

Sledgehammer Charlie

by  
Ted Ludzik

Ted Ludzik  
61 Morse St. Toronto ON M4M 2P7  
416-406-9926

Copyright (c) 2010 This screenplay may not be used or reproduced  
without the express written permission of the author.

FADE IN:

INT. FARMHOUSE FRONT ROOM -- DAY

Three people sit in the clean, homey, country house room.

A WOMAN -- 30's, attractive, but not heavily made up, professional, stern -- and a MAN -- late 30's and much the twin of his female partner -- in professional attire sit across from a LARGE BALD MAN in his early 40's -- CHARLIE: only pieces of him are revealed throughout the scene. Such is his size that his shoulders jut beyond the confines of his chair.

The professionals have clipboards and files. They coldly make notes after the big man responds to the questions. They've done this many times before.

MAN

If I were a close friend, and I playfully slapped your wife on the buttocks, what emotions would you feel?

Charlie's hand clenches on the arm of the chair. The woman sees it, notes it.

CHARLIE

Uncomfortable.

MAN

And how uncomfortable?

CHARLIE

A five.

They make notes.

MAN

Ok. And you're still taking the prescribed medication...

CHARLIE

Yeah.

WOMAN

Initially you said, you didn't feel any different. Is it still like that?

CHARLIE

No. They're doing their job now.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 2.

MAN

Alright then. Now we'll just go  
and have a chat with your wife and  
we'll see you again next month.

An awkward gap where handshakes and "See you later" would normally take place. The man notes it on his way out.

Muffled voices of greeting from another part of the house. Charlie remains in his chair. His eye listening.

INT. COLE'S APARTMENT -- DAY

The sounds of passionate love-making. Muffled, but still intense.

The knob of the apartment's front door rattles. A key being fit into it. Finally it turns and the door opens.

COLE -- a boyish, naturally mussy-haired man in his 30's -- enters. His 5 o'clock shadow and half-undone tie tell of another day of work done. He plops his keys and wallet in its hallway table home. Spinning off his jacket he looks into the kitchen and living areas.

COLE

Mon? Monica? I'm early... One of  
the patients pulled a fire-alarm.

He hears a grunt and a sigh of pleasure. He faces the bedroom door. More gentle, happy moans filter through it. He approaches it, calmly putting his hand on the knob. Finally he turns it and opens the door a crack.

A slat of twisting yellow light falls across one of his eyes.

INT. COLE'S BEDROOM -- DAY

MONICA -- a stunning woman in her early 30's -- writhes on the bed, her hand beneath the rumped sheets. She draws a MAN -- late 20's, very handsome -- up from underneath, they smile lasciviously at each other and continue their rutting.

INT. COLE'S APARTMENT -- DAY

Cole's expression -- or the lack thereof -- hasn't changed. He closes the door again, just as slowly as he opened it.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 3.

EXT. FARM DRIVEWAY -- DAY

A powerful-looking pick-up truck turns into a dirt and gravel driveway. A horse trailer tails heavily behind it. It passes a mini-van parked beside a roadside mailbox; in its windshield a sign marks it as a postal delivery vehicle.

In the truck, Charlie's eyes stare dimly from under his heavy brow-ridge.

He looks through the scraggly trees of his yard at the front door of his house. He watches the two people on the porch.

EXT. FARMHOUSE -- DAY

The scene is tinted with a misty red.

From a distance, the camera watches as a POSTMAN-- late 40's, a little bit of chub, completely unthreatening -- climbs up the stairs and speaks with a woman.

She's in her late 30's, but because of her long, brunette hair and fine features she appears much younger. This is MARY-ANNE.

The postman's hands reach forward and undo a button on Mary-anne's blouse.

EXT. FARM DRIVEWAY -- DAY

Charlie exhales sharply.

EXT. FARMHOUSE -- DAY

Now in a normal light, the scene plays out again.

The postman's hand is not on Mary-anne's blouse. He's handing her some envelopes. Mary-anne accepts the envelopes. She looks towards the camera/drive-way/Charlie in the truck.

MARY-ANNE

Oh, there he is now.

Charlie foot stomps out of the truck. His big paw slams the door home.

As Charlie gets closer, the postman starts to realize how massive Charlie is. Nevertheless, he thrusts his hand forward to meet Charlie's charge.

POSTMAN

Mr. Warren? Pleased to meet you.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 4.

Charlie nods and squeezes the postman's much smaller hand... tightly.

POSTMAN (CONT'D)

I was just saying to your lovely wife... [to Mary-Anne]... Mary-Anne, right? [back to Charlie] That I haven't seen you folks yet, and you've been here for almost a year now?

MARY-ANNE

Almost two.

Nothing from Charlie.

POSTMAN

Well, best be off. Nice to meet you!

MARY-ANNE

Thanks! Bye!

The postman waddles off.

Charlie's eyes watch the retreating postal worker. A muscle in his temple tightens. Charlie sets off after him.

The postman feels Charlie follow him. The postman hurries. Charlie is still after him. The postman stumbles on a patch of gravel. He looks back. Charlie isn't behind him.

Charlie gets to his truck. He opens the door and gets back in.

The postman walking, head still cranked over his shoulder, bangs into his own vehicle. He scrambles in.

Charlie looks to the front door once more. Mary-Anne waves at him.

Charlie rams the gas pedal down. The truck tows a horse van off toward the barn.

INT. COLE'S APARTMENT -- DAY

Cole is quickly packing things into a duffle-bag. There's not a lot in there: stuff you could get from your bathroom, from your home office, a large clutch of well thumbed papers in a file folder, a picture of two big-toothed kids smiling their heads off in front of a Christmas tree, but nothing one could get from your bedroom.

Cole looks at the closed bedroom door.

The front door closes as Cole leaves the apartment with his half-full duffle bag. He locks the door and then shoves the apartment key under it.

INT. BARN -- DAY

The barn is old but is receiving some upgrades: new wood planks and paint cans huddle up against its paint-peeling sides. Charlie's truck cools outside the large, open barn doors.

Charlie totes a bag from Home Depot and a sledgehammer with a price tag still stuck to it. He heads into the barn. Chickens scatter from his clomping work-boots.

A forest of tools array the wall over a huge tool table. Charlie tosses the spotless sledgehammer and the stuffed Home Depot bag beside it.

He shoves aside a box of nails and pulls out a translucent amber plastic pill bottle. He pops it open and dry swallows two of the little white tablets. He thinks for a second and then takes another one, just to be safe.

MARY-ANNE  
(off camera)  
Charlie?

Charlie puts the cap back on the bottle and shoves it behind the nails again. The child-safe cap sits at an odd angle on the vial's top. The bottle sits precipitously close to the edge of the table.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)  
Charlie? Did you get him?

At her words...

EXT. FARM DRIVEWAY -- DAY

In Charlie's reddish imagination, he's shaking the postman's hand. This time the postman's words are hidden behind a rush, a roar. It gets louder as Charlie shakes the man's hand. Rises as he refuses to let it go. As the post-man's smile falters. Charlie keeps squeezing. The roar is deafening as Charlie pops the bones in the post-man's hand. Pops them like grapes full of blood. The man's fingers jut at wrong angles from Charlie's hand. Charlie lets go revealing a hemorrhage of a hand, pulped and oozing black blood and white piercings of bone.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 6.

INT. BARN -- DAY

MARY-ANNE  
Charlie? Did you get him?

Slowing his breathing, Charlie heads out of the barn.

EXT. BARN -- DAY

Charlie heads for the horse van behind his truck.

CHARLIE  
Yep. The last of our "new start"  
money.

MARY-ANNE  
Relax, honey. Garry's lovely; he  
promised us stud fee...  
(sees the horse)  
Ohhh! You really did it!

Charlie slams down the back of the trailer and disappears into it. A large male horse backs out of the trailer as Charlie guides it. It's tail swishes impatiently, revealing a giant jangling pair of testicles.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)  
(all giggles at the size  
of the genitalia)  
Oh my god!  
(then as she sees the rest  
of the beast)  
Oh he's beautiful! Oh thank you  
Charlie. This is a dream. This is  
just what we needed...

Her words are for Charlie, but her hands are all over the horse.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)  
... A fresh start.

INT. BUS STATION -- DAY

Cole wanders outside a bus station. His cell phone rings. He knows who it is.

COLE  
Hi.

MONICA  
I saw the key. You got home early.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 7.

COLE

One of the clients had a pretty big  
freak out. The police and the fire  
department wanted everybody to go.

MONICA

Ah. [pause] So? You want to say  
anything?

COLE

I don't know where I'm going to go.

MONICA

I was fucking some guy in our bed.

COLE

Yeah.

MONICA

Wow. Ok, bye.

INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN -- EVENING

Charlie and Mary-Anne are settling in to dinner. A warm  
light suffuses the table as Mary-Anne sets a casserole plate,  
removes her oven mitts and sits down.

Charlie is about to take his first bite and the phone rings.  
Mary-anne looks to Charlie; most of him, still unseen by the  
camera.

MARY-ANNE

Now who would that be?

It keeps ringing. Charlie's fork-full of food hangs between  
his plate and his mouth.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)

I'll get it.

Charlie eats without tasting the food. He's listening to  
Mary-Anne on the phone.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)

Hello? ... Oh, howdy stranger! Is  
it Christmas already? Ha ha... I'm  
just kidding... And how's Monica?  
... Oh. Really? Oh that's  
terrible. ... Oh. I don't know...

There's a huge hole in the conversation. Mary-Anne looks at  
Charlie's hulking back.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)  
What about my mom and dad's? Oh,  
right the renovations.

Charlie pauses in mid-chew, listening.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)  
Oh, Aunt Sadie's, I mean your mom,  
she's got lots of room! ... Yeah,  
Florida is pretty far. But it's  
warm! Ha ha! No.

(another look at Charlie)  
No, everything's good here. Yeah,  
we've certainly got the room. I  
just didn't think you'd like the  
farm country smell. Hang on, let  
me just ask Charlie. You know how  
he loves surprises.

(puts her hand over the  
mouthpiece)  
Monica left Cole.

Charlie raises his head from his fork.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)  
There's no where else for him to  
go.

Charlie hears her but isn't answering.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)  
Can he...?

Charlie's fork drops into his plate.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)  
Please?

Charlie finally responds.

CHARLIE  
' course.

Mary-Anne's brief smile is crushed by Charlie pushing his  
plate away and getting up and leaving the kitchen.

MARY-ANNE  
(like nothing happened)  
Oh he's fine with it. No, no  
problem at all. So we'll see you  
tomorrow? Great! Okay... bye.

She hangs up the phone.

INT. BUS STATION -- EVENING

Cole holds onto his bus ticket. He sits slouched on the station's circa 1960's pre-ergonomics benches.

He watches a child and it's harried mother pass in front of the bank of vending machines. The kid sees the sugaries. The mom keeps dragging the kid past them. The kid skips the "please mum, can I have one?" And goes straight into thermo-nuclear meltdown. The mom sees the kid crying and their bus closing its doors. The kid becomes a steaming pile of dead brat weight.

The mom slaps the kid viciously.

MOTHER

Can't on yer goddamned feet!

The kid does. Too slowly. The mother gives her child a series of short maddened slaps and pinches.

She sees Cole watching. She's prepared to defend her actions, but she sees that won't be necessary.

Cole does and says nothing. His phone rings and the mother yanks her kid out to their bus.

MONICA

So you found somewhere?

COLE

Going to stay with my cousin Mary-Anne for a week.

MONICA

Crazy Charlie's Mary-Anne?

COLE

Chemically unbalanced Charlie's Mary-Anne, yeah. They were moved out of the city and he's on meds.

One of those gaps the size of a slobbery reconciliation occurs with nothing to fill it.

MONICA

Be careful.

COLE

Kay, thanks.

He nestles his phone back into the duffle bag.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 10.

INT. CHARLIE AND MARY-ANNE'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Charlie settles into bed. Mary-Anne sets down a book to smile at him. She reaches over to him, strokes his shoulder and his face.

MARY-ANNE

It's really sweet that you're letting Cole stay with us. I nearly grew up with him; he's more like a brother than a cousin. I know how something like this used to make you feel, so I really appreciate this.

She slides up to him. She nuzzles and begins to grind against him.

MARY-ANNE

Really, really.

He looks at her, his breath rising. She pulls his bulk on top of her. They begin to make love. But as her ardor rises, something in Charlie begins to fall. He goes limp and despite Mary-Anne's best efforts, they can't get it going again.

Charlie seethes at himself.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)

The pills? Well, we'll just try again tomorrow.

She turns off her bedside lamp. Her new smile glows in the moonlight.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)

I like trying.

She closes her eyes. Charlie's cold eyes stare up at the ceiling, steely in the moon's light.

INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN -- MORNING

Two eggs, sunny-side up, sizzle in a black skillet. Mary-Anne cooks up a breakfast fit for an ogre. She holds the handle of the skillet with an oven mitt.

Charlie shuffles into the kitchen. Dark bags under his eyes.

MARY-ANNE

Morning sunshine.  
(then she sees him)  
(MORE)

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 11.

MARY-ANNE (cont'd)

Oh. Didn't you sleep well? You didn't take your zopiclones did you?

CHARLIE

(at the fridge; guzzling coke straight out of the bottle)

Forgot.

MARY-ANNE

Well, breakfast will make you feel better.

She's getting a plate out for it, and the door bell chimes.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)

Oh. That must be Cole. Good! He can have some brekkie too.

She leaves the stove and scurries for the front door.

EXT. FARMHOUSE -- MORNING

Cole and his duffel wait at the front door. It's opened by a giddy and squealing Mary-Anne.

MARY-ANNE

Oh my god! There he is! Mr. Super-successful psychiatrist!

She hugs him to death. He manages a tired smile.

COLE

I'm about a thesis shy actually.

INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN -- MORNING

Charlie sits in the kitchen, listening to the happiness. He hears every rustle of Mary-Anne's clothes touching Cole's. He can hear the hug ending. Thickening steam rises from the stove behind him.

MARY-ANNE

(off camera)

What-ever! C'mon get in here. You haven't even ever been here, have you?

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 12.

INT. FARMHOUSE FRONT ROOM -- MORNING

Cole drops his duffel and doffs his shoes.

COLE  
Nope. Last time was... at the  
other place.

Charlie's silhouette stands in the doorway to the kitchen.

COLE (CONT'D)  
Oh hey, Charlie. How you doing?

Before Charlie can answer, the kitchen's fire alarm screeches to life.

Mary-Anne realizes what must have happened.

MARY-ANNE  
Oh shit!

She scuttles to the kitchen. Cole follows.

INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN -- MORNING

The eggs have become smoking, blackened cysts in the pan. Charlie grabs the pan's handle.

MARY-ANNE  
Charlie don't! You...

Charlie suddenly tosses the burning skillet into the sink. A red outline of the pan handle is emblazoned across his palm.

CHARLIE  
Aaaagh!

MARY-ANNE  
... need an oven mitt.

The alarm still wailing and smoke still billowing from the pan, Charlie turns on the cold water tap.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)  
No!

The water hits the pan, instantly boils and splashes the sizzling oil right onto Charlie. More insult than actual injury.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)  
You okay?

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 13.

Charlie shrugs her off and heads out of the kitchen. Cole only gets in the big man's way.

COLE

You okay?

Charlie gives him a withering glare.

CHARLIE

Great.

Charlie shoulders his way past Cole.

COLE

You really should get that looked at.

Charlie heads outside, oblivious to Cole's good intentions.

COLE (CONT'D)

(to himself)

He really should get that looked at.

(to Mary-Anne)

Wonderful. I think he and I barely exchanged "hellos" at Easters and Christmas'. He's going to love me now.

MARY-ANNE

Oh don't get stuck on that. He's probably more worried about what you think of him.

COLE

Truly.

MARY-ANNE

He's a deep thinker. Not an Einstein maybe, but his gears are always turning.

COLE

What happened to his hair?

MARY-ANNE

They're not sure if it was all the medications or the stress of the verdict or the 9 months at the center.

Mary-Anne suddenly discovers some fresh eggs.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)

You must be famished!

COLE

I hadn't heard of that side-effect for anti-depressants or anti-psychotics. What'd they give him after the...?

MARY-ANNE

A whole drug store at one point. Couldn't tie his own shoes, even if they hadn't tied him down. But now, it's just a good dose of , I think it's um, "effexxane"?

COLE

Venlafaxine.

MARY-ANNE

Yes, that's it.

She's got the new set of eggs going.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)

It upset his gut for a while, but it's all good now.

COLE

And he's doing well?

MARY-ANNE

We're both in a better spot. Now how about you, you poor thing... Weren't you and Monica nearly engaged or something?

COLE

We just moved in together.

MARY-ANNE

Oh that was it. So what happened, or am I salting an open wound?

COLE

We just weren't right for each other. You should have got in to psychology, not me. You're always in touch with people's feelings.

MARY-ANNE

Well I try.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 15.

Cole sees Charlie out in the yard with an arm load of metal fence posts.

MARY-ANNE  
He could probably use some help.

COLE  
Oh. Right.

Cole heads out.

EXT. BARNYARD -- DAY

Charlie drops the barb-wire fence posts. The huge racket covers Cole's approach.

COLE  
Need some help?

Charlie is startled; he spins about. His other hand bears the new sledge hammer.

CHARLIE  
I'm good.

COLE  
No, c'mon. What should I do, hold these while you hammer?

CHARLIE  
... Sure.

Cole grabs a post.

COLE  
Whoa. Heavier than they look.  
(Charlie waits)  
So where?

Charlie points. Cole erects the post. Cole watches Charlie heave the sledge hammer over head... over Cole's head?

CLANK! The hammer meets the post perfectly. The stunning vibration jars the post from Cole's hands.

COLE (CONT'D)  
Ow! Jeezus!

CHARLIE  
Nevermind, I got it.

COLE

No, no... Do you have any  
protective... hand... protection?

CHARLIE

In the barn, on the tool table. My  
leather gloves.

COLE

Cool.  
(heads to the barn)  
And you, you're good?

Charlie nods.

Once Cole is away, Charlie looks at his scorched palm: he's definitely not "good". The red outline of the skillet's handle is all one huge puffy blister, torn and hanging skin along the edges that had been holding the sledgehammer.

INT. BARN -- DAY

Cole, still rubbing his hands together, finds the tool table in the barn.

The pill bottle still sits where Charlie set it. Close to the edge.

Cole shifts things on the table, looking for the gloves.

The bottle is bumped by a jar of screws and nails. Just on the edge of falling. It teeters.

Cole finds the gloves.

The jar settles again. Safe.

Cole puts the gloves on. They're Charlie-sized. Cole wiggles his fingers in them and turns to leave.

He bumps a spool of copper wire. It falls off the table.

The jar doesn't move.

Cole retrieves the spool and places it with a thump back on the table.

The thump jostles the pill bottle. This time it's going over. Its lid is heading for the sharp edge of a shovel. Just before it hits, Cole's hand catches it.

He looks at the label.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 17.

COLE  
Can't be losing that.

He figures out where it must have fallen from and puts it back on the work table.

EXT. BARNYARD -- DAY

Cole jogs back out to Charlie.

COLE  
Alright. All set.

Cole resurrects the pole. Charlie raises the hammer. Clank! Clank! Clank!

Cole can still feel the incredible impacts straight through the gloves.

Charlie can feel the hammer's handle sliding over his hand's blister. A mixture of water and hint of blood ooze out of his clenched hand. Charlie watches Cole suffer as much as he watches his hammer's aim.

A red-infused image pops in with each hammer-shot.

The straight post becomes a two-by-four with a palsying hand strapped up to it.

Cole's wind-blown hair briefly snaps into blood-clotted hair of the head of a man gasping.

Charlie stops pounding. The reddened day-dreams stop too.

Cole checks the post.

COLE (CONT'D)  
Wow, you must've been mad at that one.

Charlie's already heading to the next spot.

INT. FARMHOUSE FRONT ROOM -- DAY

Mary-Anne finishes up the dishes then heads upstairs with a hamper of laundry. She sees Cole's duffel bag by the front door. She hears the distant clank of the men working out in the yard. She exchanges the laundry for the duffel. She lugs the bag upstairs.

INT. FARMHOUSE GUEST BEDROOM -- DAY

Mary-Anne deposits the duffel on the guest bed. She opens the window to let some light into the clean but undecorated room.

She's heading out but something glints from a corner pocket of the duffel. She checks the window. The boys are still working. She tugs 4x6 frame out of the duffel pocket. It's the pic of the kids at Christmas. The thesis research folder and the cell-phone stare up from the duffel.

Mary-Anne melts and silently coos over the picture. She places it on the night-side table.

MARY-ANNE  
(chiding herself)  
Let him do it himself Mary-Anne.

She puts it back into the duffel and zips it up and leaves it on the edge of the bed.

The door closes.

EXT. BARNYARD -- AFTERNOON

The sun is low in the sky. Cole and Charlie are setting the last fence post. Cole slouches to the ground. He's breathing heavily.

COLE  
Glad that's done.

CHARLIE  
'Cept for the wire.

Cole looks back at the expanse of posts. It's true: they're bare.

Cole tenderly tears off the leather gloves.

COLE  
How're you two liking it out here?

CHARLIE  
Nice and quiet. Hardly any people.

COLE  
That's good?

Charlie nods. He starts heading back to the barn. Cole shoves himself back up and follows.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 19.

COLE (CONT'D)  
I always remember Mary-Anne liking  
things a bit more... social.

CHARLIE  
I didn't make her come.

EXT. BARN -- EVENING

COLE  
I thought it was part of the  
judgment that you two...

Charlie kicks a roll of barb wire towards Cole. Cole has to  
stop it from colliding with his shins.

Charlie heaves another roll onto his shoulder.

COLE (CONT'D)  
... that you two had to move out of  
state or...

Barbs bite into Charlie's shoulder. He doesn't feel them;  
his eyes riveted into Cole. Cole stammers on.

COLE (CONT'D)  
... or you'd have to serve more  
time...

MARY-ANNE  
(off camera)  
Come and geet it!

Cole leaves the barbed roll and heads for the house. Charlie  
hesitates and then heads out to the fence posts.

COLE  
Aren't you hungry?

CHARLIE  
Job's not done.

Cole's turn to hesitate.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)  
Go eat.

INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN -- EVENING

Mary-Anne's oven-mitted hands slide casserole dishes onto the  
table. The food is hardy and steaming.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 20.

COLE  
You always could cook.

His hand goes to grab a drumstick. Mary-Anne slaps it playfully away.

MARY-ANNE  
Dirt is decaying animal poop. Go wash.

EXT. BARNYARD -- EVENING

Charlie unspools barb wire and strings it up on the posts. One of the barbs snags him... in his already burned and blistered palm. He barks in pain and sucks at his palm. The rising moon watches.

MARY-ANNE  
(o/s)  
Where's Charlie?

INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN -- DAY

COLE  
He wanted to finish the job. I think I might've stepped into a bad subject.

MARY-ANNE  
Oh. Yeah.

COLE  
He's still demonstrating anti-social proclivities. Did he ever try the group therapy?

MARY-ANNE  
Yeah.

COLE  
And?

MARY-ANNE  
It stopped once we got out here.

She slices into some food and plops it on a plate.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)  
But they check on him once a month. Here.

COLE

And...?

MARY-ANNE

Oh they don't tell me anything.  
They just interview me in private.  
A few questions, hoping I'll spill  
some kind of beans, but...

COLE

But...?

MARY-ANNE

Yeah and they'll do that too... to  
keep me talking... Usually it's  
"and" though. Ha, I'm teaching you  
some psychiatrics now! "But"  
things are just fine.

COLE

He's certainly calmer than the last  
time. The meds, I guess.

MARY-ANNE

The work is a great distraction for  
him. By the end of the day, he's  
just too tired to feel anything...

COLE

Like...?

A door opens and shuts. Charlie's back.

MARY-ANNE

Come eat, dear.

Charlie invades the kitchen. Cole sees that Charlie's hands  
are filthy. Mary-Anne doesn't exhort him to wash, she just  
smiles and serves up grub for him and finally herself.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)

Now what I really want to hear  
about is what happened with Monica  
and you. How long were you  
together?

COLE

Almost 5 years.

MARY-ANNE

So what happened?

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 22.

COLE

Long story short, she was cheating  
on me.

Charlie's eyes start up.

MARY-ANNE

Oh. Oh no. You poor guy.

Mary-Anne's hand instinctively reaches out to touch Cole's  
hand. Then just as quickly retreats.

COLE

It was a real shock.

CHARLIE

So you left?

COLE

Immediately.

CHARLIE

Smart.

After that, they eat in silence.

INT. FARMHOUSE GUEST BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Cole nestles into his new bed. The unfamiliar room around  
him; moonlight through the window pane. He sighs and closes  
his eyes.

INT. CHARLIE AND MARY-ANNE'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Charlie watches Mary-Anne get dressed for bed. Her panties a  
little more frilly than one might expect on a farm woman's  
ass. Her body is curved in all the right places. She slips  
on a cotton nightie and she's all freckles and innocence  
again.

MARY-ANNE

That was very sweet what you said  
to Cole at dinner.

She slides into bed up close to Charlie.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)

Thank you.

She kisses him, turns over, turns off the light.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 23.

Now it's Charlie's eyes that look at the paned moonlight on the ceiling. His eyes don't close.

INT. CHARLIE AND MARY-ANNE'S BEDROOM -- MORNING

Charlie's eyes are closed.

The light is bright and blue. Mary-Anne's giggling laugh from somewhere other than right beside him. Charlie's eyes snap open.

Her spot in the bed is empty. He listens. All the words are muffled, but it's definitely a male and female voice, conversing. Laughing occasionally. Charlie's hand clenches her side of the bed sheets.

INT. CHARLIE AND MARY-ANNE'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

The voices are gone. Mary-Anne is in bed. She carefully pulls the sheet and covers off herself. Not watching but aware of Charlie. His eyes are closed.

She eases her feet onto the floorboards. Painted toenails black in the moonlight.

One last look at Charlie, asleep, unaware. She smiles and looks down the hall. The door closes.

Muffled giggles again.

INT. CHARLIE AND MARY-ANNE'S BEDROOM -- MORNING

Charlie gets up and shoves himself into his clothes.

INT. FARMHOUSE GUEST BEDROOM -- MORNING

Charlie stops to peek in. The bed is unmade. Charlie pokes his head in, as if to smell for remnants of the night's history. No evidence here.

INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN -- MORNING

Cole and Mary-Anne are drinking coffee.

MARY-ANNE  
And you always had the biggest  
ears.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 24.

COLE

And feet... don't forget the feet.

MARY-ANNE

Ohmygosh, that's right! Ears and feet! That's why everyone called you...

MARY-ANNE/COLE

(together)

"Rabbit!"

Charlie enters on Mary-anne's laughter.

MARY-ANNE

Morning dear! Coffee?

Charlie sees Cole sipping out of a large mug, old, well-worn, "Bald Is Beautiful" barely legible on it.

CHARLIE

No.

He goes to the fridge and guzzles some Coke straight from the bottle.

MARY-ANNE

So, did you sleep well?

INT. FARMHOUSE GUEST BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Mary-Anne steps carefully to the door. She nudges open a crack. Cole lays in the moonlight, eyes wide open. He looks to Mary-Anne. Mary-Anne smiles and lifts off her nightie. She closes the door behind her.

INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN -- MORNING

MARY-ANNE

Dear?

Charlie was out of it longer than he thought. He looks blankly at Cole and Mary-Anne.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)

How'd you sleep?

CHARLIE

Good enough.

COLE

It's amazing how important sleep is on mood. Studies on insomniac schizophrenics show a distinct rise in aberrant behaviour after lack of sleep... the nearly autistic become pressured speakers... Passive patients lash out...

Mary-Anne stares aghast at Cole. Charlie puts away the Coke and isn't able to look at Cole. Charlie heads out.

MARY-ANNE

No breakfast?

CHARLIE

Animals ain't going to feed themselves.

He exits.

COLE

Shit. Sorry. Maybe I should stay with my aunt.

MARY-ANNE

Oh no, he's fine. And she's so far away. It's really nice having you here... to talk to, you know?

COLE

He doesn't express much.

MARY-ANNE

Not in words.

INT. BARN -- MORNING

Charlie is rooting around on the tool table, looking for his pills. He scuffs his palm on the table's rough top and jerks it back. He looks at his palm... the broken, bloody blisters have gone bad. His hand is swollen, red; it shakes when tries to fold his fingers.

He reaches for the leather gloves and slides them painfully on his hands.

He goes back to rooting around for his pills. He grows increasingly frantic when they don't turn up.

COLE

(off camera)

So! What's on the agenda today?

If Charlie's eyes could decapitate a man, Cole would be headless.

Mary-Anne strolls in. She heads for the new horse's stall.

Charlie steps over to a shelf and hauls a 20 pound bag of chicken feed down. He easily shot-puts it at Cole, who lurches under the weight.

CHARLIE  
Feed the birds.

COLE  
You don't need any help?

CHARLIE  
You drive tractors now?

COLE  
Oh look, chickens.

Cole heads out to lay down some feed. Charlie grabs the grimy keys to the tractor. He stops to watch Mary-Anne petting and cooing to the horse.

She's stroking the beast on its side and then on its belly. Suddenly she steps back startled. The horse has become "excited" by her ministrations.

MARY-ANNE  
Oh my!  
(laughing)  
Someone's lonely, hey?

Charlie slowly slinks out of the barn.

INT. BARN -- DAY

Cole spreads the feed for the chickens by the barn door.

The pill bottle of effexor lays on the dirt floor of the barn. It's cap is several inches away. A small drift of little white pills in the dirt between. Not seeing them, Cole squashes them into the dirt.

In the distance, the chickens peck and scratch in the dirt.

EXT. HAYFIELD -- DAY

Charlie sits in the cab of the tractor. Behind him a spider-like machine cuts down the stalks of golden hay into heaps and spirals. The blades cut efficiently.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 27.

In the cab, Charlie looks ill. His eyes are red-rimmed, sweat trickles down his head. Every once in a while, he wriggles the fingers of his injured hand, still in the glove. The radio keeps him company.

RADIO CALLER

... and they're coming out here...

RADIO HOST

Who's they, Gerry?

RADIO CALLER

Y'know, folks from the city. Even rich ones from the suburbs, buying up the land...

RADIO HOST

Because they think it's quaint and healthy.

RADIO CALLER

Yeah and they pretend to be farmers...

Charlie's fevered mind is a million miles away.

Images from previous day-dreams and recent history collide: Mary-Anne smiling at the post-man, Mary-Anne's pert ass in those panties, Mary-Anne and Cole laughing at the kitchen table together and then one image that doesn't seem to belong. It's red-filtered and erratic: a large hand grabbing a horrified man's head. The thumb slides over the man's eye and then plunges into the socket.

Charlie, wide-eyed, reefs the steering wheel hard.

The straight lines of Charlie's reaping are skewed by one trail that follows the tractor as it heads for the barn.

INT. BARN -- DAY

Sweat dripping off his bald head, Charlie searches for his pills again. Nothing. He hears the clucking of a chicken. He follows the sound over to the edge of the table.

The chicken pecks at a few remaining white pills in the dirt. The lid-less bottle laying by the table's leg.

He falls to his knees, grabbing for the remaining pills. They are sodden and dirty, crumbling and melting in his clumsy gloved fingers.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 28.

The stubborn chicken still tries to peck at the remaining pills.

Charlie grabs the bird by the neck. It freaks, and flaps and claws at him. Charlie puts his thumb underneath the bird's beak... and as easily as a child flicking the head off a dandelion, Charlie removes the bird's skull from its neck.

He heads out of the barn with the headless bird still flapping and scratching in his grip.

INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN -- DAY

Mary-Anne studies a fashion mag. She doesn't look up at the sound of Charlie entering

MARY-ANNE

What do you think you'd like for dinner, dear?

CHARLIE

Chicken.

She looks up. Charlie throws the headless fowl on the counter-top.

MARY-ANNE

Oh. Good.

CHARLIE

Got to go into town.

MARY-ANNE

For?

CHARLIE

... To the drug store.

MARY-ANNE

I'll come! I need new mascara.

INT. DRUG STORE -- DAY

Charlie waits in line at the pharmacy counter. The PHARMACIST waves him forward.

PHARMACIST

Pick up?

CHARLIE

I accidentally dropped these...  
down the bathroom sink.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 29.

Charlie proffers the empty bottle of anti-depressants.

PHARMACIST

No problem.

(takes the bottle)

You've got refills for... Whoa,  
another couple of years. Heh...

(sees Charlie isn't  
smiling back)

Fifteen minutes.

Charlie looks over his shoulder. Mary-Anne is reading a fashion magazine. She looks up, craning her neck in search of Charlie.

CHARLIE

It takes fifteen minutes to count  
pills?

The pharmacist rushes to get to work.

EXT. FARM DRIVEWAY -- DAY

Cole wanders, looking about the farm.

INT. BARN -- DAY

Cole ambles into the barn. Around the corner from Charlie's tool bench, he notices a pad-locked door.

EXT. BARN -- DAY

Cole exits the barn. He finds some barred and grubby windows that look like they must connect to the room behind the locked door.

He rubs a layer of dirt off a window and peers in. He can barely make out some lumber that may (or may not) be built into a rough structure.

INT. FARMHOUSE GUEST BEDROOM -- DAY

Still rubbing the window's dirt from his hand, Cole rushes into the guest room. He dumps the contents of his duffel bag over the bed. He snatches up the thesis folder and flips through its contents.

He finds what he was looking for: a photo of a wooden structure. It's labelled "Charlie Warren's Apparatus".

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 30.

It's composed of an "X" with stained manacles at the top of the two arms. In the centre of the X, an even more heavily stained 6x6 juts straight out. An odd metal spar pushes out to the left and right from the 6x6.

A diagram beside the photo demonstrates how the victim is placed: arms manacled to the X's arms, sitting on the 6x6 with legs to either side, and the spar pushing the legs out to the side, making the victim's groin terribly exposed.

To make it even more blunt, a dotted trajectory line traces from an upraised sledgehammer down to the spot where the victim's scrotum would rest on the 6x6.

Cole closes the folder.

INT. DRUG STORE -- DAY

Charlie closes a pamphlet on blood pressure. He looks over his shoulder. A young, handsome-faced STOCK BOY is putting out new magazines. He's on his knees beside Mary-Anne. They are not paying any attention to one another.

Charlie looks back to the pharmacist. The pharmacist is waving away his ASSISTANT, hurriedly and worriedly getting Charlie's scrip done first.

Charlie looks back to the magazine rack. The stock boy is still on his knees but he's squeezing the inside of Mary-anne's thigh. She looks under her magazine and smiles at the boy. Encouraged, his hand travels higher. Mary-Anne looks up to Charlie. She smiles widely at him through half-closed eyes.

Charlie blinks.

The stock boy is stocking Teen Beats and nearly pornographic men's mags, not even looking Mary-Anne's way. Mary-Anne is reading her magazine. She looks up at Charlie, smiles, innocently this time.

PHARMACIST (CONT'D)

Here you are.

Charlie turns back to the counter. His prescription has been filled.

PHARMACIST (CONT'D)

(tapping at register)

That'll be 117.80.

CHARLIE

They put me on a drug plan.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 31.

PHARMACIST

Uh yes, but it only covers you one month at a time. You can save the receipt and send it to them next month.

Charlie digs out his wallet. A ten sits forlornly amidst a scattering of change. Charlie's getting red in the face.

MARY-ANNE

All set dear?

Mary-Anne has crept up behind Charlie.

CHARLIE

Yeah. All set.

Charlie steers Mary-Anne to the exit.

The pharmacist scoops up the prescription bottle. He holds it up, is about to tell Charlie he forgot his meds. He thinks better of it.

EXT. PARKING LOT -- DAY

Charlie lets go of Mary-Anne's arm. They get into their pick-up.

MARY-ANNE

Anything wrong?

CHARLIE

No.

Charlie slams it into drive and careens off.

INT. CHARLIE AND MARY-ANNE'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Mary-Anne's on top, writhing. Her dewy sweat evidence that she's been at it for some time. Hands crawl up to caress and pull down to grind her closer. She's bucked up wildly.

MARY-ANNE

Oh my! You should get stud fees too!

She's whirled down and underneath him. She giggles and gasps. Strong arms on either side of her. She presses into him as much as he into her.

The door to the room flies open. Charlie stares at a stunned Cole on top of coitally interrupted Mary-Anne.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 32.

INT. CHARLIE AND MARY-ANNE'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Charlie's eyes snap open. He jerks up to a sit in his bed. Sheets of sweat roll off his head.

Mary-Anne sleeps soundly beside him.

His teeth chatter. He can barely flex his swollen, infected hand. His eyes swivel over the moonlit window; the light is strange. His eyes move but it takes a moment for the light to catch up. The delay and the fever make him nauseous.

He quietly steps out of bed, grabs his clothes.

He opens their door.

MARY-ANNE  
(sleepy)  
Where you going?

CHARLIE  
Forgot my meds.

MARY-ANNE  
Oh ok, hurry back.

She's already back to sleep when he closes the door.

INT. FARM UPSTAIRS HALL -- NIGHT

Fevered as he is, Charlie stops to look at Cole's closed door. And at his own bedroom door, just steps away.

He walks across the hall. The bathroom lit flicks on momentarily. Then off.

Charlie now has a small piece of toilet paper. He drapes it over Cole's door knob. It lays there lightly. Any movement in the door will cause it to fall off.

Charlie walks off, careful not to cause a breeze.

INT. FARMHOUSE GUEST BEDROOM -- NIGHT

The headlights of a vehicle cross Cole in bed in his room. Cole's eyes open and watch the lights recede.

INT. DRUG STORE -- NIGHT

Most of the drug store's lights are off. The aisles grey and empty of people.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 33.

The back door near the pharmacist's counter is made of steel.

A sudden crunch rattles the door. Huge pounding strikes center around the lock. The door begins to crumple under the onslaught. The lock falls out of its setting. Then the doorknob is the focus of the attack. One extra-vicious slam and it rockets across the counter into a display of make-up, puncturing the face of an extra-tarted-up female model.

The door swings open. A familiar hulk enters, his face cloaked in the shadows of the dim store. If there was any doubt about his identity, it's answered by the weapon that helped him open the door: the sledgehammer.

He immediately heads for the prescription counter.

He nearly bumps into the stock boy coming around an extra large pile of creme-filled snack cakes.

STOCK BOY

What the... WHOA!

The shocked stock boy stumbles back, keeping his eyes lowered. The intruder slowly raises his sledge and follows.

STOCK BOY (CONT'D)

(still stumbling back)

Dude, it's okay! I haven't seen your face and you just want drugs, right?

The sledge-bearer slows, listening to the desperate young man.

STOCK BOY (CONT'D)

Yeah, I'll just lie face-down, you grab whatever you want and go. I just don't want to get hurt okay?

The boy's back is to the magazine rack. He starts to kneel, doing what he said he would. The sledgehammer is lowered.

STOCK BOY (CONT'D)

Yeah, see? It's all good.

He uses the magazine rack to lower himself down. His hand crosses over one of the men's magazines. His hand over the enormous, scantily clad booty of a heroin-eyed cover girl. The intruder's eyes narrow on the boy's hand on the girl's flesh.

INT. DRUG STORE -- DAY

The stock boy is on his knees in front of Mary-Anne. His hand already on her thigh. Mary-Anne moves the magazine out of the way and looks archly down at the boy. The boy's hand rides further up. That's what she wants; Mary-Anne smiles. Encouraged, he scoops his hand under Mary-Anne's crotch. Mary-Anne purrs for him. The boy smiles.

INT. DRUG STORE -- NIGHT

The stock boy sees the sledgehammer being lowered; pleased with his ability to save his own life, the boy smiles.

Mary-Anne's echoey, delusion-sourced moans tunnel into the intruder's fevered ears.

The pupils in the eyes of the sledge-hammered man explode. The hammer comes down on the boy's knee; cracking it between steel and Formica, the muffled splitting of walnuts submerged in jello. Blood spatters the men's mag whores; like a money shot gone terribly wrong.

STOCK BOY

AAAAA! Dude, what the fuck!? Oh,  
oh, oh... Just take the drugs  
man... Oh god, oh god no...

INT. DRUG STORE -- DAY

The stock boy's hand is roaming far and wide. Mary-Anne is just letting him.

STOCK BOY

Oh god. Oh god, yeah.

INT. DRUG STORE -- NIGHT

The sledgehammer is rising again.

STOCK BOY

Noooo!

The hammer cracks him on the brow. Before the blood pours out, the eye is mashed and squirts in its socket, the deflated bag of it sagging out of the hole. Blood sprays across Charlie's clothes.

The blood spreads rapidly on the white-speckled floor. The boy is quivering from shock and brain damage. His teeth chattering so uncontrollably that he bites his lip through.

INT. DRUG STORE -- DAY

Mary-Anne bites her lip as the boy continues to slake his lust on her. She's enjoying the grinding, the pure teen-aged hormones, she invites it, grabs the boys hair and drives his face into her.

Then she looks straight at Charlie's eyes/straight at camera. She loves this.

INT. DRUG STORE -- NIGHT

Charlie's eyes seize up in fury. The sledge rears back yet again, but this time like he's going to play croquet.

The hammer arcs through, slamming into the boy's groin. The pelvis snaps in two. The boy's back breaks sideways, like the kink in an alley cat's tail.

He keeps pounding until parts of the boy are as flat tractor-trailer road-kill. Until Charlie is wheezing with emotional exhaustion. Blood covers his clothing.

Dragging his hammer, Charlie staggers to the pharmacy counter. His drained eyes roam the dozens of too-similar bottles. The names of the medicines are populated with a confusing number of X's and all end in "xyl"'s or "anane"s. A coruscation of milligrams and micrograms assault him. He pops lids off, looking for his little white pills, but they're all little and they're all white.

He wails as his sledgehammer smashes down through them all.

INT. FARMHOUSE GUEST BEDROOM -- MORNING

MARY-ANNE  
(off camera)  
COLE!

Cole's sleeping eyes burst open at the terror in Mary-Anne's call.

INT. CHARLIE AND MARY-ANNE'S BEDROOM -- MORNING

Cole bursts into the room. Mary-Anne is kneeling beside the bed. Charlie lays under the sheets; he's deathly pale and sweating profusely. He shivers like a kitten in a snowstorm. Mary-Anne removes a thermometer from his mouth.

COLE  
What's happening?

MARY-ANNE

I don't know. He was like this  
when I woke up.

(checks the thermometer)

Oh my god.

Cole takes the thermometer.

COLE

105. Jesus. We've got to get him  
to the hospital.

MARY-ANNE

I'll get his clothes.

COLE

Ok big fella, let's get you up.

Cole tries to pull back the covers. Charlie's good hand  
locks on to them.

COLE (CONT'D)

Don't worry, I didn't graduate but  
I interned.

Still Charlie hangs on. The covers slowly come down,  
revealing... Charlie's near nakedness. No bloody clothing.

Mary-Anne has a sweater ready to put over Charlie's head.

Cole gets his arm under Charlie and heaves.

COLE (CONT'D)

You're going to have to help me  
Mary-Anne.

Mary-Anne and Cole both yank at Charlie. Snot and foam spew  
from Charlie's nose and mouth; he stiffens.

COLE (CONT'D)

Charlie don't fight us! You're  
brain is going to boil in your head  
if we don't get you to the  
hospital!

Charlie's eyes widen.

MARY-ANNE

Charlie, it's not that kind of  
hospital!

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 37.

COLE  
(to Mary-Anne)  
Get all the ice you can. Fill up  
the tub with cold water.

MARY-ANNE  
The shock?

COLE  
If we don't get his temp down,  
he'll be brain-damaged.

INT. FARMHOUSE BATHROOM -- MORNING

The breath is punched out of Charlie as his body is submerged in water and ice. Suddenly, painfully conscious, Charlie clambers to escape the tub.

COLE  
(holding him down)  
Just a couple minutes, Charlie!  
Hang on!

Charlie's head clangs repeatedly against the tub as the cold takes him.

COLE (CONT'D)  
That's it, bud. There you go.

Mary-Anne hovers over Cole.

MARY-ANNE  
Oh Jesus, Cole, look. At his hand.

A viscous trail of pink and beige pus trails in the water leading back to Charlie's injured right hand. It's a ballooned, inflamed mockery of a real hand.

INT. CHARLIE AND MARY-ANNE'S BEDROOM -- DAY

Charlie's inflated, infected hand lays on a clean white towel. Charlie lays in bed looking between his hand and Cole.

Cole has an exacto knife in his hand. He pours rubbing alcohol into a dish that holds the knife's blade. He takes the blade and snaps it into the exacto.

COLE  
At the hospital, they could give  
you some wonderful anesthetics.

Charlie moves his misshapen hand towards Cole.

COLE (CONT'D)  
Mary-Anne hold his arm down.

Mary-Anne puts her weight onto Charlie's arm.

Cole pricks the knife into Charlie's hand. A jet of pus and blood gout up onto Cole. Cole turns his head, gagging at the smell.

The knife cuts a longer furrow across Charlie's palm. Clots and dried chunks of pus float out on a pinky yellow river.

Cole screws off the top of a bottle of hydrogen peroxide. He pours it into the wound. It hisses as pink foam grows.

Charlie stiffens. Despite Mary-Anne's weight, his arm rises - - he could obviously throw her off -- but he keeps hand on the now-fouled towel.

His eyes flutter. He looks beyond Cole. Under a dresser behind them, the stub of the sledge-hammer sticks out, badly hidden.

Charlie faints.

INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN -- DAY

Cole washes Charlie's blood out from underneath his fingernails.

MARY-ANNE  
Wow, you handled that like it was nothing.

She takes the soap from his hand. Their fingers briefly touching.

COLE  
(drying hands)  
Interned at a couple of emergency rooms. His hand was a lot like this kid's knee. He took a bullet there. He didn't want to tell anyone obviously, so he let it fester in there. That was my first day.

MARY-ANNE  
You must have been an emotional wreck.

COLE

Yeah... well, actually...

There's a hard knocking at the front door.

INT. FARMHOUSE FRONT ROOM -- DAY

The knocking again. Hard, demanding. Mary-Anne begins to head for the front door, but in it's little window, the unmistakable hat of a state trooper waits.

MARY-ANNE

I still can't stand the sight of them. Could you please?

Cole makes the save and opens to the front door. A uniformed police trooper looks him up and down.

TROOPER

You're not Charlie Warren.

COLE

No, I'm family.

TROOPER

I need to speak with him.

COLE

He's in bed right now. Sick.

TROOPER

It'll only be a few questions. He'll survive.

COLE

Actually, he's kind of unconscious.  
(off the trooper's  
suspicious look)  
He should have went to emerg, but  
he's pretty stubborn.

TROOPER

He long's he been out?

COLE

Since he went to bed last night.

TROOPER

(starts taking things down  
in a notebook)  
Anybody else who could verify his  
whereabouts since last night?

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 40.

COLE  
His wife.

TROOPER  
And your full name?

COLE  
Cole Eastman.

TROOPER  
Family, you said?

COLE  
Yeah, I'm Mary-Anne's, Mrs.  
Warren's cousin.

TROOPER  
Good. Thank you.

Abruptly the trooper turns on his heel and goes.

COLE  
Can you tell me what's going on?

TROOPER  
(over his shoulder)  
No.

Cole closes the door.

INT. CHARLIE AND MARY-ANNE'S BEDROOM

The day passes.

Charlie sweats and shivers.

Mary-Anne strokes his forehead with a cool cloth.

Cole checks the drainage on Charlie's infected hand.

INT. CHARLIE AND MARY-ANNE'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

The moon has risen and now sets.

Cole pokes his head in the room.

COLE  
How's he doing?

MARY-ANNE

Fever's lower. He's getting restless. I think he might come out of it soon.

COLE

Good. Personal question. Answer only if you want to.

MARY-ANNE

Kay.

COLE

He ever talk about it?  
(off her look)  
Not the details, they're not important. But what thoughts drove him... how he felt?

MARY-ANNE

Why?

COLE

What could spawn emotions so big?  
To lose control so completely.

MARY-ANNE

He once said he didn't know how every other man in the world could swallow it back. Chain it down.

COLE

Chain what?

MARY-ANNE

Jealousy.

COLE

It's just a different balance of chemicals in the body.

MARY-ANNE

Yeah. Hey, I gotta go potty. But I don't want him to wake up alone.

COLE

No problem.

Cole enters and Mary-Anne exits.

Cole sits. Charlie's eyes begin to open.

COLE (CONT'D)

Hey there. How you feeling?

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 42.

Charlie takes a moment to absorb the question. He looks to a small (and familiar to us) piece of toilet paper on his night side table.

CHARLIE

Pretty good.

And amazingly, Charlie smiles.

INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN -- MORNING

Egg white and yolks drip down into a skillet. Cole and Mary-Anne are in the kitchen.

Charlie traipses in, re-adorned in his work clothes. His sore paw is lightly bandaged.

MARY-ANNE

Oh! I was just going to bring some up to you.

CHARLIE

Smelled good. Got me going.

He leans his head down to peck her on the cheek.

Charlie sits down at the table. He tucks into his breakfast as soon as it's placed in front of him. He picks up his juice glass with the bad mitt, winces.

COLE

You should take another day, big guy.

Charlie's eyes meet Cole's unflinchingly. That smile re-surfaces.

CHARLIE

Job's not done.

He swallows the juice with a huge open-throated gulp. He puts the glass down with a thump.

INT. BARN -- DAY

A hammer meets a nail. Charlie puts down the hammer and examines his handiwork. The sides of wood make the object, and a few others like it, look like an angular letter "C".

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 43.

COLE  
(off camera)  
One feverish coma and the man  
thinks he's a cabinet-maker.

Charlie smiles but continues tinkering.

CHARLIE  
Just feeling tidy.

He places the wooden bracket up against the barn wall and  
slides a hammer into it.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)  
(points to some scrap  
lumber)  
And maybe that'll be a work bench.

COLE  
Good idea. Anything I can do to  
earn my keep?

CHARLIE  
Yeah. C'mere.

Cole follows. On his exit, he takes an extra look at  
Charlie's wooden tool brackets.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)  
(off camera)  
Up here!

Charlie has already scaled the ladder that leads to the hay  
loft. Cole walks over and hauls himself up the wooden  
ladder.

INT. HAYLOFT -- DAY

Cole pulls himself up. It's dark up here. Cole's eyes  
adjust slowly. He thinks he sees Charlie above him on a pile  
of hay bales.

CHARLIE  
(panicked/ angry?)  
Shit!

Suddenly, huge bales of fresh hay start to rain down around  
Cole.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)  
God damn you!

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 44.

A bale catches Cole square in the breadbasket. It knocks him back over the edge of the loft. His foot is caught between boards momentarily. He dangles over the barn floor head first; if he falls, his neck will snap like a twig.

He falls.

A bandaged hand shoots out of the loftian darkness and catches Cole's ankle.

Cole looks up at Charlie. Slowly he's hauled back to safety.

Cole looks incredulously at a panting Charlie.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Sorry. I wanted you to move some of the bales around. I almost left it too long.

He leads Cole up to the pile of bales. He points into the pit he just dug.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Put your hand on that one.

Cole puts his hand on a bale. And then yanks it back.

COLE

Aow! It's burning!

Cole sees steam rising from the bales and into the dust flecked air. Charlie starts throwing down some more bales.

CHARLIE

Almost. These bales were too wet to stack. Another hour or two... whole barn would have went up.

COLE

Really?

CHARLIE

Happened down the road last year.

Cole helps Charlie take bales off the pile.

INT. GROCERY STORE -- DAY

Mary-anne pushes a grocery cart toward the breads stacked on a shelf. She heads past the bakery counter.

The lady baker and a local gal are yakking up a storm, but go quiet as Mary passes them.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 45.

BAKER  
(quietly)  
That's her, huh?

LOCAL GAL  
Mmmhmm. You ask me, she had  
something to do with the whole  
thing. Why stay with him after?

BAKER  
Maybe she's one of those bi-polars.

LOCAL GAL  
Maybe she's just evil.

Mary-Anne's nails puncture the loaf she's holding. The loaf  
is completely squashed in her hand.

MALE VOICE  
Fresh enough?

Mary-Anne looks up another shopping cart pusher: GARY, a  
handsome, buff man in his late 30's.

MARY-ANNE  
Oh! Oh, hi Gary. No, I was... I  
overheard...

Gary, smiling, takes the loaf from her hand and selects an  
unmangled one for her.

GARY  
Mary-Anne, let those hens peck.  
They're just jealous of swans like  
you.

They push on down the aisle towards the registers.

MARY-ANNE  
Thank you.

EXT. GROCERY STORE -- DAY

Groceries bagged, they head into the parking lot.

GARY  
I saw your husband pulling in with  
a trailer the other day.

MARY-ANNE  
Oh, our stud! He's everything you  
said he was.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 46.

GARY

So we're still on?

MARY-ANNE

Of course! I've never done any breeding before.

GARY

Maybe we'll let you sit back and watch this first time.

MARY-ANNE

I can't wait.

GARY

It's something to see. And your man will love it too.

They trade smiles. Gary gently sets her bags into the pick-up truck.

INT. CHARLIE AND MARY-ANNE'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Mary-Anne settles down into bed. Charlie strips off his work clothes. Mary-Anne laughs.

CHARLIE

Something funny?

MARY-ANNE

I didn't know we were out of toilet paper.

CHARLIE

Hah?

He looks over his shoulder. There's a bunch of hay sticking out of his underwear. Charlie looks at Mary-Anne laughing at him; she stifles it. Then Charlie smiles...

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

(pulling hay out)

Damn. And here I thought the horse just liked my ass.

Mary-Anne's smile returns.

Charlie climbs into bed and straddles her. He leans down to smell her hair. His fingers go under the strap of her nightie.

MARY-ANNE

You want to try?

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 47.

CHARLIE

Try and stop me.

The glint in his eyes continue to shine as she flicks off the light.

Once again, Charlie gets going, and things start to peter out.

MARY-ANNE

You ok?

Flash from the moon-lit outlines of their bodies...

EXT. FARMHOUSE -- DAY

... To hazy shots of Charlie's past nightmares and now best fantasies: the mail-man stroking Mary-Anne's arm and then cupping her breast through her shirt.

INT. CHARLIE AND MARY-ANNE'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Charlie's breathing deepens. Mary-Anne senses the change in him.

INT. DRUG STORE -- DAY

The stock boy looks around furtively. He looks up at Mary-Anne still reading a magazine near him. He looks back down. She moves closer to him. He looks up at her again. Her eyes peer over the top. She turns her back on him, nearly putting her well-curved rump in his face. The boy swallows and sneaks a hand to her knee, and beyond.

Mary-Anne's hands tighten on the magazine.

The boy's arm kneads up and down under her skirt.

INT. CHARLIE AND MARY-ANNE'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Charlie locks eyes on Mary-Anne. His breath quickens and his rhythm is restored. Powered up, he's able to ram into her until she quivers with each withdrawal and penetration.

One of his huge hands threatens to encircle her slender neck.

He smiles. She smiles back.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 48.

EXT. BARNYARD -- DAY

Charlie's stallion whinnies as it humps the mare beneath it.

Cole, Charlie and Mary-Anne watch, all at various levels of bemusement and embarrassment. Gary holds the stallion's reins and a STABLE-HAND helps him monitor the situation.

GARY

There we go.

The male horse shudders. Once its done, Gary pulls and guides it off the mare.

GARY (CONT'D)

(to Mary-Anne)

And that, m'dear, is a demo of the efficiency of the equine reproductive process.

He gives her a wink.

Charlie approaches Gary from behind. Gary turns around, startled.

GARY (CONT'D)

Charlie, it'll be a fine-looking foal, I'm sure. And you'll get 25% of whatever I sell it for.

Charlie looks at the man's hand. Cole watches Mary-Anne grow a little worried. Charlie's smile creeps across his face. He shakes Gary's hand.

CHARLIE

That's a deal.

Gary leads his horse off.

COLE

Guess that kind of makes you a pimp, hey big guy?

Charlie claps a big paw down on Cole's shoulder.

CHARLIE

Twenty bucks can get you a date too.

Mary-Anne titters. Cole guffaws. Even Charlie chuckles. As soon as Charlie turns to take his horse back to the barn, his smile drops a little.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 49.

INT. BARN -- DAY

Charlie roughly steers the stallion back into the stall. He slams the gate shut before the horse is all the way in. It bounces off the horse's rump and opens again. Charlie gives the horse's rear a slap.

CHARLIE

G'wan, get!

The horse kicks back. Even at 240 pounds, Charlie flies 8 feet through the air and stops only because he meets up with the locked door by the tool table.

He's not out though. A wildness comes to his eyes. Pawing to get up, his hand comes to rest on the sledge hammer.

The hammer meets the horse's on the flat part between it's eyes. It makes the merest of knuckle poppings. The hammer sits in the shallow, unbloody crevasse it's created.

For a second the horse remains perfectly balanced, then it simply topples. The horse is not breathing.

Charlie stares at what he's done. He closes all the barn doors, locking or barricading them -- and himself inside.

He yanks down an ancient, rust-riddle axe from the barn wall. He heads for the stall, thinks twice, and strips naked.

The axe rises high inside the stall, it falls...

INT. FARMHOUSE FRONT ROOM -- DAY

Cole falls into the well-worn sofa.

COLE

Only here three days, and I get to see an infected barb-wire abscess and help make some horse porn.

MARY-ANNE

Who says country life is boring, huh?

She sits at the other end of the sofa, relaxed near Cole's feet.

COLE

You deserve a little boredom.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 50.

MARY-ANNE

I like the wild life every so often, but trials and media and the guilt, no thanks.

COLE

Guilt?

MARY-ANNE

People think: what does a man get jealous enough to kill over?

COLE

He was an untreated, psychot... mentally ill person...

MARY-ANNE

... who didn't take the lives of three men and one woman until after me and him got together.

COLE

No offence, as cute and perky as you undoubtedly are, in his condition...

MARY-ANNE

... previous condition...

COLE

Yeah... He could have gotten jealous over an 82 year-old syphilitic whore named Gretchen.

Mary-Anne laughs.

COLE (CONT'D)

... whose boobs hang so low she tucks them into her orthopedic socks.

MARY-ANNE

Oh thanks, I feel so much better.

COLE

Good.

MARY-ANNE

When I go in town, I still try to dress down, not use make-up, even not look at men.

COLE

Yeah?

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 51.

MARY-ANNE

So thanks, Rabbit, for saying I  
still look cute and perky.

COLE

No problem. But another couple  
Christmases and I'll be wrapping  
you those socks.

MARY-ANNE

(laughing)

You!

She slaps him hard on the thigh. The curtain of laughter and  
pain drops and they're looking at one another in silence for  
a moment too long.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)

Lunch time?

COLE

Sure, thanks... Gretchen.

She smacks him in the thigh again.

INT. BARN -- DAY

The axe crashes into the horse's hip, separating bone and  
cartilage. Charlie, naked except for a layer of gore and  
blood, heaves the leg into a growing pile. The pile is not  
much smaller than the horse it came from. Charlie looks  
around; where the hell is he going to put all that?

In a shadowed corner, he sees the rusting scoop for the  
tractor.

Charlie unravels a hose, turns it on himself. The clots of  
blood flow down the barn's drain.

EXT. BARN BACKDOOR -- DAY

Charlie pokes his head out the crack of the door. He sees no-  
one. His re-clothed ass juts from the door. He's hauling,  
yanking and jerking something heavy.

With Promethean strain, he drags the tractor's scoop out the  
door. He locks the door behind him.

Cole comes round the corner of the barn.

COLE

Lunch!

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 52.

Charlie forces the smile back to his face.

CHARLIE  
I'll be in in about an hour.

Cole notices the tractor scoop. It's bed, full of horse chanel, faces away from him.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)  
Can't stand the smell of that horse's shit.

COLE  
Bury it deep!

Cole heads back around the corner to the house. Charlie's smile dries up instantly.

EXT. BACK 40 -- DAY

With the scoop back on the tractor, Charlie digs a huge hole behind a line of uncut hay.

EXT. BACK 40 -- EVENING

The tractor pushes a last heap of dirt onto the hole.

INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN -- EVENING

A last heap of food is plopped on a dinner plate.

COLE  
Alright, I could eat a horse.

Charlie stops with a forkful of food half-way to his mouth. Mary-anne and Cole notice.

CHARLIE  
Shit, forgot to wash my hands.

Charlie heads to the sink.

MARY-ANNE  
Cole and I were talking about how we used to spend so much time together...

CHARLIE  
(back to them/ reflection  
in darkening window)  
Oh yeah?

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 53.

MARY-ANNE

... and it reminded me of how our families used to have "champeenship Chah-rades."

CHARLIE

You mean charades.

Cole and Mary-Anne shakes their heads in mock consternation.

COLE

Nope, Uncle Barry said "It's spelled with a C-H, it's gotta be pronounced with a C-H..."

MARY-ANNE/COLE

... "Goddammitall!"

MARY-ANNE

So I thought that after dinner we should revive the tradition.

COLE

I'm in.

They look to Charlie.

CHARLIE

Oh, I'm invited?

MARY-ANNE

Of course.

COLE

Yeah, otherwise it would be just Fairy-Anne and me.

MARY-ANNE

(mock gasps)

Fairy-Anne... Oh that's right. I used to wear those pajamas forever, didn't I?

COLE

Till you were nearly busting out of them at 14.

MARY-ANNE

I was a late bloomer.

CHARLIE

(interrupting)

Alright, I'll play.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 54.

INT. FARMHOUSE FRONT ROOM -- NIGHT

The three of them play a rousing game of charades. Well, Cole and Mary-Anne play. Charlie is obviously out of his element. He tries at first, but constantly gets a head shake from either Cole or Mary-Anne. The two of them are on the exact same frequency: picking up on the smallest cues from each other. They have a great time; laughing so much they don't notice how Charlie fades deeper and deeper into his chair, hiding his unease behind silence and immobility.

Finally he can take no more. He gets up.

CHARLIE

Well, enough fun for me.

COLE

No, that was ME getting boiled in a pot!

MARY-ANNE

What?!

COLE

Me... Rabbit boiled in a pot...?

MARY-ANNE

Rabbit in a... oh FATAL ATTRACTION!  
How was I supposed to get that?

CHARLIE

Tough one. Well, let's hit the sack.

MARY-ANNE

Oh just one more... I have to get him back for that one.

Charlie wasn't expecting to be turned down. Mary-Anne feels the silence.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)

(to Charlie)

If it's okay with you.

CHARLIE

Yeah sure. I'll see ya upstairs.  
In a couple minutes.

INT. CHARLIE AND MARY-ANNE'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Charlie lays down in the dark. He closes his eyes, but the muffled happiness from downstairs knocks them back open.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 55.

He lays there until it eventually goes quiet. Only the occasional murmur. His breathing speeds up.

He flings back the covers.

He opens the door and sticks his head out into the hall.

CHARLIE  
(calling loudly)  
Hey, when you come up, can you  
bring me some imovane to knock me  
out?

MARY-ANNE  
(from downstairs)  
Okay!

Charlie waits at the door listening again. When he doesn't hear any movement.

CHARLIE  
(calling)  
I could use them right now.

MARY-ANNE  
Okay!

He waits again. This time he hears movement. Cupboard doors opening. Water pouring. Feet coming up the stairs. Charlie sits on the bed.

Cole passes the open door.

COLE  
Trouble sleeping?

CHARLIE  
Yeah. All this excitement.

COLE  
Champeen-ship Cha-rades will do  
that to you.

MARY-ANNE  
Excuuuuse me.

Mary-Anne happily hip checks Cole out of the way. She gives pills and a glass to Charlie.

CHARLIE  
(to Cole)  
Night.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 56.

COLE  
(tipping imaginary hat)  
Charlie. Fairy-Anne.

Cole leaves. Mary-Anne gets ready for bed. Charlie chases his pills down with a gulp of water.

They put out the lights, lay down and stare at the dark ceiling.

MARY-ANNE  
God, that makes me feel like  
teenager all over again.

CHARLIE  
Really.

Mary-Anne rolls over and goes to sleep with a bow-lipped smile on.

Charlie's eyes roll off of her and back up to the dead ceiling.

After a minute, he rolls over and flicks on the light.

MARY-ANNE  
Charlie?

He grabs her face and kisses her... Hard. Her eyes bug out, but then she's returning the kiss. Charlie keeps pressing it, driving into her mouth. Mary-Anne's pleasure dissipates and she tries to push him back a bit.

Charlie doesn't stop. In fact, he mashes his lips down harder.

Mary-Anne begins to whimper and push at Charlie. Incited further, he grinds further into her mouth.

The corner of her lips begins to bleed. She's fully in a panic, beating him fists and trying to buck him off her.

With a sound like a splitting head of cabbage, her cheeks rip open all the way back to her jaw. Blooded teeth and Charlie's worming tongue in her mouth.

INT. CHARLIE AND MARY-ANNE'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Mary-Anne starts awake.

Charlie lays quietly beside her. The imovane has put him to sleep.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 57.

She lays back down and stares at the ceiling.

INT. CHARLIE AND MARY-ANNE'S BEDROOM -- MORNING

The light changes to dawn. Charlie's eyes are closed. Mary-Anne has left only a rumple in her place.

MARY-ANNE  
(O.S.)  
CHARLIE! COLE!

Charlie's eyes slam open. He immediately sees Mary-Anne's absence.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)  
CHARLIE! Somebody stole the horse!

EXT. BARN -- MORNING

The state trooper is back. He's taking notes. Mary-Anne is still in her bed clothes. Cole and Charlie are on either side of her.

TROOPER  
So you wanted to let your husband sleep in, so you went to feed the animals yourself, and the horse was just gone.

Mary-Anne nods.

TROOPER (CONT'D)  
The doors were still all locked too. Hmph.

He looks at Charlie.

COLE  
Shouldn't you get going? The thief could be getting farther and farther every minute.

TROOPER  
Yeah, I'm about done... You two can go back in the house. Mr. Warren a few nights ago when you were sick...

He singles out Charlie. Mary-Anne is reluctant to leave. Cole is already half way back to the house. The trooper lowers his sunglasses and looks her up and down. Charlie sees this.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 58.

TROOPER (CONT'D)

That's all I need you for Mrs.  
Warren.

MARY-ANNE

But I was there with Charlie that  
night.

The trooper gently takes her by the shoulders and turns her  
toward the house.

TROOPER

I need to talk to your husband...

MARY-ANNE

But he was unconscious... in a  
fever.

TROOPER

Thank you Mrs. Warren. Now you  
scoot.

He gives her a quick, playful whack on the buttock to get her  
going.

Mary-Anne is shocked but Charlie looks like he's bitten  
through his tongue.

Cole comes and collects Mary-Anne.

COLE

C'mon Mary-Anne. Charlie's going  
to tell him the same thing we did.

INT. BARN -- MORNING

The trooper follows Charlie into the barn. His note-taking  
pen is running out of ink.

TROOPER

So you don't remember anything  
about that night?

CHARLIE

No, I was really out of it.

TROOPER

Out of what?

CHARLIE

Out of it... out of my head...

The trooper leaps on this, writing it down.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 59.

TROOPER

Out... of... my... head...

His pen goes dry again. He taps the pen to get the ink to flow. He taps it on the tool table. He shakes it down like a thermometer and then taps it harder... right on the head of the sledge hammer. Charlie's eyes are on it; is that a fleck of blood?

CHARLIE

I couldn't even get up. I was weak as a kitten.

The pen flowing again. The trooper finishes jotting and goes on a talk and walk.

TROOPER

That's funny. Looking at you, the last thing I'd think of is a kitten. A bear maybe. And you were plenty strong a few years ago, weren't you Mr. Warren?

Charlie is unable to respond. He sags against the tool table. Behind his back, Charlie's hand brushes against the hammer's handle.

TROOPER (CONT'D)

And what is that?

Charlie's head bolts up. But the trooper is looking around a corner.

Charlie follows. The trooper is pointing at a pad-locked door.

TROOPER (CONT'D)

What's in there?

CHARLIE

Just scrap wood and such.

TROOPER

Lock up the valuables? Open it.  
(off Charlie's hesitation)  
My uncle is the local judiciary, won't take me more than a couple hours to get a warrant. And then I'll be grumpy to boot.

Charlie reaches around to the tool table and pulls a key out from under a level that's hanging on the wall.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 60.

CHARLIE

What are you looking for?

TROOPER

Not sure. Maybe something that could turn a 17 year old boy into a human mulch pile. Maybe I'm just a nosey bastard.

Charlie unlocks the door. The trooper heads in, notebook at the ready. Charlie puts the key back. He eyes the sledgehammer once more.

Charlie's mind flashes back a few minutes.

TROOPER (CONT'D)

Thank you, Mrs. Warren. Now you scoot.

His notebook slaps her ass.

Charlie's breathing rises as he continues to look at the sledgehammer.

TROOPER (CONT'D)

(off camera)

And what in God's name?

INT. LOCKED ROOM -- MORNING

Dust-moted light drizzles through the stained, nearly opaque window. The corpses of old rusty tools and garden implements hang from the walls or against walls. Scrap wood, broken bricks, a flat tire or two round out the decor.

The trooper is looking at something else, the apparatus from the Cole's photo.

CHARLIE

That's... Something I been working on in my spare time.

The odd tool collars that Charlie showed Cole earlier are affixed at various points along the X.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

To hang the larger tools. And I thought maybe this...

(touches the jutting plank)

... could be like a work bench.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 61.

TROOPER

Inventive, aren't you? Care to invent a different alibi for that night? Maybe you were so fevered, you thought you'd head to the drug store, pick up some 'tussin?

CHARLIE

Couldn't have even laced my boots.

The trooper looks down at Charlie's big dirty boots.

TROOPER

Boots. Yeah.

He goes to write something in his note book. The pen is acting up again. He straddles and sits on the "work bench" part of the X. He starts patting himself down looking for another.

CHARLIE

Hey, take this.

Charlie's hand is behind his back. He pulls out... another pen. He gives it to the trooper.

TROOPER

Thanks. Guess I've seen enough.

INT. BATHROOM -- DAY

Mary-Anne strips down to take a shower.

She runs the water and starts to head into the water, but notices herself in the mirror. She gets into the shower and starts to lather up.

The steam rises and fills the room beyond the curtain. The steam is disturbed as the shadow of the bathroom door crosses the curtain. When it recedes, there is the shadow of someone standing outside the curtain.

Mary-Anne is oblivious to the shadow. The shadow raises its had high and ...

Jerks open the curtain. It's Charlie.

MARY-ANNE

Aaa! Oh Jeezus, Charlie, you nearly scared the living shit out of me!

She recovers a bit and turns on the flirt.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 62.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)  
What, you feeling a little dirty?

Charlie's not talking. He grabs her arm and drags her out of the shower.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)  
Charlie! Charlie!

She manages to snag a towel on the way out.

EXT. BARNYARD -- DAY

Charlie still has his hand clamped on Mary-Anne's arm. She's barely managing to keep the towel wrapped around her.

Charlie hauls her out to the barn.

MARY-ANNE  
Charlie! Stop it!

From a row of hay (the same one behind which Charlie buried the horse), Cole sees Charlie pulling Mary-Anne through the gaping mouth of the barn door.

INT. BARN -- DAY

Charlie still drags Mary-Anne roughly. He pulls her around the corner to the locked room. Does she see where they're headed or has she just had enough man-handling?

MARY-ANNE  
Charlie, enough!

She scratches at his face to force him to let go. He does, but only momentarily, he grabs her again, this time by the hair! She screams in pain and now, fear.

INT. LOCKED ROOM -- DAY

The door bursts open. Charlie shoves Mary-Anne in front of the apparatus. Charlie shoves her onto it. He advances on her.

CHARLIE  
How did this get here?

Confusion flutters across her face, but before she can answer, Cole skids into the room between the couple.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 63.

COLE

What the hell's going on?

Charlie and Mary-Anne both look towards the grotesque work-bench. Cole follows their eyes. Cole helps Mary-Anne to her feet. They back-out, never taking their eyes off Charlie.

INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN -- EVENING

The three are eating dinner once again.

Silence reigns palpably. Charlie keeps his eyes on his plate, ramming food back into his mouth. He's done quickly and first. He gets up, tosses his plate and fork into the sink and heads outside.

The echo of the door closing fades.

COLE

Was that thing he built exactly the same as the last one?

MARY-ANNE

I never looked closely at it.

COLE

Looks about right from what I recall in the papers and on TV.

MARY-ANNE

We had a garage, and I thought that was just what men do. Go out in the garage and hammer things.

COLE

Supposedly he did that too.

MARY-ANNE

But nobody's missing or dead.

COLE

We should head into town, to find out.

MARY-ANNE

You mean, to get away.

COLE

Wouldn't hurt.

MARY-ANNE

Yes, it could. If he thought I took off with you.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 64.

INT. BARN -- EVENING

Charlie grabs the sledgehammer, and as an afterthought, a crow bar with a nail claw on it. He heads to the locked door. He moves too quickly and gets dizzy. He spots the dusty forgotten pill bottle. He breathes deeply.

CHARLIE

Non-addictive, my ass.

The lock on the door is unlocked, hanging on the door. That's not what Charlie expected. He opens the door slowly. On the workbench, eyes and mouth duct taped shut, is the trooper.

Charlie, and his tools, enter the room and close the door.

INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN -- EVENING

Cole is looking out the window. He see the light going on in the room behind the dirty window.

COLE

We could be down the drive way  
before he got even this far.

MARY-ANNE

He'd hear the truck.

COLE

But he couldn't catch it.

MARY-ANNE

Go, if you want.

She tosses him the keys from off top of the fridge.

COLE

I'm not going to leave you here  
with him.

MARY-ANNE

I'll be fine. He's never hurt me.

COLE

He's psychotic. I'd venture that  
it's progressing. And from his  
carpentry project in the barn, I  
don't think the meds are working  
very well.

MARY-ANNE

Do you think I'm attractive?

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 65.

COLE

Wh...what?

MARY-ANNE

Am I pretty? Am I at least a MILF?

COLE

What's that got to do with...?

MARY-ANNE

I've got a nice pair of eyes.  
Maybe you like my lips. Or maybe  
you're a tit-man, hmm?

She squeezes her shoulders together and leans over a bit.  
Her cleavage is accentuated. Cole can't help but glance into  
the valley.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)

He can't get jealous all by  
himself.

COLE

Oh Jesus, you can't blame yourself  
for someone else's sickness.

MARY-ANNE

He wouldn't have done what he did,  
if he weren't with me. I promised  
I'd help him get better.

COLE

So you're staying here.

MARY-ANNE

I am.

He puts the keys back on the top of the fridge.

INT. LOCKED ROOM -- NIGHT

Charlie drops the crow bar. The trooper reacts; he's alive.  
A stream of blood dries behind his ear.

Charlie starts to pull the duct tape off the trooper's eyes.  
The adhesive pulls on the trooper's brows, but also on his eye-  
lids. If Charlie pulls any harder, the trooper will lose his  
ability to blink. The trooper moans.

FLASHBACK: The trooper lowers his sunglasses to look Mary-  
Anne up and down.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 66.

Charlie removes the duct tape slowly. The trooper's eyelids stretch, but remain attached.

The trooper looks fearfully up at Charlie. He also notices the tools Charlie's brought with him.

Charlie rips off the duct tape covering the trooper's mouth.

TROOPER

Aaah!

CHARLIE

(after a very long pause)  
Who put you here?

TROOPER

You.

CHARLIE

Bullshit.

TROOPER

You smashed me from behind just after I called in, you cowardly piece of shit. Knocked me out. I woke up on your torture rack.

CHARLIE

I didn't do it.

TROOPER

Yeah, if you didn't do it, get me out of here.

Charlie begins to free the trooper, loosing one of his hands from the same collars he was building earlier to hold his tools. The trooper yanks his hand down. His sunglasses fall out of his pocket.

TROOPER (CONT'D)

C'mon, the other one.

(to himself he thinks)

Arrest all three of you damned loonies.

Charlie picks up the sunglasses and unfolds them. FLASH: Behind the super-tint of the sunglasses, the troopers eyes roam over Mary-Anne... her cleavage, lips... his hand instructs her to spin... she obeys and he spansks her on the ass.

CHARLIE

Don't want you to hurt your eyes.

He starts to put the sunglasses on the trooper.

TROOPER  
It's dark out, you big idiot!

CHARLIE  
And getting darker.

Charlie shoves the arms of the sunglasses straight into the trooper's eyes.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)  
(over the trooper's  
scream)  
You like looking at her?

He grabs the trooper's free arm and sets it back into the tool collar.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)  
She's got a good ass, doesn't she?  
Is that why you gave her that cute  
little spank? Is this the hand you  
used?

He grabs the pinky.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)  
If I wasn't there, what else would  
you have done?

He starts to bend the pinky to the side. The way it's not supposed to bend. He does it slowly.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)  
If she had let you, how far?

Finally, the pinky dislocates.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)  
Would you slide this hand up her  
skirt? All the way. She'd like  
it. She'd give in. Yeah? Right  
inside her. I know what she likes.  
She likes them way up there. G-  
spot and all. But your fingers are  
too damn short. You need longer  
fingers.

He grabs two fingers in each hand and pulls savagely in opposite directions. The flesh of the trooper's hand tears all the way to the wrist.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 68.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

There you go.

TROOPER

(sobbing)

Sorry.

CHARLIE

What?

TROOPER

I'm sorry.

CHARLIE

(gently)

Yeah. They all got sorry.

The sledgehammer comes down on top of the troopers skull, utterly JFK-ing it.

INT. HAYLOFT -- NIGHT

In the dimness, Charlie hurls aside bales of hay. He digs straight down and creates a grave. When it's deep enough, he buries the trooper in bales.

EXT. BARN -- NIGHT

Charlie exits the barn. His hand is on the lock, about to slide it home. He looks over his shoulder to the house.

He can see Cole and Mary-Anne talking animatedly in the kitchen. He can't hear what they say. But he can see Cole put his hand on Mary-Anne's shoulder, kneading it.

His hand leaves the lock open.

INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Cole's hand squeezes Mary-Anne's shoulder.

COLE

I know we were just cousins who saw each other on holidays. So I couldn't be with you as much as I wanted. But I'm here right now. And I think this might be when you need me most.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 69.

MARY-ANNE

What do you mean? Everything's fine. Or as fine as it has been in a while. This is an upswing!

Cole nods, forced to agree. He drops his hand from her shoulder.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)

And that hurts when you say "just cousins".

Her hand gives his a squeeze. He responds by tightening its grip.

A big meaty hand suddenly encircles Cole's neck.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)

Charlie?!

Charlie slams Cole into the wall. Dishes spatter down from the dish rail. Cole twists to face Charlie, only to be pinned by the handle of the sledge hammer in Charlie's other hand.

Choking, Cole lashes out. Flailing, he manages to catch Charlie numerous times. But Charlie's murderous eyes don't even blink. Cole's kicks and punches become less and less energetic.

Mary-Anne tries to drag Charlie off. He doesn't even notice her.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)

Charlie! Charlie!

Cole's eyes role up into his head. Charlie leans off the hammer. Cole crumples to the floor, so much human slag.

Charlie grabs Cole's hair and starts to drag him off.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)

He didn't do anything! He didn't do anything!

Charlie drops Cole again. Cole's head bounces on the floor with a meaty thud. Charlie steps up into Mary-Anne's face.

CHARLIE

He wanted to.

MARY-ANNE

No he didn't. He wouldn't. He's scared shitless of you. Besides, I wouldn't.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 70.

CHARLIE

No. You were just cousins.

That shuts her pie-hole.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Kissing cousins? Little bit of tongue cousins maybe. Huh? Maybe he copped a feel of your brand new tits. Hmm? More? Yeah? He make you wet? Then? Did he? And when you heard him on the phone, what did he really say? Nothing about any fucking girlfriend. Just stuff about his fingers in your cunny. Didn't he?

The iron skillet crashes off Charlie's head.

Stunned, Charlie spins to see Cole wielding the pan. Despite the situation, Cole is cool and calm.

COLE

Get away from her.

Charlie, a rabid grizzly, charges low at Cole. Cole uses the skillet two-handed on the top of Charlie's head. Charlie goes down.

Cole hovers over Charlie, turns the skillet edge-wise and brings it down at Charlie's head.

It's knocked side-wise and out of Cole's hand by Charlie's recovered sledgehammer.

The skillet rolls on a demented orbit, deformed by the power of Charlie's defensive strike. As it rolls, Charlie's vicious grunts tell the tale of Cole's being pummeled into unconsciousness.

MARY-ANNE

Leave him alone.

Charlie grabs Cole's hair again.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)

Charlie!

Charlie starts dragging Cole away.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)

I could call them!

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 71.

Charlie stops. He raises his sledge hammer up, high over Cole's head.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)

Nooo!

The hammer comes down, smashing the phone into shards of avocado plastic chunks of electronic salad.

He scoops the truck keys up off the fridge.

He heads out with Cole in tow.

Mary-Anne watches out the window. Cole's body raises dust as its pulled out to the barn. The door closes behind them. The light goes on in the locked room. Charlie's large shadow is visible.

It's impossible to tell for sure, but it looks to Mary-Anne as though Charlie is raising something and dropping it quickly. She flinches as it falls.

Shortly after that the light in the locked room goes off. Charlie exits the barn, ramming the lock closed. He heads for the house.

Mary-Anne now starts to worry for her own skin.

She sees the smashed phone. She remembers something. She scrambles upstairs and into Cole's room. The picture of Rabbit and young Mary-Anne is now on the bedside table.

She hears the sound of the downstairs door opening and closing.

She pulls the duffel bag and starts rifling throughout.

CHARLIE

(off screen)

Mary-Anne!?

Finally she finds what she was searching for: Cole's cell-phone.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

(closer)

MARY-ANNE!

She flips the phone open and presses in 9-1-1. Her thumb hovers over the "send" button. She shows it to him like it's a loaded gun.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 72.

MARY-ANNE

What did you do to him?

Charlie doesn't answer.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)

What did you do?!

CHARLIE

Why do you care so much?

Her finger goes back over the send button.

CHARLIE

He'll be fine. Unless you leave.

She leaves the button unpressed.

Charlie's hand takes the phone from her. So startled by his sudden looming presence, she falls down on the bed. Charlie squeezes. The phone pops and cracks in his paw.

Charlie pushes her down the rest of the way on the bed. He puts his hand through her hair, gently. And then snags it harshly in his fist.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

How many times did you two do it here?

MARY-ANNE

No. Never.

CHARLIE

Right. Juicy slut like you? Stuck with a fuck-up like me. Pretend I'm him.

He hikes up her skirt.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

That's what you do anyways.

He's in her. Slow and grinding like an earthworm.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

And who else?

MARY-ANNE

No-one.

He emphasizes his thrust, clutches her hair harder.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 73.

CHARLIE

Oh just him then. Right. Who else?  
The drug store kid?

(off her confused look)

Yeah. Him. New, fresh, not broken  
down in the head.

(rams her once hard)

Oh, that made you wet. You liked  
him, didn't you? Didn't you? Say  
it.

He's rougher until she finally speaks.

MARY-ANNE

I liked it.

CHARLIE

He's much better than me, isn't he?  
Isn't he? Say it. Say it.

MARY-ANNE

He's better.

He grabs her throat and uses his massive strength to impale  
her on him. Savagely he finishes in her. Lungs still  
bellowing, he slides himself out of her and leaves the room.

INT. FARMHOUSE FRONT ROOM -- AFTERNOON

The next day. Charlie sits. Stares at an empty corner of the  
room.

The ghost of Mary-Anne makes sounds in the kitchen. She's  
cleaning, putting away dishes, running the faucet.

There's a knock at the front door.

Charlie's POV: Charlie leans over in his seat. His big mitt  
moves the curtain a couple of inches. The mail man waits at  
the front door. The curtain moves back.

CHARLIE

It's for you.

INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN -- DAY

Mary-Anne puts down a dish and shuts off the water.

MARY-ANNE

For me? Who is it?

There's no response.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 74.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)  
Charlie, who...?

The door is knocked on again.

Mary-Anne dries her hands and heads for the front door. She looks in the front room as she passes. Charlie's seat is empty.

She opens the door.

EXT. FARM DRIVEWAY -- DAY

The mail man's smile bursts open when he sees Mary-Anne.

POSTMAN  
Hello Mrs. Warren! I hoped it would be you.

MARY-ANNE  
How can I help you?

POSTMAN  
A piece of registered mail, your address, but it's for a "Cole". Is that your husband or your boyfriend? Ha ha ha!

MARY-ANNE  
Cole... he's my cousin.

POSTMAN  
Wonderful, if you'll just sign for it here.

She signs. He watches. And then gives her the letter.

POSTMAN (CONT'D)  
Thank you! See you soon, I hope.

MARY-ANNE  
Thanks.

She begins to close the door.

POSTMAN  
Mrs. Warren...  
(puts his hand on gently  
on her wrist)  
Is everything hunky dorey?

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 75.

MARY-ANNE

Oh... I... We love it here. Thank you for asking.

POSTMAN

Well, I'm by here everyday, if you ever need anything.

MARY-ANNE

That's very sweet. Bye now.

POSTMAN

Till next time! Toodles!

The door closes. The postman looks at it for moment, shrugs mentally and starts heading back to the driveway. He actually starts whistling.

In the shade of the trees, he hesitates. A sound? He drops his whistling as he looks behind him. Nothing. The trees are blowing in the wind making a quiet susurrus and also making the shadows move oddly.

He turns back to head up to his truck. The truck sits at the top of the driveway, warning lights blinking.

He begins to whistle and walk again. His eyes want to look behind him again.

Giving in to his paranoia, he does a complete, careful spin to look behind him... as he turns back to face the truck, he encounters... nothing.

Swallowing, he drops his whistle altogether, and steps up his pace.

EXT. FARM DRIVEWAY -- DAY

With visible relief, he makes it to his postal truck. He takes a final look at the driveway... now just an innocent pastoral scene.

He slides the truck door open. The window reflects the scene of the empty driveway, but as the door opens, from within the truck Charlie stares out at the post-man.

POSTMAN

(shocked)

AAAAAAA!

Charlie's hands slam onto the postman's head. Charlie drags him into the truck.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 76.

INT. POSTAL TRUCK -- DAY

Charlie is on top of the hyper-ventilating postman. His knees and his full-weight on the shoulders and chest, pin the desperate man.

CHARLIE

Anything I can help you with Mrs. Warren? Maybe I could lick your envelope, Mrs. Warren?

POSTMAN

(in heart failure territory)

No, No... I wouldn't...

CHARLIE

SHADDAP!

Charlie slaps his hands around the man's head. And pulls!

The postman's neck visibly stretches. It starts to tear. Blood begins to surface.

The postman screams, but suddenly the air from his lungs bursts out of his throat, bloody and foaming. The bone white larynx is exposed, flexing like a bloodied grub. The postman's wail blows through it.

EXT. POSTAL TRUCK -- DAY

The post-man's scream goes from high pitched to breathy and watery to completely quiet. The postal truck stops its shuddering. The door slides open. A bloodied Charlie steps out.

Charlie opens up the road-side mail-box.

CHARLIE

Maybe you ought to give her some head.

He rams the head of the postman into the mail box. It lodges half way out. Charlie punches it in, closes the door... and then raises the flag.

Charlie gets back into the truck and drives it away.

INT. FARMHOUSE FRONT ROOM -- MORNING

Mary-Anne watches out the front window. The top of the drive way is hidden from her view by trees.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 77.

But shortly she sees the truck drive off down the road. Slightly relieved, she turns back into the room. She sees Charlie's empty chair.

MARY-ANNE  
Charlie? You inside still?

No answer.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)  
(still loudly as if  
Charlie might be  
listening)  
I guess I'll just wash the bedding.

She heads up the stairs.

INT. COLE'S BEDROOM -- DAY

With an arm-load of sheets, Mary-Anne enters Cole's room. She starts to strip the bed. The old picture draws a sad smile from her. It also swings her eyes in the direction of the thick well-thumbed folder that Cole brought with him.

She opens it and begins to leaf through it. Her eyes begin to widen.

EXT. GARY'S HOMESTEAD -- DAY

The front yard of a well-established, well-kept home. A large wooden sign hangs out front and is lit... it reads Gary Foreman's Equine Husbandry.

The stillness of the country night is cracked by the blaring of a truck horn.

Gary -- the stud farmer -- opens the front door and comes steps out into the yard. He can see a vehicle sitting on his driveway. He heads towards the noisome vehicle. It's the postal van. Someone is slumped forward on the wheel, causing the horn to go off.

Gary opens the door.

GARY (CONT'D)  
Hey, Wally, you sauced again?

The body falls out. Gary catches it.

GARY (CONT'D)  
If you're going to pickle your  
brain, don't come here and...

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 78.

Then he sees that Wally the Postman has no brain left to pickle.

GARY (CONT'D)  
Aaagh! Kee-rist!

He lets the body drop into driveway's dust.

He backs up and around the back of the truck. His ass hits the open back door. Cat-nervous, he swings around and peers into its darkness.

GARY (CONT'D)  
Charlie. Alright then. Come on.

Charlie emerges, sodden in blood and jealousy. He hefts his sledge. But unlike Charlie's other victims, Gary is ready for a fight. He dodges the hammer and disarms Charlie. From there he stays out of Charlie's reach and peppers him with damaging punches and kicks.

INT. FARMHOUSE GUEST BEDROOM -- EVENING

Mary-anne's hand moves photos of Charlie heading to and from the courthouse, and disgustingly objective police photos of Charlie's work on his victims.

The pilot whose lungs and skin are peeled out and back to create a bloody set of angel's wings. The voyeuristic next-door neighbor's new cyborg-like appearance with binoculars jammed in his eye sockets and the video-tape hog-tying him in a position that would make a contortionist cry uncle. A close up of the blood oozing forth from the crotch of a man's pants. And of course, the work-bench crucifix that is reproduced in the barn.

Among the photos are newspaper and magazine articles titled "Jealous Killer Castrated Victims", "Sledgehammer Charlie Pleads Insanity", "Killer Considered Cured".

Accompanying the articles are photocopies of research, charts, scientific papers titled "Historical Dissections of Psychopathic Brains", "Serotonin, Epinephrine and Norepinephrine: The Relationship with Guilt and Conscience", "Rage, Jealousy and Murder: The Evolution of Social Controls".

EXT. GARY'S HOMESTEAD -- EVENING

Gary continues to pound Charlie. Charlie's eyes flutter. He's nearly out.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 79.

GARY

I'm gonna turn you in Charlie. Mary-anne deserves to find herself a real man.

Flashes of the breeding of the horses, Mary-anne and Gary exchanging looks, smiles around the copulation of the animals.

Charlie's eyes snap open, suddenly clear.

INT. FARMHOUSE GUEST BEDROOM -- EVENING

Mary-Anne picks up a neatly type-written stack of papers entitled "Charlie Warren: NOT a Psychopath". The author is Cole Eastman. Paper-clipped to the thesis is a smaller sheet... "Ruling: Failure" and beneath that words like "Rubbish!", "Nonsense!", "Pure fantasy", "unsubstantiated by any experimentation".

Mary-Anne riffles to the first page of the thesis.

INT. GARY'S BARN -- NIGHT

Gary's eyes flutter open under the shade of a huge goose-egg on his forehead.

He tries to move but can't. He's duct-taped, stomach down, to an old saw horse. Each of his limbs is tightly wrapped to a separate saw-horse leg.

Charlie's hand holds a box-cutter. Charlie moves around to Gary's rear-end. The cutter comes down slowly. And begins slicing off Gary's pants. And underwear. Shortly Gary is completely bare-assed.

Unable to see directly behind himself, Gary waits for an even unkind cut.

The muzzle of a horse sniffs and blows on Gary's naked ass.

Charlie hauls on the reins, rearing the horse. Its front hooves pound Gary's back once and clip his head. The horse's chest presses on his spine.

Charlie reaches under the horse. Gary's eyes widen as something touches his vulnerable buttocks.

GARY (CONT'D)

What are you doing?!

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 80.

CHARLIE  
Demonstrating the efficiency of the  
equine reproductive process.

The eyes of the horse reveal that it's starting to get the  
idea. It's flanks start to pump.

GARY (CONT'D)  
Aaaaaah! No!

Gary is brutally rocked back and forth on the sawhorse. A  
rivulet of blood runs down the back of his thigh. As the  
horse starts to snort, the rivulet grows thicker and becomes  
a torrent.

GARY  
Noooo!

EXT. BARN -- NIGHT

MARY-ANNE  
Cole?!

Mary-anne yells for Cole through the locked barn door.

COLE  
(faintly O.S.)  
Mary-anne?

Mary-anne and Cole call back and forth till she winds up at  
the barred window to the barn's locked room.

She can't see through the dirt on the window. Rubbing just  
smudges it.

She finds a rock and smashes a pane of the window.

Through a jungle of spare lumber and hanging farm implements,  
she can see...

MARY-ANNE  
Cole?

He's strapped onto Charlie's torture bench.

COLE  
Are you okay?

MARY-ANNE  
Never mind me!

COLE  
I'm okay. This isn't my blood.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 81.

MARY-ANNE  
What else has he done?

INT. HAYLOFT -- NIGHT

Moonlight highlights steam rising up from the trooper's boot. Moist with blood, it's wedged between and under stacked bales of hay.

EXT. BARN -- NIGHT

MARY-ANNE  
I think I can squeeze in there.

Mary-anne smashes the window and then starts to try and wriggle through the bars. It's tight.

INT. LOCKED ROOM -- NIGHT

COLE  
(excited)  
You may have noticed, but I'm alive. You know why? Because Charlie's no more a psychopath than you are. He can empathize with his victims. He's racked with guilt! It's tearing him apart, which pushes him even further over the edge.

Mary-anne finally flops into the room.

MARY-ANNE  
So he should have gone to jail.

COLE  
He should have been fried like bacon. He knows exactly what kind of pain he's put people in.

Mary-anne quickly tests the home-made manacles that hold Cole in. They're too much for her to break. She roots around in the room for a lever and comes up with a sharpened metal spike.

MARY-ANNE  
Charlie says he didn't build it.

COLE

That's exactly what an non-  
psychopathic, unrepentant killer  
would say.

MARY-ANNE

That's also what a man telling the  
truth would say.

She puts the point of the stake up against Cole's throat.

MARY-ANNE

And I know I didn't do it. So  
either he's lying to me, which he's  
never done before, or you came all  
the way out here to try and prove  
that damn paper of yours.

COLE

My thesis.

MARY-ANNE

Whatever it's called. You built  
this.

She taps the torture bench with the stake.

COLE

Yeah.

MARY-ANNE

Why?!

COLE

Nothing else was working. Me, a  
male interest from your past.  
Destroying his medication. Invading  
his peace with charades and our  
shared history. He hung in there. I  
even contemplated getting frisky  
with you.

Mary-anne's stake pries off one of the manacles.

MARY-ANNE

We're getting in the truck and  
going into town.

COLE

Thanks, Fairy-anne. It was only a  
matter of time before he hurt you.

MARY-ANNE

You're the dangerous one. I'm  
turning you in.

The last restraint comes loose.

COLE

(looking at the broken  
window)

Charlie?!

Mary-anne looks to the window. It's empty. Cole drives his  
shoulder into Mary-anne knocking her down. He comes closer to  
her. He leans his forehead against hers.

COLE (CONT'D)

It's been years. No anger at  
having my thesis rejected. No self-  
loathing as lover after lover  
dumped me. Even when I walked in  
on Monica cheating on me. Nothing.  
Like shed snake skin. Empty.

MARY-ANNE

You sounded sad on the phone.

COLE

Psychopaths learn to be incredible  
liars.

He touches her ear lobe. She knocks his hand away.

COLE (CONT'D)

I'm starting to feel! Just little  
glimmers but it's there. Fear when  
Charlie had that sledge hammer over  
my testicles. Joy over proving my  
thesis correct. And being close to  
you again after all these years...

(draws a finger under the  
collar of her clothing)

Nervousness that it'll stop any  
minute.

He rips open her blouse.

COLE (CONT'D)

You're feeling stuff right now too.  
Anger. Passion. You still like  
"trying"?

Mary-Anne finally nods. Cole launches his face into her  
breasts, his lips all over her throat.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 84.

At first it appears as though Mary-anne is also into it. Then we see her reaching for the metal stake. Suddenly, Cole looks her straight in the face. She freezes, caught.

COLE

Remember when we used to hide behind the couch and play the kissing games?

MARY-ANNE

And the "equipment testing"?

He nods hungrily. She shoves his face back into her bosom.

COLE

My dad nearly killed me when he found out.

MARY-ANNE

Oh.

COLE

And that's why we moved away. That's when I stopped feeling.

Mary-anne's fingers tickle the stake. One more inch...

MARY-ANNE

Am I helping you feel again?

COLE

Oh fuck yeah.

A noise stops them both midstream.

MARY-ANNE

Oh Jesus.

Cole follows her eyes to the window. Charlie's silhouette has been watching them. And then it's gone.

INT. BARN -- NIGHT

Charlie's sledgehammer slams the big barn doors wide open.

FLASH TO:

Charlie sees Cole and Mary-anne on the torture bench. From this perspective, it really appears Mary-anne is doing it of her free will.

Charlie's sledge smashes open the torture bench room's door.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 85.

INT. LOCKED ROOM -- NIGHT

Covered in blood and nearly berserk with rage, Charlie storms into the small room.

Mary-anne cowers before him.

Cole is nowhere in sight.

Charlie focuses on Mary-anne. Is he going to kill his adulterine wife?

Cole lets go of the beam he's been holding onto above Charlie's head and drops down feet first onto Charlie. Charlie is stunned and drops his sledge hammer.

Cole snaps the hammer up and uses it to smash Charlie's jaw askew. He falls back onto his own torture bench.

MARY-ANNE

No!

COLE

Relax! I need ol' Charlie too. More than you do. Once we turn him in, I can those wrinkly fucktards to give my thesis a proper grade, I get set up in as a psychiatrist with my own practice. I help you recover from your traumatic marriage. Then maybe we use the couch for a more physical kind of therapy?

Charlie's form rises up behind Cole.

INT. BARN - NIGHT

Cole flies out the door of the locked room and lands in a heap.

Charlie stalks out of the room, sledgehammer in hand. He pauses to put his jaw noisily back in joint. Then he heads towards Cole. Mary-anne tries to hold him back.

MARY-ANNE

Charlie, no. Please.

Charlie has already put the head of his sledgehammer on the side of Cole's face. He begins to put his weight on the shaft, threatening to squash Cole's head.

MARY-ANNE

Don't hurt him. Please!

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 86.

COLE

See? It's not us, Charlie. It's her. She's been coming on to me ever since I got here.

Charlie's weight on the hammer lessens.

COLE

She's been calling me for months. Complaining about how lonely she is out here.

Charlie turns toward Mary-anne.

COLE

My girlfriend thought I was cheating. That's why she screwed around on me! I just came out here to try and get Mary-anne to leave me alone.

MARY-ANNE

No!

COLE

And the things she was telling me... I don't think I'm the first one.

MARY-ANNE

You shut up!

Charlie faces her, hammer in hand, waiting for her to offer some kind of defense.

MALE JUSTICE OFFICER

(O.S.)

Drop the weapon, Mr. Warren!

The male and female justice officers stand in the barn's door, guns aimed at Charlie.

Charlie drops the sledgehammer. The officers move in to cuff him.

MALE JUSTICE OFFICER

Thanks for your call, Mr. Eastman. Sorry it took us so long to verify your identity and relationship to the Warrens.

COLE

No harm done it seems.

He smiles at Mary-anne. Charlie sees it.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 87.

EXT. FARM DRIVEWAY -- NIGHT

Charlie is quivering.

Charlie's wrists spasm in the cuffs. One of the links in the manacles' chain gives way, a tiny explosive "ting". A shard of the link races up... and plunges into the male justice officer's eye.

MALE JUSTICE OFFICER

AAAAA!

FEMALE JUSTICE OFFICER

You ok?

MALE JUSTICE OFFICER

Just phone it in and I'll...

FEMALE JUSTICE OFFICER

(stepping around the male  
justice officer)

YOU phone it in.

She heads for Charlie. She clenches a fist until her knuckles pop. The female justice officer blasts Charlie with charley-horsing kicks to the legs and lung-emptying strikes to his midsection. She dances out of his reach, angering him like a wounded bull.

Finally she decides to end the torture and stands still. She lets him take her down. She arches her back so that he can't reach her face to strike. She expertly flips one leg over and catches Charlie in a triangle.

Charlie's face goes from red rage to purple confusion. In seconds, he's unconscious.

EXT. FARM DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

The male justice officer and female justice officer drag Charlie's hulk into the back seat of their car.

Mary-Anne rushes after them.

INT. BARN - NIGHT

Cole starts to go after Mary-anne, but a crackling noise distracts him. He looks up into the heights of the barn.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 88.

EXT. FARM DRIVEWAY - DAWN

MARY-ANNE

Can I just say good-bye to him?

The female officer looks back at Charlie. He's coming around. She nods while she lays her gun in her lap.

FEMALE JUSTICE OFFICER

Quickly, please.

The back seat window rolls down. Mary-Anne goes to it.

MARY-ANNE

Charlie... I know nothing I say can make you trust me anymore. So...

She pulls something out from behind her back.

MARY-ANNE (CONT'D)

... here.

She passes him his sledgehammer.

FEMALE JUSTICE OFFICER

(twisting around)

What the fu...!

The remains of the female justice officer's head explodes out her window, slapping down against the car door like Halloween pumpkin guts.

The passenger side window turns red with gore from the male justice officer's head. Crispy white spider-web cracks radiate outwards.

Charlie exits the car with his bloody sledge. Mary-Anne backs away, circling the car.

MARY-ANNE

Where are you going?

CHARLIE

Finish the job.

Mary-anne grabs the female officer's gore drenched firearm. She heads to the barn after Charlie.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 89.

INT. BARN -- DAWN

Charlie pushes on the barn doors.

FLASH TO:

Inside the doors a hastily erected set of timber holding the doors shut.

The barricade is no match for Charlie's hammer. The door flies open. Its velocity is audible.

INT. HAYLOFT -- MORNING

The sudden influx of oxygen reaches the burial loft. The steam becomes a twisting rivulet of smoke. The dull red eyes of embers begin to burn.

INT. BARN - MORNING

Charlie spies the rear door of the barn flapping in the changing air currents. He knows why it's open. He whirls.

INT. BARN - MORNING

Outside the barn, Cole appears behind Mary-anne. He snatches the gun from her. He grabs her around the neck and puts the gun to her head.

Charlie hefts his hammer.

FLASH: The embers claw their way up the stalks of hay, towards open air.

Cole shakes his head and uses the gun to motion Charlie to put the hammer down.

FLASH: The ember's speed increases until their upward momentum stretches them into tender sprouting flames.

Mary-anne reaches behind her and crushes Cole's balls in her hand.

Charlie charges, hammer held high. Mary-anne rolls away. Cole fires at Charlie. The hammer is descending as a red mist sprays up from Charlie's head.

EXT. FARM DRIVEWAY - DAY

Dwindling smoke departs the burnt out shell of the barn.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 90.

Police cars flank an ambulance.

A cop waves good-bye to a fire truck as it pulls out and away.

The officer turns and looks as the coroner zips an unrecognizably charred body into a thick black plastic bag. The officer strides around to the other side of the ambulance to an exhausted, haunted Mary-anne.

COP

Mrs. Warren? You don't have to worry. That freak won't be hurting anyone else.

A comforting hand settles on Mary-anne's shoulder, startling her.

As the shot widens...

COP

So you're positive that he was the cause of all this?

She nods. The hand squeezes her comfortingly. It's Charlie's hand. A paramedic is timidly trying to apply a bandage over the bloody furrow that creases the skull of the bald giant. Charlie glares at him till the poor EMS gives up and wanders away.

Mary-anne leans her head into Charlie's chest.

The cop listens to a squawk coming from his shoulder-mounted walkie.

COP

(to the walkie)

Uh, yeah, 10-4.

(to Charlie)

Mr. Warren, I don't want to upset you...

His hand wanders to his holster. Charlie's hand tightens on the hammer that he still clasps.

COP

... but they're worried that you may, this may - that because of your mental history - they want me to, accompany you back into town for some observation.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 91.

Charlie swivels towards the cop. Things look to escalate...  
Until Mary-anne's hand gently turns Charlie back to her.

MARY-ANNE  
I'll tell them what happened. It'll  
be okay. Go with him.

The hammer slides out of Charlie's paw.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

Envelopes slide into the front door mail slot.

The door opens. The mail-man is startled. Mary-anne's face,  
restored to its previous radiance, pokes out from behind the  
door. She laughs.

MARY-ANNE  
Oh, I'm sorry! You're the new mail  
man... Obviously!

MAIL CARRIER #2  
Yes. And you're Mrs. Warren.

MARY-ANNE  
That's right!

MAIL CARRIER #2  
Well, nice to meet you. I should be  
going...

MARY-ANNE  
It's so warm. Would you like a cold  
glass of something before you go?

MAIL CARRIER #2  
Uh, well...

MARY-ANNE  
(understanding)  
Don't worry. My husband isn't here.

MAIL CARRIER #2  
Well, ok. What have you got?

MARY-ANNE  
A new lemonade recipe, less sugar  
and a bit of ginger for some zing.

MAIL CARRIER #2  
Sounds good!

She opens the door wider to allow him in.

"Sledgehammer Charlie" by Ted Ludzik (416)406-9926 92.

MARY-ANNE

I'm just trying it out. I really  
like trying.

The door closes.

INT. PADDED ROOM

Charlie's eye opens half-way.

Drool slings down from his lip like a spider web.

He moans breathily. His body is slack, but somewhere in his  
mind he still resides.

THE END