive.

Captain Phillips looks at Franny, then hangs his head.

CAPTAIN PHILLIPS

Not if he's the guy. Both those girls were...disposed of a few hours after he was with them.

But until we have ...a body...this doesn't fit the M.O.

PAUL

He's the guy. You saw his attitude.

CAPTAIN PHILLIPS

Let's check his house and vehicle. We'll have the warrant in a few minutes.

FRANNY

Then why'd you let him go?

Captain Phillips is trying to be patient with her. He takes a slow breath before he speaks.

CAPTAIN PHILLIPS

I want to give him a few minutes to think about his situation, see what he does. That okay with you?

INT. CHRIS'S BEDROOM - LATER

Chris, in a bathrobe, watches Shawn, also in a bathrobe, fondle Kim who is naked, partially covered, passed out face down.

The doorbell RINGS. Chris looks up a moment and then resumes watching Shawn who is oblivious to anything but Kim. Again the bell RINGS followed by KNOCKING. Again Chris looks up.

EXT. CHRIS'S HOUSE - EVENING

Several police cars, marked and unmarked, are in the long driveway. At the end of this fleet is Franny's Jeep with Franny in it. Paul rings the bell and KNOCKS. Several detectives and forensics people are behind him.

The front door opens. Chris, in a white robe, stands there.

PAUL

Mr. Netan, we have a search warrant.

Chris's mouth shows a small smile but his eyes show his displeasure. He opens the door wide and stands aside while the police file in.

INT. CHRIS'S FOYER - EVENING

CHRIS

(to Paul)

Can I tell my guests you're here? I don't think they're dressed for company...

...unless you're a swinging kind of guy. Detective Furio, right?...

...That girlfriend of yours seems like she might be some fun, huh?

PAUL

Why don't you get your little friends out of here...while they're still breathing.

CHRIS

(coldly)

I'm not a killer.

He turns and goes upstairs.

The police, all wearing gloves, fan out to different rooms.

INT. CHRIS'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Paul and Ngoyen enter. Ngoyen pulls open the narrow door that leads downstairs. She flips a light switch and she and Paul descend the wooden stairs.

INT. THE BASEMENT - NIGHT

Paul and Ngoyen enter. It's a game room: 50s heavy pine paneling, pool table, dart board. One side of the room is a mud area: washer, dryer, folding pantry doors...

Paul walks to the washer and dryer, opens each, then opens the folding doors to the pantry: detergents, mops, broom...

Ngoyen checks the walls, taps casually with a pool cue.

They return to the staircase.

INT. CHRIS'S FOYER - NIGHT

Paul and Ngoyen enter from the kitchen. They see Chris and the two young women coming down the stairs.

Kim is less than steady and Chris has his arm around her. Shawn grins and squints.

CHRIS

(to Paul)

The ladies are going to sit out in the sun room 'til you're done here.

PAUL

I'd like to ask them a few questions. Why don't I go out there with them. You can stay here with Detective Ngoyen.

Chris's face hardens. Then he smiles.

CHRIS

Fine.

Paul, and grinning Shawn and stumbling Kim, leave.

NGOYEN

(to Chris)

Why don't we go sit in the kitchen.

INT. CHRIS'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Ngoyen and Chris enter and sit at the counter that looks out into the sun room.

There is no glass separating the two rooms. They can see Paul sitting with Shawn and Kim by the Jacuzzi twenty-five feet away.

Their VOICES are audible above the Jacuzzi jets but their words can't be deciphered.

Chris watches them.

NGOYEN

You're quite the man, huh?

Chris frowns and continues to watch the not quite heard conversation.

NGOYEN (CONT'D)

Aren't you afraid of diseases? I'm scared to death to date new people.

I've stayed with awful boyfriends way too long just because I can't bring myself to start over with the whole AIDS, herpes, warts...

CHRIS

Can we just sit here? Not talking?

NGOYEN

...Chlamydia...oy... Sure.

They sit not talking for a moment. Paul's and the two women's unintelligible voices can be heard washed out by the bubbling Jacuzzi.

Beyond the sun room, a uniformed cop with a leashed German Shepherd strolls the grounds.

NGOYEN (CONT'D)

I've put up with lousy lovers...for months.

Chris closes his eyes. Ngoyen smiles. She watches his face while the dog does its work.

Paul comes into the kitchen leaving Shawn and Kim by the Jacuzzi. Behind him while he speaks, Shawn undresses and steps into the water. Kim watches without expression and then steps in fully clothed while Shawn laughs.

PAUL

The ladies wanted to leave but I've suggested they stay. Just for a while until they're able to drive.

Chris and Ngoyen have been watching the young women.

NGOYEN
May be a long while.

She shakes her head.

NGOYEN (CONT'D)
What did you give those girls?

CHRIS
Would you like some?

A uniformed cop with two German Shepherds pulling him enters through the front door and approaches the kitchen.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
I told you Miss Sterling was here
Friday night. Why is this necessary?

He looks at the dogs.

PAUL
A dead body smells different than a
live one: These are cadaver dogs.

The dogs and the uniform go through the narrow door that leads down to the basement. With a hardened face Chris watches. Paul and Ngoyen watch him.

CHRIS
I don't allow dogs in my house.

Paul looks out toward the Jacuzzi.

PAUL
No, I don't think you do.

EXT. CHRIS'S DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Franny waits in her Jeep while police officers file out of the house. She sees Paul and he sees her and gives an almost imperceptible shake of his head. She pushes on the steering wheel in frustration.

Paul approaches her.

FRANNY
So?

PAUL
Nothing.

FRANNY
She was in the house. There's got
to be something.

PAUL

Yeah. We found some prints. But no blood, no...body.

FRANNY

There were three guys crawling around his car for almost an hour. They didn't find anything?

PAUL

There was no evidence she was ever in the vehicle. It's clean but it hasn't been cleaned. Same thing with the two in the garage.

He says she drove her car here. And we haven't found her car.

FRANNY

So what's this mean? He's going to get away with it? That's it?

PAUL

I don't know what it means, Franny.

EXT. CHASTAIN PARK SOFTBALL FIELD - NIGHT

Two Ladies' League teams play softball. Scarlet, playing second base, fields a grounder, steps on second, and tosses to first for a close double play.

Scarlet and her team run off the field to the bench on the third base side.

Behind the bench is a steep slope that rises to the sidewalk that encircles the ball fields and golf course of Chastain Park.

EXT. CHASTAIN PARK - NIGHT

The sidewalk meanders for a quarter mile down to where it twists and drops and passes over a creek buried in steep green embankments.

An attractive young woman in running clothes jogs down the sidewalk toward the creek.

Chris, at a distance behind her, is catching up, but instead of passing, he lingers, synchronizing his movements with hers, watching her, focused.

EXT. CHASTAIN PARK SOFTBALL FIELD - NIGHT

Scarlet, on the bench, cheers on her teammate at the plate.

Up the slope on the sidewalk above the field, the jogging woman has stopped and now walks and stretches. As she leans forward, a heart-shaped ruby on a thin gold chain dangles from her neck.

Chris approaches her and smiles and she returns the smile.

He descends the concrete staircase that leads to the field, comes up behind Scarlet and pokes her bottom with the toe of his running shoe.

She turns.

CHRIS
Who's winning?

SCARLET
We are. Seven zip.

CHRIS
All right Sapphoes.

He pulls his tank top off revealing his perspiring torso. Scarlet looks, her eyes on the sweat as it runs down his muscled abs.

From the on-deck circle PATSY DUNN, 26, plain, butch, watches Scarlet's interest in Chris.

The batter flies out to center and Patsy steps into the lefty batter's box. She watches as Scarlet touches the sweat pooling in Chris's navel, and as she does, a pitch crosses the plate for a strike. On the next two pitches she swings and misses.

Chris walks back up the steps to the sidewalk above where the jogging woman is still stretching. Scarlet watches as he talks to the woman.

Patsy, walking back to the bench, watches Scarlet watch Chris.

INT. STERLING KITCHEN - NIGHT

Franny putting dishes in the dishwasher while Paul leans against the counter eating a slice of cake. Franny's eyes are puffy and red.

PAUL
Maybe he didn't do it. Maybe someone is setting him up.

FRANNY
You're a cop, Paul. You know he did it.

(MORE)

FRANNY (CONT'D)

He isn't saying anyone is setting him up. If he didn't do it, he'd be saying someone was setting him up.

He isn't saying that. He knows you know he did it and he doesn't care. He knows he's got you beat.

PAUL

That's what I thought 'til yesterday. You didn't see him. He was annoyed with us. Like we were stupid.

FRANNY

Of course he was annoyed. He thinks he's smarter than everyone.

PAUL

It was as if he wanted to tell us how to solve this. But he couldn't.

FRANNY

Or he'd get the needle.

PAUL

That's not it. There's something more here.

FRANNY

You're psychic? You got a vibe?

Paul shakes his head and tightens his jaw.

FRANNY (CONT'D)

Maybe it's cop intuition!

PAUL

So what's his motive?

FRANNY

(revved up and building)

He's a psycho. He doesn't need a motive. He kills women because he knows he can get away with it. It's a game.

He wines and dines 'em and then beds 'em and then he sticks 'em in the back of the neck with a pair of freshly sharpened Japanese shears...

...rips up their girl parts, tints their hair and then hacks it off and

(MORE)

FRANNY (CONT'D)
 dumps 'em in the water. He's a
 psycho, God damn it!

PAUL
 The uh, genital surgery was pretty
 clean on both women. If he did it,
 and I'm not sure he did, he cut their
 hair real slow and perfect, too.

EXT. INTERSTATE HIGHWAY - MORNING

Franny's Jeep, top down, rolls through the rich green Georgia hills.

INT. FRANNY'S JEEP - MORNING

The cell phone RINGS. She answers.

FRANNY
 Yo, talk loud.

INT. BUCKHEAD POLICE STATION - MORNING

Paul at his desk.

PAUL
 Why aren't you at work?

INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION BETWEEN FRANNY AND PAUL

FRANNY
 Well, *Dad*, I'm doing your job.

PAUL
 Where are you?

FRANNY
 About half way to Savannah.

PAUL
 What the hell are you doing, Franny?

FRANNY
 I'm gonna nail this bastard, Paul.

PAUL
 (taking a slow breath)
 I've been doing some digging on him.
 Some background. He's an interesting
 guy.

FRANNY
 But he's no killer, right?

PAUL

We've got to look at other possibilities. Who's got motive?

FRANNY

Catch you later, Paul.

PAUL

Franny, what about work?

FRANNY

My sister's missing, you asshole!
Do you get that? She's the only family I have!

PAUL

Franny, don't explode 'til I finish, but I'm beginning to think you're wrong about her being missing.

I talked to Nathan again this morning about what she said to him while she was getting her hair done. She may just be testing Mark.

I called him in Seattle and he doesn't seem too worried. He thinks she might be trying to give him a push.

Franny, if something had happened... there'd be a body...

Fran?...

I wanted to be your family.

FRANNY

I can't rely on you, Paul.

She hangs up and SCREAMS in frustration.

EXT. CHASTAIN PARK CREEK - MORNING

Several uniformed cops and detectives in their shirt sleeves watch as a nude woman is pulled from the water under the walkway they're standing on.

It is the same location the jogging woman, with Chris following, passed the previous evening.

Paul and Ngoyen approach down the winding walkway. They see the body.

PAUL

It's not Peggy.

INT. CHATHAM COUNTY MORGUE - DAY

Franny and a young male ASSISTANT enter talking...

FRANNY

They told me out front you could
give permission.

ASSISTANT

Sure, why not? Who're you bothering?

He grins.

ASSISTANT (CONT'D)

You a relative? They said they
couldn't find anyone. She's been
here since Thursday.

They walk toward a wall of large stainless steel cabinet doors. The assistant opens one and slides out a corpse draped with a white sheet. He lifts the covering...

Franny shudders then steadies herself and reaches into her purse and pulls out a hair cutting comb. She reaches toward the corpse's hair.

ASSISTANT (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

Franny combs a section of hair carefully a couple of times and then holds it out from the head as if she is about to cut it. She looks at the ends. They are perfectly aligned at an angle.

She makes another lift. Again, perfect. She combs down the bangs and examines them. Perfect.

ASSISTANT (CONT'D)

What the hell are you doing?

There is a look of satisfaction on Franny's face.

EXT. INTERSTATE HIGHWAY - DAY

Franny's Jeep passes a sign that reads: "ATLANTA 52"

She is on the phone...

FRANNY

It was perfect. Nobody's setting
him up.

INT. BUCKHEAD POLICE STATION - DAY

Paul at his desk on the phone.

PAUL

We had a team on him. He didn't do this Chastain Park one.

The guys watching him saw the woman and him talking and saw them leave and go over to the Horseradish for a drink.

A while later, she followed him to his house. She stayed 'til a little after eleven. They should've followed her.

He's some kind of sex freak but he didn't kill her.

INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION BETWEEN FRANNY AND PAUL

FRANNY

The cut was perfect, Paul.

PAUL

He's not the guy.

FRANNY

So who is?

PAUL

The guys tailing him saw him talking to a girl at a softball game. We're gonna question her as soon as we get a name.

INT. ROBERT JAMISON SALON - DAY

Franny enters through the front door. She sees Robert's station is clean and deserted and she walks to the break area and takes her phone from her purse and dials. She waits a moment.

FRANNY

Hey. I guess you're busy. I'm at work; I just got in. Nothing's happening here. I'll be home in a couple of hours. Bye.

She walks out into the cutting area, looks around and then looks up toward the office.

Behind the tinted glass she sees Chris and Kati. She takes a step forward to see more clearly: neither is smiling. Every time Chris tries to talk, Kati starts talking.

He tries repeatedly, then grits his teeth and walks toward the door.

Kati steps in front of the door, cuts him off and he says something, and she looks down and sees Franny and then steps aside.

Chris leaves going down the back stairs and out the back door.

Kati walks out of the office and descends the back stairs. As she approaches her station she smiles. There is no sign of the confrontation that just took place.

Franny approaches her.

FRANNY (CONT'D)

Nice guy, your ex-hubby.

KATI

He has his charms.

FRANNY

You know what's going on?

KATI

He just told me the cops think he murdered some women.

She smiles and shakes her head.

FRANNY

(emotionally)

One of 'em was my sister.

KATI

Your sister?

FRANNY

She's been missing since Friday night.

KATI

How do you know...she was murdered?

FRANNY

He was with her. He was with two other girls last week in the Savannah area and they're both dead.

Kati picks up her scissor case from her station, opens a cabinet, retrieves her purse, and puts the case in it.

FRANNY (CONT'D)

Can I...I need to ask you some questions...about...

KATI
I'm leaving. I'm starving.

FRANNY
Can I buy you dinner?

KATI
I've got to get home.

FRANNY
Do you have...a date?

KATI
Do I have a date?

She smiles.

KATI (CONT'D)
No, I don't have a date.

FRANNY
How about if we just go next door.
I'll buy.

INT. MICK'S RESTAURANT - DAY

Franny and Kati are seated at a booth by the bar. Both are eating salads.

KATI
He's the most anal person I've ever met. And the most compulsive. You can set your clock by him.

FRANNY
Was he a good hairstylist?

KATI
He was great...but he's much better suited for sharpening: Metal doesn't talk back.

Franny pokes at her salad, hesitates.

FRANNY
He killed those girls in Savannah.
(trembling)
And my sister.

Kati looks up from her plate.

KATI
The guy I married couldn't have done that.

FRANNY

What about the guy you divorced?

Kati smiles.

FRANNY (CONT'D)

Why did you divorce him?

Kati smiles again.

KATI

Because I couldn't apologize.

Franny is perplexed.

KATI (CONT'D)

He was the fixer. You know what a fixer is?

Franny is silent, blank.

KATI (CONT'D)

It's the person who fixes all the problems, says he's sorry when he's not or when he has no reason to be sorry. The person who takes the hit.

Healthy relationships have two fixers. Sick relationships have one.

He stood his ground and refused to fix the mess I created. He'd never done that before.

I waited five months for him to come out to the lake house and ask me to come home with him. He didn't even call. Not once.

Finally, I told him I didn't love him anymore and I filed for divorce. He didn't contest it. Not a peep.

Franny has been looking at Kati, her expression somewhere between baffled and horrified.

FRANNY

How much therapy did it take to get you to realize how stupid you'd been?

KATI

I don't do therapy.

FRANNY

Really? But you talk like you've
come to an understanding, like you've
got a handle on it now.

Kati narrows her eyes, a slight smile still lingering at the
corners of her mouth.

KATI

I had a *handle on it* then.

FRANNY

So, why didn't you apologize?

KATI

I don't do apologies.

FRANNY

But you still loved him?

KATI

What's not to love?

She smiles.

Franny blinks and looks down at her food, then picks up her
tea and takes a drink.

Kati LAUGHS.

KATI (CONT'D)

You think he killed your sister...
and you wanna fuck him...and you
think I'm sick.

INT. STERLING HOUSE - EVENING

Franny and Paul are on the couch. The cat is in Franny's
lap.

FRANNY

Her egg's a bit cracked. I'd never
talked to her before--she pretty
much keeps to herself at work--but
let me tell you...

Franny nods and opens her eyes wide.

PAUL

So now you think...

FRANNY

No, Paul. But she's really weird.
(MORE)

FRANNY (CONT'D)

I always wondered why she didn't have a boyfriend, but it's suddenly crystal clear.

PAUL

A guy wouldn't care if she was a little loony. Not with the way she looks. Their breakup must have been really bad.

And I've been checking around. He didn't start going out 'til about a month ago. They've been divorced for over a year.

FRANNY

And now he picks up girls...almost nightly...drugs 'em, screws 'em, kills 'em, does their hair like Kati's, and then dumps 'em in shallow water.

Franny begins to shake, trying not to cry.

PAUL

Franny, he didn't do this last one. He couldn't have. And if he didn't do this one, he probably didn't do the others.

Somebody's setting him up.

FRANNY

He could have snuck out of his house, climbed the back fence and run over to that woman's house.

PAUL

And dyed and cut her hair and taken her to the park, all without a vehicle?

FRANNY

What if he has Peggy's car stashed somewhere? He could have used it.

PAUL

That's nuts, Franny. Every cop in the state has Peggy's vehicle description and plate number.

And he would have to have something bigger than Peggy's Prius.

(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

That woman wasn't murdered in her house and there was no sign of any hair...stuff.

FRANNY

What if he took her to a motel? He could have killed her and done her hair there.

Paul juts his jaw, then speaks calmly.

PAUL

Somebody else did it.

Paul's phone RINGS and he lifts it from his pocket.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Furio.
 (listening)
 Yeah, okay.
 (listening)
 Yeah, later.

He puts the phone back into his pocket.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Do you know a girl named Scarlet Wood who works for him?

FRANNY

I know who she is.

PAUL

She's the girl he was talking to at the softball field. She saw him pick up this last one. We're gonna question her.

FRANNY

I'm going too.

PAUL

She's not home. We've got a guy sitting on her place. They'll call me.

EXT. CHASTAIN PARK - EVENING

Chris runs down the walkway that borders the golf course. There are very few people exercising this time of the evening.

On the street that parallels the walkway, an old Buick sedan slowly approaches from the opposite direction Chris is moving.

As the Buick passes Chris, it stops and the passenger door opens. Patsy Dunn, Scarlet's softball teammate, jumps out and runs up behind Chris. She pokes him in the back. He turns and stops.

PATSY
We need to talk.

CHRIS
Yeah? What's up?

PATSY
You need to stop teasing Scarlet.

CHRIS
Saw you strike out last night, Patsy.

PATSY
I know you don't get this but Scarlet and I are a couple. We live together just like any married couple.

You wouldn't have wanted somebody hitting on your wife when you were married.

CHRIS
First of all, Scarlet hit on my wife when we were married. A couple of times when she was really drunk.

Second, you aren't married. Let's see, third, Scarlet doesn't see your relationship as a marriage.

And fourth?--oh, yeah: Scarlet isn't a lesbian. She's just a mixed up kid you took advantage of one night when she was plastered.

PATSY
You prick.

She takes a swing at him but he catches her arm and pushes her away. She makes a GUTTURAL SOUND and reaches under her flannel shirt and pulls out a gun. She takes a step back and holds it with two hands.

PATSY (CONT'D)
See that car over there?

She motions with the gun quickly then returns her aim to him.

PATSY (CONT'D)
We're gonna go sit and talk.

She motions with the gun for him to walk. He hesitates, looks at the gun and then her eyes.

PATSY (CONT'D)
(angrily)
If you don't start walking, I'm gonna turn you into a woman.

She lowers the gun's angle.

CHRIS
You'd like that, wouldn't you?

She looks quickly in both directions down the sidewalk.

PATSY
I'm gonna do it right here.

She takes a step closer, the gun still pointed at his crotch.

CHRIS
Okay, I'm walking.

He moves toward the car.

From a distance a jogger approaches.

PATSY
Move it!

Chris reaches the old Buick

PATSY (CONT'D)
Get in the back.

He opens the back door and gets in while she opens the passenger door. KATHLEEN TUCKER, 25, plain, also in jeans and flannel, is in the driver's seat.

INT. OLD BUICK - EVENING

KATHLEEN
(excited, to Patsy)
What are you doing?

Patsy climbs in.

PATSY
Just drive.

KATHLEEN
Are you crazy?

PATSY

Drive!

Kathleen slams the car in drive and they lurch forward. Chris lunges over the seat and grabs the gun, and he and Patsy struggle for possession.

PATSY (CONT'D)

Kathleen!

Kathleen turns and with one hand tries to help Patsy.

The car weaves from lane to lane. It crosses the center line narrowly missing an oncoming car and climbs the curb on the opposite side of the street from the golf course and crashes into the bushes in front of a house.

Chris grabs the gun away from Patsy and points it at her face. He grits his teeth.

CHRIS

I'll say it went off while we were struggling.

KATHLEEN

(in a panic)

I didn't know anything about this.

Patsy looks at her and shakes her head and then stares back calmly into the barrel of the gun.

CHRIS

Sorry, Kathleen. Wrong place, wrong time.

He pushes the gun barrel against Patsy's jaw and Patsy smiles. As he pulls the trigger, Kathleen SCREAMS. The gun CLICKS. He shows his teeth again and pulls the trigger repeatedly, the gun CLICKING each time.

EXT. STREET BORDERING CHASTAIN PARK - EVENING

A car SCREECHES to a stop in the street near the Buick. Detective Burlington jumps out of the car and rushes to the old Buick on the lawn. He sees Chris holding the gun and he draws his.

He grabs the passenger door and opens it keeping the gun on Chris.

DET. BURLINGTON

Out of the car!

Chris looks at him and shakes his head, exasperated.

INT. BUCKHEAD POLICE STATION INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

Kathleen is seated. Detectives Williams and Burlington are at the table with her.

KATHLEEN

She told me she was going to talk to him. She never said anything about a gun.

DET. WILLIAMS

We believe you, Kathleen. But by being there and driving the vehicle you're just as implicated as her. Do you understand this?

She looks at him, her jaw set.

KATHLEEN

The gun was empty, but he didn't know that. He tried to kill us in cold blood.

INT. BUCKHEAD STATION, ANOTHER INTER. ROOM - NIGHT

Patsy is seated, Paul and Ngoyen stand over her.

NGOYEN

This guy is screwing your girlfriend?

PATSY

No...I don't know. I don't think so.

NGOYEN

When you call her your girlfriend, do you mean...

PATSY

My lover.

PAUL

You see him as a threat? To your relationship?

PATSY

I see him as a prick.

PAUL

You'd like to get him out of the way, wouldn't you?

PATSY

I'd like to cut his nuts off...but I was just trying to scare him.

NGOYEN

You went to beauty school didn't you, Patsy? That's where you met your girlfriend Kathleen and your special girlfriend Scarlet.

PATSY

Yeah, what of it?

NGOYEN

Well, how come none of you are hairdressers?

PATSY

Kathleen worked for a year at The Red Hair Ring but she hated it.

PAUL

What about you and Scarlet?

PATSY

(smiling)

God's gift came into our class one day to give a talk on shears and Scarlet decided she wanted to work for him so she quit school.

NGOYEN

And you quit because school wasn't the same without her.

PATSY

Ooh, you're an excellent detective.

INT. BUCKHEAD STATION, A THIRD INTER. ROOM - NIGHT

Chris, seated alone, stares at the mirrored wall in front of him.

INT. BUCKHEAD STATION OBSERVATION ROOM - NIGHT

Franny stares at Chris. His eyes, although he can't possibly see her, are locked on hers.

Paul, Ngoyen, Burlington, Williams, and Captain Phillips, enter the central room that looks out into all three interrogation rooms. Phillips sees Franny and then looks at Paul.

CAPTAIN PHILLIPS

Furio.

PAUL

It's her sister, Captain.

CAPTAIN PHILLIPS

(to Burlington)

And what the hell were you doing watching him? You didn't hear me call that off?

DET. BURLINGTON

I was doing it for Paul...and Franny.

CAPTAIN PHILLIPS

So, has anybody located this Scarlet Wood?

PAUL

Not yet. Her girlfriend says she doesn't know where she is.

CAPTAIN PHILLIPS

So why is this guy still here?

He motions toward Chris in one of the interrogation rooms.

DET. BURLINGTON

The girls said after he grabbed the gun away, he tried to execute 'em.

CAPTAIN PHILLIPS

Maybe he knew it wasn't loaded. Drive him home. And after you do that, Burlington, leave.

FRANNY

No! Make him tell what he did with my sister!

CAPTAIN PHILLIPS

He couldn't have done this last one-- and the details were identical with the other two.

PAUL

We have to keep a tail on him. If he isn't the guy, then that means the perp's following him.

CAPTAIN PHILLIPS

This is really pretty simple, Furio: Either somebody's trying to implicate him or somebody's insanely jealous.

So who are the obvious suspects? Well we got this girl right here...

He points to Patsy in her room...

CAPTAIN PHILLIPS (CONT'D)
...but she had an unloaded weapon.
A cold blooded Tony wouldn't use an
unloaded weapon even if it was just
to scare somebody.

We've got this Scarlet Wood, who we
can't seem to locate.

PAUL
And of course, the ex-wife, except,
she divorced him. But Franny says
she's a little crazy.

His teeth clinched, Captain Phillips looks at Paul and then
Franny.

CAPTAIN PHILLIPS
Is that what Detective Franny says?

He takes a breath and gathers himself.

CAPTAIN PHILLIPS (CONT'D)
We don't have the resources to put a
tail on everybody we think might
have a motive or might be a *little*
crazy. We're already doing doubles.

FRANNY
(forcefully)
The killer is a hairstylist. Tell
him, Paul.

Paul stands there silently. Franny frowns at him and then
her face hardens.

CAPTAIN PHILLIPS
(to Franny)
I heard about your trip to the Chatham
morgue. I agree with Paul: That
doesn't eliminate anybody.

FRANNY
The killer is a really good
hairstylist.

She locks her jaw and stares at Chris who is staring back at
her.

EXT. BUCKHEAD POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Burlington and Chris walk toward Burlington's car in the
parking lot. Franny catches up with them.

FRANNY
I'll drive him home.

Burlington and Chris both stare.

FRANNY (CONT'D)
(to Chris)
I'll drive you home.

Chris smiles.

DET. BURLINGTON
Cap'n wants me to do it, Franny.

CHRIS
(to Burlington)
Since I'm not in custody, Detective...

He turns to Franny.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
I accept the pretty lady's offer.

INT. FRANNY'S JEEP - NIGHT

Franny, with Chris in the passenger seat, backs out of a parking space. Paul rushes to the Jeep and BANGS on the hood.

PAUL
What are you doing!?

He puts both hands on the door, holding it where the window is rolled down.

FRANNY
Get out of my way, Paul.

The Jeep lurches forward and speeds out of the lot leaving Paul standing there watching as it turns onto the street and races away.

Franny and Chris sit silently while the Jeep moves up Peachtree Street. Chris looks at Franny and smiles. The Jeep stops at a light. Franny knows he's looking and she turns and catches him.

FRANNY (CONT'D)
What?

CHRIS
(smugly)
Why?

FRANNY

I want to know how you got past your baby-sitters last night.

CHRIS

You don't believe I killed anybody. You wouldn't be alone with me if you did.

FRANNY

I'm not scared of you.

He grins.

CHRIS

Good. I'm not scared of you, either.

FRANNY

Let's say you didn't kill anybody...

CHRIS

Okay...You didn't kill anybody.

A HORN sounds. Franny looks up at the green light and the Jeep lurches forward.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

You were supposed to say it with me.

FRANNY

You're an asshole.

CHRIS

Yeah, I can be. Turn here.

FRANNY

I'll turn at Pharr.

CHRIS

It's faster if you turn here.

He watches the street go by and chuckles to himself. The Jeep turns onto Pharr Road and disappears into the distance.

EXT. CHRIS'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Franny's Jeep pulls into the driveway.

INT. FRANNY'S JEEP - NIGHT

CHRIS

Why don't you come in for a while. I promise I won't kill you.

He smiles.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

We'll talk.

Franny looks at him. She shuts off the engine.

FRANNY

We can talk here.

CHRIS

I've got to get out of these clothes.

He opens the Jeep's door, hops out, and walks to the front door. He pauses, looks back at her seated in the Jeep, then puts his key in the door and opens it.

He looks back again, then steps across the threshold and shuts the door.

INT. CHRIS'S FOYER - NIGHT

Chris pulls off his shirt. He kicks off each running shoe, then pulls off his socks.

The doorbell RINGS, he smiles. He opens the front door. Franny is there.

With a sweep of his arm he gestures for her to come in. She steps through the doorway and he bends and picks up his shoes, socks, and shirt.

Franny takes in the room.

FRANNY

Nice place.

CHRIS

Yeah, it is.

FRANNY

Was this your parents' home?

CHRIS

Yep.

FRANNY

I lost both my parents, too.

CHRIS

My dad's in a nursing home.

FRANNY

Oh.

CHRIS

I gotta take a shower.

FRANNY
I'll wait here.

CHRIS
Come upstairs with me.

FRANNY
That's okay, I'll be fine down here.

CHRIS
Come upstairs or leave.

She studies him. He motions with his arm, then waits for her to start walking toward the staircase. She stands there a moment, a slight frown on her face, then starts up the stairs.

At the landing at the top of the staircase he pauses, waits for her to catch up, and then he takes her hand...

FRANNY
What are you doing?

CHRIS
There's no reason to be afraid.

...and he leads her down the hall.

INT. CHRIS'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The bed is a mess of covers and pillows. He guides her to it and she sits. He walks into the bathroom and with the door open he starts the SHOWER.

FRANNY
(loudly)
Your bedroom's a wreck.

CHRIS (O.S.)
I wasn't expecting company.

FRANNY
(loudly)
I'm going to make the bed.

CHRIS (O.S.)
Don't bother.

FRANNY
(loudly)
It's no trouble.

She gets up and starts straightening the sheets. The SHOWER turns off. She puts the pillows back into place.

She sees the MICRO-RECORDER on the bedside table and picks it up and pushes play.

MICRO-RECORDER

(Chris's voice)

He knows he's an animal. A smart animal. An upright, forward-focusing, binocular biped. A predator.

Chris enters wearing a towel and rubbing his hair with another towel. She switches off the recorder. Chris looks at the half made bed.

CHRIS

Nervous? Or compulsive?

He notices the recorder in her hand.

She puts it back on the table and takes a half step back away from him.

FRANNY

What the hell is that?

He smiles.

CHRIS

I'm writing a series of articles for "Bacchus" magazine.

FRANNY

Right.

He takes a step toward her and she flinches, and then he reaches past her for a magazine under the recorder. He flips through it and hands it open to her.

She looks at it: "PREY TELL", BY CHRISTOPHER NETAN. She relaxes a bit, puts the magazine down. An awkward pause...

She reaches for the comforter and starts to pull it into place. Chris grabs her arm.

CHRIS

Don't.

She sits.

FRANNY

I'd be more comfortable.

Chris sneers and shakes his head, then walks to the dresser, opens a drawer and takes out a pair of silk boxers.

CHRIS

You might want to turn around.

As she adjusts her position on the bed so she is facing the opposite direction, he drops the towel and steps into the shorts. He approaches her.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

So?

She turns and faces him.

FRANNY

I...I thought you were going to put some pants on.

CHRIS

What did you want to talk about?

FRANNY

My sister. I need to find out what happened.

CHRIS

I spent Friday night with her. She left here about two.

Franny stares at him. She catches herself, gets up and starts to pull the comforter up. From behind, he grabs both her arms. His mouth is behind her ear.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

(whispering hoarsely)

I said "don't".

FRANNY

You're making me uncomfortable.
I...I'd better go.

CHRIS

It was your idea to come here.

She pulls free, turns, and faces him. A tear runs down one cheek.

FRANNY

I just want to know what happened to my sister.

Chris stares at her a moment then puts his arms around her. With her palms against his chest, she looks up at him and for a second it appears as if their chemistry might ignite but then he speaks...

CHRIS

I'm going out. You wanna catch your killer?...come with me.

FRANNY

I'm not dressed to go anywhere.

CHRIS

There's a whole closet full of clothes down in the dungeon. I think they'll fit.

FRANNY

The dungeon?

CHRIS

The fallout shelter.

INT. FALLOUT SHELTER - NIGHT

A 20' X 20' pecky cypress room with one long couch against a mirrored wall. A baby grand piano sits in the middle of the room. Chris and Franny enter and Chris goes to a door and opens it. It's a walk-in closet filled with women's clothes.

CHRIS

Have at it. I'll be upstairs.

He exits quickly ascending the stairs as she watches from the closet.

Panic grips her and she rushes to the foot of the stairs and looks up as he reaches the basement above. She watches as he turns and looks down the stairs at her and he smiles and exits leaving the hatch open.

She lets out her breath.

EXT. TRUMPETS - NIGHT

DANCE MUSIC blasts the large nightclub. Chris and Franny come through the doorway. Franny wears a black strapless dress. Her eyes are wide: this is new for her.

Nude dancers work on two stages: one stage for female dancers, one for male dancers.

Chris leads Franny to a table between the two stages and they sit.

From his jacket, he pulls out a bottle of bourbon and takes a sip. He offers it to Franny. She looks at a male dancer grinding his hips not fifteen feet from her and she takes the bottle and gulps down a couple of ounces.

FRANNY

You come here often?

Chris smiles and takes another sip, again offers it to Franny and again she takes a couple of swigs.

CHRIS

You've never been here. How sweet.

A waitress dressed in lingerie brings them glasses with ice and Chris pours some bourbon into Franny's glass.

EXT. TRUMPETS - NIGHT

Chris's SUV is parked in the lot. Another identical silver SUV is parked several yards away. Someone is in the driver's seat. The driver's face can't be seen.

The door opens...

INT. TRUMPETS - NIGHT

The dancers grind as the crowd stares. Chris rises from his seat and walks toward the setups bar. Scarlet is sitting there.

SCARLET

She's not scared of you?

Chris's mouth smiles but his eyes don't.

CHRIS

Why are you following me?

SCARLET

I'm not following you.

CHRIS

You've come here to figure out your sexual identity?

She sneers at him.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

You know your idiot girlfriend pulled a gun on me?

SCARLET

(laughing)

Yeah? When?

CHRIS

While I was running...after work. She forced me into a car.

SCARLET

She thinks I've got the hots for you.

She takes a drink.

CHRIS

But you just wanna steal my clients.

Scarlet stares, her bottom lip pouts.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Scarlet, I know you're planning on opening your own business. A couple of shear companies have told me you called 'em.

There isn't room in Atlanta for another scissor person.

SCARLET

I'm not planning on sharpening: There's more money in sales. Am I fired?

Chris smiles.

CHRIS

Why are you following me?

She takes another drink and then speaks slowly, slurring a bit...

SCARLET

Why don't you get rid of Miss Junior Hairstylist? Or should I do it?

He shakes his head.

CHRIS

Later.

He turns and goes back to his table. Scarlet turns toward the bar.

SCARLET

(to nobody)
You bastard.

A woman with thick, cropped, platinum hair, and arms decorated with tattoos and glitter, sits down next to Scarlet. She is painted with thick make-up and has a nose ring. She speaks in a low, eastern European voice...

TATTOOED WOMAN

They're all bastards.

She puts an e-cigarette in her mouth.

Chris is back seated at the table with Franny. They're in the middle of a conversation...

FRANNY

So you decided to use your education?

CHRIS

I've always wanted to write. It's just too hard to make any money at it. My Dad expected me to make money.

FRANNY

Isn't your house paid for?

CHRIS

I like doing the scissor thing. I like driving.

FRANNY

Yeah: Savannah twice in one week.

He smiles.

FRANNY (CONT'D)

It just seems that since you have enough to live on, and your Dad isn't really part of the picture anymore...

CHRIS

You sound like a wife...My Dad has Alzheimers--he's not dead. He wanted me to be successful, I'm successful. Just not at what he wanted.

FRANNY

What did he want you to be?

CHRIS

A surgeon. When I was a kid, he and I would dissect field rats and frogs down in the dungeon.

I turned it into a music room when he went into the home.

FRANNY

Is that when you dropped out of med school?

CHRIS

No, I dropped out of med school when he could still be disappointed.

I didn't like the hours. I'm a night person.

FRANNY

Me too. Once I'm done assisting, I can start going in later.

CHRIS

And since you're still assisting, why don't we leave?

FRANNY

What about "catching the killer"?

CHRIS

That happens later.

EXT. CHRIS'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Chris's SUV pulls into the driveway next to Franny's Jeep. Chris and Franny get out. Chris takes Franny's hand and starts to walk toward the house. Franny pauses.

FRANNY

I don't think so.

CHRIS

You have to if you wanna catch your killer. Just one drink.

INT. CHRIS'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Franny and Chris sit by the Jacuzzi. They each hold a drink.

FRANNY

You have to wake up really early to be an anthropologist. By the time that sank in, I'd graduated.

Chris puts his hand on Franny's and then runs his fingers up her arm.

FRANNY (CONT'D)

(tentatively)

No.

He stops.

CHRIS

I thought anthropologists understood the big picture.

FRANNY

What, that all that matters is screwing?

He smiles and takes a sip.

CHRIS

Perpetuation of the species.
Survival.

FRANNY

Only until you have two children who reach childbearing age. Then you're expendable.

She puts the drink to her lips but then hesitates, withdraws it, and holds it in her lap.

Chris watches, amused.

FRANNY (CONT'D)

So, Scissorman, how come you and Kati never had any...children?

He narrows his eyes.

CHRIS

Kati's too dysfunctional to bring any kids into the world.

FRANNY

The dysfits always have the most kids.

CHRIS

Kati's smart enough to break that cycle.

FRANNY

She seems a little strange, but I wouldn't call her dysfunctional. She's got a great clientele.

CHRIS

She's perfect in public, but she's personally a mess. She's a rageoholic maniac...and as anal and compulsive as it gets.

FRANNY

Forgive me, but you seem like the anal compulsive.

CHRIS

That's what happens when you live with chaos. She's that way because her family was nuts. I'm that way because she's nuts.

FRANNY

So Kati's the killer? She's been following you and murdering everyone you've been with...including my sister?

He stares into her eyes.

CHRIS

No.

FRANNY

Then who? You know. I know you know!

He puts the back of his hand on her arm and runs it up and down. She shivers.

FRANNY (CONT'D)

Tell me!

He takes her hand and kisses it and stands.

CHRIS

I'll tell you in the morning.

He pulls on her hand to raise her from her seat but she resists.

FRANNY

Are you serious? You screwed my sister Friday night! You screwed those two girls yesterday, and you screwed that woman last night!

You think I'm going upstairs with you?

She stands.

CHRIS

I didn't screw any of 'em.

FRANNY

Paul saw you with those two girls yesterday.

CHRIS

Detective Furio must have been fooled
by what he saw...

I just watched.

FRANNY

You're sick.

CHRIS

Like you watched, tonight.

FRANNY

That was dancing.

CHRIS

It's all dancing.

EXT. CHRIS'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Franny leaves through the front door. Chris follows her out
but stops on the porch.

CHRIS

(for his ears only)
Go find your killer.

EXT. BUCKHEAD AND BROOKHAVEN STREETS - NIGHT

Franny's Jeep moves up Peachtree Street in a light drizzle
and then through residential Brookhaven as it rains a little
harder.

EXT. STERLING HOUSE - NIGHT

Franny's Jeep pulls into her driveway. She gets out in the
light rain and takes a step toward the front door.

A black-clad figure with a cap pulled down low grabs her
from behind and puts a cloth over her nose. Franny struggles
trying to free herself.

Paul's car, police light flashing, races up into Franny's
driveway. The door opens.

The black-clad figure draws a gun and FIRES as Paul emerges
from the driver's seat. Paul takes a step forward and falls.

The black-clad figure runs across the lawn and gets into a
silver SUV parked one house past Franny's house.

With lights off the SUV splashes through the street's gutter
and digs through a stretch of lawn before it finds traction
on the street.

At the streetlight illuminated corner, the SUV's lights go on. The license plate is visible: 880 MBE.

Franny sits on her walkway holding her head. She looks around groggily then focuses on Paul lying on the ground. She lumbers toward him.

EXT. NORTHSIDE HOSPITAL - NIGHT

An ambulance, lights flashing, pulls up to the emergency entrance. The doors open.

Franny's Jeep pulls up behind the ambulance.

Franny, still wearing the black dress, her arms and legs smeared with blood, rushes toward the hospital doors as Paul, on a gurney, is about to be wheeled through.

She takes his hand and he looks at her. One of the paramedics holds a compress high on the right side of Paul's chest.

INT. HOSPITAL E.R. - NIGHT

Doctors and nurses rush down the corridor toward Paul, Franny, and the paramedics. With his free hand Paul pulls the oxygen mask from his face.

PAUL

It was him. I followed you from his house. I was...about a block back. At Paces Ferry...he turned onto Peachtree in front of me.

It was him. I got the plate: 880 MBE.

FRANNY

You knew he was coming after me and you didn't try to stop him?

PAUL

We have to catch him in the act.

Franny don't do anything stupid:
Your head not your gut.

As the emergency staff reach the gurney, Franny releases Paul's hand and a nurse replaces Paul's oxygen mask.

The PARAMEDIC compressing the wound lets a nurse takeover.

PARAMEDIC
 (to the doctor in
 charge)
 He's stable. One ten over sixty.
 He was out when we arrived.

DOCTOR
 Let's get him to O.R.
 (to Paul)
 You were lucky, Detective.

Franny watches as Paul is wheeled away. She turns and rushes out of the hospital.

EXT. HOSPITAL E.R. - NIGHT

Franny hurries to her Jeep and starts it as Detective Ngoyen runs up.

NGOYEN
 How is he?

FRANNY
 He's okay. He's in surgery. Let me
 know when he's out.

Franny gets into her Jeep and SQUEALS out of the entrance as Ngoyen stands there with her mouth open.

NGOYEN
 Franny!

INT. FRANNY'S JEEP - NIGHT

Franny glances past her bloodstained arm and leg to the passenger seat where a bloodstained small notebook and a detective's bloody holster containing a 38mm S&W lie.

FRANNY
 (sarcastically)
 Your head not your gut.

EXT. BUCKHEAD STREETS - NIGHT

Franny's Jeep hurries through town.

EXT. CHRIS'S HOUSE - NIGHT

There is only a slight drizzle, now. Franny, gun in hand, exits her Jeep and walks to Chris's SUV parked exactly where it was when she left earlier. She looks at the plate: 880 MBE and she frowns.

She moves closer and looks at the tires on the car's right side: They're clean.

She walks to the front of the vehicle feeling the lower part of the side panel. She looks at her hand and continues to the hood.

She puts her palm on it and holds it there.

Chris's front door opens. Franny puts her gun hand behind her back.

Chris, in silk boxers, stands in the doorway looking out toward Franny's Jeep. He sees Franny standing at the front of his SUV.

CHRIS

Don't tell me: You felt guilty about stealing the clothes.

Franny looks down at the dress.

FRANNY

It's ruined.

Chris shrugs.

CHRIS

There're thirty more in that closet.

FRANNY

You've been here for the last hour?

Chris studies her, steps out of the doorway, and walks toward her. He sees her wet hair, her bloodstained skin and dress.

CHRIS

Are you all right?

He reaches for her. She backs away.

FRANNY

Somebody tried to kill me. You know who it was.

CHRIS

Your detective friend didn't get 'em?

FRANNY

Paul's got a bullet in his chest.

You knew I was a target.

CHRIS

I knew Detective Furio was watching you. I didn't think he would let anybody hurt you.

FRANNY

You thought wrong.

He reaches for her again and this time she doesn't pull away. He brushes her wet hair from her face and inches forward and lightly kisses her forehead.

She closes her eyes and sobs. He kisses her brow and then her eyes and then he kisses her tear-streaked cheek.

She pushes him back with her free hand and holds him at arm's length.

FRANNY (CONT'D)

Tell me who it is!

CHRIS

I don't know who it is. I seem to be a bit unpopular at the moment.

She studies him, trying to find the truth in his face. She sets her jaw and backs away.

FRANNY

Does Kati have an SUV?

CHRIS

She drives a little red Eclipse.

FRANNY

I know that. Does she have a silver SUV?

CHRIS

She had one, a red one, but she traded it for the Eclipse.

She studies his eyes. He shows nothing.

FRANNY

What about Scarlet? Is her SUV like yours?

CHRIS

She has my old car. It's exactly like the one I have now...couple years older.

Franny thinks a moment.

FRANNY

Did Kati have a key to it?

CHRIS

She did, but she wouldn't have kept it.

(sarcastically)

When she cuts ties, she does it cleanly.

EXT. B.P. GAS STATION - NIGHT

Franny's Jeep pulls up to a pump.

INT. FRANNY'S JEEP - NIGHT

Franny unbuckles her seat belt, picks up the small notebook on the passenger seat and flips through the pages until she finds what she's looking for:

The name, "Scarlet Wood", followed by: 2012 Ford Edge, silver w/gray, GA 607 LLK/ Home, Summit Condos, 5149-5 Roswell Rd., Sandy Springs.

EXT. ROSWELL ROAD - NIGHT

Franny's Jeep travels up the nearly deserted commercial road. It turns at the landscaped entrance to The Summit Condominiums.

EXT. SUMMIT PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The Jeep moves slowly through the lot. At a silver SUV the Jeep stops and Franny hops out. The Georgia plate reads: 607 LLK. She examines the plate up close and looks at the right side lower panel. She feels the hood.

She gets back in her Jeep and turns on the interior light.

INT. FRANNY'S JEEP - NIGHT

Franny flips through the bloody notebook until the name, "Katherine McGovern", appears followed by: 2014 Mitsubishi Eclipse, red w/tan, GA PCH FZZ. Home, 2525 Lake Vista Ln., Cumming, GA.

EXT. GA 400 - NIGHT

Franny's Jeep races away from the city. The surroundings get a little darker as the Jeep continues up the nearly deserted highway.

A road sign reads: CUMMING 4. The Jeep continues.

Franny takes an exit and pulls into the only lighted gas station. She gets out of the Jeep and goes into the foodmart.

She talks to the kid behind the counter. He responds and points.

She gets back into the Jeep and leaves the station, heading down a dark two-lane road.

INT. FRANNY'S JEEP - NIGHT

Franny leans forward in her seat and reads each street sign as she approaches it: "PEAR RD", "DOGWOOD RD", "PEACH RD".

EXT. COUNTRY ROADS - NIGHT

The Jeep turns onto Peach Road, a winding, narrow, two lane ribbon of rough asphalt bordered on both sides by tall trees.

A street sign: "LAKE VISTA LN"

Franny turns onto the dirt and gravel road. The trees are inches from the sides of the lane. There are no lights except the Jeep's headlights.

She drives for several seconds, the road bends and she sees a large lake a short distance to the left side of the Jeep.

The half moon hangs low above the still water. There are scattered pinpoint lights on the opposite shore.

Ahead and to the left are brighter lights and as she approaches them she sees a house sitting on the lake's shore. There is a mailbox: 2323. She continues down the lane. Another set of lights. Another mailbox: 2525.

The Jeep stops. There is an unpaved driveway that stretches for more than two hundred feet that connects the lane to the house. Franny turns off the headlights, pulls into the driveway, and shuts off the engine.

She sits there a moment looking toward the house and the boat house that stands about fifty feet from it.

INT. FRANNY'S JEEP - NIGHT

Franny looks down at the gun on the seat. She reaches for it, picks it up, then frowns. She puts it down and opens the door. As she steps out of the Jeep she turns and reaches for the gun again, and this time, takes it with her.

EXT. KATI'S PROPERTY - NIGHT

As Franny walks toward the house, she looks to her right in the direction of the boat house, then veers off the driveway toward it, but as she nears it, she glances back toward the house.

She sees the brightly lighted glassed back porch that overlooks the lake. On the porch a woman runs on a treadmill.

Franny walks cautiously toward the porch. She sees that the runner is Kati, barefoot and in her bra and panties. Franny, only a few feet away, stands in near darkness, watches.

Kati steps off the treadmill and squats into a yoga position. Franny turns and walks toward the boat house then stumbles on a tree root. She falls. BARKING shakes the night air.

An outside spotlight comes to life and illuminates the grounds and the porch door opens. A golden retriever rushes toward Franny who scrambles to her feet. Kati stands in the doorway. There is a gun in her hand.

She sees the prowler is Franny and relaxes her gun arm.

KATI

Ralph! Come here! Ralph!

The dog stands a few feet in front of Franny BARKING.

FRANNY

Good boy. Nice Ralph.

KATI

Ralph! Come here!

The dog stops barking but doesn't budge.

KATI (CONT'D)

What are you doing here?

FRANNY

Hi, Kati.

KATI

It's two o'clock in the morning.

FRANNY

Sorry.

KATI

What do you want?

FRANNY

I...I'm not sure.

Kati steps out onto the uncut lawn and walks toward Franny. Franny looks down and sees Paul's gun laying in the grass. The dog is still poised. Kati, gun hanging at her side, stops a few feet away and studies Franny.

KATI
You're bleeding.

FRANNY
It's not my blood.

KATI
It's coming out of your knee.

Franny looks down at her knee and sees it is bleeding.

Kati shakes her head and lets out an exasperated SIGH.

KATI (CONT'D)
Come on in, I'll fix you up.

Franny is wide eyed. She looks at the dog then the gun in the grass and then at Kati's gun.

INT. KATI'S BACK PORCH - NIGHT

Ralph, Franny, and Kati come through the doorway onto the large glass porch which is adorned with hanging and potted plants. A treadmill, a weight bench, and an ab machine are set up in the center of the room.

There are two high-backed rattan chairs facing the lake and an entertainment center against the glass that separates the porch from the rest of the house.

Kati flips off the outside spotlight and motions for Franny to sit.

Franny hesitates, takes in the room, then sits.

FRANNY
(nervously)
Nice place.

Kati looks at Franny in the bright light.

KATI
You're a wreck. What happened to you?

Franny studies Kati.

FRANNY
You don't know?

KATI
I'm supposed to know?
You're not drunk are you?

Franny doesn't answer.

KATI (CONT'D)

What is that all over you?

FRANNY

My ex-boyfriend's blood. He got shot saving my life.

Somebody tried to kill me.

Kati's expression is unchanged.

KATI

And you're here because...?

FRANNY

Because I need some answers.

Kati's eyes slowly take Franny in, head to toe.

KATI

Why don't you go clean up while I fix us something to drink.

She puts the gun down on top of the entertainment center.

FRANNY

I'm okay. Really. Maybe if I could just have a Band-Aid?

KATI

Franny, look at yourself. Go take a shower. I'll get you some clothes.

Kati holds out her hand to Franny. Franny, a worried look on her face, takes it and rises from the chair. Kati waits for Franny to step through into the house and then she follows.

INT. KATI'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Kati unfastens the hook at the back of Franny's dress and slowly lowers the zipper. Franny watches in the mirror, a tense look on her face.

KATI

I had a dress just like this.

She smiles, and Franny, seeing the smile in the mirror, turns around holding the dress up.

KATI (CONT'D)

I'll get you some clothes. You seem to be just my size.

She turns and starts to leave and with her back to Franny...

KATI (CONT'D)
Leave the door unlocked. I'll put
'em on top of the throne.

She leaves.

Franny closes the door and immediately opens the medicine cabinet.

In a panic she looks at each shelf then closes the cabinet and opens the top drawer beside the sink. It is perfectly arranged.

She sees makeup brushes with long thin wooden handles and she picks one up and holds it in her fist like a knife and then in frustration puts it back in the drawer.

She opens the next drawer and sees a scissor case. She takes it out and opens it and sees the scissors in it.

She pulls the shower curtain to one side, sets the case on the shower organizer by the shower head, then steps out of the dress.

INT. KATI'S SHOWER - NIGHT

Franny, eyes closed, rinses her hair quickly with one hand. The other hand holds the unsheathed scissors.

KATI
(loudly to be heard
over the SHOWER)
I brought the clothes.

Franny's eyes open. She tenses, her knuckles white gripping the scissors.

KATI (CONT'D)
Everything okay?

FRANNY
Uh...yeah. I'll be out in a minute.

She waits, ready to defend herself.

KATI
I'll be on the porch. There's first
aid stuff in the medicine cabinet.

Franny hears the DOOR CLOSE. She pauses, listens...

She pulls the curtain aside a few inches and carefully peeks out. Kati is gone.

INT. KATI'S BACK PORCH - NIGHT

Kati places two drinks on the small rattan table between the two chairs. She wears an open robe over her underwear. Ralph is curled on the floor.

Franny enters wearing a long, dark, floral print skirt and a long sleeve knit top. Her hair is damp and combed back.

KATI

Much better. Want me to dry your hair?

FRANNY

No, I'm fine.

KATI

I fixed you a drink. You seemed a bit frazzled.

She sits and motions for Franny to do the same and Franny does. Ralph sniffs at Franny's knee. Kati picks up one of the drinks, rises, and stands by the threshold into the rest of the house.

KATI (CONT'D)

Ralph. Come here.

The dog looks at her and, giving her his saddest face, reluctantly walks to the threshold and leaves. Kati closes the glass door. She takes a sip of her drink.

KATI (CONT'D)

You got any pets?

FRANNY

A cat.

KATI

Cats are so independent. I like an animal that'll do what you tell it to do: Ralph, kill the prowler.

She makes a face like a rabid dog.

KATI (CONT'D)

Rrrrrrrr!

She smiles and then sits and takes another sip of her drink.

KATI (CONT'D)

I don't usually drink at night.

(MORE)

KATI (CONT'D)

Alcohol affects me funny: screws
with my sleeping...I'm already kind
of an insomniac.

I tried exercising and yoga tonight
but then you showed up.

She takes another sip. Franny watches, wide eyed.

FRANNY

Maybe you shouldn't. Don't you have
to work tomorrow?

KATI

Not 'til noon. How 'bout you?

FRANNY

Nine-thirty. I might not make it.

So, can I ask you some questions?

KATI

Sure, ask away.

She takes another sip.

Franny looks down at her drink sitting on the table, puts
her hand on it, then leaves the drink where it is.

Kati watches her, a smile lifts the corners of her mouth.

FRANNY

Well...I was wondering where you
were earlier tonight.

Kati, still amused, takes another sip and bottoms her drink.

KATI

You haven't tasted your drink.

FRANNY

I...I'm not really that thirsty.

KATI

Well then...

She picks up Franny's drink and pours half of it into her
glass.

Franny watches her down it in one long gulp. Kati smiles
and sits back in the chair.

FRANNY

So?

KATI
Rrrrrrrrr. Delicious.

FRANNY
Where were you earlier?

KATI
He's got you believing I'm the killer.

She LAUGHS.

KATI (CONT'D)
Have you fucked him, yet?

Franny frowns, then picks up what's left of her drink. She takes a sip.

KATI (CONT'D)
Makes your mouth dry just thinking about it. Huh?

Gorgeous, nice package...
(she winks)
great house, plenty of money...

FRANNY
Where were you tonight?

Kati narrows her eyes and tightens her jaw.

KATI
Minding my business.

She leans back, heavy lidded, now, the alcohol doing its job...

KATI (CONT'D)
He's the only one...who ever made me cum...

No one ever made me cum... 'cept me.

She GIGGLES.

KATI (CONT'D)
They all tried so hard.

She smiles and slides down farther in the chair, her thighs opening a bit.

FRANNY
Kati, you're drunk.

KATI

I'm not drunk; I'm just relaxed...and having a friendly conversation...with a bad listener.

FRANNY

I'm not your therapist.

KATI

I told you...girlfriend...

The corners of her mouth turn up but her eyes aren't smiling...

KATI (CONT'D)

I, don't do, therapy.

FRANNY

You've got demons.

KATI

Demons? My demons live in Chula, Georgia, just off 75...back where the rabbits fuck the chickens.

She GIGGLES, again.

KATI (CONT'D)

My demons got remarried a couple of years ago. Once wasn't enough.

She slides her fingertips just under the waistband of her panties. She raises one eyebrow and squints...

KATI (CONT'D)

When I was fourteen I told the cops what Daddy demon was doing and they came...and they talked to him...and they left.

And then he beat the crap out of me...and then he left...and my mom never forgave...me.

Franny picks up what remains of her drink and holds it

KATI (CONT'D)

Each time, after he'd...do it, after he'd left...that bathroom, I'd lie there in the tub, with my face under the surface of the water...

...furious at myself for not having the courage...to just breathe in.

She closes her eyes and breathes in slowly.

Her eyes remain closed. A moment...and then...she opens them and smiles...

KATI (CONT'D)

Just kidding...I'm from the suburbs.

She laughs to herself, closes her eyes...

Franny grips her glass tightly.

FRANNY

Kati, where's my sister?

Kati opens her eyes half way and looks at Franny.

KATI

I don't know where your sister is.
Ask God's gift, Mr. Netanyahu. You
think I'm the maniac. He's the
maniac.

She leans forward toward Franny and places her hands on Franny's thighs.

KATI (CONT'D)

He still loves me.

A tear rolls down one cheek...

KATI (CONT'D)

He's become so proper...he can't
have Crazy Kati in his life anymore
even though I'm what he wants.

She shakes her head and glares at Franny.

KATI (CONT'D)

Think about that. Who's really the
crazy one?

She rises and walks to the entertainment center.

Franny watches, wide eyed, her stare focused on the gun lying on top of it.

Kati fumbles for a CD. She slides it into place and David Wilcox's EYE OF THE HURRICANE fills the room. Eyes closed, she dances...

Franny puts her glass down and stands.

FRANNY

I'm going to the bathroom.

Kati, her eyes still closed, waves a hand, dismisses her.

Franny opens the sliding glass door and closes it behind her.

INT. KATI'S FOYER - NIGHT

Franny looks at the top of the table by the door while Ralph watches. She hurriedly opens a drawer in the table and sees a set of keys. She lifts the keys and fans them out. Beside the Mitsubishi key is a Ford key. She frowns, thinking...

FRANNY
(whispering)
So what's that mean?

The dog looks at her and WHEEZES.

She puts the keys back and hurries toward Kati's bedroom.

INT. KATI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Franny and Ralph are in Kati's closet. At the back of the closet Franny leafs through a dozen coats and jackets and stops when she finds a motorcycle jacket.

FRANNY
(to Ralph)
I know. I have one, too.

As she's about to exit the closet she sees, on a shelf beside the doorway, a Styrofoam head adorned with a short, spiky, platinum wig. Beside it are a few pieces of gold jewelry and a stack of temporary tattoos.

She stares at the items, puzzled.

She steps out into the bedroom and quickly looks around...

On the wall beside the vanity she sees a framed document: a marriage certificate in the names of Aaron Christopher Netanyahu and Katherine Lynn McGovern.

On the other side of the vanity she sees another framed document: a divorce settlement in the same names.

She reads the list of properties awarded Kati: the house at 2525 Lake Vista Lane, a twenty-two foot Reed power boat, a 2012 Ford Edge...

INT. KATI'S BACK PORCH - NIGHT

Franny enters and closes the glass door in front of a sad Ralph.

The SONG ends.

Franny looks at the top of the entertainment center. The gun is gone.

Kati, her back to Franny and still swaying to the music that has ended, finally stops and turns. The gun is in her hand, her arm dangling by her side.

The next track, LANGUAGE OF THE HEART, begins. She sits and SIGHS.

KATI

Isn't this the best song?

She slides her free hand into her panties and closes her eyes and smiles...and then lifts her lids half way, stares at Franny, and GIGGLES.

She bites her bottom lip, and repeatedly shakes her head from side to side.

Franny, momentarily frozen, watches, then looks toward the outside door, then hesitates.

FRANNY

Put the gun down, Kati, you're drunk.

KATI

I'm loaded...but ol' Rusty isn't.
He's just for show.

She points it toward Franny, hesitates, then smiles.

She pulls the trigger and with a DEAFENING SOUND the gun fires and a panel of glass shatters on the side of the sun porch behind Franny. Ralph, standing at the closed glass door, BARKS ferociously and SCRATCHES at the door.

KATI (CONT'D)

(laughing)

Oh, my God, we're both loaded.

She sniffs at the barrel and closes her eyes again.

Franny rushes to the outside door and runs out.

EXT. KATI'S PROPERTY - NIGHT

Franny runs toward where she left Paul's gun and bends down and retrieves it from the grass and lets out a SIGH of relief.

She turns and looks back at the porch. Kati is still slumped in the chair.

Franny rushes toward the boat house. She pulls at one of the three garage doors on the front side of the structure. It's locked. She tries the other two. No luck.

She rushes around to the lake side. It's completely open: the building only has three sides.

She sees a boat mostly hidden under a plastic tarp and beside it Kati's Eclipse and a second car completely covered by a tarp.

She lifts the car's tarp and sees the back of the vehicle. It's a silver Ford Edge. The plate reads: 330 MLL.

She lifts the tarp on the right side and sees mud splattered on the tires and lower panel. She feels the hood under the tarp.

She returns to the license plate and studies it in the moonlight. She reaches down and touches the surface beside the numbers. Her fingertips stick to the plate.

Using the barrel of the gun she scratches the silver paint beside the license plate: The scratches are red.

Franny's eyes mist and her jaw trembles.

FRANNY
You fucking bitch.

She stands there a moment holding the gun. Tears fill her eyes and roll down her cheeks. Her whole body shakes.

FRANNY (CONT'D)
You...fucking...bitch.

She takes a couple of deep breaths...

FRANNY (CONT'D)
My head, not my gut.

She runs out of the boat house and looks toward the sun porch. Kati is still in the chair.

INT. FRANNY'S JEEP - NIGHT

Franny drives away slowly from Kati's mailbox with her lights off. She picks up her cell phone and punches a number.

She turns on her headlights and drives away quickly.

FRANNY
This is Franny Sterling.
(MORE)

FRANNY (CONT'D)

(listening)

That's great.

(listening)

Yeah, she said she would. Listen,
Barb: It was Kati McGovern, Chris
Netan's ex-wife.

I just left her house up in Cumming.
2525 Lake Vista Lane. The car Paul
followed to my house is in her boat
house.

She put tape on the license plate to
change the numbers and letters to
make it the same as Chris's plate.

She must have gotten a plate that
she could alter to pass for his.

(listening)

Yeah, she's there right now.
Send in the troops and please, hurry,
my sister could still be alive.

She disconnects abruptly then pushes a number, waits,
listens...

VOICEMAIL

You have two new messages. First
new message: Franny, it's Angie.
Paul's okay. The bullet didn't hit
anything major. You can see him
tomorrow. Great, huh? Bye.

Second new message: Fran, it's Peggy.
Sorry about the noise, can you hear
it? I'm calling from a bar. I didn't
bring my charger.

I've decided to stay a few more
days...

The Jeep slams to a stop.

VOICEMAIL (CONT'D)

...I'll call you Thursday. They did
give you my message Saturday? Y'all
sounded busy. I knew you couldn't
pick up your phone.

Anyway, sorry for calling so late--
it's much earlier here. Bye.

Franny simultaneously SOBS and LAUGHS.

EXT. GA 400 - NIGHT

Franny's Jeep moves down the black, nearly deserted highway.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CHRIS'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Franny's Jeep pulls into the driveway.

INT. FRANNY'S JEEP - NIGHT

Using the rear-view mirror, Franny applies lip gloss. She brushes a little color around her eyes. In the mirror she sees something move behind her. She turns quickly and looks. Nothing. She LAUGHS, embarrassed.

She stuffs her make-up into her purse.

EXT. CHRIS'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Franny gets out of the Jeep and takes a couple of steps toward the house. She hears MOVEMENT and whirls around to see a wild hare, frozen in place, looking at her. She LAUGHS with nervous relief.

She walks to the front door and RINGS the bell. She waits, fluffing her hair in the reflection on the glass panel beside the door, and then RINGS again.

A figure dressed in motorcycle jacket, black jeans and boots, and wearing a black cap, rushes toward her with scissors raised but she sees the movement in the reflection and turns and catches the attacker's arm before it comes down on her.

She sees it's Kati.

KATI

I couldn't sleep. You either, huh?

Kati's eyes are wild, intense.

Franny pushes Kati away, then stumbles as she turns to run. Kati comes at her again.

KATI (CONT'D)

Can't believe I got here so quick,
huh?

She raises the scissors.

KATI (CONT'D)

I know all the short cuts.

She smiles sweetly and brings the scissors down.

Franny grabs her arm again and they struggle and Franny knees Kati in the crotch while digging her nails into Kati's wrist. Kati's hand opens and the scissors fall behind her as Franny pushes her backward.

Kati falls off the porch onto her back and her eyes open wider.

She raises her head a couple of inches and then lowers it back to the ground. She lies perfectly still then begins to GIGGLE.

KATI (CONT'D)

Uh, oh. Isn't this ironic.

The front door opens and Chris, in a robe, stands there. He looks at Franny and then sees Kati on the ground.

Kati raises her head again.

KATI (CONT'D)

Hi, hon.

She GIGGLES again.

Chris rushes off the porch to her.

CHRIS

Get up, Kate.

KATI

If only it was that easy.

FRANNY

She fell on her back.

KATI

It's a little more complicated than you think...girlfriend.

She lifts her head again and frowns at Franny.

Chris's eyes open wide. From his side view he can see something under the base of Kati's neck catch the light.

KATI (CONT'D)

(to Chris)

I think I dropped my shears.

CHRIS

I'll call an ambulance.

He rushes into the house.

KATI
He can fix 'em. He can fix anything:
He's Scissorman.

GIGGLING she lays her head back.

Franny steps down to where Kati lies. She kneels down and looks at Kati's lifeless, gloved hand. She frowns. Her bottom lip trembles.

She takes Kati's hand in hers.

Kati's eyes roll up and she purses her lips.

KATI (CONT'D)
So, we're friends now?

Franny brushes Kati's hair off her cheek.

KATI (CONT'D)
I didn't kill your sister.

FRANNY
I know.

KATI
I was in Asheville. It was our anniversary. That's where we honeymooned. We go back every year... He didn't show...Had a date...

She clinches her teeth.

KATI (CONT'D)
...with your sister.

She narrows her eyes and tightens her lips.

KATI (CONT'D)
He still loves me you know. He's been protecting me...wanted the cops to think that little weasel, Scarlet, was doing it.

Pretty smart, huh?

Chris rushes back out and kneels at Kati's side. He takes her other hand.

CHRIS
The ambulance'll be here in a minute.

KATI
(to Chris)
You always were thoughtful. I guess
I didn't tell you that enough,

CHRIS
I don't think you ever told me.

KATI
Not even once?

CHRIS
You don't do anything once, Kate.
You either don't do it, or you do it
all the time.

KATI
You understand me. That's why I
love you. Took you a few years but
you finally figured me out...and
now, we're the same.

She GIGGLES again.

CHRIS
If you love me, why'd you want the
cops to think I was killing people?

An AMBULANCE SIREN is heard in the distance.

KATI
My ride.

She smiles lovingly at Chris.

CHRIS
(firmly)
Kate.

KATI
I couldn't bear the infidelity.
Life sentence or the needle--you
wouldn't be screwing around on me.

The SIREN gets louder as the lights of the ambulance approach.

It pulls into the driveway and two paramedics hop out, slap
the collapsible gurney down, and run to Kati.

Kati is rolled to the ambulance. Franny hangs back while
Chris follows at Kati's side.

KATI (CONT'D)

(loudly to Franny)

He loves me. He's not gonna settle
for anyone else.

(to Chris)

You're coming with me?

CHRIS

No.

As the paramedics reach the ambulance, Kati raises her fingers and wiggles her feet. Only Chris sees this.

Kati smiles and whispers to Chris...

KATI

Just a flesh wound.

She winks as she is loaded into the ambulance.

SIREN shaking the night, it races off through the forested neighborhood.

Franny and Chris sit on the front porch.

FRANNY

You still love her.

She studies his face.

He hangs his head, then looks into her eyes.

CHRIS

Yeah. I think when you spend so
many years with someone, you don't
stop loving 'em.

FRANNY

Wow, honesty. That's the first time
you've given a straight answer.

CHRIS

I spent eleven months, secluded, mad
at the world.

In the last few weeks I've been doing
things I'm not proud of. Some really
wild, sick stuff. Over the top stuff,
making up for lost time.

I got caught up being this deviant
Romeo I was writing about for the
magazine.

FRANNY

You're done with bimbos?

Chris grins.

CHRIS

They weren't bimbos. Not all of 'em. Certainly not your sister.

She smiles.

FRANNY

Peggy's fine. She left a message Saturday at the salon. Those water babies at the front desk didn't give it to me.

CHRIS

Seriously? That's great, Franny.

He takes her hand.

FRANNY

Where are the cops?

CHRIS

I told 'em the ambulance was going to Piedmont.

FRANNY

You didn't call 911?

CHRIS

I called the Piedmont emergency number on my refrigerator. I figured it'd be faster--and it was.

I also called the cops to let 'em know where they could find Kati. I can't believe I did that; I turned her in.

FRANNY

Don't worry about it, they already knew. I ratted her out an hour ago.

CHRIS

Nothing personal against your ex-boyfriend, but he and his crew really pissed me off.

I told 'em I'd give 'em a statement on this mess in the morning.

(MORE)

CHRIS (CONT'D)

They'll wanna talk to you, too, about tonight--even though, now, they don't have a case to solve.

FRANNY

I solved their case.

CHRIS

You solved the murder case, but it never was their case. Nobody got murdered in Buckhead--and nobody in Buckhead murdered anybody.

Chris stands and holds his hand out to Franny. She takes it and he helps her up.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Since we're both going to have to talk to the cops, I was thinkin'...

Franny smiles at him. He smiles then leans down and kisses her lightly on the lips.

She blushes.

FRANNY

I have a confession...you know, as long as we're doing this honesty thing: I came here hoping you might do that.

Chris grins.

CHRIS

Yeah?

He kisses her again, this time longer.

FRANNY

Whewww. Scissorman, you take my breath away.

CHRIS

Stay here tonight. The sun'll be up in a couple of hours. It'll only be sort of like spendin' the night.

FRANNY

How 'bout full p.j.'s and nothing more than heavy necking.

CHRIS

What exactly is heavy necking?

FRANNY

Follow me.

She opens the door and swishes into the house. He follows.

CHRIS

Yes, ma'am.

FADE TO BLACK:

FADE BACK IN:

INT. A BEDROOM - NIGHT

It is dark: it is hard to see clearly. The SOUND OF PASSION. Two entwined bodies clothed in silk that shimmers in the moonlight coming in through the window.

Closer...

The two people are Franny and Chris.

FRANNY

No.

More SOUNDS OF PASSION

FRANNY (CONT'D)

No.

CHRIS

I think I need a drink.

FRANNY

You agreed to the terms.

CHRIS

Yeah, but I thought I could charm the pants off you.

FRANNY

Oooh, I like that.

CHRIS

Really?

FRANNY

The honesty.

CHRIS

I'm going downstairs. You want anything?

FRANNY

No. I'm exhausted. I need to sleep.

INT. CHRIS'S DEN - NIGHT

A spinning flat wheel. Half of a pair of shears is held on the wheel. A WHIRRING SOUND.

In the dim, green haze of a banker's lamp, Chris, in silk pajamas, stands at the bar sharpening a pair of scissors. He turns off the machine and the wheel stops.

He tests each half, shaving hairs off his wrist. They are like razors.

He reassembles them.

INT. CHRIS'S STAIRCASE - NIGHT

As Chris ascends, the scissors in his hand catch the moonlight.

INT. CHRIS'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The room's only light is moonglow. Franny, in silk pajamas, sleeps face down with no covers.

A form appears in the doorway. It is Chris.

He walks to the dresser and puts the scissors down.

He slowly removes his pajama shirt and folds it neatly and places it on the dresser. He steps out of his pajama pants and folds them neatly and places them on top of the shirt.

He picks up the scissors, moves to the bed, and kneels on it, straddling Franny. He reaches down and pulls her hair aside revealing the back of her neck.

He leans down and kisses it tenderly.

Eyes still closed she smiles.

He sits up still straddling her and opens the scissors and inserts one point into the bottom of Franny's silk top and slides the blade forward toward her neck.

The fabric separates silently. He pulls the two halves apart and places his hand lightly on her exposed back.

She MOANS.

He inserts a blade into the silk of her pajama bottom and again the fabric separates silently.

With his free hand and his scissor hand he holds the two sides of the fabric a moment and then very slowly RIPS it...and then with a violent jerk, he TEARS it.

He thrusts into her and as her head jerks up, a look of terror in her eyes, he pushes her head back down and raises the scissors. They glisten in the moonlight.

He brings them down...

Franny's eyes open. She GASPS. SILENCE.

Franny is alone on the bed. She has been dreaming.

She sits up, pulls her hand through her hair, and stares toward the doorway.

FRANNY

Chris?

The doorway is empty...

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

In moonglow...moving toward...

CHRIS'S STAIRCASE

...down to the...

FOYER

...moving toward the...

KITCHEN

...lit by the stove's hood light and the moon filtering in through the glassed porch, moving toward the narrow door that leads to the...

BASEMENT STAIRS

...down toward the...

BASEMENT

A neon Beck's Beer clock illuminates the room. The rug is pulled back and the metal hatch that seals the fallout shelter is open allowing the descent to continue down the ...

FALLOUT SHELTER STAIRS

...to the bottom.

INT. THE DUNGEON - CONTINUOUS

A black light is the only light, but then continuing...

MUTED PINK NOISE is leaking from...the walk-in closet...where the door is open, and moving into it, diffused light seeps from the back of the closet as the NOISE grows LOUDER.

Dresses and coats hang on both sides of the closet. On one side they are parted, and moving toward that separation in the clothes, a bright light appears. A hidden doorway.

At the opened door the NOISE grows louder. A secret room behind the clothes.

Visible from the room's threshold: a table containing hair tint tubes, tint brushes, foils, developer, a comb, a pair of scissors, and a pink-encased cell phone.

Visible moving a step into the...

ROOM

...another table containing two large hardbound books: REICHTER'S COSMETIC SURGERY, and GOTTLIEBS'S REFACE THE FUTURE.

There is also a massage table with arm, leg, and body restraints. Another massage table is beside the first.

A WOMAN lies face down, strapped to it. Her hair is dark; her face is hidden. She wears red panties and bra.

She appears to be screaming but no sound is audible other than the STRANGE FREQUENCIES coming out of the speakers mounted on the wall above a large window that looks out into the music studio part of the shelter.

Chris, in silk pajamas, his back visible, ties a bondage gag around the woman's mouth. He pulls down a fader on the long, studio soundboard in front of the window. The NOISE STOPS. MUFFLED CRIES come from the trembling woman.

...moving closer...

She's wide-eyed, staring, her face contorts, tears stream down her cheeks.

CHRIS

Much better. How can you stand that sound?

He bends down and studies her mouth, distorted with the gag in it.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Your lips plumped up nicely.

From a metal doctor's tray between the tables, he picks up a syringe, sticks it into a small vial and withdraws the contents. He holds the needle erect and pushes the plunger causing a few drops to leap out.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I was gonna wait 'til after I completed all your surgeries to consummate our relationship...

...but our overnight guest has got me so worked up. This'll help you enjoy it a little more.

He reaches down to her panties, lowers the waistband a couple of inches, and moves the needle toward her exposed flesh.

Two hands holding a pair of scissors slam down into his back, burying the blades. He jerks upright and SCREAMS and flails at the protruding handle but he can't quite get a grip on it.

FRANNY

You motherfucker.

She grabs one of the large hardbound books and brings it violently down on his head. He stumbles against the unoccupied table.

With animal fury, she brings down the book again.

She takes a deep breath and reaches for the hypodermic needle that has fallen onto the floor.

As her fingers touch it she is jerked backward. Chris grabs her other hand and begins fastening it with a leather restraint to the unoccupied table.

She extends her free hand toward the syringe: she can't reach it.

FRANNY (CONT'D)

No!

Her arm extends, her hand reaches, her fingers curl around the hypodermic needle. With a feral SCREAM she buries it in his thigh and pushes the plunger. She jerks it out and raises it again.

He closes his hands around her wrist and she drops the needle.

He yanks her up onto the table and begins to fasten the other restraint as she fights for her life, but as he starts to thread the strap, the drug hits him and he pauses and then collapses on her.

She pulls her hand free, pushes him aside, and undoes her other hand. She grabs his legs and with adrenaline still on full and with a mighty GRUNT, swings them onto the table.

She fastens all the restraints.

She undoes the gag from the woman's mouth and flings it across the room. The woman SOBS and TREMBLES uncontrollably.

Franny undoes all the woman's restraints and helps her into a sitting position. She pushes the woman's hair back from her face and looks at her. Tears run down Franny's face. They hug.

WOMAN

Franny.

FRANNY

Peggy.

Chris comes to and realizes he's restrained. He makes a GUTTURAL SOUND, straining against the bonds.

CHRIS

Get this thing out of me.

Franny looks closely at the shears planted in his back.

FRANNY

It's almost stopped bleeding...just kidding...it's a mess.

He makes another GUTTURAL CRY and struggles again at the restraints.

FRANNY (CONT'D)

I'll call 911 in a minute, Scissorboy. I hear it's a little slower, but they bring cops.

He makes more THROAT SOUNDS.

FRANNY (CONT'D)

If you'd stop struggling you might not bleed to death before they get here. Just relax, go with the drug.

He is getting weaker and makes continuous, LOW WHIMPERING SOUNDS.

PEGGY

Shut up...asshole.

Franny smiles; apparently, Peggy's going to be okay.

Peggy walks shakily to the soundboard and pushes a fader forward and the PINK NOISE begins again. Chris's MOANS can still be heard.

Peggy reaches for a large knob on a piece of outboard equipment beside the soundboard and turns it.

The frequencies CHANGE PITCH until finally Chris's whimpers and moans disappear into the STATIC while his silent mouth continues to move.

Franny puts her arm around Peggy and picks up the cell phone.

PEGGY (CONT'D)
(loudly over the NOISE)
It doesn't work. He smashed it and
cut up the card.

FRANNY
(loudly)
What about that call you made tonight?

PEGGY
(emotional)
He said he'd kill you if I didn't do
it. I read from a script and he
recorded it 'til I got it right.

He routed it somehow through the
Internet to make it untraceable.

She takes the phone from Franny and turns to Chris.

PEGGY (CONT'D)
You know how expensive these things
are?

She throws it and it hits him in the head.

They walk to the door that leads to the closet.

Before stepping through, Franny pauses and smiles at Peggy.

It's a little QUIETER here.

She touches Peggy's hair and lightly pokes at Peggy's fuller lips, then leans close to her to be heard without yelling.

FRANNY
I like the look.

With tears in their eyes, they both LAUGH.

As they step through the doorway of the closet, Franny grabs a coat for Peggy who's begun to shiver and she helps her put

it on. She takes one for herself, pauses, and then grabs one of Kati's expensive dresses.

FRANNY (CONT'D)

What the hell. It's a nice dress.
You want one?

PEGGY

No souvenirs for me.

FRANNY

Can I have that coat...when we get home?

PEGGY

Home.

Her eyes fill with tears again and her lips tremble, and then...

PEGGY (CONT'D)

Why're you wearing pajamas?

They exit.

EXT. CHRIS'S HOUSE - DAWN

The sky is pink. Franny and Peggy, arm and arm, emerge through the doorway as SIRENS approach. They sit down on the first step of the porch.

EXT. CHRIS'S NEIGHBORHOOD - DAWN

From a distance police cars and an ambulance wind their way toward Chris's house.

FRANNY (O.S.)

I was thinkin', Peggy, how would you feel about me becoming a detective?

PEGGY (O.S.)

I told you you'd never get your cosmetology license.

FRANNY (O.S.)

No, no, I could still do the hair thing. I'd just be a detective, too.

*

FADE OUT.