

The Sunlight Dialogues

(Based on the novel The Sunlight Dialogues by John Gardner. Permission granted by the Gardner Estate)

by

Michael Bettencourt

67 Highwood Terrace #2, Weehawken NJ 07086

201-770-0550 • 347-564-9998 • michaelbettencourt@outlook.com

<http://www.m-bettencourt.com>

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FADE IN:

SUPER: PLACARD: “The Watchdogs of Society”

SUPER: PLACARD: “August 23, 1968”

EXT. TWO-LANE CITY STREET

A hot August, 3 a.m. A streetlight BUZZES. Bugs orbit the light, and a spider crawls in its web. On the light’s housing is stamped “Spartan Power and Light.”

INT. PAXTON DEN - SAME TIME

A breeze through an open window bellies a curtain.

The den is old and dense with trophies, pictures, stone fireplace, wood paneling. Name plaques and captions on photos show that this den belongs to CLIVE PAXTON.

The den is something else: a sickroom, with a hospital bed, table with pills, tank of oxygen, IV stand, and so on.

EXT. TWO-LANE STREET

Our eye travels down the length of the scarred wooden lightpole holding the streetlight. The metal footholds are rusty and bent.

INT. PAXTON DEN

Paxton, 76, wearing a ratty bathrobe, sits bolt upright at his desk surrounded by papers, books and an open notebook. On the page, a half-sentence, illegible. The fountain pen, fallen from his hand, bleeds into the page.

Paxton is dead and looks as if he could be made from stone.

EXT. TWO-LANE STREET

At the pole's base, trash and a flyer for the county fair.

INT. PAXTON DEN

The breeze blows a page over, covers the pen and sentence. Paxton's glass eyes stare at nothing.

EXT. TWO-LANE STREET

THE SUNLIGHT MAN stands in the circle thrown down by the streetlight. Scars from a burn twist his bearded face into a set half-grin. Thick blond hair halos his head.

He holds a bucket of white paint and a wallpapering brush.

Behind him, just visible, in precise 10-foot high letters, is the "L" and the "O" and part of the "V" of the interrupted word "love."

A police cruiser off to the side flashes red and blue over the scene.

OFFICER FIGLOW, 30s, swarthy, hard-bitten face, approaches with gun raised.

Sunlight sweats and quivers—but the half-grin makes him look like a demonic child.

FIGLOW

Put it down.

SUNLIGHT

(singing)

“All we need is love—”

FIGLOW

Put it down!

SUNLIGHT

(singing)

“Ya-ta-da-da-dah”

FIGLOW

Last time.

A momentary stand-off—then with a shrug and a grin, Sunlight puts down the bucket and brush and raises his hands.

SUNLIGHT

You’re anti-love, officer. The Law is anti-love. I give in to anti-love.

FIGLOW

Now, slow—

SUNLIGHT

Slowly.

FIGLOW

Shut up. Your wallet—on the ground.

Sunlight flaps his hands: they are still busy surrendering.

FIGLOW

The right one.

Sunlight reaches for his back pocket.

FIGLOW

Slow!

SUNLIGHT

Lee.

Sunlight holds up the wallet for Figlow.

FIGLOW

Drop it.

SUNLIGHT

I don't think so.

It bursts into flames and disintegrates.

SUNLIGHT

Now I am nobody to you.

FIGLOW

A fucking clown—great.

Figlow forces Sunlight to the asphalt and quickly cuffs him, but as he does so, his face scrunches in disgust.

FIGLOW

Man, you stink!

ON SUNLIGHT'S FACE

With his face pressed into the asphalt, Sunlight begins reciting Latin. His breath stirs the ashes.

SUNLIGHT

Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine—

FIGLOW (O.C.)

Shut. Up.

As Figlow pulls him up, the ashes also fly up, then settle.

SUNLIGHT (O.C.)

—et lux perpetua luceat eis—

FIGLOW (O.C.)

Come on, clown-boy—let's go.

EXT. SPARTAN POLICE STATION - EARLY MORNING

It resembles an old castle. The placard on the building reads "Spartan Police Department."

Figlow extracts Sunlight from the police cruiser.

INT. POLICE STATION

This place is worn-out. The walls are studded with certificates, wanted posters, unread memos, menus, etc.

A portrait in full-dress uniform of the current police chief, HANNAH CLUMLY, hangs just outside her office door. The picture shows a smiling woman, clearly proud of her accomplishments.

SERGEANT MILLER, mid-40s, stocky buzz-cut ex-Marine, waits arm-crossed in the front area. OFFICER KOZLOWSKI, 30s, holds court at the booking desk.

Miller cocks an eyebrow as Figlow moves Sunlight along.

MILLER

Looks like it takes all kinds.

FIGLOW

First mistake God made. Move!

Miller watches Figlow frog-march Sunlight to the cells.

MILLER

Sharp eye out here, okay?

KOZLOWSKI

Matches my sharp mind, Sarge.

Miller follows Figlow to the cell block.

THE STATION DOORWAY

Just as Miller leaves, BEN HODGE enters, a big beefy farmer in bib overalls, 60s, cherubic face, blond-white hair.

HODGE

Name's Ben Hodge—

KOZLOWSKI

Yes?

HODGE

Got a call from Chief Clumly yesterday.

Kozlowski rifles through files, pulls one out.

KOZLOWSKI

About Nick Slater—the car jacker—right?—your boy—

HODGE

I'm not his legal guardian anymore—

Kozlowski opens the file.

KOZLOWSKI

Chief's not in—

HODGE

Had to come before chores—

KOZLOWSKI

Well, I'm authorized to tell you this, Mr. Hodge, same as the Chief'd tell you: Nick is in it deep.

HODGE

That's what Chief Clumly said—

KOZLOWSKI

I mean "electric chair" deep, Mr. Hodge.

(hands Hodge some 8x10s)

The woman, the driver? In worse shape than the car there, and the car's—

Hodge hands back the photos.

HODGE

Can I see him?

KOZLOWSKI

Sergeant Miller's call, and he's busy out back. Maybe you could come back—

Hodge lowers himself onto a bench, sits straight-backed.

HODGE

Chores can wait.

INT. CELL BLOCK

To the right of the empty cell sits NICK SLATER, 19, Seneca Indian, slim and long-haired, brooding.

Fresh-faced MICKEY SALVADOR, 20, new recruit, sits at the desk reading a comic book.

SALVADOR

I'd say Tweety Bird here's got the raw deal 'cause of that frickin' Sylvester cat dude—

Figlow, Miller, and Sunlight enter. Salvador jumps up.

MILLER

Comic books'll stunt your growth.

Miller points to the cell. Salvador gets the keys, opens the cell next to Nick.

SALVADOR

Yes, sir. He got a name?

FIGLOW

He burned his wallet.

He shoves Sunlight forward.

NICK

Hey, man—hose him down.

MILLER

(without heat)

Shut up.

Sunlight turns to all of them, posed like a professor. When he has their attention...

SUNLIGHT

"The past is the only dead thing that smells sweet."

Figlow uncuffs Sunlight.

FIGLOW

Yeah?

(another rough shove)

Maybe because you stink so much you ain't got no
past.

Salvador locks the cell.

MILLER

Can't tell which one's the poet.

FIGLOW

Don't call me a poet—they're the worst.

IN THE CELLS

Nick watches Sunlight as Sunlight retreats to the rear of the cell and settles
himself on the bed.

Sunlight catches Nick's eye, then gives it back.

IN THE CELL BLOCK

SALVADOR

Boss—we gonna hose him or something?

Suddenly everyone notices the same thing at the same time.

FIGLOW

Sarge?

MILLER

I know.

FIGLOW

What do you know?

Miller takes a deep sniff.

MILLER

Naw.

FIGLOW

What?

MILLER

Clover. It's clover.

Salvador sniffs.

SALVADOR

Naw—cut hay, like on my old man's—

FIGLOW

I thought it was fresh laundry.

All stare at Sunlight. With a rush, Sunlight leaps onto the bars, like a gorilla. Everyone jerks back. Then, with a false laugh, Sunlight drops down and bows.

SUNLIGHT

You may all call me Sunlight.

EXT. STREET

A streetlight shines on a street sign: "LaCrosse Street."

EXT. HANNAH CLUMLY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A hulking Victorian among other worn but neat old houses. A mailbox on the porch bears a brass plaque: "CLUMLY"

In the driveway, a cruiser bearing "Spartan Police Department" and the logo, "To serve and protect."

BESIDE THE PORCH

A cat traps a mouse. The mouse almost escapes but doesn't.

INT. HANNAH CLUMLY'S BEDROOM

An asthmatic fan blows around the thick August air in a small, stuffy bedroom.

HANNAH CLUMLY, 65, police chief of Spartan, sleeps next to her husband, MICHAEL, also 65 and as scrawny as a chicken.

Clumly's skin and hair are almost as fair as an albino's, though her eyes, now jittering under her lids, are blue.

Whatever she dreams jolts her awake, her shirt sweat-soaked. Michael sleeps, making small WHEEZES.

The radium clock glows 4 a.m., shadows on the wall like jaws.

AT THE DRESSER

Clumly eases her service revolver from its holster.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

She stands guard among the hulking furniture, listening to the house CREAK in the dark. A passing truck RUMBLES.

IN THE KITCHEN

Blue-white light glows from the open fridge. Clumly reaches for the cold water, then abruptly grabs a beer.

EXT. PORCH - DAWN

The front door opens with a SNAP. Clumly, in tee-shirt and shorts, holds a beer in one hand and her gun in the other.

For a moment, some calm and quiet in the dawn light. Then she hears the phone RING, and then hears it stop.

Clumly swigs and does not move.

THE SIDE OF THE PORCH - BUSHES

The cat shies away from the mouse carcass.

ON THE PORCH

A VOICE, paper-thin, comes from inside.

MICHAEL (O.S.)

Hannah?

AT THE DOOR

Michael appears: pale, bony, bathrobed.

The milkiness of his eyes give away that he is blind.

MICHAEL

Everything all right?

CLUMLY

It's fine. Just thought I heard something.

Michael sniffs.

MICHAEL

You're drinking a beer.

CLUMLY

Thirsty. Hot night.

MICHAEL

There's water.

CLUMLY

That's true.

MICHAEL

It's Officer Miller on the phone.

Clumly swigs again.

INT. HOUSE - PHONE TABLE

Michael gingerly takes the beer bottle into the kitchen as Clumly, masking a burp, picks up the phone.

INT. POLICE STATION

Miller calling from his office: desk neat, papers filed.

MILLER

Mornin', boss.

Through his office door he can see into Clumly's office: a rat's nest of papers, reports, books, etc.

INTERCUT BETWEEN THE TWO OF THEM

MILLER

Sorry to bother you so early in your last week—

CLUMLY

I'm not at the glue factory yet, Miller. What's wrong?

MILLER

Ever hear of a man named "Sunlight?"

CLUMLY

No.

MILLER

Me neither. But we got one in lock-up.

CLUMLY

For what?

MILLER

Painting "love" on Oak Street.

CLUMLY

He dangerous?

MILLER

Not by the dictionary, but—odd.

CLUMLY

Odd.

MILLER

Like old Bible prophet odd, come in from the desert. Figlow calls him "dragon breath"—not far off.

CLUMLY

"Sunlight" on his license?

MILLER

And therein lies another tale. I'll fill you in when you get here.

CLUMLY

Give me thirty.

MILLER

Oh, and one other thing, Chief. Clive Paxton died. Got it off the scanner.

INT. PAXTON DEN

Ambulance workers lay Paxton on the gurney. ELIZABETH PAXTON, his wife, 70s, gaunt and disheveled in a wheelchair, watches everything with a face half-discolored by a port-wine birthmark.

MILLER (V.O.)

Wife found him sitting stone-cold at his desk.

CLUMLY (V.O.)

End of an era.

MILLER (V.O.)

The end of something, for sure.

INT. CLUMLY HOUSE

CLUMLY

(hangs up phone)

End of something—

INT. MILLER'S OFFICE

Miller hangs up, steps to his doorway. Hodge sits large and patient on the bench.

MILLER

You sure you want to see him?

HODGE

I have to, even if I don't have to legally anymore.

MILLER
It doesn't look good for him.

HODGE
All the more reason, then, ain't it?

IN THE CELL BLOCK

Hodge and Miller come in. Salvador stands. At the sight of Hodge, Sunlight also stands. Nick moves forward.

NICK
(quietly)
Get outta here, old man.

SALVADOR
Shut up—he's here to—

HODGE
Nick—

AT THE BARS BETWEEN THE CELLS

Sunlight watches Nick's back. He speaks so that Nick can just hear him.

SUNLIGHT
This is your guardian angel?

HODGE (O.C.)
Look, I'm going to try to get you a lawyer—

SUNLIGHT
They're gonna fry you like fatback. Fzzzzt!

He steps away, half-smile in place.

Nick stares back at him with eyes like hard black beads, then looks back to Hodge.

IN THE CELL BLOCK

NICK
Go home, old man. No lawyer, no nothing.

SUNLIGHT
(undervoice)

Fzzzzt!

SALVADOR
Shut up.

MILLER
C'mon, Ben. Ben—

Without a sound, Ben pivots and leaves, shoulders slumped. Miller leaves behind him. Salvador sits, reads his comic.

IN SUNLIGHT'S CELL

Sunlight drops to a lotus position and SINGS in a low-pitched voice.

SUNLIGHT
(to Old MacDonald)
“Old Ben Hodge, he had a farm, ee, eye, ee, eye, oh.”

Nick is immediately at the bars between the cells.

NICK
How do you know that?

SUNLIGHT
“And on that farm he had Nick Slater, ee, eye, ee, eye, oh—

NICK
How do you know that?

SUNLIGHT
“Steal a car, smash it there, kill the driver, electric chair—”

NICK
She's not dead.

Sunlight gives Nick a wink.

SUNLIGHT
You might want to make alternate plans. Om.

INT. CLUMLY'S BEDROOM

Clumly, in front of the mirror over the dresser, tightens and smooths her uniform.

Michael, still bathrobed, leans against the door jamb, staring vacantly.

Clumly puts on her hat, sets it, then holsters her gun.

MICHAEL

I'll make you a sandwich.

CLUMLY

I might be there all day.

MICHAEL

Then I'll make two.

He leaves.

Clumly stares at herself in the mirror and then salutes herself. She derives no great pleasure from it.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

Michael at the window pretends to watch the prowler car pull out and away. The house is densely QUIET.

IN THE KITCHEN

Michael pulls out a glass, then a bottle of wine. With a finger dipped in the glass to test the level, he pours. Then sips and stares.

EXT. OAK STREET - DAY

Clumly stands on the cruiser's hood to see the word "love." Police caution tape is strung on both sides of the street.

INT. CRUISER

The lunch bag sits next to her as she drives.

EXT. POLICE STATION - 5 AM

Miller stands squarely on the front steps, clipboard in hand. Clumly walks up the steps, carrying the lunch bag.

MILLER

Right on time. But before we go—

He points to a lone light in City Hall.

FROM MILLER'S POV

The lighted window, the shadow of a man pacing.

MILLER (O.C.)

Hizzoner the Mayor called—

CLUMLY (O.C.)

A call from the undead—let's go—

ON THE STEPS OF THE POLICE STATION

MILLER

Your meeting with him today—

CLUMLY

I'm cognizant—

MILLER

—his Time/Productivity Factor—

CLUMLY

A waste of my time. Show me this Sunlight.

MILLER

(lightly)

What got into your coffee this morning?

As they walk in, Clumly drops the bag into the trash can.

INT. STATION - DAWN

Kozlowski sits at the booking desk.

KOZLOWSKI

Morning, Chief.

CLUMLY

Kozlowski.

(to Miller)

I saw the letters—not how a drunk would paint 'em.

MILLER

Before we go, one more thing—actually, two.

(Clumly turns back)

Ben Hodge was here—a bust.

CLUMLY

Told him it would be.

MILLER

And this Salvador told me. Sunlight in there—after Hodge left—was talking about things he shouldn't have known about. Names, situations—

Clumly absorbs what Miller says.

IN THE CELL BLOCK

Figlow lounges at the desk. Nick, laying on his bed brooding, sits up at Clumly's entrance. Sunlight is still in his lotus position.

FIGLOW

Morning, Chief—our great unwashed.

Clumly walks up to Sunlight's cell. She looks closely at the ravaged face of Sunlight. Sunlight pops his eyes open and stares back at Clumly. Their eyes lock.

MILLER (O.C.)

At the "crime scene," nothing but gum wrappers, Bible pamphlets, squirrel bones—we got us a ghost, Chief.

Clumly steps back but still holds Sunlight's gaze.

Nick walks to the bars between the cells and watches Clumly and Sunlight.

Figlow gets up from the desk and walks over to Miller.

MILLER

Technically, he painted part of a state highway—

Figlow nudges Miller, points out how Clumly and Sunlight are staring at each other. Miller nods but keeps talking.

Figlow walks to Nick's cell, indicates for him to move away from the bars. Nick perches on his bed, still watching.

MILLER (O.C.)

—so I gave a heads-up to the States—be here tomorrow to take Señor Ghost to the VA for evaluation. Boss?

Clumly turns a hard face to Miller and Figlow.

CLUMLY

He is a sign.

Before anyone can react to this, she turns back to Sunlight.

CLUMLY

Aren't you?

Miller and Figlow stand there dumbfounded.

CLUMLY

Bring him to my office.

MILLER

State Police said we're not supposed to question—

But Clumly leaves before Miller finishes. Figlow looks at Miller, who nods. Figlow opens the cell, cuffs Sunlight.

SUNLIGHT

See, I am Captain Marvel.

FIGLOW

You're a cast of thousands.

INT. CLUMLY'S OFFICE

A sty of unanswered mail, unread reports, unfiled papers—a mirror of Clumly's soul. Clumly flips a switch on the intercom. Miller cuffs Sunlight to the chair.

CLUMLY
Go.

MILLER
That's not smart.

CLUMLY
I'm tired of smart this morning. Go monitor something else.

She gives Miller a "look." Miller nods, leaves.

IN MILLER'S OFFICE

He turns on the intercom.

CLUMLY (O.S.)
What's your name?

IN CLUMLY'S OFFICE

SUNLIGHT
Puddin Tane.

CLUMLY
You've committed a serious crime. You cognizant of that?

SUNLIGHT
The Lord is my cognizant, I shall not want.

CLUMLY
Do you have a job?

SUNLIGHT
I am employed by metaphysics.

IN MILLER'S OFFICE

He leans in closer to the intercom. Waits.

IN CLUMLY'S OFFICE

She paces between the piled-up desk and over-stuffed files cabinet.

CLUMLY

Why "love"?

SUNLIGHT

You ask the wrong questions.

CLUMLY

What was your purpose—

IN MILLER'S OFFICE

SUNLIGHT (O.S.)

Why are you pacing? Sit down. You make me nervous.

CLUMLY (O.S.)

I'll decide when it's time to sit down.

IN CLUMLY'S OFFICE

SUNLIGHT

No, you won't. You'll put it off until the last minute and then you'll fall on your sixty-five-year-old ass.

CLUMLY

Where do you live?

SUNLIGHT

In a big old house on LaCrosse Street.

This stops Clumly in mid-step.

IN MILLER'S OFFICE

Miller sits up straight at the mention of Clumly's address, then gets out of his chair and leaves the office.

IN CLUMLY'S OFFICE

CLUMLY

How do you know that?

SUNLIGHT

It's because you are my friend.

They lock eyes.

SUNLIGHT

Metaphysics can ruin you for life.

With a knock on the door, Miller enters.

MILLER

Your meeting with the Mayor—don't forget—

He is already uncuffing Sunlight from the chair and re-cuffing his hands.

MILLER

Let's go, bugle boy.

IN THE CELL BLOCK

Miller herds in Sunlight, followed by Clumly. Miller hands Sunlight off to Figlow.

Figlow puts Sunlight in the cell. As he turns, Sunlight whistles, and from seemingly nowhere a wallet appears in his hand. He waggles it in Miller's direction.

Embarrassed and angry, Miller strides to Sunlight's cell. He snaps the wallet out of Sunlight's hand and puts it in his back pocket.

As Miller does this, Sunlight produces a watch, cigarettes, a pencil, and a quarter. Miller angrily pockets each of them as they appear.

Clumly and Sunlight hold each other's glance for a moment. Then Clumly leaves.

Nick moves to the bars between the cells.

SUNLIGHT

I feel for her—

MILLER

Your hands were—

SUNLIGHT

Law and Order is very hard to do.

MILLER

Shut up. How did you—

SUNLIGHT

Such pressures—

(indicating Nick)

Murderers—

NICK

No one's dead.

MILLER

I want to know how—

SUNLIGHT

I did leave your gun in its holster.

(bows to Miller)

I respect the keepers of the Law.

Miller stares at Sunlight, his face tight with anxiety.

MILLER

I will figure it out.

(barks at Figlow)

Two eyes and two ears and two hands on him, all right?

Figlow fights back a grin.

FIGLOW

Think I want to get dicked like that?

Miller exits.

IN SUNLIGHT'S CELL

Sunlight pretends he has dice in his hand, then throws them, pretends to read them.

IN NICK'S CELL

Nick perches on the edge of his bed, body tense.

INTERCUT BETWEEN CELLS

SUNLIGHT

It's upsetting.

Throws again.

SUNLIGHT

The thought of one's own death.

NICK

No one's dead.

SUNLIGHT

Because life is like a jailhouse, and at the end,
instead of justice for all suffering creatures—fzzzt.

(looks at Nick)

Don't ever let them drag you back.

NICK

You are a mean, mean man.

SUNLIGHT

I am the Truth.

(pokes among the "dice")

Oop—she's dead. The flames will rise.

He stares at the imagined patterns. Images flash.

INTERCUT BETWEEN IMAGE FLASHES AND SUNLIGHT IN CELL

A fire in a house.

Two children sleeping in the house.

Sunlight, a young man with no scars, tries to get into the house. Held back by fire fighters, breaks free.

The children awake. Bedroom explodes. They are lost.

Sunlight on fire, unable to get to them. Pulled out of the fire, doused, half his face seared.

IN SUNLIGHT'S CELL

NICK (O.C.)

Hey!

Sunlight looks toward Nick, but all he can see are flames.

INT. CLUMLY'S OFFICE

Miller paces, his face twisted in anger. Clumly stares at the towering mess on her desk.

MILLER

He knew your address, boss! How did a stranger know that? He's not from here—how did he know that?

(slows down a little)

I appreciate you trying to grill him away from the cell—good work—but, boss, I want him out of here now. He is not in our league.

CLUMLY

That's because he is a sign.

Miller stops pacing, sadness and irritation in his face.

Clumly gets up, stares out the window. Miller, his body still jumpy, crosses his arms.

CLUMLY

You gotta admit, it's hell in a handbasket out there. The war, free love—it's all going to smash. And then something like him arrives. It can't all be coincidence. He knows something.

A knock. Miller opens the door. Kozlowski pops in.

KOZLOWSKI

That was the hospital. Slater's woman? Gone to the other side.

MILLER

Thanks.

(shuts the door, to Clumly)

Now we got a murderer and a madman out there and I don't think they should be in the same room together.

He softens as he watches Clumly stare out the window.

MILLER

C'mon, boss. It's your last week. Get past the Mayor today, then four more days and you're free. Don't make it hard on yourself.

CLUMLY

(without turning)

The Staties'll be here when?

MILLER

Actually, they said if we can hump him up to the VA, they'd take him today.

Clumly turns.

CLUMLY

You're a good cop. Always have been. Probably the next chief. Go ahead. He belongs somewhere else.

Miller goes to the door.

MILLER

I'll call 'em now?

Clumly nods. Miller leaves.

CLUMLY

(whispering)

A sign—a sign—

INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE - RECEPTION ROOM

Clumly, holding her hat, backs out a door marked "Mayor" in a big brass plaque, followed by a loud braying LAUGH. Clumly LAUGHS, too, though without any humor in it.

Clumly just barely keeps from slamming the door, and as soon as it's shut, her face skews with anger and disgust. The LAUGHTER can still be heard but muffled.

The MAYOR'S RECEPTIONIST primly slices open letters.

RECEPTIONIST

Time/Productivity Factor?

CLUMLY

Yep.

RECEPTIONIST

Got the idea off a cereal box, probably.

Clumly puts on her hat, starts to leave.

RECEPTIONIST

(slicing an envelope)

I pretend this is his throat. A very productive use of my time factor.

Clumly LAUGHS a genuine laugh this time, then exits down the stairs.

EXT. CITY HALL - DAY

Clumly climbs into her prowler car.

INT. PROWL CAR

Clumly, sweating, radios in.

CLUMLY

Ed, give me Miller.

INT. STATION

ED TANK, late 20s, dispatcher, hands Miller the mike.

MILLER

You survive?

INT. PROWL CAR

CLUMLY

Oughta declare him a health hazard. What's the deal with our Sunlight?

MILLER (V.O.)

2 p.m.

CLUMLY

One-thirty now. I'll be right there.

INT. CELL BLOCK

Salvador at the desk, reading. Sunlight between the cells. He looks impassively at Nick seated on his bed.

SUNLIGHT

How does it feel? Numb? Joyous?

Nick responds to nothing.

SUNLIGHT

You may not feel it now, Nick—but you are a free man. You have done what most would never dare to do.

NICK

Then why do I feel like shit?

SUNLIGHT

Because.

Figlow enters with Miller. Salvador unlocks Sunlight's cell. Figlow handcuffs Sunlight.

FIGLOW

This is one trip I'm going to like. Move, dragon breath.

INT. HALLWAY

Clumly enters just as Figlow herds Sunlight along from behind, with Miller and Kozlowski close on either side.

MILLER
Chief, you can stay here.

CLUMLY
He's my responsibility. Kozlowski, get the car. Miller,
you stay here.

MILLER
(dubious)
Chief—

CLUMLY
I'm not slacking off. Not now.

MILLER
All right. Just get him out of here.

FIGLOW
Everyone check their wallets.

INT. PROWL CAR - DAY

Kozlowski driving, Clumly in the passenger seat, Figlow with his gun drawn and Sunlight in the back seat.

Up ahead, the high brick gates of the Veterans' Hospital, a 19th-century monstrosity.

EXT. CAR

Sunlight's face through the side window, dappled by the passing reflections of trees.

INT. PROWL CAR - HOSPITAL ENTRANCE

FIGLOW
(to Kozlowski)
Pop the trunk.

EXT. PROWL CAR

Figlow pops out and goes to the trunk, where he extracts a very efficient-looking shotgun. He SLAMS the trunk shut.

He then scuttles around and pops open Sunlight's door.

FIGLOW

Ok, buster. Out.

As Sunlight gets out, Clumly climbs out of the car, pulls her gun, looks around nervously.

CLUMLY

(to Kozlowski)

Stay with the car. Tell the Staties we'll be in the lobby.

FIGLOW

(to Sunlight)

Move it.

They go up the stairs. Sunlight galumphs.

SUNLIGHT

The ants go marching one by one—

Figlow raps him on the back of the head.

FIGLOW

(voice tight with fear)

Shut. Up.

INT. A ROOM OFF THE HOSPITAL LOBBY

A small room with half-dead rubber plants, chairs, a coffee table, out-of-date magazines—and one OLD MAN, toothless in a dingy bathrobe, hair uncombed.

Figlow, Clumly, and Sunlight sit. The old man stares.

FIGLOW

Chief? I gotta go.

CLUMLY

What?

FIGLOW

I gotta go—you know—

Clumly hesitates, then takes Figlow's shotgun and aims it at Sunlight's head.

Figlow skitters for the bathroom. The old man looks from one to the other, not sure who is the lunatic.

OLD MAN

Crimnul?

CLUMLY

That's right.

OLD MAN

He stinks.

SUNLIGHT

Is it really necessary that I sit on my hands? They're numb.

Clumly glares at Sunlight, then tells him to stand.

Clumly uncuffs him, then re-cuffs him, hands in front. With a jab of the gun, Clumly forces Sunlight to sit down.

SUNLIGHT

Better.

CLUMLY

(to old man)

Don't you have someplace to be?

SUNLIGHT

Chief, I want to apologize for being hard on you.

CLUMLY

Shut up.

Sunlight leans forward, less than an arm's length away.

CLUMLY'S FACE

Sweat beads on her skin.

ROOM

SUNLIGHT

I just wanted to tell you before we part that I have great respect for you. I wish you the best.

Clumly backs up to the doorway, gun trained on Sunlight.

CLUMLY

Figlow!

SUNLIGHT (O.C.)

I also want to give you something.

Clumly turns her head.

TABLE

One by one Sunlight sets down on the table the shells from the shotgun, then Clumly's pistol, Figlow's pistol, and the handcuffs.

Then, with unbelievable smoothness, Sunlight glides past Clumly and into the hallway.

Clumly drops the shotgun and grabs the pistols.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY

CLUMLY

Stop!

She raises both pistols and fires—and nothing but empty hammers on empty chambers.

Sunlight, his back to Clumly, dribbles the bullets from his hands to the floor.

Clumly drops the pistols, and in a burst of energy charges down the hallway and tackles Sunlight, punching him with violent fury until, as if from a great distance, she hears a VOICE crying out in pain and stops to find that she's pinned the old man to floor and pummeled him.

Clumly looks up. Sunlight is gone.

INT. CLUMLY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Clumly stares at the desk. Knock on the door.

CLUMLY

Yes?

Kozlowski sticks his head in.

KOZLOWSKI

Nothing new, Chief. You should go home to your husband.

Clumly gets up, says nothing. Kozlowski says nothing. Together they say nothing.

EXT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Clumly and Kozlowski, on the sidewalk, look reflexively to City Hall. The light in the Mayor's office is on.

CLUMLY

(pointing)

The Mayor—we can't see the stars anymore because of light pollution—another thing we've lost.

KOZLOWSKI

Chief—

A sudden stiff breeze rattles the dry leaves in the trees.

KOZLOWSKI

That's funny.

(hesitating)

It's August, right? But that smelled just like snow.

Behind them, a GUNSHOT inside the station that, in the stillness of the night, sounds like an ARTILLERY SHELL.

Clumly and Kozlowski pivot, run like madmen up the steps.

INT. CELL BLOCK

Clumly and Kozlowski notice two things immediately: Salvador's bloody body, face half-shot away, and Nick Slater's open cell door. Kozlowski kneels by Salvador.

KOZLOWSKI

Oh, Jesus Christ! Oh, Jesus Christ!

Clumly sags.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

SUPER: PLACARD: "Lion Emerging from Cage"

SUPER: PLACARD: "August 24, 1968"

INT. CLUMLY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Clumly and Michael sleeping. Her eyes jitter in dreams, and the room is filled with a barrage of SOUNDS that ends in an explosive GUNSHOT.

Clumly bolts awake. Her face is bathed in sweat, and her breathing RASPS.

Michael's ghostly face rise just behind her.

INT. CLUMLY HOUSE - DAY

Michael, at the window, "watches" the cruiser pull away.

INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE - RECEPTION ROOM - DAY

The door and the "Mayor" plaque seem to vibrate as the Mayor's muffled VOICE SCREAMS:

MAYOR (O.S.)

Christ, Clumly!

INT. POLICE STATION - HALLWAY

Clumly enters. Figlow, Miller, Kozlowski, Ed—they all say hello but seem embarrassed to do so.

In the background, the cell block is cordoned off by police tape, the floor a congealed-blood red.

Clumly moves to her office without saying a word.

MILLER

Boss—a heads up. Mrs. Salvador—Mickey's mom—in your office. I can take her—

CLUMLY

No—no.

INT. CLUMLY'S OFFICE

MRS. SALVADOR, 40s, Italian, sits stiff-backed. Clumly notices that her desk has been cleaned up. She hangs up her hat, takes a deep breath, and sits in her chair.

Clumly takes a breath to speak, but Mrs. Salvador holds up her hand.

MRS. SALVADOR

I been to the morgue. I had to sign papers.

CLUMLY

I'm truly sorry.

MRS. SALVADOR

You let a killer out of jail.

CLUMLY

No, we—

MRS. SALVADOR

It's all over the papers. You got my boy dead. He just wanted to be a cop, do a little good.

CLUMLY

He was a good—

MRS. SALVADOR

You know what? I pray to the Virgin you burn in hell.

CLUMLY

Mrs. Salvador—

But Mrs. Salvador is out of her chair.

MRS. SALVADOR

You catch this bastard hard.

With a quick turn, Mrs. Salvador is out of the office.

IN THE HALLWAY

Mrs. Salvador shoots past them and out the front door.

Miller goes into Clumly's office.

IN CLUMLY'S OFFICE

Clumly gives Miller a dead stare, then stands.

CLUMLY

Send Figlow and Ed to Ben Hodge's.

MILLER

Nick wouldn't go there. And Sunlight—

CLUMLY

You got any better ideas?

MILLER

I just don't think—

CLUMLY

You want to be chief right now?

MILLER

(voice tight)

No. We'll check it out right now, boss.

He leaves.

CLUMLY

Miller—

But Miller doesn't turn around. Clumly posts a thousand-yard stare out the window.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

The prowl car pulls past two large stone pillars holding up a wrought-iron arch bearing the name "Stony Point."

INT. PROWL CAR

Figlow, driving, and Ed look out the windows at hay fields ready for harvest. Beyond them, some ruined outbuildings.

ED

In its day, man, the Hodge place here was the castle on the hill. Closest thing we had to royalty. The grand poobah of the family was a Congressman, big ol' fat Congressman Hodge.

FIGLOW

Before my time.

ED

Now Ben Hodge rents it all out—can't run it himself.

FIGLOW

Should just sell it, move to Florida.

ED

(musing)

This is just like looking at dinosaurs.

EXT. HODGE HOUSE - DAY

A huge house, run-down, but not dilapidated: Hodge has kept up repairs. A quarter-ton pickup truck sits in front.

To one side, a quarter-acre garden, flush with harvest.

To the other side, a hen house, the first floor of which holds Ben's chickens for his chicken-and-egg business.

A barn with a Road Ranger, other machines. The barn, in better days, had been as huge and inspiring as a cathedral.

The prowl car pulls up, rocks to a halt. Figlow and Ed roll out of the car.

ED

Just a word of warning. Ben's okay, but he's a little—I don't know—like a hermit, I guess.

FIGLOW

Nuts?

ED

He lives all by himself. On Sundays he travels around preaching at churches—

FIGLOW

Like I said, nuts.

INT. BEN HODGE'S HOUSE - DAY

Figlow and Ed at the kitchen table. Ben carries mugs of tea to them.

BEN

(putting mugs down)

I had high hopes for the boy—smart as a pistol—sorry, that's not a good—but he just couldn't seem to stay away from trouble.

ED

Hard enough raising one of your own, I'd imagine—being a guardian—

BEN

We had a lot of them here, Vanessa and I—tried to give 'em a home, you know.

FIGLOW

Sometimes, Mr. Hodge, some people just don't want a home.

BEN
I can't quite believe that.

ED
(rising)
Do you mind if we look around?

BEN
He wouldn't come back here—but suit yourselves.

INT. PROWL CAR - DAY

Ed radios in.

ED
Nothing here, Sarge. We searched the house top to bottom, the outbuildings—looks clean. We're on our way back. 10-4.
(hangs up mike)
Shame to see it all gone. Like paradise up here.

FIGLOW
(starting the car)
And look what happened to paradise.

The prowl car pulls away from the house.

EXT. BARN - DAY

Sunlight peers around the edge of the barn, watching the prowl car pull away. He's wearing a new set of clothes, including a panama hat with a red feather stuck in it.

Nick is to his side, squatting in the shade of the barn, disheveled and brooding.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Ben stands at the sink, absent-mindedly rinsing the tea mugs, staring out the window. He talks to himself.

BEN

“Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger
shut up his tender mercies?”

(wipes hands on towel)

A good one for a sermon—have to work on that for
Sunday.

(puts towel away)

All right, chores.

But Ben doesn't move as he hears a sharp noise.

BEN

Hello?

He listens: nothing. He sniffs several times, then pushes through the kitchen door
into the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Casually seated in the overstuffed wing chair, panama hat and all: Sunlight.

Ben immediately pivots to go back into the kitchen but finds Nick planted in the
doorway.

Ben turns slowly back to face Sunlight.

SUNLIGHT

Now you don't see it—

A flourish of hands—and Mickey Salvador's gun appears.

SUNLIGHT

Now you do.

BEN

You're both insane.

SUNLIGHT

Not yet. These things take time.

INT. AGWAY STORE - DAY

Miller puts down the paint can used by Sunlight on the counter. Clumly speaks to
NORTON, the clerk.

CLUMLY

Norton, you recognize this?

NORTON

It's a can of paint. Used.

CLUMLY

How about the brand?

Norton reads the can.

NORTON

Yup.

CLUMLY

Know it?

NORTON

I do.

CLUMLY

How about telling us?

NORTON

No need to get hard, Chief. It's aluminum paint.

CLUMLY

Anything unusual about it?

NORTON

This brand? Yeah. 'Tain't cheap.

CLUMLY

Who around here would buy it?

NORTON

These skinflints? Nobody. Because we'd have to special-order it—don't carry it here.

The three look at each other.

CLUMLY

Are you going to tell us, or am I going to have to beat it out of you?

NORTON

Let me check the orders.

He goes through a door into the back office.

Miller and Clumly wait, Miller arms-crossed and stolid, Clumly tightly tapping the counter with her thumb, looking like a balloon one breath short of exploding.

Norton returns with an index card and hands it to Clumly. Clumly and Miller read it.

Clumly slides a photo of Sunlight across the counter.

CLUMLY

Recognize him?

NORTON

(looking at photo)

Sure that's human?

(pointing to card)

You can keep that.

EXT. PAXTON'S FUNERAL - DAY

Clumly and Kozlowski pull in to a cemetery parking lot jammed with cars. Even before the prowler stops rocking, Clumly barrels out, slamming the door behind her. Kozlowski rolls out of the car.

IN THE CEMETERY

Just past the entrance gate, a crowd gathers around a coffin poised over a six-foot-deep hole in the ground.

AT THE GATE

CLUMLY

Pay attention. Paxton's a big name around here, right up there with the Hodges.

KOZLOWSKI

I already know this.

CLUMLY

You just think you do.

They come to the gate and stop.

CLUMLY

(pointing)

Over there, in the wheelchair? Paxton's wife, Elizabeth. Next to her, the son. They have a daughter, Kathleen—but she went nuts a while ago. Put in an asylum somewhere, last I heard—married a Hodge, actually—Taggart Hodge—there was a lot of pain in that marriage.

KOZLOWSKI

Chief, this is a lay-out like we're going into battle.

EXT. EDGE OF CROWD

The crowd breaks up as the ceremony ends. Through the crowd comes Elizabeth Paxton, in black and veiled, her wheelchair guided by her SON. Clumly walks up to her, Kozlowski right behind.

CLUMLY

He'll be missed.

Elizabeth raises her hand and the wheelchair stops. She lifts her veil, exposing her birthmark.

ELIZABETH

Officer Clumly, he'll be hated more than ever.

Clumly notes that everyone has stopped to listen.

ELIZABETH

He left no will. The family'll be at each other's throats for years. I always thought he'd die violently—from one of you during his black-market days, or Kathleen, when she went mad, or even me—Lord knows I had cause enough.

SON

Mother—

ELIZABETH

(undeterred)

Instead, he dies in a filthy bathrobe writing memoirs
no one would ever care to read.

CLUMLY

You discovered the body.

ELIZABETH

(operatic)

I felt like a person forced to be in a stage play—
disgusting—reaching out, my knees weak, closing his
eyes, the smell of death in the room, having to revive
myself with the breeze through the window. And you
know what? I finally felt alive, for the first time in
years.

The hag looks around in triumph to the people assembled around her, her smile
like a slash. She motions her Son to move the wheelchair, but Clumly intercepts
them.

CLUMLY

After you did all that—what did you do then?

Elizabeth's eyes go needle-sharp.

ELIZABETH

Then?

CLUMLY

After you closed his eyes.

ELIZABETH

I think you missed my point.

CLUMLY

(very aware of the crowd)

It's all very interesting, but what did you do then?

ELIZABETH

I have no idea.

(looking at Clumly directly)

Why are you interrogating me?

Clumly and Elizabeth hold eye-contact for a breath.

ELIZABETH

Fool.

She signals her Son to move her forward, and the crowd trails her. Clumly watches her disappear, but Kozlowski is watching Clumly.

Clumly turns and points to the crowd, to a panama hat with a red feather in it, bobbing among the bare heads and funereal clothes. And just as soon as she sees it, it disappears from view.

Clumly races through the crowd, politely elbowing people out of the way, Kozlowski trailing—but, of course, the hat disappears, leaving them both sweating and frustrated.

INT. PROWL CAR - DAY

The cars stream past as Clumly barks into the radio.

CLUMLY

Tell Miller I want him to dig up where the Paxton boys were when he died—and on the daughter—where she is. I want it right down to their underwear.

ED (V.O.)

Something up?

CLUMLY

I wanna sell 'em a bridge. 10-4.

Clumly hangs up the mike, glares out the window.

KOZLOWSKI

(more statement than question)

You have a theory.

Clumly stares for a moment more, then focuses tightly on the windshield wiper. She slides out of the car.

CLUMLY

I have a million of 'em.

EXT. PROWL CAR

Clumly lifts up the wiper and gingerly picks off a red feather. Kozlowski emerges from the driver's side.

KOZLOWSKI

Now you got a million and one.

INT. HODGE HOUSE - BASEMENT

Sunlight squats on the steps, looking at Ben and Nick. He's tied them up so that they hang, gagged, by their hands from the trusses overhead, crucified without the cross.

He slips down the stairs, stands in front of them. Ben's eyes shine bright with fear. Nick's eyes are hollow.

He unties and ungags Nick, who rubs his wrists to get back circulation.

SUNLIGHT

I need your help.

Nick's face looks murderous, but he climbs the stairs without a word. Sunlight pats Ben's cheek.

SUNLIGHT

Don't worry, brother. I'll be back.

EXT. BARN - DAY

As Nick walks in, he sees that Sunlight has prepared the workbench with wood, tools, and other materials.

SUNLIGHT

I need you to make me a small box, one foot square, two inches deep. Wood there, saw there.

NICK

We should get out of here.

Without seeing Sunlight make any move, the gun appears in Sunlight's hand.

SUNLIGHT

The first one you killed by accident. The second, less by accident. You are learning terrible, exhilarating truths about yourself. But don't expect me to be your third.

Nick measures the distance, then turns to the work bench and pops a board into the vice, marks, cuts.

THROUGH BARN DOOR

A dozen ravens strut through the dust, then gather around the feet of a young, fair-haired woman, KATHLEEN.

Sunlight, dumbstruck, stares at her, through her. Then, without warning, Kathleen bursts into flames, and her ashes become ravens and fly away.

AT THE WORKBENCH

Nick stares at Sunlight. Sunlight, sensing the stare, faces Nick. Apropos of nothing....

SUNLIGHT

A murder of crows.

Sunlight starts unrolling a length of wire.

INT. CLUMLY'S OFFICE - EVENING

Clumly and Miller seated, Miller holding the index card from the Agway clerk, Clumly twirling the red feather.

MILLER

Clive Paxton.

CLUMLY

Sunlight shows up with Clive Paxton's paint.

MILLER

We don't know if—

CLUMLY

No, we don't. But we do.

MILLER

Still have to check it out.

Clumly lifts the feather.

MILLER

Could be someone's joke.

Clumly shoots Miller a look.

CLUMLY

I'm three days from retirement. The mother of the youngest police officer ever on the force thinks I killed her son. The Mayor's worrying about votes, so he's worrying me like a bone. I got a red feather. I got some paint.

Clumly rocks out of her chair, stares out the window. She sees a raven walking along the curb across the street.

CLUMLY

It seems to me I have only one way out.

MILLER (O.C.)

Maybe we should both go home and rest.

The raven flies away.

CLUMLY

Maybe.

INT. CLUMLY HOUSE - EVENING

Clumly sees light spilling from the kitchen.

CLUMLY

I'm home.

No answer. Clumly, a worried look on her face, beelines for the kitchen.

IN THE KITCHEN

Michael stands at the stove, stirring something in a pot, an empty wine glass next to him.

CLUMLY

I'm home.

MICHAEL

There is something on the table for you.

Clumly sees an envelope. On the outside, in large precise letters, someone has inscribed the word "love."

CLUMLY

(too harsh)

Where did you get this?

MICHAEL

Someone delivered it.

Clumly rips it open and reads. The note says, "Come to the sanctuary of the Presbyterian church at midnight tonight. Be alone. It amuses me."

CLUMLY (O.C.)

Did he smell?

Michael pauses, as if thinking.

MICHAEL

Like funeral flowers.

Clumly lowers herself into a chair.

MICHAEL

(sitting)

He was at least seven feet tall.

Michael puts a bowl of stew more or less in front of her.

MICHAEL

His voice came from over my head. What does it say?

CLUMLY

Nothing. Just a practical joke.

MICHAEL

I thought he was very tall for a Jehovah's Witness.

Clumly digs into the stew, eating it mechanically. Michael sips wine.

INT. HODGE BASEMENT - NIGHT

Nick hangs again. Ben slumps, exhausted. Sunlight perches on the stairs, dressed in black, gazing at them, then stands and leaves. The light clicks off, and the darkness fills with their shallow BREATHING.

EXT. PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH - MIDNIGHT

SUPER: PLACARD: "The Dialogue of Robbers and Cops"

Clumly stands on the church steps, in uniform, with her holstered gun. She takes a small cassette recorder out of her pocket, checks it, clicks it on, puts it back.

The street is completely deserted.

Clumly tries the door, and it seems to swing open of its own accord. Hand on her pistol, she enters.

INT. PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH - FOYER

She steps into the cool darkness, and the door swings shut of its own accord.

Clumly waits for her eyes to adjust. To control her shallow anxious BREATHING, she inhales deeply and catches the smell: he is here. Ahead of her the pulpit looms like a dark jagged rock. Faint streetlight oozes through the stained-glass windows.

IN THE SANCTUARY

Barely two steps in, a RUSH of wind slices down toward Clumly, and she raises her hands to protect her face. WHOOSH! It's gone. A bat? A raven? She doesn't know. Clumly grabs at her holster, and her hand comes away empty.

CLUMLY

Damn!

Almost immediately, from the pulpit, a darkness shivers, darker than the darkness around it, and from it issues a resonant VOICE, full of anger and pride.

SUNLIGHT

So—you have arrived.

Half voluntarily, half-involuntarily, Clumly slides into a pew, trying to adjust the recorder stuffed into her pocket.

SUNLIGHT

What are you fiddling with?

The darkness RESOUNDS with the CLICK of the recorder as Clumly mistakenly turns it off.

SUNLIGHT

Just put it on the seat next to you and pay attention!

Clumly turns it on, puts it down gently like an unexploded bomb.

SUNLIGHT

We have much to discuss.

CLUMLY

There's nothing to discuss.

SUNLIGHT

We share two murders.

CLUMLY

We don't share anything.

SUNLIGHT

Truth is always the first to suffer. Then why are you here?

CLUMLY

To arrest you.

SUNLIGHT

Then why not storm in with a SWAT team to “get your man”? Huh? What would Sergeant Miller think about doe-eyed you sitting here, with me, alone, in the dark? What is the truth?

CLUMLY

You're a murderer.

SUNLIGHT

Is that what fascinates you about me?

CLUMLY

I'm not fascinated, I'm just—

SUNLIGHT

(slight sarcasm)

Liar, liar, pants on fire.

CLUMLY

It's important to know the criminal mind—

SUNLIGHT

Especially when there's a thrill to be had for the knowing. When the criminal may be the one wearing the uniform.

Clumly rockets into the aisle, anger (or is it excitement?) RINGING in her VOICE.

CLUMLY

That's stupid! You have Salvador's murder to answer for!

SUNLIGHT

A murder because a certain pig-headed and bored-with-her-life police chief didn't listen to her sergeant and decided to keep a freak around for her own entertainment.

Clumly moves assertively toward the pulpit stairs.

CLUMLY

I am not responsible—

Before she even takes two steps, a large black something launches itself from the pulpit. She drops to her knees, shielding her face. It WHIZZES past, grazing her knuckles.

When she shoots her eyes back to the pulpit, the brooding blackness that was Sunlight has disappeared.

Clumly spins when Sunlight's VOICE BOOMS from the rear of the church. She crouches like a fighter, heart POUNDING.

IN THE AISLE

SUNLIGHT

Pick up your recorder. You won't want to miss this.

Without dropping her stare, Clumly fumbles for the recorder and pockets it. As she slinks back, Sunlight SNAPS on a flashlight held under his chin, his face swathed in nylon. The upward light paints him a complete ghoul.

SUNLIGHT

Try your holster.

Clumly pulls out a flashlight.

SUNLIGHT

I constantly astound you, don't I?

CLUMLY

You sicken me.

SUNLIGHT

Pants on fire. Turn it on, hold it like mine—and remember who has your gun.

Clumly does. Wreathed in darkness, they square off with the flashlights under their chins. Shadows leap to the vaulted ceiling. Timbers CREAK, walls CRACK and SETTLE.

CLUMLY

What do you want with me?

SUNLIGHT

To humiliate you.

CLUMLY

You've done a pretty good job of that.

Slowly, step by careful step, Sunlight moves toward Clumly.

SUNLIGHT

Soon you will lose everything—and then you and I will be even closer.

CLUMLY

You broke the law.

SUNLIGHT

I don't care about the law. I care about justice.

CLUMLY

Justice! Tell that to Mickey Salvador's mother!

SUNLIGHT

That puzzles you. I watch a man I've talked with shot down, and I don't show one sign of remorse.

CLUMLY

You're a monster.

Sunlight stands close to Clumly.

SUNLIGHT

It's the monsters that make us pay attention.

Sunlight reaches out with his left hand to touch Clumly on the cheek, just hovers the fingertips without touching.

SUNLIGHT

I have nothing left to lose, and that gives me complete freedom. Doesn't Hannah Clumly ache for the same freedom from the law, from obligation, from "should" and "have to"?

Clumly's head inclines toward Sunlight's hand, as if to lay her cheek in his palm and give over to his offer.

SUNLIGHT

Aren't you feeling blood crash through parts of your body you thought had died?

With the same instinct that made her charge down the hall of the VA hospital, Clumly grabs Sunlight's wrist and pulls—and out of the sleeve pops a fake hand.

SUNLIGHT

(laughing)

She's not free yet!

At the same instant, Sunlight POPS off his flashlight and the pulpit EXPLODES, geysering out a thick plume of smoke.

Clumly spins to look at the explosion, and when she whirls back, Sunlight has disappeared like the smoke from the pulpit. Clumly's stabbing flashlight beam finds nothing.

ON THE PULPIT

In the flashlight beam, the carpet still fumes. Clumly roots herself there and surveys the darkness.

CLUMLY

I know you're still here!

Nothing but ECHOES fall back into her ears.

On the pulpit, Clumly spies a wooden box wrapped with a small chain. She puts down the rubber hand, picks up the box, and shakes it: a loud CLUNK shivers through the dark.

OUTSIDE THE CHURCH

Clumly, holding the box under her arm, takes out the recorder, shuts it off, and puts it back. The darkness vibrates with the HUM of electric transformers.

Clumly looks down at the steps, then scouts around her, then stares back at the steps. A little smile crosses her lips as she hops to the first step. Then another hop and another until Clumly finds herself hopping like a 10-year kid all the way down to the sidewalk, where she takes a right turn and heads for home.

INT. CLUMLY HOUSE - NIGHT

Clumly stands in an unfinished attic room, the moonlight falling through the shut windows. With a bolt-cutter she snaps the chain and opens the box. As suspected: her gun. She puts it back into the holster.

She takes out the cassette recorder, rewinds the tape a bit, then plays it. Sunlight's VOICE, resonant even through the tinny speakers, fills the dark room.

Clumly quickly snaps it off and puts the tape in the wooden box, which she hides behind a section of loose lath.

INT. BOTTOM OF STAIRS

Silent and ghostly, Michael listens to Clumly in the room.

Suddenly, the attic door opens, and Michael expertly glides away down the stairs back to the bedroom.

TOP OF STAIRS

Clumly stares down into the long tunnel of blackness.

INT. BATHROOM

Clumly runs cold water and bathes her face again and again. She peers in the mirror at the water-beaded 65-year old face, and as if from nowhere, a huge smile blooms.

She rips off the clip-on tie and dark blue uniform shirt, then takes a washcloth, soaks it, holds it overhead, and drizzles the water over her, soaking her brassiere, the sink basin, the floor, the bath mat. She repeats this.

Clumly turns the water off. Another long gaze in the mirror at the wet, elderly, smiling face.

INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE - DAY

PEEPER (50s, bald, stout), UPHILL (60s, white-haired, red-faced, Fire Chief), and MOSS (40s, bad liver) sit at one end of a table, looking as if they have burrs in their underwear. CLUMLY sits composed at the other end. The Mayor is never seen full-figure but is a VOCAL presence.

MAYOR

What is going on in your department? The Presbyterian church was fire-bombed last night!

UPHILL

And don't forget that she refused to block off the street.

MAYOR

I haven't forgotten that.

UPHILL

My firemen couldn't get to—

MAYOR

What about that, Hannah?

CLUMLY

It's your Time/Productivity Factor. We had to have men—somewhere else. Something probably more important—

UPHILL

(exploding)

More important!

MOSS

(to Uphill)

Calm down, Chief.

MAYOR

It's not just what Chief Uphill says. It's lotsa things. I'm not gonna bushwhack here. Hannah—Chief Clumly—I hate to do this—but we are gonna investigate your department.

PEEPER

(slides papers across)

I've drawn up the papers.

Clumly does not take the papers—does not move at all, and SILENCE fills up the room. The Mayor CLEARS his VOICE.

MAYOR

(nervously)

Take the papers, Hannah.

Still, Clumly does not move, just stares the papers down. Then, sliding one page to her, she quickly folds a paper airplane, stands, and launches it.

It hovers at the ceiling on some improbable updraft.

While the four men ponder it, Clumly walks to the door.

INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE - RECEPTION ROOM

We watch the Receptionist's hands slice open an envelope.

Clumly comes through the door, closes it, nods to the Receptionist.

The Receptionist holds up another envelope, letter opener inserted, and easily slices open that one as well.

Clumly puts on her hat and exits.

INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE - DAY

The paper airplane lands gently on the table.

INT. PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH - DAY

Miller and Ed stand on the steps up to the pulpit. Ed, using a handkerchief, holds the rubber hand. A FIREMAN examines the singed carpet.

Miller looks out over the pews.

FIREMAN

(standing up)

Thought so. Fertilizer, packed just right so's not to set anythin' afire. Lotsa smoke, lotsa bang.

MILLER

(half to himself)

Somebody here talking to someone out there?

FIREMAN

(preparing to leave)

Ah'll drop my report off to the Chief—

MILLER

(sharply)

No, put it on my desk.

The SHARPNESS in Miller's VOICE makes Ed gives Miller a "what's up?" look.

MILLER

I'll make sure Chief Clumly gets it.

FIREMAN

You bet.

The fireman, lugging his equipment box, exits.

MILLER

Probably hooligans.

ED

Hooligans?

Miller shoots Ed a sharp look.

MILLER

World's going to hell in a handbasket these days, isn't it? C'mon.

AT THE BACK OF THE CHURCH

Miller, trailed by Ed holding the rubber hand, finds the cloth contraption that Clumly mistook for a bird.

FROM THE AISLE

He finds the second contraption that attacked Clumly. He traces a trajectory on the air with his finger, then prowls until he comes to the seat where Clumly sat.

And there he sees it: a long white hair stark against the aged velvet of the seat cushions.

MILLER

Ed, take that backscratcher to the car and radio we're coming in.

Grinning, Ed waves good-bye with the hand and exits.

Miller tugs free a small kraft evidence envelope from his breast pocket. He deposits the hair in the envelope and slides it back into his pocket.

He stares up at the pulpit.

INT. BEN HODGE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Ben and Nick, gaunt and defeated, sit at the kitchen table while a manic Sunlight cooks breakfast.

SUNLIGHT

Got to keep up your strength—for life is a tier of veils—

Sunlight dishes out scrambled eggs, well-made and steaming.

SUNLIGHT (CONT'D)

—and “Whan that Aprill, with his shoures soote / The droghte of March hath perced to the roote—”

Nick picks up a fork, ready to eat, but Ben, barely turning his head, WHISPERS...

BEN

Don't.

Sunlight hears the hiss in Ben's voice and stands, like a crane, balanced on one leg, holding the frying pan.

SUNLIGHT

Nick?

Nick glares at the fork in his hand, then at Ben, then at the eggs. Sunlight switches his standing leg.

SUNLIGHT

Nick?

With a stab at the plate, Nick shovels a forkful of eggs into his mouth. Then another. Sunlight stares at Ben.

Ben eats one forkful of eggs, then puts the fork down precisely. With a leap, Sunlight goes back to the stove, dishes out pancakes, and brings them over as well.

SUNLIGHT

“And bathed every veyne in swich licour, / Of which vertu engendred is the flour”

By this time, Nick ravens the food almost without pause. Ben does not touch it.

Sunlight appraises Ben sitting solid and straight-backed, then sits opposite him, his face pushed close to Ben's. Nick chews and watches with hooded eyes.

SUNLIGHT

It was the custom of the kings to hear a story while they ate to pass the long dark hours. A story, preacher man.

Ben does not look away from Sunlight, who does not look away from Ben. Then Sunlight sinks back into his chair. He takes out a large silver coin and walks it along the backs of his fingers, makes it disappear and appear.

Ben closes his eyes, his hands steady on the table.

SUNLIGHT

Watch this.

A VOICE, dark and resonant, not unlike Sunlight's voice at the church, comes out of Ben.

BEN

Let us begin.

HAND

The coin walks back and forth across Sunlight's knuckles.

EXT. BARN ROOF - YEARS EARLIER

Hodge's barn, but now in all its architectural glory.

A young Ben Hodge stands on the peak shouldering a bundle of new cedar shakes while staring up at two figures struggling to climb to the top of the barn's steeple.

EXT. BARN STEEPLE

Kathleen, 20, in a bright yellow dress, hangs off the trough that circles the steeple. She shines a smile but clearly she doesn't have the strength to pull herself over.

ALONG THE PEAK

Ben YELLS.

BEN

Taggart! Taggart! She needs a hand!

THE BARN STEEPLE

A young Sunlight, unscarred, fits his shoulders underneath Kathleen's dangling feet, and Kathleen flings herself over the eave and onto the small pitched roof of the steeple.

Sunlight, with equal dexterity, heaves himself up next to her, and together they sit holding hands, feet braced, calm faces surveying the richness of the Hodge estate.

ALONG THE PEAK

Ben gazes at them perched in the sunlight like mythological lovers. He shakes his head, half-smiling, half-worried.

BEN

"And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed."

INT. HODGE'S KITCHEN

Hodge crashes to the floor as an angry Sunlight slams him with the pistol butt. Ben's food goes flying, and Nick, eyes hooded and veiled, slides away. Sunlight breathes as heavily as a dragon.

On the counter toast burns in the toaster, geysering up smoke—but no one moves. Finally, it pops up, charred.

NICK

You're sick.

SUNLIGHT

"Comfort me with apples: for I am sick of love."

Ben levers himself up to standing, a bloody welt on his cheek. Sunlight works to control himself.

SUNLIGHT

Enough of fairy tales.

A handkerchief emerges in Sunlight's other hand, which he hands to Ben. Then he points the gun at Nick.

SUNLIGHT

You—downstairs. Now!

INT. CLUMLY HOUSE - ATTIC ROOM

Michael feels the wall until he comes to the loose lath.

MICHAEL

(with sad affection)

You are so predictable.

He takes out the recorder, rewinds the tape, stops it, then plays. His face clouds over as he hears his wife converse with an escaped criminal and possible murderer.

Michael hits "stop" and sits completely still in the heat. He pops out the tape, straightens his spine.

INT. CLUMLY'S OFFICE - DAY

Miller, with his inevitable clipboard, leafs through notes. Clumly sits rock-solid behind her desk.

MILLER

Your hunch paid off, boss. On 16 August, someone moved Kathleen Paxton Hodge from—

(checking)

—Palo Alto to Pleasant Hills, over in Rochester.

CLUMLY

A week before.

MILLER

Right.

CLUMLY

So who moved her?

MILLER

They wouldn't give me—

CLUMLY

Elizabeth Paxton did it.

MILLER

Boss, you can't go accusing Elizabeth Paxton—
especially with the Mayor's investigation—

CLUMLY

So you know.

MILLER

And I know something else.

Miller takes out the evidence envelope, extracts the hair, and dangles it in the sunlight.

MILLER

I know for a fact you're not Presbyterian.

Clumly looks at the strand, then gets up from the desk. Miller puts the hair back in the envelope.

CLUMLY

Miller, I find as I get older and dumber that the rules
just don't work anymore.

Clumly moves to the door, takes her hat off the hatrack.

MILLER

You ask me, that is a dangerous thing to find.

CLUMLY

If I ask you.

MILLER

You're going to have to do what you're going to have
to do. And me, too.

There's a KNOCK on the door. Clumly opens it.

IN THE DOOR

Figlow, sour-faced as usual, cradles a pigeon with bright candy-colored feathers. He raises it, and Clumly and Miller can see a message capsule clipped to one leg, block-lettered with one word: "Clumly."

IN THE HALLWAY

Behind Figlow cluster THREE MEN, each dressed in the same suit and hat, each with a briefcase. Behind them stand FIVE MEN, dressed exactly the same but without briefcases.

MAN 1 stands squarely, flanked by MAN 2 and MAN 3.

Clumly moves into the hallway, Figlow following, Miller following Figlow. She faces Man 1 directly, then turns to Figlow and takes the capsule off the pigeon.

MAN 1
(insistent)
Chief Clumly?

Ignoring Man 1, Clumly cracks the capsule, unfurls a scroll of paper three feet long and one-inch wide, and reads it. Everyone waits, the sullen air barely stirred by the overhead fans.

With deliberate slowness, Clumly folds the paper and slips it into her breast pocket while staring down Man 1.

MAN 1
(flipping a business card)
We're from the Mayor's office.

Clumly ignores the card, turns to Miller.

CLUMLY
Let the pigs have the run of the barn. Kozlowski!

Clumly heads out into the brash sunlight.

EXT. PAXTON HOUSE - DAY

Clumly and Kozlowski wait on the doorstep. Kozlowski fidgets, Clumly simply stares out at the landscape.

KOZLOWSKI

Maybe no one's home.

CLUMLY

Maybe.

From within they hear scuffling FOOTSTEPS. At last the door swings upon like a tomb.

A SERVANT, old and chalky, says nothing but gestures for them to come in.

INT. PAXTON HOUSE

The door swings closed with a THUD. The servant shuffles off. Clumly and Kozlowski follow with ECHOING footsteps.

INT. SUNPORCH - DAY

A bed occupies the sun-porch, with other furniture at odd angles, everything makeshift. A wheelchair waits.

In the bed lies Elizabeth, her birthmark even more livid in the morning light, the sheet pulled up but exposing bare bruised shoulders. Her clothes lay in a heap on the floor.

Perched on the bed next to his mother, dressed in a bathrobe, is the Son. His clothes lay next to hers.

The servant and police officers stand at the entrance.

ELIZABETH

(without embarrassment)

My son told me to expect you.

The servant disappears.

ELIZABETH

Because of all your impertinent questions at the funeral.

The Son slides his hand over his mother's hand, and they give Clumly and Kozlowski a direct unembarrassed look.

CLUMLY

(nervously)

I was wondering, if it wouldn't be too much trouble—

ELIZABETH

(to Son)

I'll need the wheelchair.

The Son brings it over, and Elizabeth, indifferent, whips back the sheet and shifts her naked body into the wheelchair, then grabs the sheet and re-covers herself. Noticeable to everyone are the bruises on her arms and legs.

CLUMLY

Those bruises—

The Son wheels Elizabeth away, and she tosses over shoulder as she disappears down the hall....

ELIZABETH

Ah, love.

Clumly and Kozlowski trade a look.

KOZLOWSKI

(disgusted)

Ah, Christ, boss.

CLUMLY

Stay focused. And shut up.

They follow.

INT. PAXTON STUDY - DAY

Everything about the place has a grey dusty pallor to it.

ELIZABETH

(pointing to desk)

He was sitting there.

Clumly tries the rolltop desk and finds it locked.

ELIZABETH

I locked it afterwards. He always liked everything locked.

CLUMLY

Would you unlock it? Please.

The Son fishes out a key, unlocks the desk. Clumly clatters up the roll-top, gives the desktop a cursory exam.

CLUMLY

(moving to window)

But the window was open.

ELIZABETH

I believe that was locked, too.

CLUMLY

You said it was open. The breeze—it revived you. From the smell of death.

ELIZABETH

How clever you are.

CLUMLY

You closed his eyes—then what?

ELIZABETH

I called the ambulance and waited like a dutiful wife.

Clumly gives Elizabeth a square look before she speaks. A hint of a self-satisfied smile crosses Clumly's lips.

CLUMLY

Have you told your daughter—Kathleen, isn't it?—that her father is dead?

ELIZABETH

My daughter is 3,000 miles away.

CLUMLY

Have you told her husband—

SON

You don't have any right—

CLUMLY

(hand up to stop him)

Well, ex-husband because your husband arranged to get that marriage annulled—right?

ELIZABETH

I've not spoken with Taggart Hodge—

CLUMLY

(cutting her off)

Yes, of course.

Elizabeth suddenly grips the wheelchair and starts breathing heavily, her eyes rolling back. Kozlowski springs to her side, SHOUTS at the Son.

KOZLOWSKI

Call the hospital!

The Son, oddly, does not move. And neither does Clumly. Kozlowski lightly slaps Elizabeth's cheeks, and almost as quickly as she fell into the fit, she falls out of it, giving Clumly a defiant stare. Kozlowski turns to Clumly.

SON

Perhaps you should go.

The servant appears in the doorway, patient and hangdog.

IN THE HALLWAY

Clumly walks so fast that Kozlowski has to trot to keep up. She reaches the front door.

KOZLOWSKI

You think it's a murder?

Clumly stops, stares at the wood grain of the door, then opens it and has to squint against the brassy sunlight. She rockets toward the prowl car.

KOZLOWSKI

(to himself)

I don't believe you.

Kozlowski trots after Clumly.

INT. HODGE'S BARN - DAY

As with Nick before, Ben works on contraptions: wood, rope, wire, tools and so on everywhere. The gun rests on the workbench, within easy reach. The welt burns on Ben's cheek. Without fuss, Ben stops working.

SUNLIGHT

Keep working.

But Ben doesn't.

BEN

What are you doing? What is your point?

Sunlight looks at Ben. The physical and emotional pain in Ben's face gives Sunlight pause.

SUNLIGHT

(false cynicism)

You mean the point of anything? So we move into philoso[phy]—

BEN

A falling rock will still fall down even if you command it to fall up.

Ben goes back to work. So does Sunlight.

BEN

You turned Nick into a killer.

SUNLIGHT

I freed him.

BEN

You freed him without knowing him.

SUNLIGHT

It was a whim.

BEN

Then it's just arrogance.

SUNLIGHT

“Why do sinners’ ways prosper?” Is that your question?

BEN

No.

SUNLIGHT

Are you afraid of me?

Ben stops working again and gives Sunlight a sharp appraising look.

BEN

You have changed. You have changed so much.

Sunlight throws down his tools.

SUNLIGHT

(viciously)

The universe is a great machine-gun—bam bam bam bam bam—you build, build, build, but the cats eat the birds in the birdhouses and the fires eat the cities and nothing is left but bones and ashes, otherwise known as the soul.

BEN

You misunderstand.

SUNLIGHT

You’re hunting for the dragon’s belly.

BEN

You misunderstand. I am offering help.

Sunlight’s fury fills the barn with THUNDER and lightning, and Sunlight rages over the CRASHING around him.

SUNLIGHT

(snarling)

What help, preacher man? With love? Is love your weapon? “Down pour’d the heavy rain / Over the new reap’d grain; / And Misery’s increase / Is Mercy, Pity, Peace”!

For all of Sunlight's opera, Ben keeps his cool, and the CRASHING subsides, leaving them back in the dusty barn. Ben calmly picks up a hammer and goes back to what he was doing. As does Sunlight.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Michael, cane in hand, moves along confidently, the streets clearly memorized. Slung from his shoulder is a canvas bag embroidered with a sunflower.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Michael marches up the steps and into the station.

INT. POLICE STATION

Miller, at the desk, sees Michael. The Mayor's Men almost bowl Michael over as they scavenge.

MILLER

(with false enthusiasm)

Mr. Clumly!

MICHAEL

What is going on here?

Michael walks to Clumly's office door, cocks his head to listen.

MICHAEL

Who is in my wife's office?

MILLER

(taking Michael's elbow)

It's a new cleaning crew.

(guiding him)

We can talk in my office.

INT. MILLER'S OFFICE

Miller guides Michael to a chair, then sits behind his desk.

MILLER

(false cheer)

The Chief isn't here—she's out on some important business—

Michael holds up his hand to stop Miller, and Miller, a grateful look in on his face, stops lying.

Several CRASHES from the hallway, but Miller calmly refuses to notice them.

Michael pulls from his bag the tape of the dialogue and hands it to Miller.

INT. HODGE BASEMENT

Nick and Ben tied. Sunlight stands in front of them. He touches the welt on Ben's cheek, then turns and leaves.

INT. MILLER'S OFFICE

A cassette recorder on Miller's desk. Miller presses "play," then hovers over the machine, waiting.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Clumly, sweating, checks the scroll of paper as she bushwacks her way through brush.

SUNLIGHT (V.O.)

I don't care about the law. I care about justice.

CLUMLY (V.O.)

Justice! Tell that to Mickey Salvador's mother!

INT. MILLER'S OFFICE

Miller and Michael stare at the cassette player.

SUNLIGHT (V.O.)

(from recorder)

That puzzles you. I watch a man I've talked with shot down—

EXT. RAILROAD TRACKS

Clumly stumbles from the woods to find a painted square canvas tent with a wooden floor and a peaked roof hanging by a heavy chain from the railroad trestle. The tent gleams a sugar-white and the chain is bright yellow.

SUNLIGHT (V.O.)

—and I don't show one sign of remorse.

CLUMLY (V.O.)

You're a monster.

SUNLIGHT (V.O.)

And it's the monsters that make us pay attention.

INT. MILLER'S OFFICE

Miller punches it off. The commotion outside has gotten even LOUDER, with file drawers banging and heavy feet running back and forth.

MILLER

In about two seconds those investigators are gonna bang on my door to see my files.

Miller pops out the tape.

MICHAEL

Investigators?

MILLER

From the Mayor.

Touching the corner of the tape to Michael's hand, Miller gets Michael to take it.

MILLER

This can't be here. I never heard it.

A heavy KNOCK on the door, and without waiting for permission, a Mayor's Man enters. He sees Michael slipping the cassette into his bag.

MAN

What's that?

MILLER

I was just giving back to the Chief's husband a self-help tape he loaned me—did you know that stress from overwork is the biggest killer—

MAN

(interrupting)

Let me see it.

MILLER

(to Michael)

“Point Number Three: When you feel your heart race—”

MICHAEL

(finishing off)

“—time to slow down your pace.”

MILLER

(to Man)

You should try it.

MAN

We need you out here—right now.

MILLER

(with a false smile)

Duty calls.

MAN

Why are you smiling at a blind man?

MICHAEL

(rising)

I can find my own way out, thank you.

He whacks the Mayor's Man several times with his cane as he propels himself from the room. Miller just smiles as he gestures with mock politeness that the Man should leave first.

EXT. RAILROAD TRACKS

SUPER: PLACARD: “The Dialogue of Leaping”

Clumly looks up at the tent. Just as she hears the sharp high WHISTLE of a distant freight train, a rope ladder uncoils downward like a snake.

INT. TENT

A sweating HUFFING Clumly heaves herself into the swaying tent. The train WHISTLE rips the air again.

Sunlight sits cross-legged, wearing a purple turban painted with gold zodiac signs. Holding together the cloth as a clasp is Clumly's badge. The gun, of course, is gone.

SUNLIGHT

Welcome to the house of leaping.

CLUMLY

(gasping)

The train—

SUNLIGHT

That is why we have to be on track! Recorder?

Clumly, still gasping, pulls it from her pocket.

SUNLIGHT

(tenting his fingers)

The question for today—

CLUMLY

The train—

SUNLIGHT

Pay attention! The question for today is: what drives a woman like you to a life of decency?

EXT. TRACKS - NOT FAR AWAY

The freight train heaves into view, CHUGGING along.

INT. TENT

Clumly, on her hands and knees, tries to catch her breath.

CLUMLY

I can't breathe in here! You stink!

SUNLIGHT

It's hard, isn't it, being cooped up with a dead man?

CLUMLY

Look, damn it, the train—

SUNLIGHT

Wrong! You think following rules is what makes people good. Wrong!

CLUMLY

Of course we have to follow rules—it's so goddamn hot—

SUNLIGHT

What, or we'll become barbarians?

CLUMLY

Yes!

SUNLIGHT

But you don't believe that—

CLUMLY

I do!

SUNLIGHT

Maybe once, but not anymore. A life of law and order, decency and duty to a blind husband, and what's your pension? You end your days speaking to lunatics.

INT. FREIGHT TRAIN ENGINE

The ENGINEER watches the dry and brittle scenery slide by.

SUNLIGHT (V.O.)

So listen to the lunatic.

INT. TENT

Sunlight points to his turban.

SUNLIGHT

The twelve houses of the zodiac. Astrology is not trash—it's mind-reading the gods. Not to obey laws—I hate laws, I hate the hooks that obligation stabs into your flesh—

CLUMLY

Stop it—just stop it!—and answer a simple question from the idiot: why did you go to so much trouble to paint the word “love”?

The TRAIN HORN blows, suddenly MUCH closer.

SUNLIGHT

(ignoring it)

Astrology is all about knowing when to jump when the gods say “jump.”

CLUMLY

You painted “love”—

SUNLIGHT

The only obligation is to remain free—free!—so that when the universe says jump—

The TRAIN HORN blows again, this time even closer and much louder. Clumly gives a start.

CLUMLY

You want to blabber on while we get crushed—fine! This much of the universe I know—you painted “love” on a public street with Clive Paxton's paint.

A tense SILENCE at the mention of Paxton's name.

CLUMLY

What the hell kind of “jumping” is that?

SUNLIGHT

Do you wish I had painted it for you?

CLUMLY

You painted it for somebody.

SUNLIGHT

And you think that makes me not a monster?

The TRAIN HORN again, and really LOUD.

CLUMLY

Yes.

SUNLIGHT

You actually care.

CLUMLY

I think you've suffered a lot of pain. A lot.

SUNLIGHT

And that touches the policeman's law-abiding heart.

Clumly peers out of the tent.

INT. ENGINE

Through the leaves and haze the engineer can just make out something square and white hanging above the tracks ahead.

INT. TENT

SUNLIGHT

Go ahead—jump. I'm fine.

CLUMLY

Come with me! Turn yourself in.

SUNLIGHT

Go—I'm waiting.

Clumly, at the tent's door, looks down at the sharp gravel, the tent tilting wildly.

SUNLIGHT (O.C.)

(mock Scarlett O'Hara)

Go ahead—save yourself. I'll be fine.

EXT. GRAVEL BED

Clumly lands with a THUMP. She looks up, and the train looms like a giant.

Clumly heaves herself up and runs toward it.

INT. ENGINE

The engineer sees a crazed police officer running towards him even as he leans all his weight against the brake, the SQUEAL of metal against metal shattering the thick hot air.

EXT. TRACKS

The train grinds to a heavy stop opposite a profusely sweating Clumly. Man and machine stare at each other like exhausted warriors.

The engineer clammers down.

ENGINEER

Get that thing out of my way!

CLUMLY

There's a fugitive—

ENGINEER

I don't care if it's the Lennon Sisters on crank, get that goddamn thing down! I got a schedule!

The TRAIN CREW comes running.

ENGINEER

(to YOUNG MAN)

Check if there's any idiot up there.

The young man runs to the rope ladder, followed by Clumly.

AT THE ROPE LADDER

The young man scrambles up.

CLUMLY

He may be dangerous—

But too late—the young man flings himself into the tent, pops back out holding a wooden box wrapped in a chain.

YOUNG MAN

Like a goddamn outhouse in there.

Scurries down the ladder.

YOUNG MAN

(handing box to Clumly)

Found this.

Clumly turns and sees crew members climbing up the bank to the trestle, one with a bolt-cutter in his hand.

Behind her Clumly hears the CRASH of the tent as they cut the chain.

CLUMLY

Wait, that's evidence!

ENGINEER

Get it the fuck off my tracks.

The WHISTLE splinters the air.

FROM THE TRAIN

As the train passes the wreckage of the tent, several CREW MEMBERS see Clumly smash the wooden box with a heavy rock.

BY THE TRACKS

With sharp angry movements, Clumly pulls her gun and badge out of the box's wreckage, jams the gun into the holster, jabs the badge's pint through her shirt pocket. With a GROWL she heaves the chain into the brush.

CLUMLY

You son-of-a-bitch!

As if to mock her, the distant train WHISTLE drifts through the dry sluggish air.

EXT. HODGE HOUSE - LATER

Sunlight rockets up to the house in Ben's pickup.

INT. HODGE BASEMENT

Sunlight, agitated, clomps down the stairs and stares at the two men hanging there. Their eyes stare back at him, tired and frightened and, in Nick's case, full of anger.

Taking a knife from his pocket, Sunlight cuts them both down, and they collapse. Sunlight gently lifts each of them to their feet, then guides them up the stairs.

INT. HODGE KITCHEN

Nick and Ben sit at the table, their gags gone, Nick like a cornered animal. A light shines in Ben's eyes.

At the sink, Sunlight fills a bowl with water. He grabs dishtowels, picks up the bowl, and faces them.

Sunlight kneels in front of Ben, puts the bowl and cloths down, and carefully undoes the laces of Ben's boots.

NICK

What the fuck are you doing?

BEN

Taggart.

Sunlight does not stop unlacing the boots.

BEN

Taggart.

NICK

Who's Taggart? You know him?

Sunlight wrestles one boot off.

BEN

(ignoring Nick)

Taggart?

NICK

You know this shit?

BEN

(ignoring Nick)

Taggart—you don't need to do this anymore.

Sunlight wrenches the other boot off. He pulls the bowl to him, dips a cloth into it, and gently washes Ben's right foot.

BEN

This is my brother.

Ben touches Sunlight's hair while Sunlight, head bowed, continues to wash Ben's feet.

Nick glares at Ben with a face twisted by confusion.

NICK

The lawyer? The one that fucked up?

Ben nods yes. Nick shoots out of his chair.

NICK

(to Sunlight)

You're the fucking angel this guy used to talk about all the time.

(to Ben)

Isn't he? The youngest. Taggart Hodge, the big boo-hoo tragedy with his wife and kids.

Sunlight finishes Ben's feet, stays kneeling, his head bowed.

NICK

(to Ben)

You knew, and you didn't do a fucking thing.

(to Sunlight)

You always said the next one, the third one, wouldn't be an accident. You're goddamn right it won't.

Without changing position, Sunlight flashes the gun at Nick.

BEN

Nick, sit down. It will be all right.

NICK

It's not going to be all right!

SUNLIGHT

Nick, sit.

Sunlight stands.

SUNLIGHT

It's almost over. We'll be gone soon. Then you'll be as free as a murder of crows—they will never have you.

BEN

You and Kathleen on the roof of the barn steeple.

Sunlight turns a calculated face to Ben, gun pointed.

SUNLIGHT

(with a drawl)

Old preacher man, I don't know who yer talkin' about.

(to Nick)

Want yer feet washed, sonny?

NICK

You're worse than any fucking jail ever would've been.

SUNLIGHT

The young these days—give you no gratitude at all.

Taking careful aim, Sunlight shoots at Nick, but out pops the standard magician's bouquet. He tosses what is now clearly a fake gun to Nick while pulling the real gun from his waistband.

SUNLIGHT

Let's eat.

INT. CLUMPLY HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

Michael perches on the couch in the dim living room, swaying slightly, the cassette tape in his left hand. In his right, a gun. On the coffee table in front of him is a half-empty bottle and a wine glass.

From outside he hears a car pull into the driveway.

MICHAEL

So they've come at last, those ungrateful sons-a-bitches.

EXT. HOUSE

Clumly pulls up in her prowl car, gets out. Her uniform is dirtied, her face sun-reddened. She walks stooped over.

ON THE PORCH

She shuffles up the stairs to the front door, pats her pockets for the house keys: nowhere.

INT. HOUSE

Michael grips the gun more tightly.

EXT. HOUSE PORCH

One last slap at the empty pockets.

CLUMLY

Damn, damn, damn!

She rings the doorbell.

INT. HOUSE

The doorbell ECHOES, but Michael does not move.

EXT. PORCH

Clumly waits, head tilted, listening. Nothing.

CLUMLY

Where the hell is he?

RINGS the doorbell again. She can hear the faint CHIME inside the house. She POUNDS on the door.

INT. HOUSE

Michael hears the POUNDING, does not move.

MICHAEL

(to himself)

You can pound like the hammers of hell, you bastards.

EXT. PORCH

Clumly walks down the porch steps and into the alley between the house and the garage.

IN THE ALLEYWAY

Clumly squeezes through towards the back yard.

IN THE BACK YARD

The back yard is rank and overgrown. Clumly appears on top of the fence and does an inelegant dismount onto the grass.

CLUMLY

Too old for this.

Clumly trudges up the steps, opens the unlatched screen door, then opens the unlocked back door.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Michael hears the back door open, hears FOOTSTEPS move heavily towards the living room. With an unsteady dignity, Michael stands, gun pointed at the ceiling.

MICHAEL

(loudly)

Whoever you are, I intend to protect—

Without quite meaning to, Michael squeezes the trigger, and the shot EXPLODES in the small room. Plaster rains down.

Clumly appears in the living room door.

MICHAEL

(slurred and loud)

'Smy duty to love, honor, and o[bey]—

Another BLAST, and this time the kick knocks Michael onto the couch as more plaster showers. The coffee table with the glass and bottle goes flying.

MICHAEL

Oh shit.

(liking the word)

Shit, shit, shit, shit, shit—

Clumly leaps to the couch and wrenches the gun free.

CLUMLY

Michael! Michael! It's me!

Clumly guides Michael's hand to her face, and Michael calms as his fingers explore the familiar facescape.

MICHAEL

I thought it was the Mayor's thugs—

CLUMLY

Not by a long shot.

MICHAEL

Long shot. Bang!

He raises his other hand, the one holding the tape.

MICHAEL

Miller says they might relieve you—

CLUMLY

Sit up.

She sits Michael up straight, the plaster CRUNCHING. She puts the gun on the floor, takes the tape, puts it on the floor, and holds Michael's hands.

Gently, she kisses him on the cheek, leaving a negative of her lips on his plastered face.

CLUMLY

I will be relieved.

MICHAEL

I would've been just as happy if you'd sold insurance.

Michael leans into Clumly.

CLUMLY

Insurance?

MICHAEL

Any kind.

Clumly leans her cheek against the top of Michael's head.

INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE - NEXT DAY

Peeper, Uphill, and Moss at one end of the conference table, Clumly at the other. In front of Peeper, a bound report. Peeper slides it towards Clumly.

INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE - RECEPTION ROOM

On the Receptionist's hands as she slits open a letter. From behind Mayor's door she hears muffled ROARS.

Another letter slit open. Then the door opens. Clumly, hat in hand, comes through, chased by the Mayor's VOICE.

MAYOR

Don't walk out on me!

Clumly calmly closes the door. Silliiitttt.

CLUMLY

(putting on hat)

Don't think I'll be getting the parade.

Clumly walks to the top of the stairs, then pauses.

A look over her shoulder at the Receptionist, who continues to slice, then back down the stairs.

A little leap to the first step, then another little leap to the second, and then all the way down to the landing.

FROM THE RECEPTIONIST'S DESK

With each small leap, the Receptionist watches more and more of Clumly disappear until there is just the hat, and then that disappears as well.

INT. POLICE STATION

Ed, Figlow, Miller, Kozlowski, and PIEMAN, 30s (Salvador's replacement), give Clumly a funereal stare as she enters. She walks to her portrait, unhooks it from the wall, tucks it under her arm, and heads back to the door.

At the door, she salutes everyone. They salute back.

EXT. CLUMLY BACK YARD - EVENING

From the steps Clumly surveys the rank state of nature.

She rips off her clip-on tie, drops it like a dead snake on the steps, unbuttons her shirt collar, then marches to the little shed at the back of the yard.

INT. SHED

Dry-rotted, cobwebbed, a rat's nest of tools. Clumly unhooks a scythe and wrestles it into the fading light.

IN THE YARD

Clumly scythes the tall thick grass and vines. She is clumsy at it but does not stop for anything.

Tears stream down as the grass flies until, so blinded by tears and sweat, she stops, breathing heavily, her clothes flecked, her hair unpinned and flying, completely alone.

INT. CAR - NEXT DAY

Clumly, now dressed as a civilian, drives in her own car through parched countryside along the Interstate.

EXT. PLEASANT HILLS RESIDENTIAL AGENCY

Clumly pulls through a wrought-iron gate onto a well-maintained driveway. She passes a MAN in a drab uniform raking the same spot on the front lawn over and over again, never varying his rhythm. The grass has been torn away.

IN THE PARKING LOT

She parks facing a huge many-gabled house in good repair.

ON THE PORCH

To the right of the huge double doors is a brass plaque: "Pleasant Hills Residential Agency." The stained-glass panels gleam, the porch itself sanded and re-painted.

Clumly looks out over the green/gold landscape of the Genesee River, then opens the doors and disappears inside.

INT. PLEASANT HILLS - ROOM OF KATHLEEN PAXTON HODGE

DR. BURNS, 40s, bearded, glasses, with an Irish accent, stands with Clumly outside a wooden door. They peer through a window into a room with soothing blue walls, a set of high bright windows, comfortable furniture, carpeting—and Kathleen.

A small white card to the left of the door states: "K. Paxton Hodge."

BURNS (O.C.)

There's no way to know.

Through the window Clumly sees the woman we have seen before, though she is much changed.

BURNS

There's simply no way to know what's going on inside since she's completely catatonic.

IN THE ROOM

Wearing a bright yellow dress, Kathleen sits rigidly still, her back jammed against the wall, her eyes lifeless. Some of her short grey hair has fallen out over her temples. If anything, she looks like a breathing corpse.

OUTSIDE THE DOOR

Clumly stares through the window.

BURNS

We feed her, we bathe her, we rub lotion into her skin,
we play music, we give her physical therapy—

Clumly turns a stricken and saddened face to Burns.

BURNS

Let me escort you to your car.

IN THE ENTRANCE LOBBY

Clumly and Burns walk to the front door that had Clumly entered. A lone NURSE sits at a desk guarding the well-appointed lobby.

ON THE PORCH

The man raking is still there. The air fills with the SAWING of cicadas.

BURNS

There's more we could do—various shock therapies,
for instance—and maybe in five years we could get
her to wave hello. But what ails her—

(tapping his temple)

—it's not in here—

(tapping his heart)

—it's in here.

CLUMLY

That's not very scientific.

Burns pulls a handkerchief out his pocket, pulls off his glasses and polishes them.

BURNS

True, “deep tremendous sorrow” is not listed as a
“scientific” diagnosis—

He puts his glasses back on.

BURNS

But I think it’s why Kathleen’s all folded in on herself.

He methodically folds the handkerchief and puts it away.

BURNS

I’m sure you know something of her story. Such as
when she burned the house down with her two sons
in it.

CLUMLY

I know she was married to a lawyer.

BURNS

Which her father annulled—didn’t approve of their
elopement.

CLUMLY

Clive Paxton was a hard man.

BURNS

From what I’ve gathered, Clive Paxton was a
monster.

CLUMLY

Most wouldn’t disagree.

BURNS

And the husband—he was here. Twice.

A troubled look passes over Burns’ face.

CLUMLY

What?

BURNS

I thought he was going to kill me. But then he would
stand at the window—that little one we looked
through—and cry. And mutter. For hours.

CLUMLY

Who gave him permission to see Kathleen?

BURNS

I received a phone call from Elizabeth Paxton allowing it, just after Kathleen was transferred here. As if she wanted him to. As if she knew he was going to be here.

They both look up at the man raking because he SHOUTS and turns ninety degrees, then continues with the raking. Burns gives Clumly an embarrassed look.

BURNS

It is not easy being a human.

The man rakes with a vengeance.

EXT. PAXTON HOUSE - VERANDAH

Elizabeth, wheelchaired, dressed in a light summer dress, watches Clumly get out of her car. Clumly steps into the shade harbor cut by the verandah roof, comes to the verandah steps.

CLUMLY

The Paxtons and the Hodges—like two big fish in one small pond. Taggart and Kathleen eloped with your help.

ELIZABETH

Someone had to get out alive.

CLUMLY

But they didn't.

Elizabeth pivots her wheelchair.

ELIZABETH

Chief Clumly—let's finish this up.

INT. PAXTON STUDY

Clive Paxton in his chair. Sunlight slips in through the window.

ELIZABETH (V.O.)

The annulment drove his daughter crazy and killed the heart of a fine young man. Standard operating procedure for my husband.

Sunlight, crying, pleads with Paxton.

ELIZABETH (V.O.)

I left the window open for him—

Paxton gives Sunlight the finger, then meets Sunlight's livid eyes with his own dead eyes.

ELIZABETH (V.O.)

He said he wanted to patch things up with Clive, that the time for hate was over—but Clive probably said something—

Sunlight's hands around Paxton's throat.

EXT. PAXTON VERANDAH

Clumly stands, simply looking at Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH

You'll never prove any of it.

CLUMLY

Why should I? Sentences already been handed out. Love crushed, mothers sleeping with their sons—and we think we're so civilized.

For a heartbeat Elizabeth loses her stone composure, and her face sags under a tremendous sadness.

Clumly moves down the steps back to her car.

CLUMLY

I don't know my jurisdictions anymore, and I don't know from hunger about rules and rights. Some would say that makes me a free man, so to speak. You should visit your daughter soon.

EXT. HODGE BARN

Sunlight stands in the yard staring at the ruined steeple. Behind him Ben's pick-up truck is loaded.

ELIZABETH (V.O.)

They were so beautiful. They were—

EXT. PAXTON VERANDAH

ELIZABETH

—so, so beautiful.

Clumly, unmoved, watches Elizabeth regain her stone face, then turns to go to her car.

EXT. STONY POINT CEMETERY

Clumly stands in the Hodge family plot. The Congressman's granite tombstone dominates, and all the other tombstones orbit his, just as they had done when they were all alive.

Clumly faces two small engraved headstones. Both of them have been painted completely white. Clumly kneels, runs her hand along the incised letters of the names of Taggart and Kathleen's two sons, lays gentle hands on the stones.

EXT. CLUMLY HOUSE - DAY

Tucked in the mailbox Clumly finds what looks like a parking ticket. Pulling it, she reads the word "VIOLATION" scrawled in black crayon across the top, and under it, in child-like letters, the invitation to the third dialogue.

Clumly pockets the "ticket."

INT. HODGE'S BASEMENT

Ben and Nick hang, but without gags. Sunlight sits on the stairs.

SUNLIGHT

(to Nick)

We'll be gone soon, my pet. Our brother here will drive us far away to Neverland.

(to Ben)
Won't you?

BEN
I said I would help.

NICK
Why do you have to do this?

SUNLIGHT
(to Ben)
Always the Samaritan.

NICK
(more forceful)
Why?!

SUNLIGHT
Do you have a choice about breathing, boy? Opera
singers gotta sing.
(stands)
Stretch yer legs, me hearties. The time for leaping
has arrived.

Sunlight exits.

EXT. PAXTON BARN - EVENING

SUPER: PLACARD: "The Dialogue of Ends"

Clumly pulls up in her car, gets out. She walks toward the barn, and as she does, a light inside the silo glows, shining through the window of a small door. She veers toward the silo.

EXT. SILO

Through the dusty glass pane Clumly sees a flickering light. She opens the door.

INT. SILO

A kerosene lamp glows from a chair suspended ten feet off the ground.
Sunlight's VOICE REVERBERATES from everywhere.

SUNLIGHT

You've come unarmed.

CLUMLY

And without the tape recorder.

SUNLIGHT

And no uniform. You are much changed.

CLUMLY

Not a bit.

A long red cloth begins to unroll from the chair, but Clumly SPEAKS loudly.

CLUMLY

I don't care anymore, Sunlight, truth be told. And I don't care about the tricks. I saw your wife today.

The cloth stops, skewed, and Clumly, in the warm kerosene light, can see the fishline.

CLUMLY

I saw the graves of your sons.

Sunlight steps out of the shadows, dropping the line that led up to the chair. In his hands, the gun.

CLUMLY

It's over.

SUNLIGHT

If only you knew.

His hand shaking, Sunlight BARKS out an order that carries no conviction.

SUNLIGHT

Move!

CLUMLY

Look, friend—

At the word "friend" the tremor in Sunlight's hand seems to take over his entire body. Only with great effort does he bring himself under control

CLUMLY

You need help.

SUNLIGHT

(laughing)

Who knew "leap" would mean Hannah Clumly?

Sunlight, still LAUGHING, waves the gun, pointing for Clumly to move. Clumly shrugs, moves toward the door. Sunlight follows.

SUNLIGHT

You're married, are you not?

CLUMLY

Yes.

SUNLIGHT

And how is the husband?

Clumly turns at the door.

CLUMLY

Too much duty.

SUNLIGHT

Just as bad as too much love. Go.

EXT. SILO

They step through and walk away from the silo, Sunlight behind Clumly, gun in her back.

SUNLIGHT

My last trick. Remember Lot's wife? If you look over your shoulder, the silo will burn.

CLUMLY

(looking over shoulder)

Don't be a fool.

But Clumly's look seems to make the silo burst into flames, and they stand there bathed in hot orange light.

Clumly can also see Elizabeth, her Son, and the servant come out and stand on the verandah.

Sunlight seems transfixed by the fire, and for the third time since she's known him, Clumly makes a move. She grabs the gun, and it easily slides out of his hand.

Sunlight turns a face to her showing as much pleasure as it does wildness.

SUNLIGHT

Even though you're out of your jurisdiction, I should never underestimate you.

Pointing to the silo...

SUNLIGHT

A demonstration. You see, your next move is to let me go. Otherwise, I will look at the house and—

CLUMLY

You wouldn't.

Clumly looks at the three yellowed figures on the verandah, then at Sunlight, and hands him the gun.

SUNLIGHT

And your car keys.

Which Clumly also gives him. Sunlight turns to go to the car, then turns back.

SUNLIGHT

Between acts of love and acts of hate there is only gloomy confusion.

CLUMLY

You think too much.

SUNLIGHT

That is my crime. Yours, too.

He gets into the car and drives off.

EXT. VERANDAH

CLUMLY

I need your phone.

SON

The line's been cut.

The four watch the flames from the silo leap to the barn.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

The bright headlights of three fire trucks pick out a figure walking alone toward Spartan as the trucks race to the Paxton property. In the distance, sparks rise up from the burning silo and barn.

Clumly watches the trucks' red lights recede, then keeps walking towards the faint glow of light on the horizon that is Spartan, the sky overhead crowded with stars.

INT. HODGE BARN - NIGHT

Ben sits inside the old Road Ranger, the engine GROWL savage in the hollow barn. He flicks on the lights, puts the machine in gear, and moves out.

IN THE YARD

Ben opens the slide door in back and Nick, silent as a shadow, floats in. Sunlight hesitates.

NICK

Come on.

Sunlight nods, as if agreeing to something, and moves to the truck. He stands face to face with Ben, looking intently into Ben's eyes.

BEN

Come on, brother—we need to move.

Sunlight continues to look into Ben's eyes, and Ben returns the gaze without effort. Ben cups his hands, and Sunlight, holding onto Ben's shoulder, steps into the hands and up into the truck.

Ben goes to slide the door shut, but Sunlight stops it.

SUNLIGHT

Leave it open—for the air.

EXT. ROAD

The lights of the Road Ranger cut the darkness as Ben moves through the gears and picks up speed.

INT. TRUCK CAB

Ben peers out at the road ahead of him. The speedometer reads 60 miles per hour. Ben SINGS over the engine's HOWL.

On the other side of a crest Ben sees a small town, houselights off, a neon light glowing in the general store, and a stop light that turns red as he looks at it.

He hits the brake and gears down, bringing the truck to a stop just as the light turns green.

At the intersection, a sign: "Bridge Ahead" with a right-hand arrow.

Taking a right, Ben goes up the gears, picking up speed.

EXT. ROAD

Sunlight and Nick stand at the intersection and watch Ben's truck disappear. Without a word, Nick melts away.

INT. TRUCK CAB

The HOWL of the engine is deafening.

BEN

(shouting)

"Where is thy brother? And he said, I know, for I am my brother's keeper."

ON THE BRIDGE

The truck speeds onto the bridge, then takes a sharp right.

ON THE ROAD

Sunlight watches the truck's tail lights veer right as Ben drives the truck through the guardrails. Several beats of silence, then Sunlight hears and sees the EXPLOSION as Ben's truck slams into the bottom of the gorge.

Tears course down Sunlight's face, flickering red from the neon light of the general store.

INT. CLUMLY HOUSE

As Clumly lets herself in, she finds all the lights in the house on—and an unusual smell.

CLUMLY
(sniffing)

Michael?

INT. KITCHEN

On the counter is propped a Braille cookbook, and around Michael are cooking utensils he has not used in ages. Flour, bowls, spatulas—a kitchen in full use. In the background, barely audible, is the TICKING of a timer.

CLUMLY
Bread?

MICHAEL
(smiling)
Look in the refrigerator.

Clumly looks: a six-pack of her favorite beer.

MICHAEL
I went for a little shopping today.

Clumly closes the refrigerator and looks at Michael. Tears course down her face. Michael walks to Clumly and touches her face with his floured fingers, leaving a white streak.

MICHAEL
What is it?

The phone RINGS, and they both jump.

CLUMLY
(wiping face)

I'll get it.

(into phone)

Clumly.

The way Clumly falls SILENT makes Michael take notice.

CLUMLY
Okay. Thanks.

Clumly hangs up.

CLUMLY
Ben Hodge—drove off the Lancaster bridge. The
Staties think it might be a suicide. Miller's going over
to check it out.

Michael sits down, his face downhearted.

MICHAEL
I don't believe it. Ben Hodge had a heart as big as all
outdoors—I heard him preach once—

CLUMLY
(taking Michael's hands)
Michael, Sunlight was Taggart Hodge.

MICHAEL
(information sinks in)
Oh—oh—

CLUMLY
I'll bet Sunlight was in the truck—but they won't find
him.

MICHAEL
Why would Ben try to kill his brother?

CLUMLY
Ben was too hungry to save his brother's soul.

The timer GOES OFF, but for a few seconds neither moves. Finally, Clumly
grabs a pot holder, opens the stove, and slides out the bread.

MICHAEL
(sadly)
How does it look?

CLUMLY
(trying not to cry)
It looks absolutely wonderful.

Clumly takes it out, slides it out of the pan onto a wire rack. Without preamble, Clumly begins to cry without restraint.

Michael goes to Clumly, holds her hands and wipes her face.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Figlow at the front desk listens to the scanner, leaning in close. Its staticky VOICES ECHO off the hard walls. As he listens, he SLAMS the desk with an open hand.

FIGLOW
Ha! Fuckers.

He gets up and goes back to the cell block.

IN THE CELL BLOCK

Figlow nods hello to Pieman. Two of the cells have prisoners, each one asleep.

FIGLOW
They just got Nick Slater, the bastard.

PIEMAN
Well, good.

FIGLOW
Anything here?

PIEMAN
The firebug there's setting fires in his dreams, and the D&D over there puked in his shoes and fell over snoring.

FIGLOW

Another perfect day in paradise. Buzz me if you need anything.

AT THE DESK

Figlow riffles through some papers when his head jerks up and he sniffs. His face loses its usual disgusted look.

AT FIGLOW'S HOLSTER

Figlow's right hand slides towards his gun, then wraps itself tightly around the gun butt, finger on the trigger.

AT THE DESK

Figlow whips around, gun in hand, and sees Sunlight in front of the filing cabinets, tilting crazily as if his shoes were nailed to the floor. He wears a crazy smile and his face is slick with tears.

He does a funny wave with his hands to show they are empty, that he is surrendering, but it comes too late. Figlow shoots him through the heart.

EXT. HOLLOW GROVE CEMETERY - SEVERAL DAYS LATER

SUPER: PLACARD: "Winged Figure Carrying Sacrificial Animal"

Clumly and Michael stand on a small hill in a grove of trees above a burial party in the Hodge family plot. A gentle breeze RUSTLES the dry leaves.

Clumly hears a car PULL UP and STOP, the SLAM of the door, FOOTSTEPS on the asphalt, then NOTHING as the approaching feet hit the well-tended lawn.

Miller joins them.

MILLER

Afternoon.

MICHAEL

Officer Miller.

CLUMLY

(lightly)

Hello Dominic.

MILLER

(laughing)

No one but my mom has ever called me that!

MICHAEL

He was a good saint.

MILLER

Chief—

CLUMLY

(to Michael)

Nobody from the Paxtons came.

MILLER

Chief—

CLUMLY

I'm not chief anymore.

MILLER

Chief—

MICHAEL

Hannah, answer the man.

(lightly)

You tell her, Dominic!

MILLER

Chief, talk to you for a minute?

Michael pats Clumly's arm, releasing her. Miller and Clumly move several steps away. Clumly stares down at the funeral party.

MILLER

I spoke with the Mayor, and the D.A.

Miller waits for a response from Clumly, gets none.

MILLER

They're not going to press anything. You'll keep your pension.

CLUMLY

Michael will be relieved.

(turns to Miller)

You didn't have to. Thanks.

MILLER

You're welcome. And yes I did.

Clumly looks back to the funeral.

CLUMLY

Nick Slater?

MILLER

Kind of becomes the fall guy, doesn't he? Salvador's death, escaping from prison, aiding a prisoner. Not to mention the woman in the car.

(pointing to caskets)

Not like we can lock him up again.

CLUMLY

(staring at caskets)

And Figlow?

MILLER

Gonna get cleared, too. Everything justified.

Clumly simply nods.

MILLER

It might even get a smile out of him.

CLUMLY

Don't hold your breath.

The MINISTER raises his arm and makes a sign of the cross.

MILLER

Well, I just wanted you to know.

CLUMLY

(not looking at Miller)

I appreciate it.

(looks at Miller)

I really appreciate it.

Michael joins them. A thin WHIRRING sound reaches them, and they can see the caskets being lowered by the winch.

AT THE GRAVESIDE

The caskets disappear bit by bit as the people graveside step up and throw in flowers and handfuls of dirt.

ON THE HILL

The three of them watch as the people file away.

MICHAEL

Blessed are the meek.

CLUMLY

We are gonna need it.

MILLER

Amen.

FADE OUT

FADE IN:

SUPER: PLACARD: "All this, though some may consider it strange, mere fiction, is the truth."

FADE OUT