

Maxine  
by  
Nick Kahn

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FADE IN:

INT. RICHARD'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

We're inside a small and funky studio apartment. The apartment is several floors up with a view of the Los Angeles skyline.

KNOCK KNOCK

RICHARD, a handsome but disheveled 25 year old man with facial hair approaches the front door and looks through the peephole.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

POV - THROUGH PEEPHOLE

Two plain clothed detectives are waiting anxiously in the hallway. One is short and mean looking, this is DETECTIVE GARY. The other officer is taller and older, this is STONE.

INT. RICHARD'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Richard SIGHS and begins to open the door slowly. The door is quickly pushed open by Detective Gary. Gary takes a few steps inside and scrutinizes the inside of the apartment with his prying gaze.

RICHARD

Hey!

STONE

Oh don't mind him, Detective Gary's a bit of a free-spirit.

Stone WHISTLES and Detective Gary steps back into the doorway and stands uncomfortably close to Richard. He stares at Richard with a furious gaze.

DETECTIVE GARY

Look asshole, we know you had something to do with that woman's death. Out of curiosity, of all things, why did you use windex?

RICHARD

I don't know what you're talking about officer.

STONE

The evidence stacked up against you kid.

(Beat)

I know what kind of influence she can have on people.

(Beat)

Just confess and we can make a bargain with you.

RICHARD

If you have so much evidence, arrest me.

DETECTIVE GARY

We know you've been sleeping with her. What do you think about that?

RICHARD

Fascinating, but if you'll excuse me, I'm kinda busy right now.

DETECTIVE GARY

Come on asshole, we know you did it. Just confess and we'll take it easy on you.

RICHARD

I didn't kill anyone.

DETECTIVE GARY

You aren't fooling us with your bullshit.

STONE

Trust me, all you have to do is cooperate with us and we'll make sure you're alright.

RICHARD

I'm cooperating right now, aren't I?

DETECTIVE GARY

(Under Breath)

Douche bag.

RICHARD

(To Detective Gary)

What?

STONE

Well, since you are being so cooperative, maybe you could help us out with something.

(Beat)

You recognize this?

Stone reaches into his pocket and produces a plastic bag that contains a small pistol. The pistol has a pearl handle with a rose printed on it. Stone pulls the gun out of the bag and presents it to Richard.

Richard looks at the gun intensely.

We hear a loud GUNSHOT and Richard shudders.

CUT TO:

INT. RICHARD'S APARTMENT - DAY

Richard is well shaven now. He's slumped over his desk, asleep and fully clothed. His laptop is open and there are printed pages strewn about the studio's living area, some are crumpled. A cell phone on the coffee table begins to RING.

RICHARD

Hmmm?

Richard awakens to the phone RING. As he stands up, several pages of text fall to the ground from his lap. He picks up the papers and answers the phone. He fumbles with the papers as he talks.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

(Into phone wearily)

Hello?

We hear the voice of MARTY come from the telephone. He speaks quickly with a shrill voice.

MARTY

(from phone)

Richard, where the hell have you been? I've been calling you all morning.

RICHARD

(into phone)

Marty?

MARTY  
(from phone)  
Yeah, it's Marty...rise and shine  
beautiful. Please tell me we're  
going to make this deadline.

RICHARD  
(into phone)  
We'll make it.

Richard's focus now lies solely in the papers he's reading.

MARTY  
(from phone)  
Don't tell me that if it's not  
true. Remember what happened the  
last time you told me we'd make it  
on time?

RICHARD  
(into phone)  
Uh-huh.

MARTY  
(from phone)  
You can't just blow this one off.  
The future of your career depends  
on it.

RICHARD  
(into phone)  
Uh-huh.

MARTY  
(from phone)  
Don't you have any idea how  
important this is? Most writers  
would kill to write a story for  
Playboy.

RICHARD  
(from phone)  
Marty, it's done. I finished it  
last night.

MARTY  
(from phone)  
Oh you're beautiful. And to think  
I ever doubted you...

RICHARD  
(into phone)  
You're always doubting me.

MARTY

(from phone)

You're right. It's because you're the slowest goddamn writer I've ever known. In fact just last night I says to my wife: I says if Richard can't finish this story in time I might just have to kill someone. And then she says...

RICHARD

(into phone)

Uh-huh.

Richard is barely listening to Marty's rant. Marty's voice becomes inaudible as Richard leaves his phone on the coffee table. He passes the bed on his way to the kitchen, and there is a beautiful young blond woman sprawled across the bed, asleep. This is LILLY. He glances at her while he turns on the coffee machine.

He returns to the living room and picks up the phone.

MARTY

(from phone)

...and now I check under the toilet seat every time...

RICHARD

(into phone)

Uh-huh, that's great Marty. Listen, I've gotta make some final touches to the story, but I'll bring it by your office later today...maybe.

MARTY

(from phone)

Maybe?!?! You're going to give me a goddamn...

Richard hangs up the phone and reclines on the couch examining his papers. He smiles to himself. Lilly appears behind him, and leans in to kiss him on the neck.

LILLY

Good morning.

RICHARD

Oh, good morning.

Lilly is now reading over Richard's shoulder. She chuckles, and Richard notices.

LILLY  
I see you finished it. Did you get  
any sleep?

RICHARD  
Maybe a little.

Richard turns his body so it's more difficult for Lilly to read. Lilly turns to the kitchen to pour some coffee.

RICHARD (CONT'D)  
But it's still not very good  
considering how much I suffered for  
it.

LILLY  
Oh come on, it wasn't that bad.

Lilly returns with a cup of coffee for Richard and sits down.

RICHARD  
Yeah, says the girl who just sleeps  
while I work all the time.

LILLY  
You don't even know the meaning of  
hard work. All you do is sit at  
your desk and complain.

RICHARD  
Speak for yourself. You've been on  
vacation for like the last month.

LILLY  
First, it's only been five days.  
Second, I leave on Friday for  
another month on site.

RICHARD  
Excuses excuses. You have an  
excuse for everything.

LILLY  
Not everything.

Lilly puts down her cup of coffee and straddles Richard while he reads.

RICHARD  
Oh?

CUT TO:

INT. MARTY'S OFFICE (RECEPTION) - DAY

Richard and Lilly enter the office and approach the attractive 35 year old RECEPTIONIST at the desk.

RECEPTIONIST  
Hey handsome.

RICHARD  
Hello...is Marty ready for me?

RECEPTIONIST  
He'll just be a couple minutes.

There is YELLING coming from behind the office door. The voice gets louder as the sound of FOOTSTEPS approach the door. The door opens to reveal Marty, a short dark haired man with a bald spot on the top of his head. He's holding a cell phone to his ear.

MARTY  
(Yelling into phone)  
I don't give a shit what you do!  
In fact I'd prefer it if you went  
to hell!

Marty hangs up his phone and turns to the receptionist.

MARTY (CONT'D)  
(to receptionist)  
Send them in.

RECEPTIONIST  
(To Richard)  
Marty will see you now.

RICHARD  
(To receptionist)  
Are you sure?

MARTY  
(to Richard and Lilly)  
Just get your ass in here Skippy,  
I've got some good news for you.

Marty heads back in through his office door, Richard and Lilly follow.

INT. MARTY'S OFFICE - DAY

Marty takes a seat behind a big oak desk. Richard and Lilly occupy the seats in front of him. There's a half empty glass of Scotch on the desk. Marty is staring vacantly above Richard's head.

RICHARD  
So what's the news?

MARTY  
(Still staring behind  
Richard)  
I just had it installed today,  
isn't it beautiful? I think it  
adds a well needed touch of Zazz to  
my office.

RICHARD  
Zazz?

Richard turns around to see a giant portrait of a nude woman with her legs spread.

MARTY  
Zazz.

RICHARD  
(to Marty)  
A little crass, but it really  
speaks to your character.  
(To Lilly)  
Are you seeing this Lilly?

LILLY  
(looking at the painting)  
Very classy Martin, what's your  
wife think?

MARTY  
That IS my wife.

LILLY  
(blushing)  
Oh.

Marty and Richard chuckle to themselves and share a glance.

MARTY  
Alright, let's get to business.  
First off, congratulations. Your  
story's a big hit.

Marty stands up, shakes Richards hand, and then sits down again. He picks a cigar from a box on his desk, and gestures an offer to both Richard and Lilly, they don't respond. Marty places the cigar in his mouth.

MARTY (CONT'D)

You've got job offers coming in  
from all over the place.

Marty picks up all sorts of letters from the desk and starts looking through them one by one. Richard smiles with excitement.

MARTY (CONT'D)

There's this one for PBS.  
(tosses the paper in the  
trash bin)  
But there's no pay.  
(beat)  
Then there's this one.  
(He trashes it)  
This one sucks.  
(He throws all the papers  
in the trash  
dramatically)  
You know what? They all suck.  
(beat)  
Except for this one.

RICHARD

What about the ones in the trash?

MARTY

Don't worry about those.

RICHARD

Why not?

MARTY

You take one of those jobs, and  
you'll be stuck in your crappy  
studio apartment for another 10  
years.

RICHARD

But I like my apartment.

MARTY

(frustrated)

Look, I don't give a shit about  
your apartment. The point is you're  
being offered \$50,000 to write a  
feature film!

RICHARD

Sweet.

Marty hands a treatment over to Richard.

MARTY

This is it Sunshine. Your big break.

LILLY

That's fantastic Richard! You're going to be famous.

MARTY

She's right you know.

RICHARD

(Reading out loud)

A two hour gut-slashing head-thumping blood-fest about recently convicted serial killer, Jason Franklin...

(To Marty)

A slasher film Marty? I don't want to write a slasher film. I wouldn't even know how.

Richard continues to read from the treatment in silence.

MARTY

What are you talking about? I bet you could write the best damn slasher film there ever was. It ain't fine literature, it's a goddamn talking picture.

LILLY

(To Richard)

How hard could it be?

MARTY

(To Richard)

The young lady's got a point there buttercup.

Richard places the treatment back down on the table.

RICHARD

No thanks. What else you got?

MARTY

What do you mean what else? No thanks...very funny.

(MORE)

MARTY (CONT'D)

This is it sweetheart. Your big fuckin' break!

RICHARD

I'm serious too Marty. I don't want to write a slasher film, I hate slasher films. There's no realism, and any comedy is almost always unintended.

MARTY

Exactly. This is the perfect opportunity to expand your horizons. Just think about it, you write the first intellectual and comedic slasher film and you'll blow everyone's minds straight out their asses. Just do this one project, and then I promise you, you can get rich writing whatever you damn well please.

RICHARD

I don't know.

MARTY

Well you don't have a choice. I already told them you'd have a rough draft done by the end of the month.

RICHARD

You what? Fuck Marty. Your a fucking nutcase.

MARTY

I'm a nutcase? You're the one telling me you don't want to get paid for writing something so easy you could do it in your sleep.

(Beat, Richard looks angry)

Alright alright, I haven't told them anything yet, I just thought that might help motivate you. But you'd be an idiot to reject this kind of offer.

RICHARD

Now I don't want to do it, just out of spite.

LILLY  
 (To Richard)  
 Come on Richard.  
 (To herself)  
 Just think of all the money...and  
 your career.

RICHARD  
 I don't really care about my  
 career.

LILLY  
 Then do it for me.

Lilly squeezes Richards thigh gently. Richard looks at her and smiles vaguely.

RICHARD  
 Alright.

MARTY  
 Oh thank god.

RICHARD  
 When do I start?

MARTY  
 You've already started, they want a  
 treatment by the end of the month.

RICHARD  
 You're one crazy son of a bitch  
 Marty.

Marty looks at Richard and Lilly with his big crazy smile.

INT. UGLY WHITE SEDAN (MOVING) - DAY

Lilly sits in the passenger seat while Richard drives the car. There is a large suitcase in the back seat.

LILLY  
 Oh, I forgot to tell you, I've got  
 some good news.

RICHARD  
 What's that?

LILLY  
 My boss gave me a personal  
 recommendation for a job at HQ.

RICHARD  
Good for you.

LILLY  
Maybe we should, you know, get an  
apartment together?

Richard looks at her emptily.

RICHARD  
I'll think about it.

LILLY  
That's fine. I wouldn't want to  
push you into something your not  
comfortable with.

Richard gives Lilly a sarcastic look, but she doesn't notice  
it.

LILLY (CONT'D)  
You know, I'm proud of you for  
making the right decision.

RICHARD  
(passively)  
Thanks.

LILLY  
I'm serious, this is big.

RICHARD  
I'm glad you think so.

LILLY  
Oh Richard, you're so cute. I'm  
really going to miss you while I'm  
gone.

RICHARD  
You won't be missing much. I'll  
probably just sit at my desk and  
complain all the time.

LILLY  
You'll do fine.  
(Beat)  
Right here. Southwest.

Richard stops the car in front of the airport terminal.  
Lilly grabs her bag from the back seat.

LILLY (CONT'D)  
Think about that apartment. I  
can't wait to see you.

Lilly kisses Richard and exits the car.

RICHARD  
Bye.

INT. RICHARD'S APARTMENT - DAY

Richard is sitting at his desk, surrounded with newspaper clippings and folders. He's writing with a pen and paper. He stops writing, crumples a newspaper clipping and throws it at his window.

RICHARD  
I just don't get it.  
(Beat)  
Jason, Jason, Jason, what made you  
do it? You seem like a ordinary  
enough guy. You had a job, an  
apartment, you were even married  
once.

Richard begins to examine the newspaper clippings again, frustrated.

RICHARD (CONT'D)  
Bah!

Richard stands up from the desk and tosses some of his notebooks into a messenger bag. He then exits the apartment.

EXT. MELROSE AVE - DAY

Richard approaches a coffee shop simultaneously as an angry man wearing a suit approaches the shop from other side. This is NELSON.

Richard arrives to the door first, and opens it for Nelson who then enters the store without acknowledging Richard.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Nelson enters the coffee shop, followed directly afterwards by Richard. Richard is walking quickly so he can make it to the line before Nelson. They arrive at the back of the line at the same time and Richard tries to squeeze in front of Nelson.

NELSON

Where do you think your going?

RICHARD

Well, we got here at the same time,  
and, uh since I opened the door for  
you...

NELSON

I don't give a shit. I got here  
first and I want my goddamn coffee.

RICHARD

Come on, you serious?

Nelson looks Richard in the eyes with an extreme intensity,  
and then turns around to face the front of the line.

Richard stares pensively at the bald spot on the back of the  
mans head as he waits.

CUT TO:

INT. MARTY'S OFFICE - DAY

We are looking at a the back of Marty's bald head. He's  
sitting at his desk, talking on the phone. A half empty  
glass of scotch sits on the desk.

MARTY

(Into Phone)

That's not a good reason. I want  
to see him immediately.

(Beat)

To the full extent of your mother's  
law!

Marty violently hangs up the phone and chugs the rest of his  
scotch.

MARTY (CONT'D)

Fuck.

He begins to refill his glass with scotch. We see the office  
door inch open and Richard stick his head inside.

RICHARD

Marty?

MARTY

Oh, hey there kiddo, come on in.

RICHARD

Where's your receptionist?

MARTY

I don't know. Some thing about sexual something or whatever. You can never really tell for certain these days.

(Marty chugs then refills his glass)

So what's up?

RICHARD

I wanna talk to Jason. The murderer.

Marty breaks into HYSTERICAL LAUGHTER.

MARTY

Well then I've got some bad news for you doll-face. I've been working day and night to make arrangements for you to talk with him directly from jail. But his goddamn lawyer son of a bitch just cancelled on us. Not that it matters, with your talent, I'm sure your making great progress.

(Beat)

Right?

RICHARD

Haven't started yet.

Marty, shocked, accidentally knocks his glass of scotch to the floor.

MARTY

You what! You've got four weeks left and you haven't started? Do you at least have an outline or something?

RICHARD

No. I just can't come up with a story.

MARTY

Are you fucking insane? The guy murdered 19 people! It's not rocket science.

RICHARD

I don't know what to tell you  
Marty, I guess I just don't  
understand what would possibly fuel  
someone to commit a murder?

MARTY

Your fueling me to murder your ass  
right now.

RICHARD

Thanks Marty, that's helpful.

MARTY

I'm sorry kid. Just sometimes...I  
just wanna...

(Mart strangles the air in  
front of him)

You know.

(Beat)

But on another note, I have some  
good news too. I gathered up a list  
of some family and friends of  
Jason's. Heres some names and  
addresses.

(He hands Richard a list)

If you can convince any of these  
people to talk to you, I bet you  
could get some dynamite material.

(Beat)

Now get your ass in gear Daisy.  
This has got to get done on time.

RICHARD

Whatever.

INT. MAIL ROOM - DAY

Richard is in an old dark mail room, there are EMPLOYEES  
sitting at work stations sorting mail. Richard approaches an  
employee.

RICHARD

Where's the manager?

The employee points towards an office at the opposite end of  
the room without looking up.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Thanks.

Richard walks down the hall to the office door and KNOCKS. We hear a VOICE say something, but it's garbled by the noises from the mail room. Richard KNOCKS again. The door opens to reveal an exhausted manager wearing a skinny tie.

MANAGER

I said come in goddamnit.

Richard enters the office.

INT. MAIL ROOM OFFICE - DAY

Richard enters the bland office.

RICHARD

Oh, sorry, thanks.

MANAGER

Who the hell are you and what the hell do you want?

RICHARD

I'm a writer. Uh, I came to ask some questions about a former employee.

MANAGER

Which one?

RICHARD

Jason Franklin.

MANAGER

Don't know the name, sorry.

RICHARD

He's the one that murdered a bunch of people.

MANAGER

Oh. I think I know the one you're talking about.

RICHARD

You think? You have many employees that match that description?

MANAGER

You never know with this bunch.

Richard looks out the door and towards the bank of employees. There is a man with wild hair and an eye-patch staring back at him. This is REDBEARD. Richard turns back towards Manager.

RICHARD

So what do you know about Jason?

MANAGER

Never spoke a word to the guy. He always came to work on time, so I never had any reason to.

RICHARD

Never?

MANAGER

Sorry. I could show you his workstation. We haven't touched any of his stuff yet.

RICHARD

Thanks.

Manager leads Richard out of the office towards an empty workspace near Redbeard.

INT. MAIL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Manager leads Richard to Jason's workstation, it's plain and organized. Taped to the desk is a photograph of a beautiful older woman, MAXINE. Next to it is a wedding photo of a young man and woman. The Young woman is wearing a big stone pendant.

MANAGER

This is it, I don't think you'll find anything useful though.

RICHARD

Thanks anyway.

Manager leaves for his office. Richard grabs the photographs from the desk and examines them closely.

Richard notices Redbeard staring at him. He winks at Richard with his unpatched eye.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Did you know him? The man who worked here?

Redbeard gazes down to his work, shakes his head, and continues working.

RICHARD (CONT'D)  
Do you know anything about Jason,  
the man in the photograph?

Redbeard looks up at the photograph. He waits a moment, and then nods his head no, as if unsure of himself. Richard sticks the photographs in his pocket.

EXT. FUNKY OLD SHACK - DAY

Richard looks at his list. A couple of names are scratched off. He lowers the list and sees a dilapidated house with a dead lawn and an old wrecked car sitting near the front porch. There is a hole in the front window.

RICHARD  
What the hell is this?  
(Beat)  
Oh well.

Richard walks slowly and methodically up to the front door and KNOCKS.

There is SHUFFLING and BANGING from inside the house. Richard KNOCKS again. RESIDENT begins YELLING at Richard.

RESIDENT  
(from inside)  
Who the fuck is that at my door?

RICHARD  
Um, hi, my name is Richard...I'm a,  
a writer.

RESIDENT  
Get out of my house.

RICHARD  
I'm not in your house, I just  
wanted to ask you a few  
questions...

RESIDENT  
(interrupting)  
I don't give a good goddamn what  
you want, get off my property.

RICHARD  
Look, it would really help if...

Resident sticks a shotgun through the hole in the glass and COCKS it. Richard is terrified and begins to back up slowly. He bumps into the wrecked car.

RESIDENT

Don't you dare scratch up my ride!

Resident COCKS his shotgun again. Richard turns around and runs.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Lilly emerges from the bathroom wearing a towel. She looks at her cell phone, and then changes into a nightgown. She takes her dirty clothes from the bathroom and spreads them out on top of the dresser next to a tool box, the clothes are stained and dirty. Her phone begins to RING and she answers it immediately.

LILLY

Hey! So how'd it go?

INT. RICHARD'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Richard is lounging on the couch wearing a robe, he's drinking coffee and talking on the phone. A Troma slasher film is playing on his television. We cut in between Richard and Lilly as they speak.

RICHARD

(Into Phone)

Not good, I tried almost everyone on the list and nobody would talk to me. One guy even pulled a shotgun on me. I could have been killed!

LILLY

(Into phone)

Oh you poor thing.

(Beat)

Why wouldn't they talk to you?

RICHARD

(Into phone)

I think Jason's lawyers have been telling everyone to stay away from me.

LILLY

(Into phone)

Why does that even matter? It's not a documentary, just make something up.

RICHARD

(Into phone)

It's supposed to be based on a true story Lilly, and I still don't know anything about his home life or why he became a serial killer. I can't write a character I don't understand.

LILLY

(Into phone)

It sounds like someone's cranky, maybe you should take a nap. Take off all the strain of complaint.

RICHARD

(Into phone)

Real funny, but maybe you're right, I do feel a bit fatigued.

LILLY

I'm always right. What are you doing tomorrow?

RICHARD

(From phone)

Well, I have one more name on my list. Jason's mother, Maxine.

Richard pulls out the photograph of Maxine and examines it closely. He sets it down on the coffee table.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

(Into phone)

But she's, she's the one that pays for all Richard's lawyers. I doubt she'll talk to me.

LILLY

(Into phone)

Were any of the other people on your list women?

RICHARD

(Into phone)

Well, no.

LILLY  
 (Into phone)  
 Then give it a shot, you might be surprised.

RICHARD  
 (Into phone)  
 I hope so. I'm starting to think this job might be a little dangerous.

LILLY  
 (Into phone)  
 Don't be such a baby, this's the most important thing that's ever happened to you.

RICHARD  
 (Into phone)  
 I'm glad your so keen on the importance of things in my life.

LILLY  
 (Into phone)  
 I always know what's best for you Rich.

RICHARD  
 (Into phone)  
 Thanks.

INT. RICHARD'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Richard is paying attention to the film on his television in which a man is stabbing another man with exaggerated arm movements. Richard is mimicking the stabbing motions in the air.

LILLY  
 (Into Phone)  
 So, have you thought anymore about getting that apartment with me?

RICHARD  
 (Into Phone)  
 Well....

LILLY  
 (Into Phone)  
 Look Richard, if you really don't want to move in with me, I'd understand.

(MORE)

LILLY (CONT'D)

(Beat)

You're a writer, and you need your space, I wouldn't want to get in the way.

RICHARD

Okay.

LILLY

Okay what?

RICHARD

Okay, I'll move in with you.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lilly jumps with excitement

LILLY

Oh my god Richard, you make me so happy. I can't wait to...

Lilly is interrupted by a crashing KNOCK on the door. She is frightened for a second then looks through the peephole, she looks relieved.

LILLY (CONT'D)

Sorry Richard, someone's at the door, I've gotta go. Talk to the mother OK?

Lilly hangs up the phone and opens the door. A bearded man wearing a baseball cap and dirty white tee-shirt, KENNY, is standing at the threshold.

KENNY

Lilly, we've found something...I came as fast as I could.

LILLY

What'd you find?

KENNY

You better come see for yourself.

INT. RICHARD'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

On the television set a man is carefully cleaning up his crime scene, and preparing to dispose of the body.

Richard sets his phone down and picks up his list of names. Most of the names are crossed out, except for one near the top. MAXINE FRANKLIN - 2248 Beverly Drive

RICHARD  
Beverly Hills huh?

EXT. BEVERLY DRIVE - DAY

Richard is walking slowly on the sidewalk, looking at the numbers on the houses.

He arrives in front of an older but well maintained two-story home. There's an attractive 40 year old woman wearing short shorts and a tank top pruning a rose bush in the front of the house. Richard just stares at her. It looks like the woman from the photograph only older. This is MAXINE.

He double checks the address on his list and approaches Maxine. She doesn't notice him, so he CLEARS HIS THROAT loudly.

MAXINE  
Oh, hello.

Her face is even more beautiful than her body, and Richard is lost in her eyes.

MAXINE (CONT'D)  
Can I help you?

RICHARD  
(In thought)  
Can you help me?  
(Louder)  
Oh, yes, let's hope so. Are you Maxine?

MAXINE  
Yes, that's me.

RICHARD  
Well hi, uh my name is Richard.

MAXINE  
Hello Richard.

Richard is lost in her eyes again.

MAXINE (CONT'D)  
Richard?

RICHARD

Yes?

MAXINE

Why are you here?

RICHARD

I'm a writer!

Maxine gives him a blank look.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Uh, and as you probably know,  
they're making a feature film about  
your son.

MAXINE

Oh, so you're the Richard I'm not  
supposed to talk to. Tell me  
Richard, what do you want with me?

RICHARD

I just wanna ask a few questions  
about your son if you don't mind.  
I'm having a hard understanding  
what happened.

MAXINE

I see. Well, actually I DO mind  
Richard, I'd prefer not to talk  
about that.

(Maxine takes a step  
towards Richard)

But is there anything else you  
might want me for?

RICHARD

I'm not sure I know what you mean.

MAXINE

Why don't you come in and have a  
drink? I might be able to be of  
some help.

RICHARD

Alright.

Maxine lays down her pruning tool, and begins up the stairs.  
Richard stands stoically by the bush, watching her walk up  
the stairs.

MAXINE

Are you coming Richard?

RICHARD

Yeah.

Richard quickly climbs the staircase. Maxine opens the door, and they enter the house together.

INT. MAXINE'S HOUSE - DAY

Maxine is walking down a hallway, while Richard is standing in the foyer examining the beautiful interior.

MAXINE

Follow me.

Richard walks down the hallway behind Maxine.

INT. MAXINE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Maxine has arrived in front of a small bar in the living area. There are plush velvet couches facing an unlit fireplace in the opposite corner.

MAXINE

Why don't you make us a couple drinks? I'm going to change into something a little more comfortable.

Before he can respond, Maxine has already left for the adjacent bedroom. A record begin to PLAY from the bedroom. Richard begins preparing a couple cocktails.

MAXINE (CONT'D)

(From bedroom)

So Richard, how do you like being a writer.

RICHARD

It's alright, you know, it pays the bills.

MAXINE

(From bedroom)

What makes you want to write about my Jason?

RICHARD

I don't really know. I guess...

(Beat)

(MORE)

RICHARD (CONT'D)

I guess so I could write...uh, an intellectual and comedic slasher film. And blow everyone's minds straight out, oh whatever, it's not important.

Maxine sticks her head through the door to look at Richard. She is wearing a bra.

MAXINE

Is the film about Jason going to be a comedy?

RICHARD

Well, no. Not exactly. You see, I'm not exactly familiar with this kind of story.

She ducks behind the door again.

MAXINE

(From bedroom)

So then what are you familiar with?

RICHARD

Short fiction mostly and sketch comedy, nothing you'd recognize.

Maxine emerges from the bedroom wearing a simple but elegant dress. She approaches Richard, and he hands her a cocktail.

MAXINE

You mean that story in Playboy wasn't you? I really liked it.

Richard smiles and they clink their cocktail glasses together and take a seat on a couch.

RICHARD

(Embarrassed)

Thanks, it wasn't easy.

MAXINE

You seem tense Richard, is there something bothering you?

RICHARD

Bothering me? No, I don't think so, well, maybe. Do I seem bothered?

MAXINE

Frankly, yes. What's the matter?

RICHARD

Nothing, I just have a lot on my mind. I'm moving to a new apartment with my lady friend soon.

MAXINE

Lady friend, is that like a girlfriend?

RICHARD

Yeah. Well sort of, if we move in together, then she gains the title of girlfriend...

(beat)

that's what gets me, first it's changing titles, and eventually changing diapers. I don't know if I'm ready for something like that.

Maxine is watching Richard closely, but says nothing. They lock eyes. Maxine bats her eyelashes.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

What am I doing? I came here to ask you some questions, and you end up psychoanalyzing me.

(Startled)

I almost totally forgot, I still have some questions to ask you about Jason.

MAXINE

Well, I'm not sure I'll be able to answer any of them right now.

(Maxine looks at her watch and puts down her cocktail)

Oh, look at the time, I'm going to be late for my engagement.

RICHARD

Oh, sorry.

MAXINE

Why don't you come by the same time tomorrow and we'll see if I can help.

RICHARD

OK!

Maxine shows Richard to the door and he exits.

MAXINE  
Good bye Richard, it's been a  
pleasure.

Maxine kisses her hand and places it gently on Richard's  
cheek.

RICHARD  
Farewell.

Maxine closes the door.

EXT. MAXINE'S HOUSE - DAY

Richard smiles as he walks to his car. He notices a strange  
man watching him from a blue sedan. This is STONE.

EXT. EXCAVATION SITE - DAY

Lilly is watching closely as several WORKERS carefully dig  
and clean around what appears to be a human corpse in the  
dirt. Lilly excuses herself and makes a call on her  
cellphone. We cut in between Richard and Lilly as they  
speak.

INT. RICHARD'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Richard is sitting at his desk looking at the photograph of  
Maxine. He occasionally types something into his laptop.

RICHARD  
You're my last resort. God I hope  
you can help.

His phone begins to RING and he answers it.

RICHARD (CONT'D)  
Hey there.

LILLY  
Hey sweetheart.

RICHARD  
What's up?

LILLY  
Oh not much, I'm just calling to  
chat.

RICHARD  
(Sighing)  
Oh.

LILLY  
Well actually there is something.  
I'm not sure your interested, but I  
think we may have found something  
out here in the desert. We're all  
really excited.

RICHARD  
That's cool.

LILLY  
It's OK, I know you don't want to  
hear about it. Did you find the  
killer's mother?

RICHARD  
(Into Phone)  
Yeah, she had a real swanky house  
in Beverly Hills.

LILLY  
(Into Phone)  
Was she pretty?

RICHARD  
(Into Phone)  
Was she pretty? She's a middle aged  
woman.

LILLY  
(Into Phone)  
So? You don't think a middle-aged  
woman can be attractive?

RICHARD  
(Into Phone)  
I guess she's kind of attractive.  
For being an old lady.

LILLY  
(Into Phone)  
Did she talk to you?

RICHARD  
(Into Phone)  
Yeah, we talked, but somehow I  
managed to not get any useful  
information from her.

(Beat)  
(MORE)

RICHARD (CONT'D)

It was weird. She lured me inside,  
and somehow got me talking all  
about myself.

(Beat)

Maybe she's a therapist.

LILLY

(Into Phone)

Is she a therapist?

RICHARD

(Into Phone)

I don't know.

LILLY

(Into Phone)

That'd be an interesting twist, a  
serial murderer with a psychiatrist  
mother.

RICHARD

(Into Phone)

Haha, maybe.

EXT. MAXINE'S HOUSE - DAY

Richard walks up the steps to Maxine's front door and KNOCKS loudly. Maxine promptly opens the door. She's dressed in a revealing short skirt and low-cut blouse. She's wearing much more make-up than before and looks exquisite.

MAXINE

Hello Richard.

RICHARD

(Looking at her legs)

Hi.

Maxine notices Richard checking her out, and smiles to herself.

MAXINE

Please, come in.

She opens the door widely for Richard, and then begins walking down the hallway.

INT. MAXINE'S HOUSE - DAY

Richard enters Maxine's house from the front porch. Maxine is walking towards the bar, and Richard is following blindly, staring at her backside.

INT. MAXINE'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Maxine approaches the bar and starts to prepare a drink.

MAXINE  
Would you like something to drink  
Richard?

RICHARD  
Please.

Richard sits down on the couch nearby, watching Maxine mix some drinks.

RICHARD (CONT'D)  
So, have you thought about what you  
can tell me about your son?

MAXINE  
I've already told you, I can't tell  
you anything about my Jason.

RICHARD  
Then why'd you invite me back here  
today?

MAXINE  
Why do you think? A handsome man  
like yourself should know.

Maxine delivers a drink to Richard, and then sits down on the couch opposite to him. She opens her legs just wide enough so Richard can see her underwear, then immediately crosses her legs.

RICHARD  
I see.

MAXINE  
Good.

Richard chugs down the rest of his cocktail. Maxine stands up and walks to the bedroom in a seductive manner. When she gets to the bedroom door, she turns her head over her shoulder.

MAXINE (CONT'D)  
Are you coming?

Richard is shocked and excited. He hesitates for a moment, then puts down his drink and looks up at Maxine.

INT. MAXINE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Richard and Maxine are lying on the bed together side by side. Maxine is under the sheet, but her neck and shoulders are glistening with sweat. Richard is glowing.

Maxine grabs a cigarette from a metal case on her bedside table, lights it and then readjusts the pillows so she can lean up facing Richard while smoking her cigarette.

RICHARD

Wow.

(Beat)

So is this the reason why you wanted me to come over today?

MAXINE

Obviously.

RICHARD

You never had any intention of helping me with my story at all, did you?

MAXINE

I might be able to help.

RICHARD

Then tell me about your son.

MAXINE

No.

RICHARD

How can you help if you won't tell me anything?!

MAXINE

Calm down Casanova. Why do you need my help with your story anyway?

RICHARD

What?

MAXINE

Tell me what you expected to learn from me that you can't learn from the newspapers.

RICHARD

Oh, more of your psychotherapy, huh? Are you sure you aren't a therapist.

MAXINE

I'm sure.

RICHARD

Well, I guess I want to learn about Jason's personality. I haven't written a single page yet because I don't know who my character is.

MAXINE

What don't you understand about his personality?

RICHARD

How could somebody to commit a murder? Let alone 19 murders. What could you possibly be thinking when doing something like that?

MAXINE

If you understood what it took to commit murder, do you think you would be able to write the story?

RICHARD

What, you think I should kill someone?

MAXINE

No, nothing like that.

RICHARD

Then what?

MAXINE

Use your imagination.

RICHARD

Excuse me?

MAXINE

Plan a murder, as if you were really going to do it. You should follow someone, and just imagine how you'd do it.

RICHARD  
You think I should start stalking  
people?

MAXINE  
No, not exactly.

RICHARD  
That's what it sounds like.

MAXINE  
You're a writer, it's more like  
gathering research.

RICHARD  
I bet the police would like that.  
I wasn't stalking him officer I  
swear. I was gathering research!  
(beat)  
Research for what?  
(beat)  
Research on my fake murder victim.

MAXINE  
That's why you don't get caught.  
You don't think a real murderer is  
concerned about being caught?  
You're quite naive.

RICHARD  
Hmmm.

MAXINE  
Trust me. I can help you  
understand.

Maxine puts out her cigarette, removes the sheet from her  
body and climbs on top of Richard.

RICHARD  
Alright.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

Richard sits at a table in the corner of the shop, near the  
window. He's drinking a coffee, and holding a magazine in  
front of his face. He pretends to read the magazine, while  
carefully examining the people inside the shop. He see's  
Nelson sitting in the corner opposite of him arguing on a  
cell phone. Richard sneers and continues examining the other  
people in the shop.

There is an old hippie on a laptop. A young mother. A pair of 20 year old GIRLS. He settles his gaze on the girls.

EXT. GRASSY FIELD - NIGHT

We see the slasher film Richard was watching earlier. Richard is chasing a young woman across a field while brandishing a knife.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - CONTINUOUS

The pair of girls receive their drinks and exit the coffee shop.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

The girls are walking down the street towards a parked SUV. Richard exits the coffee shop in a nonchalant manner. He begins to follow the girls down the street on foot.

The girls enter the SUV and drive off.

RICHARD

Shit.

(Beat)

Not as easy as the movies would have you believe.

CUT TO:

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Richard pulls his Ugly White Sedan up to the curb in front of the coffee shop. He parks the car and climbs out.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Jerry enters the coffee shop, and sits back down at his table in the corner. He examines the people in the shop. Nelson is no longer there. Richard smiles.

FREDDY, 30 years old with a scruffy beard and loosely worn clothing, is reading a book while leaning on a counter. A female EMPLOYEE places his drink on the counter.

EMPLOYEE

Freddy!

FREDDY

Thanks.

Freddy takes his drink and exits the coffee shop. As soon as Freddy has left, Richard gets up from his seat and follows him outside.

EXT. MELROSE AVE - NIGHT

Freddy walks down the sidewalk at a brisk pace. Richard exits the coffee shop, and Freddy notices. They make eye contact briefly.

Freddy stops at a bus stop on the side of the street, and Richard walks past and turns a corner.

Richard watches from around the corner as Freddy gets on the bus. The bus leaves, and Richard runs back to his car and starts his motor.

INT. UGLY WHITE SEDAN (MOVING) - NIGHT

Music is BLARING from the car speakers as Richard furiously drives to catch up with the bus. He swerves between cars and eventually catches up to the bus.

Richard's cell phone RINGS. He examines the front of the phone.

RICHARD

Not now Marty.

Richard sets the phone back down and continues the chase. The phone stops ringing for a few moments, and then begins to RING again. Richard lowers the volume of his music and answers the phone, but he speaks so quickly that Marty never has a chance to speak.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

(Into Phone)

Leave me alone Marty, it's all under control!

Richard hangs up the phone and continues the chase. The bus stops in a residential neighborhood. Richard parks his car and watches Freddy as he exits the bus and walks towards a small duplex.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Finally, something interesting.

EXT. DUPLEX - NIGHT

Freddy walks up the stairs and lets himself into the duplex. Richard climbs out of his car and approaches the duplex's front door.

He considers opening the door, but then goes back down the stairs. He walks down to the side of the building to a large window.

Richard presses his face against the glass so he can peak through the slats in the blinds.

INT. DUPLEX - NIGHT

Freddy's walking around inside his apartment, taking off his jacket, and looking at a pile of mail on the table. He approaches the big window at the side of the room.

EXT. DUPLEX - NIGHT

Richard is watching Freddy through the window. Freddy approaches the window quickly. His feet CRASH loudly on the floor as he gets close to the window.

RICHARD

Shit.

Richard ducks, simultaneously the blinds open and the window slides open right above his head. Freddy looks through the window to the street below, but sees nothing.

Freddy walks away from the window, and a few moments later we begin to hear MUSIC coming from inside.

Richard runs away down the street towards his car.

EXT. MAXINE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Detective Gary and Stone sit in a blue sedan. Detective Gary is watching the front of Maxine's house through binoculars and Stone sits impatiently.

DETECTIVE GARY

This is stupid, why don't we just bring her in and interrogate her?

(Looks at Gary)

I can't believe we're even out here.

(MORE)

DETECTIVE GARY (CONT'D)

She hasn't done anything in hours,  
let's call it a night.

(Beat)

What are you expecting her to do  
anyway, dig a grave in the front  
yard? Maybe you're waiting for her  
to come out and give you a blow  
job.

(Beat)

I'll tell you something right now,  
it ain't gonna happen. What are you  
looking at anyway?

(Beat)

That's it! I'm done. I'm going to  
go arrest her right now.

Stone opens the door to exit the car.

STONE

Sit down.

(Sets down his binoculars)

Sit down.

Stone closes the door and settles back into his seat.

STONE (CONT'D)

We can't arrest her because she  
hasn't done anything illegal.

DETECTIVE GARY

Not that we can prove.

STONE

We can't bring her into the station  
because she has important friends.

DETECTIVE GARY

Damn politics.

STONE

(Sighs)

Let's go home

INT. RICHARD'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Richard is sitting at his desk, typing furiously on the  
laptop in a word processor. He types "INT. COFFEE SHOP -  
NIGHT" He types some more, and then leans back in his chair  
and smiles.

EXT. MAXINE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Richard's ugly white sedan pulls up in front of Maxine's house. Richard climbs out of the car, briskly walks up the stairs and KNOCKS softly on the door.

After a few moments Maxine opens the door. She's wearing a night gown and is drinking a glass of wine. A stone pendant hangs from around her neck. The same pendant from the photograph of Jason and the young woman. Richard sees the pendant but doesn't pay any special attention to it.

MAXINE

Richard. Is everything alright?

RICHARD

Yeah, I'm OK.

Richard looks at the ground in front of his feet.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Can I come in?

MAXINE

Yes, of course.

Maxine steps aside and opens the door for Richard to walk past.

INT. MAXINE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Richard walks down the hallway towards the living area. Maxine is close behind.

INT. MAXINE'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Richard notices a fire blazing in the fireplace. He takes a seat on a couch near the fireplace. There's a large wooden box and a pair of reading glasses sitting on top a coffee table.

Maxine approaches the bar and refills her glass and pours another for Richard. Richard is peaking inside the box and sees several newspaper clippings.

"NEWLYWED WOMAN SLAIN IN SHOOTING"

He's interrupted when Maxine speaks.

MAXINE

So what brings you to my house tonight?

RICHARD

Well, I came to get your opinion...I've been stalking people all week and....

MAXINE

You mean researching.

RICHARD

(Laughing)  
Right, research.

Maxine finishes pouring the wine. She walks over to the fireplace and leans against the hearth.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

It hasn't been going so well.

(Beat)

I followed someone home earlier and almost got caught.

MAXINE

I'm sorry.

RICHARD

No no, I'm not really upset about that. I just don't think this strategy is really working.

MAXINE

You still haven't been able to write anything?

RICHARD

Actually. I've been writing a lot, just not the story about your son.

MAXINE

That's a pity.

RICHARD

It's been an interesting learning experience and all but I don't think it's helping.

(Beat)

I still have no idea how this whole murder thing works.

MAXINE

Oh?

RICHARD

I can't imagine killing anyone...I'm too much of a people person.

MAXINE

I see. Did you actually know any of the people you researched?

RICHARD

You mean the people that I stalked? No, not really, they were all just people, you know, normal people.

MAXINE

(Passionately)

That's why it's difficult for you. You lack passion; people don't kill strangers. People kill out of lust, revenge, pain...

(Beat)

Hatred.

RICHARD

Oh.

MAXINE

Is there anyone you despise?

RICHARD

I like everyone.

MAXINE

Think about it. There must be someone you hate. What about that lady friend of yours?

RICHARD

No, not her. She's can be a little overbearing, but I still like her.

MAXINE

There must be someone.

RICHARD

(Looks up)

I don't know...

MAXINE

Think about it.

Maxine has started to walk towards the bedroom.

MAXINE (CONT'D)

Coming?

INT. RICHARD'S APARTMENT - DAY

The early morning light creeps through the blinds in Richard's apartment. The front door opens and Richard enters. He sleepily walks to the couch and collapses. He contorts his body to a sitting position and opens up his laptop. He begins to type: INT. MAXINE'S HOUSE - NIGHT. His phone begins to ring, and he warily answers it.

RICHARD

(Into Phone)

Hello?

EXT. EXCAVATION SITE - DAY

Lilly is sitting on a rock in the desert with a phone to her ear. Her clothes are dirty and she looks excited.

LILLY

(Into Phone)

Good morning Richard.

RICHARD

(Into Phone)

Lilly? What time is it?

LILLY

(Into Phone)

Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to wake you up. I have some great news.

(Beat)

But I'll call back later when your more awake.

RICHARD

(Into Phone)

OK.

Lilly looks a little disappointed, but still excited.

INT. RICHARD'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Richard drops his phone onto his chest, abandons the laptop, and closes his eyes.

FADE TO:

Richard is still asleep. His phone RINGS again and he picks up.

RICHARD

Hello?

STONE

Hi, my name is John, and I'm calling on behalf of the office of Public Safety. Who I am I speaking with.

RICHARD

Richard.

STONE

I'd like to ask you a few standard questions please if I could Richard.

RICHARD

Did I do something unsafe?

STONE

No. I'm conducting a public survey. Have you been to Pacific Heights or the surrounding area lately?

RICHARD

Sure.

STONE

And what was the purpose of your visit?

RICHARD

Um, I was visiting a friend.

STONE

What's the nature of your friendship with this person?

RICHARD

(Ponders)

Well, I guess she's a, sort of creative assistant. It's complicated.

(Beat)

What? Why is that important?

STONE

That's all the questions I have for you. Thanks.

RICHARD

Ok.

(Beat)

That was weird.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Richard is sitting near the corner of the coffee shop, near the window. He's drinking a coffee and pretending to read a book. He's looking around the room, examining the patrons.

Richard's phone rings, and everyone in the coffee shop looks at him suspiciously.

RICHARD

(Into Phone)

Hello?

Richard turns his chair so it's more difficult for people to look at him. When he turns, everyone goes back to their business.

LILLY

(From phone)

Hey there.

RICHARD

(Into Phone)

Oh, hey Lilly.

LILLY

(From phone)

You have a minute to talk?

RICHARD

(Into Phone)

Well, I'm actually sort of busy right now.

LILLY  
 (From Phone)  
 It'll only take a minute.

Richard sees Nelson approaching the coffee shop door through the window.

RICHARD  
 (To himself)  
 Good.

LILLY  
 (From Phone)  
 I finally heard back about that job at corporate...maybe you should start looking at apart...

RICHARD  
 (Into Phone)  
 That's good. Hey, sorry Lilly but I've really gotta go.

INT. OFFICE TENT - DAY

Lilly is sitting at a table surrounded by paperwork and dirt samples. She hangs up her phone, slightly frustrated. Another WOMAN approaches, and hands her a few samples.

WOMAN  
 Hey Lilly, could you get these done for me by noon? Thanks.

Lilly just smiles vaguely at Woman as she leaves.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Richard pretends to read his book while watching Nelson in line. Nelson receives his coffee and says something to the female employee that makes her to grimace at him.

Nelson smiles and turns around to exit the coffee shop.

EXT. MELROSE AVE - DAY

Nelson exits the coffee shop and walks down the street towards a Porsche. Richard then exits the coffee shop, and watches Nelson as he climbs into his car.

CUT TO:

EXT. NELSON'S HOUSE - DAY

Nelson pulls his Porsche into the driveway of his impressive two-story home. Richard parks on the opposite side of the street.

Nelson exits his car with his briefcase and coffee in hand.

INT. UGLY WHITE SEDAN (PARKED) - DAY

Richard is sitting in the drivers seat with a note-pad in his lap and binoculars pressed to his face. He watches Nelson in silence. The silence is broken as his phone begins to RING loudly. Richard is startled; he jumps in his seat and hits his head on the ceiling and drops the binoculars.

RICHARD  
God damn cell phone!

Richard contorts his body awkwardly so he can retrieve the phone from his pocket.

RICHARD (CONT'D)  
(Into Phone)  
What?!

INT. MARTY'S OFFICE - DAY

Marty is standing in front of his desk with a golf club, practicing his swing. He's wearing a collared shirt and tie with shorts. He looks ridiculous. We cut back and forth between Richard and Marty as they talk.

MARTY  
(Into Phone)  
Hey sunshine, it's Marty.

RICHARD  
(Into Phone)  
What do you want? I'm busy.

MARTY  
(Into Phone)  
Busy with what? Busy driving your ass over to my office with a treatment, right?

RICHARD  
(Into Phone)  
Shit.

Marty tosses his golf club to the ground.

MARTY  
(From Phone)  
Shit? You told me not to worry  
about it!

RICHARD  
(Into Phone)  
I didn't know what you were talking  
about, I just wanted you to stop  
calling me.

Marty sits down behind his desk and pours himself a glass of  
scotch.

MARTY  
(From Phone)  
Have you started yet?

RICHARD  
(Into Phone)  
It depends on what your definition  
of start is.  
(Beat)  
I've been doing lot's of research,  
and have some pretty good ideas.  
I'm taking a more creative  
approach.

MARTY  
(From Phone)  
I'll take that as a no. Come by my  
office, **now**.

INT. UGLY WHITE SEDAN (PARKED) - CONTINUOUS

Richard slams his hand onto his steering wheel. He starts  
the motor, and begins to drive.

RICHARD  
(Into Phone)  
Alright, I'm coming.

Richard hangs up the phone and continues driving.

INT. MARTY'S OFFICE (RECEPTION) - DAY

Richard enters Marty's office. The receptionist is missing  
from her desk. Richard walks to Marty's door which is closed  
and presses his ear to the wood.

There's GIGGLING coming from inside the office. Richard KNOCKS softly. A throat CLEARS. We hear SHUFFLING from inside the office, and then FOOTSTEPS. The door opens and the receptionist emerges. She makes eye contact with Richard but then continues on to her desk.

MARTY  
(From office)  
Come in here, you maniac.

RICHARD  
Hi Marty.

INT. MARTY'S OFFICE - DAY

Marty is sitting behind his desk. There's a bottle of scotch on his desk as well as a framed photograph that has been turned face down.

MARTY  
A creative approach, huh?

RICHARD  
Yeah, well, your the one who told me to make it intellectual or whatever.

MARTY  
Since when did you start listening to me?

Richard shrugs. Marty takes a swig from his bottle of scotch. He turns the framed photograph back up to it's upright position.

MARTY (CONT'D)  
I swear Richard, you're going to give me a god damn heart attack someday.

Marty takes another sip of the scotch and examines the framed photograph once more. He puts the bottle down, and then knocks the photograph back face down on the desk.

RICHARD  
So, did you get me an extension or what?

MARTY  
No.  
(Beat)  
You know what you are?

RICHARD

What?

MARTY

You're one lucky son of a bitch.  
That's what you are.

(Sigh)

You can skip the treatment, as long  
as you have some sample pages by  
the end of the week that shows your  
*creative* approach.

(Sigh)

I can barely believe it.

RICHARD

Thanks Marty.

MARTY

That's it? Thanks Marty?

RICHARD

(Shrugs)

Bye Marty.

Richard leaves the office, and shuts the door behind him.

EXT. NELSON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The sun has just set, and Richard parks his car opposite  
Nelson's house. The driveway is empty.

INT. UGLY WHITE SEDAN (PARKED) - CONTINUOUS

Richard turns off his cell phone and places it in his glove  
box. He rolls up his sleeves and climbs out of the car.

EXT. NELSON'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Richard stealthily crosses the street and climbs the stairs  
to Nelson's house. He checks the front door. It's locked.

Richard sneaks around to the side of the house and checks the  
windows. He finds a window that's unlocked and slides it  
open.

INT. NELSON'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Richard pushes the blinds aside and climbs in through the darkened window. He closes the window behind him and searches the wall next to him for a light switch. The lights come on, he's in the kitchen.

Richard snoops around the kitchen, examining the modern appliances and furnishings.

RICHARD  
That wasn't so hard.

He comes to a modern looking knife block, and begins to examine the knives one by one.

He pulls out a big knife, and examines the edge. He replaces it and pulls out another one. This one's bigger than the last. He replaces it and pulls out another knife. This one is ridiculously large. It seems improbable that this knife could even fit in the block. He smiles at the knife.

FADE TO:

INT. NELSON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Richard slides rubber gloves onto his hands and grabs the giant knife from the block. He sneaks through the house like James Bond. He climbs up a set of stairs and approaches a door that's half open. There is light emanating from the room and a RUNNING SHOWER can be heard.

Richard pushes the door open all the way and sneaks towards a bright steamy bathroom. He prepares the knife to stab his victim.

NELSON  
Hello?

Richard turns his head.

FADE TO:

INT. NELSON'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Richard is in the kitchen when lights begin to pour into the room from the hallway. Richard, still holding the knife, snaps back into reality and quickly approaches the blinds and attempts to open them.

NELSON (O.S.)  
Hello? Is someone here?

RICHARD  
(To himself)  
Oh fucking shit.

NELSON  
Theresa?

Nelson enters the kitchen to see Richard with one leg out the window, holding a huge knife in his teeth.

Nelson looks at the knife, Richard looks at the knife.  
Nelson looks at Richard. Richard drops the knife from his mouth, and it BANGS on the floor.

NELSON (CONT'D)  
I know you! What the fuck is this?!

Richard manages to get his other leg out the window and jumps down. Nelson quickly exits the kitchen.

INT. UGLY WHITE SEDAN (PARKED) - CONTINUOUS

Richard sprints to his car, opens the door and jumps inside. He starts the motor.

RICHARD  
Oh my god, oh my god, oh my god.

INT. UGLY WHITE SEDAN (MOVING) - CONTINUOUS

Richard is driving the car furiously down the road, and banging on the steering wheel.

RICHARD  
He know's me. He fucking knows who I am.

Richard dials the number for LILLY on his cell phone.

LILLY  
Hi, you've reached Lilly. Sorry I can't come to the phone right now.

RICHARD  
Shit.  
(Beat)  
Shit shit shit.

He hangs up the phone.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAXINE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Richard pulls up to the curb going way too fast. He opens the door and jumps out as the car comes to a stop. He stumbles as he runs to Maxine's front door.

He manically RINGS the doorbell and POUNDS his fists on the door. He tries the doorknob but it's locked.

Maxine opens the door wearing a different, but equally revealing nightgown. She smiles.

Richard's BREATHING slows down as he looks at Maxine's face. He steps inside the threshold and Maxine closes the door.

INT. MAXINE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Maxine takes Richard's head in her hands and kisses his forehead. We see the excitement on Maxine's face.

MAXINE

Everything's going to be alright.

RICHARD

He saw me.

(Beat)

He knows who I am. I'm fucked.  
I'm fucked.

MAXINE

Calm down Richard.

RICHARD

I can't.

(Beat)

I won't calm down, he fucking knows  
me.

MAXINE

Sit down. Tell me what happened.

RICHARD

He knows who I am. He called the  
police, I'm sure of it. I bet  
they're after me right now.

MAXINE  
Shhhhh. Everything's fine. I can  
take care of you. I'll take care of  
you.

Maxine takes Richard by the hand and leads him into the  
bedroom as his breathing continues to slow.

MAXINE (CONT'D)  
Tell me what happened.

RICHARD  
I was following some **asshole** from  
my coffee shop.  
(Beat)  
He recognized me. He saw my face.

MAXINE  
You'll be OK.

RICHARD  
I broke into his house.

MAXINE  
Oh.

RICHARD  
He came home, and I was in his  
kitchen holding a huge fucking  
knife.

Maxine is undressing Richard as he talks. He's still  
frightened, but she's turned on.

MAXINE  
A knife huh?

RICHARD  
I just jumped out the window and  
ran like a fucking criminal.

Maxine is pulling Richards pants down.

RICHARD (CONT'D)  
He totally recognized me.

MAXINE  
How can you be sure.

Maxine is kissing Richard's stomach and chest.

RICHARD  
He told me he did!

MAXINE

Well you know what you have to do then?

Maxine pushes Richard over onto the bed and straddles him.

RICHARD

What?

MAXINE

You'll have to kill him.

Before Richard can respond Maxine has started kissing Richard with intensity. Richard tries to pull away from her kiss and struggles slightly.

RICHARD

What? Are you fucking insane?

Maxine continues to kiss him while speaking.

MAXINE

He knows who you are.

(Pause)

You broke into his house with a knife.

(Pause)

You have to kill him.

RICHARD

But...

Maxine mutes his voice with more kissing.

MAXINE

He'll go to the police first thing in the morning, and before long you'll go to jail for attempted murder.

(Kiss)

There's only one way to stop it.

They continue to make love on the bed. Richard looks at Maxine's face, entranced.

INT. MAXINE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Richard is calm, and lying down under the bed covers by himself. His bare chest is exposed as he leans up to take a drink from a glass next to the bed. Richard notices the necklace with a stone pendant resting on Maxine's bedside table.

Maxine is nearby, standing on her toes, looking through the top of her closet. We can see her bare bottom exposed underneath her nightgown as she searches.

MAXINE

Ah, here.

Maxine pulls a small velvet bag down from the closet and brings it towards the bed.

MAXINE (CONT'D)

You'll probably want this.

(She hands the bag to  
Richard)

Careful, it's loaded.

Richard opens the bag to reveal a small revolver with a pearl handle. A very stylish woman's gun. Richard holds the gun in his hand, points it in the air and examines it closely. He's fascinated by it. Maxine grins.

MAXINE (CONT'D)

If you're want to do this right,  
you need to listen to me very  
carefully. Are you listening  
Richard?

RICHARD

(still entranced by the  
pistol)

Yeah.

(Maxine sneers at him)

Yeah.

MAXINE

Make sure one of your neighbors  
sees you at home before and after  
you go. Get rid of the gun after  
you use it and go straight home.  
Don't leave your house until I call  
you.

(Beat)

Can you remember that?

(Richard nods)

Go. It'll be morning soon.

RICHARD

I must be insane.

Maxine leans in, lifts up his head with her hand, and kisses him.

MAXINE

You can do it.

(Beat)

You have to do it.

EXT. NELSON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Richard is parked on the side of the street. Both his hands are on the steering wheel and he's looking straight ahead.

INT. UGLY WHITE SEDAN (PARKED) - CONTINUOUS

Richard is staring over the dashboard. He looks down to the passenger seat where the gun is resting. He averts his gaze and looks forward again. Richard looks back to the gun and picks it up and examines it above his lap.

The sun has started to rise.

Richard is staring pensively at the pistol in his lap. Tango Music is PLAYING softly from the car stereo.

RICHARD

I've gotta do it.

Richard looks out over the dashboard again.

EXT. INTERSECTION - CONTINUOUS

A standard police car drives by slowly. There are two OFFICERS in the car. The officer in the passenger seat looks at Richard and they lock eyes.

They stare at each other intensely, their heads turning as the car passes through the intersection.

INT. UGLY WHITE SEDAN (PARKED) - CONTINUOUS

The gun is still in his lap, there's no way the officer could have seen it.

RICHARD

Holy shit.

(Beat)

What am I doing?

(Beat)

What the fuck am I doing?!

He tosses the gun to the seat dramatically.

INT. UGLY WHITE SEDAN (MOVING) - DAY

Richard drives while delivering an animated monologue to himself.

RICHARD

This is insane. How'd I let that you get inside my head? You crazy bitch.

(Beat)

Your the mother of a fucking serial killer. I bet your what drove that bastard to murder all those people. Fuck, you almost got me to murder someone.

(Beat)

You've just been using me to play your sick fucking murder games. How could I be so stupid?

We see a montage of several images: Maxine wearing the stone pendant necklace, Detective Gary and Stone parked outside Maxine's house, the suspicious wooden box on the coffee table, the phone call with the Stone, the necklace again, and the image of the young couple.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

I bet your responsible for countless murders. I come to you for information on a goddamn story I don't even wanna write and you fucking turn me into an attempted murderer.

(Beat)

Attempted Murderer.

(Beat)

Fucking brilliant.

(Beat)

That bitch.

Richard has arrived in front of Maxine's house. The morning sun has risen above the building. Richard parks his car and puts the pistol in his waste-band at the small of his back. He grabs his cell phone from the glove box and puts it in his pocket.

EXT. MAXINE'S HOUSE - DAY

Richard climbs out of the car confidently. He keeps his hand on the gun at his back.

Richard climbs the stairs quickly but silently and KNOCKS on the door. No answer. He RINGS the doorbell and KNOCKS on the door again. Still no answer. Richard goes to the corner of the front porch and finds a key taped to the bottom of a chair. He uses this key to open the door and enter the house. He closes the door behind him.

INT. MAXINE'S HOUSE - DAY

Richard enters from the front door slowly. He looks down the hallway suspiciously.

RICHARD

Hello?

(Beat)

Maxine?

Richard, in stealth mode begins to sneak around the house. He enters the living room to the spot where he had seen the wooden box but it's no longer there.

INT. MAXINE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Richard enters the bedroom and immediately sees the necklace with the stone pendant on the bedside table. He walks over to it, picks it up, and examines it closely.

He pulls the photographs from his pocket. He examines the necklace with the photo of the newlywed couple. The young woman is wearing the same necklace.

Something catches his eye from the top of the closet. He approaches the closet and reaches into the depths of its shadows.

RICHARD

Bingo.

INT. MAXINE'S DINING ROOM - DAY

Richard is sitting down on a chair at the dining table. He's writing furiously on a note-pad in front of him. The pistol is sitting on the table in front of the note-pad. The wooden box is on the table, and newspaper clippings are spread out all over. Richard is speaking as he writes.

RICHARD

A young and talented comedy  
writer....extremely talented comedy  
writer...slasher film about a local  
serial killer... manipulative  
mother...uses men to act out her  
murder fantasies.

During the monologue we see close-ups of newspaper headlines.  
One in particular stands out:

YOUNG BRIDE MURDERED: Sarah Franklin was viciously attacked  
while on her honeymoon vacation....

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Maxine. Your son's wife? That's  
low.

Richard makes another couple notes onto his notebook.

Richard leans back and smiles to himself. He reaches into  
his pocket and retrieves his cell phone. He turns on the  
phone excitedly. It BEEPS, and reads NEW MESSAGES.

Richard places his phone to his ear and we hear VOICEMAIL.

VOICEMAIL

(From Phone)

You have 13 new messages.

RICHARD

Jesus.

VOICEMAIL

(From Phone)

First new message.

MARTY

(From Phone)

Daisy, it's Marty. I'm just making  
sure your working hard on...

Richard presses a button on his phone.

VOICEMAIL

(From Phone)

Message deleted.

(Beat)

Next new message.

MARTY

(From Phone)

Hey Pumpkin, it's your agent.

Richard Presses the same button.

VOICEMAIL  
 (From Phone)  
 Message deleted.

We here the phone BEEP again, and Richard looks at the screen.

INCOMING CALL - LILLY

Richard accepts the call but continues to write on his notepad while speaking.

RICHARD  
 (Into Phone)  
 Hello?

LILLY  
 (From Phone)  
 Hey there Richard. Are you alright?

RICHARD  
 (Into Phone)  
 Yeah, I'm fine. Why? Do I not seem fine?

LILLY  
 (From Phone)  
 I don't know, you sound a little frantic. And Marty's been calling me all morning, he's worried sick about you.  
 (Beat)  
 He tells me you haven't even started your script yet.

RICHARD  
 (Into Phone)  
 That's not true, I'm working on it right now. I'm making fantastic progress.

LILLY  
 (From Phone)  
 Well, that's a relief. Have you been looking for apartments at all?

RICHARD  
 Yeah, about that...

LILLY  
(From Phone)  
Richard, I got the job.

RICHARD  
(Into Phone)  
What job?

LILLY  
(From Phone)  
The job at corporate! I'm going to  
take it.

RICHARD  
(Into Phone)  
Oh, that's good.

LILLY  
(From Phone)  
I come home in three days.

RICHARD  
(Into Phone)  
I see.

LILLY  
(From Phone)  
I've been looking at apartments for  
us on the internet.

Richard is struck with an idea, and writes it on his notepad.

RICHARD  
(Into Phone)  
Listen, Lilly, I hate to keep doing  
this to you, but I'm really busy  
right now. I'm on a roll with my  
project. I'll call you back later  
today, I promise.

LILLY  
(From Phone)  
Fine, but you better...

Richard hangs up his phone and continues to make notes on the  
table. He lifts up his pen to read what he's written.

RICHARD  
Awesome.

Richard picks up his phone again and dials for Marty.

INT. MARTY'S OFFICE - DAY

Marty is sitting at his desk when his phone begins to RING. There are a couple of workers in the corner installing what looks like a bar with a built-in beer tap. Marty picks up the phone.

MARTY

(Into Phone)

Oh, thank God it's you Sunshine.  
Please tell me you've finished your script.

We cut back and forth between Marty and Richard as they talk.

RICHARD

(Into Phone)

Marty! No, I haven't finished yet,  
but I just found my story.

MARTY

(Into Phone)

Just found your story? You haven't  
started yet have you?

RICHARD

(Into Phone)

Well, not the actual writing of the  
script, no.

MARTY

(Into Phone)

What are you doing on the phone  
with me? Write it down!

(Beat)

You can't fuck this one up. My job  
is on the line this time. I've  
been covering for your ass this  
whole time. Everyone thinks your  
almost done. If you fuck this up  
for me, I swear I'll kill you.

RICHARD

(Into Phone)

I'm just returning your dozen phone  
calls Marty.

MARTY

(Into Phone)

If you actually did your job I  
wouldn't have to call you all the  
time.

RICHARD

(Into Phone)

Don't worry Marty, everything's under control. I'm serious this time.

MARTY

(Into Phone)

Don't expect me to believe you for a second.

RICHARD

(Into Phone)

Whatever Marty. I'm working on it now. I think it has the potential to be ground breaking. So don't bother me anymore.

MARTY

(Into Phone)

You're the one who called me!

Richard hangs up his phone and looks at his note-pad again. He smiles to himself.

INT. MAXINE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

We hear the door OPEN down the hall. Soon after, Maxine enters the dining area where Richard is working.

Richard is looking up at Maxine as she enters. Richard looks confident and ready.

MAXINE

Richard.

RICHARD

Hello Maxine.

Maxine, shocked at Richard's presence looks at the gun on the table.

MAXINE

What are you doing here? Why do you still have the gun?

RICHARD

I figured this would be a nice place to work on my script.

MAXINE

Well?

RICHARD

Well what?

MAXINE

Did you do it?

RICHARD

Do what, murder that guy?

MAXINE

You didn't?

RICHARD

No fucking way.

MAXINE

Why not?! It's the only way to protect yourself from the police now.

RICHARD

You're one crazy bitch. To think I trusted you for a second.

(Beat)

I've been doing some research on you, it turns out you've been a bigger influence on my story than you expected.

MAXINE

(Looking at her wooden box)

What? How dare you!

RICHARD

You nearly convinced me to murder a horrible yet innocent man. God knows how many murders you're responsible for.

MAXINE

You made that decision on your own, how dare you accuse me. I give you everything, and this is how you repay me?

RICHARD

(Confidently)

I'm not playing your fucking games anymore.

(Beat)

(MORE)

RICHARD (CONT'D)

But, I do thank you for all your help with my story. I think it's gotten pretty good.

Maxine is upset. She moves to a kitchen drawer and starts to fish around in it.

Richard picks up his note-pad and the gun. He places the gun in his lap and begins to read his notes out loud to her as she searches the drawer.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Here let me read to you from what I have so far.

(Beat)

Richard, a very intelligent and handsome writer, that's me, takes an assignment to write a story about a local serial killer. While researching the story, he encounters the murderer's mother, Maxine.

(Beat)

That's you.

(Beat)

Richard soon discovers that Maxine is more than likely responsible for the murders that her son has been arrested for.

(Beat)

This is where it starts to get interesting...

Richard looks up from his note-pad and sees Maxine holding a knife at him.

Richard takes the gun from his lap and points it at her chest nonchalantly.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Should I stop reading? It looks like you want to say something, do you?

MAXINE

You bastard. How dare you betray me?

RICHARD

Betray you?! You've been manipulating me since the moment I met you.

MAXINE

I didn't! I was trying to help  
you.

RICHARD

Sure.

(Beat)

I think I'll keep reading for you.

MAXINE

No, don't.

Maxine drops the knife to the floor and falls to her knees. She crawls to Richard and puts her head on his lap. She's CRYING.

Richard places the gun down on the table. He puts his hands on Maxine's head to comfort her while still holding his notebook.

RICHARD

(Feigning Comfort)

There there. There there.

Maxine tilts her head up and tries to kiss Richard.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Sorry sweetheart. No more.

Maxine face instantly changes complexion as she grabs the gun from off the table while Richard is distracted. She stands up with the gun in hand, causing Richard to accidentally rip a corner of his notebook out. Maxine points the pistol at Richard.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

What are you gonna do with that?

MAXINE

I'm going to kill you, you son of a  
bitch.

RICHARD

You don't want to kill me. Why  
don't you have your son kill me? Or  
some other guy.

(Beat)

You don't have the guts.

Maxine FIRES the gun, but it just barely misses Richard.  
Maxine SCREAMS.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Shit.

Richard knocks over his chair, and runs out of the room. Maxine FIRES another shot but it hits the wall as Richard runs behind it.

INT. MAXINE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Richard is running down a hallway. Maxine emerges behind him at the end of the hallway and fires another shot. It misses Richard and hits a vase near his head. Richard turns into the darkened living room which is lit only by the fireplace.

INT. MAXINE'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Richard is standing behind a wall in the main living area. He's holding a large book firmly in his hands. We see Maxine creeping up to the entrance next to Richard. She's holding her gun, ready to fire.

Maxine passes the threshold carrying the gun in front of her. Richard hits her on the head with the book. Maxine falls down and the gun goes flying in front of her and hits the floor with a THUD.

Richard runs over to the gun and kneels down to pick it up. As Richard is picking up the gun, Maxine jumps on top of him, knocking Richard to the floor. The gun falls out of his hands.

Richard is holding onto Maxine as she picks up the gun. They begin wrestling around on the ground in front of the fireplace. The gun is in Maxine's hand, but Richard maintains control of her hands. He brings the gun close to their bodies and points it towards Maxine. Richard has gained control of the situation, and they have calmed down slightly.

RICHARD

It won't be so bad, I can change your name in the story.

MAXINE

You won't need to do that.

(Beat)

Goodbye Richard. Too bad it has to end like this.

The gun is in Maxine's hand. Richards hands still surround hers. Maxine pulls the trigger.

There is a loud BANG as the top of Maxine's head is blown apart. Brains get splattered into the fireplace. Blood splatters onto Richard's forehead.

Richard looks pensively at the now lifeless body underneath him. He's in shock.

RICHARD

Oh.

(Beat)

Holy shit!

(Beat)

What a twist.

Richard, still holding onto the gun, stands up. He examines the lifeless corpse underneath him. He looks at the gun in his hand. He throws the gun to the floor dramatically.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Fuck. Oh no.

The camera follows Richard as he runs into the dining room. Richard collects his things from the dining table and then runs towards the front door.

Before he opens the door, he turns to look back at Maxine's body. He sets his stuff down by the door and walks back to Maxine's body. He then leaves the room and comes back with a paper towel and some cleaning spray.

He sprays the gun down with the cleaner and wipes it clean with the towel, careful not to touch it with his bare skin. He places the gun back into Maxine's hand.

He sets the towel and sprayer down on the ground and examines the scene again. He picks up the spray bottle and wipes it clean as well. He leaves the room.

Richard runs to the door. SIRENS can be heard coming from far away. He takes one last look at Maxine, grabs his stuff and bolts from the house.

INT. MAXINE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

We see Detective Gary and Stone hovering above Maxine's corpse in the living room. There are many officers in the house. Some are taking photographs, others are cataloging evidence. One officer is interviewing a woman near the front door. There is another officer standing nearby. This is OFFICER.

DETECTIVE GARY  
The gun matches the bullets we  
found in her daughter-in-law.

STONE  
Yeah

DETECTIVE GARY  
So what do you think?

STONE  
Well, it looks like a suicide  
right?

DETECTIVE GARY  
Right.

STONE  
But why then did someone try to  
clean it up? Why?  
(Beat)  
The gun was fired from her hand.  
(Beat)  
What do you think about the other  
bullet holes?

DETECTIVE GARY  
It looks like she was in a fight.

OFFICER  
You guys better see this over here.

Detective Gary and Stone are led by Officer into the dining room where some newspaper articles are still sitting on the table as well as a torn piece of Richard's notebook. Stone picks up the notebook page. Officer continues on into the main foyer.

STONE  
Interesting.

INT. RICHARD'S APARTMENT - DAY

Richard is pacing back in forth in his apartment. We can see it's just starting to get dark outside.

RICHARD  
I can't believe I ever went back to  
that witch.  
(Pause)  
I'm going to end up in jail.  
(Pause)  
(MORE)

RICHARD (CONT'D)  
The gun was in my hands!  
(Pause)  
I've got to call Lilly.

Richard pulls out his phone and settles on the couch. He is extremely anxious. He dials Lilly.

EXT. EXCAVATION SITE - DAY

Lilly is sitting at her lab station. She smiles broadly and sneaks away from the lab to answer her phone. We cut back and forth between Lilly and Richard as they talk.

RICHARD  
(Into Phone)  
Lilly, it's Richard.

LILLY  
(Into Phone)  
Finally, he calls back. What took you so long? Have you started looking for apartments yet?

RICHARD  
(Into Phone)  
Lilly. What? No!

LILLY  
Richard, what's wrong?

RICHARD  
Everyone's going to think I killed her.

LILLY  
(Into Phone)  
Killed who? What?

RICHARD  
(Into Phone)  
Maxine. We were wrestling with the gun, and she said goodbye, and it went off!

LILLY  
(Into Phone)  
A gun?

RICHARD  
(Into Phone)  
She's dead Lilly, her fucking head exploded into the fireplace.

LILLY  
(Into Phone)  
Maxine. Maxine the mother?

RICHARD  
(Into Phone)  
Yeah.

LILLY  
(Into Phone)  
You killed her?!

RICHARD  
(Into Phone)  
No, No, I didn't kill her. That's  
the whole point.

LILLY  
(Into Phone)  
What happened?

RICHARD  
(Into Phone)  
I was over at her house working on  
my story. She came home and was  
all upset. She pulled a knife on  
me, so I pointed the gun at her...

LILLY  
(Into Phone)  
Where'd you get a gun?

RICHARD  
(Into Phone)  
It's not important.  
(Beat)  
So I pointed the gun at her and she  
started crying. Then she got the  
gun back and started shooting at  
me.

LILLY  
(Into Phone)  
This is a joke right? This is all  
just part of your story.  
(Beat)  
Right?

RICHARD  
(Into Phone)  
Well, it is part of my story.

LILLY

(Into Phone)

Oh thank god. You had me scared there for a second.

(Beat)

So I saw this fantastic little place in the financial district.

RICHARD

(Into Phone)

Shut up Lilly, listen to me! My story is about me! This actually happened. She's dead!

LILLY

(Into Phone)

Don't you tell me to shut up!

(Beat)

Oh my god. Well you didn't kill her right? Go to the police!

RICHARD

(Into Phone)

I can't go to the police. They'll think I killed her.

LILLY

(Into Phone)

Why Richard, why?

RICHARD

(Into Phone)

Because I was there. The gun was in my hands. Shit, it could have been me. I don't even know. Maybe I did kill her. And besides, I'm probably already a wanted fugitive.

LILLY

(Into Phone)

What have you done Richard? How could you do this to me? I should have known you were going to screw up your career if I left. You're such a dumbass sometimes.

RICHARD

(Into Phone)

Stop telling me what I am! And you're wrong about my career, I'm writing the best goddamn script anyone has ever seen.

LILLY

Don't you dare write that story  
about yourself, my image will be  
tainted forever.

Richard hangs up the phone. It's now night time outside.

INT. RICHARD'S APARTMENT - DAY

Richard is sitting at his desk wearing a robe. He hasn't shaved in a while. He's writing furiously on his laptop. He takes a break periodically to take a sip of coffee. He pauses typing for a moment.

MAXINE (V.O.)

You bastard. How dare you betray  
me?

(Pause)

Goodbye Richard. Too bad it has to  
end like this.

We hear a GUNSHOT and Richard shudders. There is a BOOMING knock at the front door to the apartment. The sound nearly knocks Richard over. He quickly recovers and stands up. He approaches the door and looks through the peephole.

INT. RICHARD'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

RICHARDS POV THROUGH PEEPHOLE

Detective Gary and Stone are standing in the hallway patiently.

INT. RICHARD'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Richard pulls his head back from the peephole.

RICHARD

Who is it?

STONE

LAPD. Homicide Investigation Unit.

RICHARD

(Repeating)

Homicide...

Richard goes to his laptop and closes the screen so it can't be seen. He then opens the door for the officers.

RICHARD (CONT'D)  
How can I help you gentlemen?

STONE  
I'm Stone, and this is my partner,  
detective Gary.

Stone shows him a badge.

STONE (CONT'D)  
Mind if we come in?

Detective Gary walks into the apartment before Richard gives his response.

RICHARD  
Ummm, sure come on in.

Stone enters the apartment, and Richard closes the door behind him.

STONE  
You mind if we ask you a few  
questions?

RICHARD  
Why?

STONE  
Please, we just have a few  
questions we'd like you to answer,  
it won't take long.

RICHARD  
Should I have a lawyer here or  
something?

DETECTIVE GARY  
Why? Do you think you need a  
lawyer here?

RICHARD  
Well, no. Just what is this all  
about?

Gary is snooping around the apartment, looking at books, shuffling things around. Richard is watching him.

GARY  
We're on to you dick.

RICHARD  
What?

STONE

I think what he means to say is,  
there's been a murder, and it  
appears that you knew the victim.  
Quite well.

RICHARD

Are you accusing me of something?

STONE

Not yet.

RICHARD

Well, I'm sorry gentlemen. I'm  
going to have to ask you to leave.  
I'm not comfortable talking to you  
without a lawyer present.

(Beat)

And if you want to search my  
apartment, come back with a warrant  
and I'd be happy to accommodate  
you.

STONE

(To Gary)

You heard the man Gary. Let's get  
out of here.

(To Richard)

The next time we see you it might  
not be so pleasant. Here's my  
card, I suggest you call me if you  
don't want to end up in jail for  
obstruction.

Gary sneers harshly at Richard as he walks to the door. The  
officers approach the door.

GARY

We'll be seeing you real soon.

Stone and Gary leave the apartment. Richard closes the door.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - DAY

Stone and Gary are lingering in the hallway, walking very  
slowly.

STONE

What do you make of all this?

DETECTIVE GARY

I don't doubt he was there the night of the murder. That bastard is guilty of something. Murder I don't know. But I do know I want that motherfucker in jail. He wreaks of guilt.

(Pulling out piece of paper)

I got a handwriting sample.

STONE

Good.

They continue to walk down the hall.

INT. RICHARD'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Richard is looking through the peephole into the hallway.

RICHARD

Shit. Obstruction of justice too, I wonder how many crimes I could commit before bedtime. God, what a story though.

Richard, seemingly unaffected, walks back to his laptop, opens the screen and continues to type. He types for a few moments and then prints the script.

He puts on a jacket and leaves the apartment while his script is still printing on the desk.

EXT. RICHARD'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Richard walks out the front door of the apartment building. He looks to the left, and sees Detective Gary leaning against a wall. Richard starts walking to the right. He looks over his shoulder and Detective Gary is following him. Richard waves. Detective Gary sneers.

INT. MARTY'S OFFICE (RECEPTION) - DAY

Richard enters the office area and approaches the receptionist. He has a smile on his face.

RECEPTIONIST

Hey Handsome, why the big smile?

RICHARD

I've got good news for Marty, he  
around?

RECEPTIONIST

He's in a meeting right now, but he  
should be finished any moment.

Just then, Marty's office door opens and a young attractive  
Asian woman leaves the room.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)

Excellent timing, you can go in  
now.

Richard walks through the open door to Marty's office.

INT. MARTY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Richard enters the office. Marty is standing near the window  
pulling a shirt over his bare chest. He turns around and  
begins to button his shirt.

MARTY

Look at you, you're glowing.  
What's the news?

RICHARD

I finished the script.

MARTY

I love you. The whole thing?

RICHARD

The whole thing.

Marty gets down on his knees and bows at Richard's feet.

MARTY

I don't know how you do it, but I  
love you for it. Oh thank god.

(He stands)

So where's the script?

RICHARD

It's at home.

Marty grabs his heart as if he's about to have a heart  
attack.

MARTY

You...

RICHARD

It's at home because it's still printing. The deadline isn't until tomorrow right?

MARTY

I swear, every day as your agent is an emotional roller coaster. A weaker man would've had a heart attack by now.

RICHARD

I just wanna read it over before I give it to you.

(Beat)

Marty, I think it's the best thing I've ever written.

MARTY

Good. And you told me you didn't know how to write a slasher film. Turns out you're just a big baby. It was easy as hell, right?

RICHARD

Not exactly.

Richard's phone begins to ring.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Hold on a sec.

Richard examine's his phone; Lilly is calling. He hits the END button and puts it back in his pocket.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

(To Marty)

So where were we?

MARTY

You were telling me that you're printing out your script right now, and you're bringing it to me tomorrow afternoon.

RICHARD

Oh. Right. I'll do that. Marty, I can't wait to show you this script, I've never written anything that even comes close to the magnitude of this one.

MARTY

Good. Now, don't do anything to  
fuck it up between today and  
tomorrow.

RICHARD

Yeah.

INT. RICHARD'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Richard hasn't shaved in days, and his entire face is covered  
with a thin layer of dark hair.

He's sitting on the couch reading his script. The cover  
reads MAXINE. He occasionally marks the script with a pen.  
He seems calm. Richard's phone rings and he answers it.

LILLY

Hello?

RICHARD

Hey Lilly. What do you want?

LILLY

What are you doing?

RICHARD

Reading.

LILLY

Reading what?

RICHARD

My script.

LILLY

You're what? Don't tell me you're  
actually writing it!

RICHARD

No, no.

LILLY

Thank god.

RICHARD

I finished it.

(Beat)

It's the best thing I've ever  
written.

LILLY  
How dare you?!?! You...

Lilly's screams become inaudible as a BOOMING knock comes from the front door. Richard hangs up his phone and goes to the door to look through the peephole. Detective Gary and Stone are waiting anxiously in the hallway.

Richard goes back to the coffee table and places the script underneath a pillow on the couch. He closes his laptop, and slides all the loose pieces of paper off his desk and into the waste basket below.

DETECTIVE GARY  
(Through door)  
Come on tough guy, open up. We know you're in there.

RICHARD  
Coming.

Richard SIGHS and begins to open the door slowly. The door is pushed all the way open by Detective Gary as he lets himself into the apartment. Gary takes a few steps inside and scrutinizes the inside of the apartment with his prying gaze.

RICHARD (CONT'D)  
Hey!

STONE  
Oh don't mind him, Detective Gary's a bit of a free-spirit.

Stone whistles, and Detective Gary steps back into the doorway where Richard and Stone are standing. He stares at Richard with a furious gaze.

DETECTIVE GARY  
Look asshole, we know you had something to do with that woman's death. Out of curiosity, of all things, why did you use windex?

RICHARD  
I don't know what you're talking about officer.

STONE  
The evidence stacked up against you kid.

(Beat)  
(MORE)

STONE (CONT'D)

I know what kind of influence she can have on people.

(Beat)

Just confess and we can make a bargain with you.

RICHARD

If you have so much evidence, arrest me.

DETECTIVE GARY

We know you've been sleeping with her. What do you think about that?

RICHARD

Fascinating, but if you'll excuse me, I'm kinda busy right now.

DETECTIVE GARY

Come on asshole, we know you did it. Just confess and we'll take it easy on you.

RICHARD

I didn't kill anyone.

DETECTIVE GARY

You aren't fooling us with your bullshit.

STONE

Trust me, all you have to do is cooperate with us and we'll make sure you're alright.

RICHARD

I'm cooperating right now, aren't I?

DETECTIVE GARY

(Under Breath)

Douche bag.

RICHARD

(To Detective Gary)

What?

STONE

Well, since you are being so cooperative, maybe you could help us out with something.

(Beat)

You recognize this?

Stone reaches into his pocket and produces a plastic bag that contains a small pistol. The pistol has a pearl handle with a rose printed on it. Stone pulls the gun out of the bag and presents it to Richard.

Richard looks at the gun intensely.

MAXINE (V.O.)  
Goodbye Richard. Too bad it has to  
end like this.

We hear a loud GUNSHOT and Richard shudders.

RICHARD  
No, definitely not.  
(Beat)  
Now if you'll please excuse me.

STONE  
So you've never seen this gun  
before?

RICHARD  
I'm not saying another word until  
you bring me a subpoena or whatever  
it is you people do.

DETECTIVE GARY  
The bullets matched that of several  
other crimes. Mind if we take your  
fingerprints?

Detective Gary grabs Richards hand but he pulls it away.

DETECTIVE GARY (CONT'D)  
You're going down motherfucker.  
You're hiding something. I see  
everything; one little slip up and  
you're going to jail for life. I  
despise your kind.

RICHARD  
Thanks for that.

Richard closes the door on the officers.

Richard locks the door and then returns to his seat on the couch. He picks up the script and continues to read and edit it. He shakes his head and smiles.

RICHARD (CONT'D)  
It's so worth it.

INT. RICHARD'S APARTMENT - DAY

Richard is dressed in clean clothes, and wearing a collared shirt. He has packed some bags and gathered some possessions in a box. A fresh copy of the script is sitting on his coffee table.

Richard looks at the clock on the wall, it's 12 Noon. Richard dons a jacket and messenger bag. He put's the script into his bag and exits the apartment.

INT. ERNIE'S RESTAURANT - DAY

Richard follows a waiter towards a table where Marty sits alone, drinking some scotch. The restaurant is very fancy. Most of the patrons are wearing suits.

Richard arrives to the table where Marty's sitting. They both seem slightly under-dressed compared to the other patrons.

RICHARD  
(To Waiter)  
Thanks.

Marty looks up at Richard morosely, just now noticing him. Richard takes the script from his bag and places it on Marty's plate in front of him.

MARTY  
This is it huh? I knew you could  
do it gorgeous.  
(Marty picks up the  
script)  
Thick.

Richard sits down at the table opposite of Marty. He hangs his bag over the back of his chair.

RICHARD  
Yeah, it's a little long, but I  
promise Marty, you'll love it.  
(Beat)  
Hell, everyone will love it, it's a  
masterpiece.

MARTY  
That's good Kiddo.

RICHARD

Good is an understatement, this could be the most important thing ever written.

MARTY

I'm glad. Shall we eat?

RICHARD

Yeah. Why'd you choose such a fancy place Marty? I can't help but feel a little out of place among people with suits.

MARTY

You deserve it...Nothing's too good for my masterpiece writer.

RICHARD

Well thanks. Say Marty, are you feeling alright?

A WAITER arrives to take their order. Marty signals for Richard to order first.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

(To Marty)

You're treat right?

(Marty Nods)

I'll have the 24 ounce steak please. Rare.

WAITER

(To Richard)

Good choice sir

(To Marty)

And for you?

MARTY

(Pointing to his Scotch)

I'll take two more of these.

WAITER

Very well sir.

Richard watches the waiter as he leaves the table.

RICHARD

What's bothering you Marty?

Marty chugs the rest of the drink that's in front of him.

MARTY  
I've got some bad news.

RICHARD  
Spill it.

MARTY  
(Fondling the script)  
I hate to do this to you Richard.

The Waiter arrives to the table with two more glasses of Scotch and places them in front of Marty. Marty grabs one and chugs the whole thing.

RICHARD  
Must be some real bad news.

MARTY  
The studio cancelled your slasher picture.

RICHARD  
Really?

Marty's still fondling the script when Richard slyly grabs it from him and sticks it back into his bag.

MARTY  
This morning their lead actor dropped out. He was the only reason anyone agreed to put money into this film. When he left, everything fell through.

RICHARD  
Oh.

MARTY  
So, you aren't getting paid sunshine, I'm sorry.  
(Beat)  
I know you're upset, and I wish it didn't have to be like this. Sorry.

RICHARD  
It could be worse.

MARTY  
Well, you're handling it well. I'll get you gig within the week. I promise. I'll make it my top priority.

RICHARD

Don't worry about it. I don't think I'll be needing another job anytime soon.

MARTY

You say that...

RICHARD

And I mean it. I've gotta jet Marty, thanks for everything.

Richard grabs his bag and leaves the restaurant. Marty is just sitting at the table shocked and upset by what just transpired.

MARTY

God, how does he take it so well?

Marty chugs the last of his drinks at the table.

INT. UGLY WHITE SEDAN (PARKED) - DAY

Richard is standing next to a rural mailbox. He sticks his script in an envelop and sticks in the box and raises the flag. The envelop is addressed to:

LAPD ATTN: Detective Stone

Richard climbs into his car and starts the motor. His personal belongings are scattered in the back seat.

Richard's cell phone begins to ring. He looks at the caller ID. It says LILLY. He answers the phone.

RICHARD

I'm on vacation.

Richard turns off his phone and begins to drive.

EXT. MEXICAN BORDER - DAY

Richard drives into the sunset towards the border.

FADE TO BLACK.