

Revolutionary Road

Screenplay by Justin Haythe

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1

INT. STAGE - EVENING.

1

A beautiful woman's face appears against a black background. Her ash-blond hair is pulled back, her lips painted red; a downward light enhances the well-assembled bones of her face.

GABRIELLE

Wouldn't you like to be loved by me?

ALAN SQUIER (O.S.)

Yes, Gabrielle. I should like to be loved by you.

GABRIELLE

You think I'm attractive?

2

INT. BACK STAGE - EVENING.

2

From the wings, SHEP CAMPBELL, 32, stocky with reddish hair, dressed in the black of a stage hand, mouths the next lines perfectly.

ALAN SQUIER (O.S.)

There are better words than that for what you are.

3

INT. STAGE - EVENING.

3

GABRIELLE

Then why don't we at least make a start at it?

A thin MAN with an unconvincing comb-over gazes back at her over a cafe table.

ALAN SQUIER

You know we can't.

He reaches out and takes her hand.

DIRECTOR (O.S.)

We'll leave it there for tonight, people.

APRIL WHEELER, 29, who was playing Gabrielle, and BURT DONALDSON, 35, who played the part of Alan Squier, make way as the DIRECTOR steps onto the stage from the darkness. He has the affectation of a not entirely successful man of the theater.

DIRECTOR
Gather 'round people.

The rest of the LAUREL PLAYERS, suburban MEN and WOMEN of various shapes, shuffle in from the darkness: the diminutive PATTY DONALDSON, 31, looking uncomfortable in a fur stole and heavy glass diamonds, LOUIS CARSON, 28, as an aging millionaire with hair powdered white, CAL MINSKY, 38 and fat, crammed into a football jersey, CHUCK ATWOOD, 36, still in character as a desperate criminal with a tooth pick in the side of his mouth and a toy machine gun. They all turn to the Director for his response. He takes a dramatic pause.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)
Well... it hasn't been easy...
We've had more than our share of
problems, and frankly, I didn't
expect much, but tonight...

The door to the auditorium opens and several TEENAGERS appear with brass instruments.

The Director removes his glasses and gives them a laborious clean.

BOY
I thought we had practice here.

PATTY DONALDSON
You're in the lunch room tonight,
Matt.

MATT
Oh... Sorry.

They go out, slamming the door behind them.

PATTY DONALDSON
Sorry.

The Director smiles thinly and puts his glasses on again.

DIRECTOR
As I was saying... Before I was so
rudely interrupted... Something
happened here tonight. Sitting out
there tonight I suddenly knew deep
down that you were all putting your
hearts into your work for the first
time... You accomplished something
here tonight. You formed a
community theater...

(MORE)

DIRECTOR (cont'd)
Do that tomorrow night and we'll
have ourselves a hell of a show.

The cast lets up a spontaneous burst of applause. The director waves them away.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)
So let's have a drink. And then
we'll all go home to bed.

The cast falls in around a table in the wings, helping themselves to plastic cups and struggling with cork screws. Various men shake hands with Burt, the women discuss line-readings.

April stands out of the fray, unquestionably the most lovely woman in the room. Shep approaches with two clouded plastic cups of wine.

SHEP
You were terrific tonight April.

APRIL
Thanks Shep. No missed cues
tonight.

SHEP
I run a tight ship back stage... I
tell you April you're going to be a
hit. Frank's going to be blown
away.

APRIL
I don't know about that.

SHEP
(low tones)
You even made Burt Donaldson look
decent.

APRIL
(laughs)
I must have been good, then.

They drink. The Director approaches.

DIRECTOR
So, April. Tell me again, are you
sure you didn't study?

APRIL
Actually, I did attend the Academy
of Dramatic Arts.

DIRECTOR

That's right, of course you did.
Why didn't you keep at it?

APRIL

Well, you know, I got married, had
kids and we moved away from the
city.

DIRECTOR

(shudders)

The dreaded suburbs!

The Director leads her away, leaving Shep alone.

FADE TO:

4 EXT. MIDTOWN STREET, NEW YORK, 1954 - EVENING. 4

CREDITS ROLE

Thick HONKING traffic. Sidewalks crowded with COMMUTERS:
men in stiff grey suits, and secretaries with fading make-up
marching in an exhausted mass of people towards the subway.

5 EXT. KNOX OFFICE BUILDING - EVENING. 5

Through the revolving door of an office building steps FRANK
WHEELER, 29, intelligent good looks. He doesn't quite fit
the mould: his suit is rumpled, his hair needs a cut. He
cups his hands, lights a cigarette and steps into the flow.

6 EXT. GRAND CENTRAL STATION - EVENING. 6

Frank follows the continual mass of people moving through the
station doors.

7 INT. GRAND CENTRAL STATION BAR - EVENING. 7

Frank leans against the bar nursing a cocktail, his second.
He looks down at the human wave moving across the main
concourse. He checks his watch and snubs out his cigarette.

8 INT. COMMUTER TRAIN - EVENING. 8

Frank sits against the window in a commuter train watching
the passing countryside.

He turns and looks at his fellow commuters: all men wearing similar hats, their faces pressed into copies of the New York Herald.

9 EXT. SUBURBAN DRIVEWAY - EVENING. 9

The commuter train whizzes past in the background, as a middle-aged MAN stands in the driveway of a modest house hosing down a shining new car.

10 INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - EVENING. 10

Two BOYS sit in front of Howdy-Doody in matching pyjamas. The older of the two gets up and goes to the window to watch the commuter train go past.

11 EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - EVENING. 11

A train passes at the edge of a field as A MAN hammers a FOR SALE sign into the grass in front of a farmhouse which sits about fifty yards from a row of identical new white clapboard houses.

12 EXT. REVOLUTIONARY ROAD TRAIN STATION - EVENING. 12

The commuter train eases to a stop. The doors slide open and the commuters step out onto the pavement. Frank Wheeler is one of the last out.

13 EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - EVENING. 13

The high school parking lot is filling up. Suburban couples emerge from gleaming parked cars and make their way towards the school.

Frank emerges from his car. He checks his reflection in a car window, adjusts his collar and follows the crowd inside.

END OF CREDITS.

14 INT. HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - NIGHT. 14

The auditorium is filling up. Frank saunters down the aisle and chooses a seat. He glances round at the audience CHATTERING nervously. He slips down low in his seat.

15 INT. BURT DONALDSON'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT.

15

The Director stands in Burt Donaldson's dressing room with Shep and Patty Donaldson. Burt is sitting on the floor with a distinct green tint to his skin. April enters.

APRIL
What's going on?

SHEP
Burt's sick.

BURT
I'm fine.

PATTY DONALDSON
He's fine.

DIRECTOR
You sure?

BURT
Yes.

Burt dry heaves and then pulls himself up and darts for the bathroom. From behind the door we hear RETCHING.

DIRECTOR
Jesus fucking Christ.

PATTY DONALDSON
It's probably just nerves.

She goes after her husband.

DIRECTOR
Shep, you know the lines, don't you? I've seen you follow along.

SHEP
Me? I don't know.

DIRECTOR
Come on Shep. We need you. April needs you. She won't let you make a fool of yourself. Right, April?

Shep looks at April.

APRIL
You'll be fine, Shep.

16 INT. HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - NIGHT. 16

Frank reads the dittoed program. The lights flicker. The audience settles. The house lights fade. Frank chews at his finger nail as he watches his wife move across the stage.

17 INT. STAGE - NIGHT. 17

April walks alone across the stage with a small book. Her confidence is enough to silence the last of the nervous COUGHS from the audience. She stops to pick an imaginary flower. Cal comes bounding onto the stage. He goes to April and tries to take her book.

GABRIELLE

Cut it out.

BOZE

What's the matter? Don't you like me?

GABRIELLE

Not very much.

BOZE

You'll change your mind.

GABRIELLE

I'm not so sure.

BOZE

What's that you're reading?

GABRIELLE

You wouldn't like it.

BOZE

Poetry huh? That's pretty hot.

APRIL

Hot...? I guess so.

She turns away and rolls her eyes. The audience LAUGHS.

18 INT. HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - NIGHT. 18

Frank glances round.

VOICE 1

She's good.

VOICE 2

...Lovely.

He folds his hands under his chin.

19 INT. STAGE - NIGHT, LATER. 19

Shep sits at a table as April pours him water. Shep is stiff and nervous.

20 INT. HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - NIGHT. 20

Frank flips frantically through his program.

INT. STAGE - NIGHT. 21

GABRIELLE MAPLE

There's something in me that wants something different, I guess.

Shep glances into the darkness beyond the stage. April places her hand on his. Shep turns and looks at her. Her confidence makes him a much better actor than he is.

ALAN SQUIER

I know there's something in you. Wish I could figure out what it is.

GABRIELLE MAPLE

You're making fun of me.

ALAN SQUIER

No, I'm not.

GABRIELLE MAPLE

Sometimes I feel as if I was sparkling all over and I want to go out and do something absolutely crazy and marvellous... You know the feeling?

Shep blanks on his line...

ALAN SQUIER

...I guess so.

April effortlessly improves.

GABRIELLE MAPLE

You either do or you don't.

Again the Audience lets up a CHUCKLE. Shep looks relieved.

22 INT. HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - NIGHT. 22

Frank looks around at the happy faces of the audience. He folds away the program and an enormous grin spreads across his face. It's a success.

FADE TO:

23 INT. STAGE - NIGHT, LATER. 23

April moves across the stage towards Shep. She holds the entire audience rapt. Shep, by contrast, looks worse than before.

ALAN SQUIER
Brains without purpose...

April gives Shep a reassuring smile and it seems to help.

ALAN SQUIER (CONT'D)
Noise without sound... Shape
without substance.

A DROP of sweat runs down Shep's oily brow and lodges itself painfully in his eye.

GABRIELLE MAPLE (CONT'D)
Wouldn't you like to be loved by
me?

Shep wipes at his eye and winces at April. He opens his mouth to speak, but nothing comes. A look of panic registers in his face.

A nervous MUTTER rises from the audience. Only April looks at Shep as if she is sure he will not let her down.

GABRIELLE MAPLE (CONT'D)
Alan...?

Shep opens his mouth, but again, he makes no sound.

24 INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT. 24

Frank chews at his nail again.

25 INT. STAGE - NIGHT.

25

A faint glimmer of doubt appears in April's expression.

GABRIELLE
Well... Would you?

ALAN SQUIER
...Yes...

Again April tries to give him an encouraging look.

GABRIELLE MAPLE
And you think I'm attractive...?

Shep gazes at her helplessly.

ALAN SQUIER
...Yes...

GABRIELLE MAPLE
Then why don't we make a start of
it?

She grazes her hand across his face, but the gesture feels false.

ALAN SQUIER
There are better words...

He reaches after her in an improvised gesture and spills a glass of water across the table into April's lap. She rears away, her dress wet. She glares at him, her shoulders hunched, eyes darting nervously.

ALAN SQUIER (CONT'D)
You see? That's how useless I
am... Here, let me help you wipe
it up.

Shep wipes at the table. April has now fully emerged from her character. A beat of silence. Shep takes one last look out at the audience, and the curtain falls. A disaster.

26 INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT.

26

The lights come up. Nervous chatter fills the room. Frank looks stunned.

27 EXT. HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - NIGHT. 27

Frank stands alone sucking hard on a cigarette and avoiding eye-contact with the rest of the intermission smokers.

MILLY (O.S.)

Frank!

MILLY CAMPBELL, 34, short and a little stout.

FRANK

What the hell's going on?

MILLY

Apparently, Burt Donaldson's sick.

He offers her a cigarette, trying to gather his cool.

MILLY (CONT'D)

I didn't even know Shep was going on till he walked out there. I almost died.

FRANK

Oh well. No big deal, right?

MILLY

Right.... Poor Shep. He's probably just dying.

FRANK

Well, we'll have a drink afterwards, laugh the whole thing off. I know Shep will need it.

MILLY

Me too.

They smoke silently.

28 INT. SHEP'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT. 28

Shep sits at the mirror with his head against the table.

SHEP

Oh God, oh god, oh god, oh god...

29 INT. DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT. 29

April sits at the mirror, her head in her hands. A KNOCK.

VOICE (O.S.)
Five minutes April.

April wipes away a tear.

APRIL
Okay.

30 INT. HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - NIGHT. 30

Frank takes his seat. A moment later, the lights go down. Frank begins to chew his nail again.

31 INT. STAGE - NIGHT. 31

...A MONTAGE of scenes of the play going increasingly wrong: Pam Donaldson trips over her fur... Cal throws his football in the air, misses it and watches it roll into the audience... Louis Carson delivers a speech, then walks forcefully into a wall, dangerously rattling the scenery... Chuck Atwood fires his prop gun, but it doesn't fire... until, finally, mercifully, it is all over.

Shep and April stand at the curtain call acknowledging the polite APPLAUSE. April wears a fixed smile. Shep glances over at her anxiously. They bow mechanically.

32 INT. HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - NIGHT. 32

Frank recognizes his wife's expression: she's miserable. He stops applauding. The curtain falls again; the lights come up and the CROWD is instantly on its feet in a controlled rush towards the exit. Frank remains seated a moment longer.

33 INT. BACK STAGE - NIGHT. 33

The CAST mills around backstage. The mood is subdued, but some have already decided to make light of the fiasco.

PATTY DONALDSON
Well, it was a lot of fun, anyway.

Frank moves through the crowd. Across the room, he spots - Shep and Milly. They wave. Shep brings his finger to his head and pulls the trigger.

Frank waves him off, as if to say, "don't worry about it."

Shep makes a gesture for a drink.

Frank holds up his hand, "Five Minutes."

34 INT. DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT.

34

Frank enters. The chair in front of the mirror is empty, but a cigarette burns in the ashtray. Frank glances at the door to the bathroom. He goes over and TAPS.

FRANK

April...? Sweetheart...? Look...
You were great. Really.

The door to the hallway opens letting the SOUNDS of the crowd inside then closes again. Frank turns to see April. He's been talking to an empty room.

APRIL

I've just got to get this makeup
off then we can go.

She sits down in front of the mirror. Frank comes up behind her and puts his hand on her shoulder. She glances at his hand in the mirror and he removes it.

FRANK

Well, I guess it wasn't a triumph
or anything.

APRIL

I guess not.

FRANK

Poor Shep.

APRIL

Yeah.

He lights a cigarette with an expert snap of his Zippo.

FRANK

Take your time. Shep and Milly can
wait.

APRIL

...Would you do me a favor?

FRANK

What's that?

APRIL
Tell them we can't go for a drink?

FRANK
I just saw them. I said we would.

APRIL
Say it's because of the baby sitter
or something.

FRANK
It might be fun, you know. Laugh
the whole thing off.

APRIL
Okay. You go. I'll take the car
and Shep can drive you home.

FRANK
Come on April. Don't start about
the car.

APRIL
So you won't tell them?

FRANK
I didn't say that.

APRIL
I'll tell them myself.

She stands. Frank leaps up and they are face to face.

FRANK
I didn't say I wouldn't. I just
said it'd be rude.

APRIL
I'm not going out with those
people. I don't happen to feel
very well and...

Frank raises his hands and backs away.

FRANK
Okay. Okay. I'm sorry. I'll tell
them. Okay?

April turns back to the mirror.

APRIL
Thank you.

Frank exits.

35 INT. WHEELER CAR - NIGHT. 35

Frank drives while April stares ahead, her face lit dramatically by the light of the dashboard.

36 EXT. HIGH WAY - NIGHT. 36

The Wheelers' car cruises along the smooth asphalt of the newly constructed RT. 12. The countryside is dark except for the odd light in a distant house.

37 INT. WHEELER CAR - NIGHT. 37

Frank glances at April again.

FRANK
You were the only one in that play,
April... I mean it.

APRIL
Thank you.

He lights a cigarette, offers the pack.

FRANK
If Shep didn't feel so bad, I'd
ring his neck.

APRIL
It wasn't his fault.

FRANK
The rest of them, then. Bunch of
amateurs. We never should have let
you get mixed up with them. You've
studied, for Christ's sake.

APRIL
All right. Do you think we could
stop talking about it now?

FRANK
Of course.

38 EXT. HIGH WAY - NIGHT. 38

The car rattles over a bridge far above a moon-lit river.

39 INT. WHEELER CAR - NIGHT.

39

Frank flicks his cigarette out the window.

FRANK

I just don't want you feeling bad about it, okay? Because it's not worth it. I mean it's bad enough having to live out here among all these little suburban types - and I'm including Shep and Milly in that, by the way. Friends or no, they're as bad as the rest of them. It's bad enough living with these people without letting ourselves get hurt by every little half-assed... What'd you say...? You say something?

APRIL

I said 'yes.' All right. But could we stop talking about it now before you drive me crazy?

Frank clenches his jaw at the road ahead.

40 EXT. HIGH WAY - NIGHT.

40

The Wheeler car comes to a stop at the side of the road.

41 INT. WHEELER CAR - NIGHT.

41

Frank turns off the ignition. The road goes dark. Frank slides over towards her and tries to embrace her.

APRIL

Please don't. Please, just leave me alone, okay?

FRANK

Baby, it's okay...

APRIL

Leave me alone.

FRANK

April...

APRIL
 What don't you understand? Just
 leave me alone!

Frank slides back behind the wheel. A long pause.

FRANK
 Jesus, April... It's not my fault
 the play was lousy.

APRIL
 No one said it was.

He turns the ignition.

FRANK
 I don't happen to fit the role of
 dumb, insensitive suburban husband
 you've been trying to hang on me
 since we moved out here... It's
 not my fault you didn't turn out to
 be an actress...

She opens the door.

FRANK (CONT'D)
 Where are you going?

She flashes across the headlights. Frank struggles with his
 door.

42 EXT. HIGH WAY SHOULDER - NIGHT.

42

April stands at the side of the road looking over the dark
 country. Frank comes up behind her.

FRANK
 What the hell, April...? Come on
 back to the car.

APRIL
 In a minute. Just let me stand
 here.

A car approaches. Frank acts nonchalant. The car passes.

FRANK
 April...? Can we talk about it in
 the car rather than running all
 over Route 12?

APRIL
Haven't I made it clear I don't particularly want to talk about it?

FRANK
It's just a play, April. I'm trying to be nice.

APRIL
How kind of you.

FRANK
Hey, I don't deserve this.

April turns and looks at Frank.

APRIL
You're always so wonderfully definite on what you deserve.

She walks past him back towards the car.

FRANK
Now wait a minute.

He follows. Other cars whizz past, but he's past caring.

FRANK (CONT'D)
This is one time you're not going to twist everything I say.

April leans against the grill of the car, arms crossed.

APRIL
God, if only you'd stayed home tonight.

FRANK
You know what you're like when you're like this? You're sick. I really mean that. (taps his head) Like your parents. The play boy and the flapper. Never took any responsibility for their lives or for you. Just blamed everybody else.

APRIL
And you know what you are...?
(looks him up and down) You're disgusting.

FRANK
Oh I am, am I?

APRIL
You just love this don't you? The poor husband by the side of the road. Just because you've got me safely in a trap you think -

FRANK
(quivering with anger)
You in a trap? You? Jesus don't make me laugh.

APRIL
Yes, me! Me! You poor deluded little boy. Look at yourself. Tell me how by any stretch of the imagination you call yourself a man?

He raises his fist, she flinches away, and BONG he punches the hood of the car. Then, silence. She calmly walks around and gets in the car. Cars whizz past. Frank rubs his hand and looks up at the sky dotted with stars.

43 INT. WHEELER CAR - NIGHT.

43

April stares ahead. Frank gets in.

FRANK
God damn you April.

APRIL
All right. Can we go home now?

He starts the engine.

FADE TO:

44 INT. FRANK AND APRIL'S BEDROOM - MORNING.

44

Frank lies twisted in sheets across a double bed. A lawnmower BUZZES in the background. He opens his bloodshot eyes... An empty tumbler rests on the bedside table along with an overflowing ashtray and a clock. It's 10:30 a.m.

Frank stands at the window looking out over the back garden. The SOUND of the mower grows louder as April pushes the mower past the window followed by JENNIFER, 6, and MICHAEL, 4.

45 INT. WHEELER LIVING ROOM - MORNING. 45

Frank enters dressed in a pair of army pants and a tee-shirt. He glances at the couch. A pillow and blanket are folded and neatly piled where April spent the night.

46 INT. WHEELER KITCHEN - MORNING. 46

Frank pours a cup of coffee and flinches at the stale taste. He rinses his face under the faucet, takes a deep breath and heads for the screen door.

47 EXT. WHEELER YARD - DAY. 47

April pushes the mower across the grass with her children trailing behind. She looks up to see Frank emerge from the house.

Frank squints into the sun. He looks even more hungover and pale in sunlight. He sees April look at him and he waves.

April looks away.

APRIL

Go say hello to your Dad.

Michael and Jennifer run across the freshly mowed grass towards their father.

Frank puts on his best smile and opens his arms for his kids. They leap happily into his arms.

FRANK

Hey guys. You going to help your Dad with the path?

JENNIFER AND MICHAEL

Yeah!

48 EXT. WHEELER YARD, PATH - DAY. 48

Frank is shirtless, digging up earth in the shape of a path from the drive to the front door. Michael and Jennifer work ineffectively nearby with plastic shovels. Frank stops, and wipes his brow. The house is still a long way off.

JENNIFER

When will the path be done?

FRANK
I don't know, honey... When it's
done, I guess.

Frank begins to dig again. A CRACK as the shovel hits rock.

MICHAEL
What's that noise?

FRANK
I'm hitting rock... When you hit
rock you get a spark.

MICHAEL
Why don't you take the rock out?

FRANK
I'm trying.

He slips the blade under the rock and levers it up. It comes loose; he kneels and pulls it free with his bare hands.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Out of the way now.

With great effort, he carries the rock towards a pile of others. Michael and Jennifer follow.

FRANK
Not too close.

MICHAEL
We're helping.

FRANK
Sure, but not so close. It's
heavy.

Frank drops the rock into the pile. He walks back to the shovel and starts digging again with Mike and Jennifer in tow.

JENNIFER
Daddy?

FRANK
Yeah.

Frank struggles with a root in the ground.

JENNIFER
Did Mommy sleep on the couch?

He pulls at the root, trying to twist it from the ground.

FRANK
I guess so.

MICHAEL
Are you hitting rock again?

FRANK
No. This is a root.

MICHAEL
Look, a worm!

Mike reaches into the moist soil.

FRANK
Keep out of the way here, Mike.

Mike withdraws his hand.

Frank raises the shovel in two hands and STABS at the root.

The WORM wiggles through the soil.

JENNIFER
Why'd she sleep on the couch?

Frank STABS the shovel again.

Mike watches the WORM intently.

FRANK
I guess she felt like it.

Frank STABS the shovel again.

JENNIFER
Why'd she feel like it?

STAB.

FRANK
I don't know.

Mike goes up on his knees to get a closer look at the WORM.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Not so close!

FRANK raises the shovel. The blade hangs in the air...

CLOSE: the WORM...

Michael reaches out...

Frank diverts his stroke in mid-flight, smashing the shovel against the grass. He grabs Michael, spins him round, and spansks him three times HARD.

FRANK (CONT'D)
I told you not so close!

Michael looks stunned. Then his eyes fill with tears.

FRANK (CONT'D)
You want to lose your arm, kiddo?

Jennifer begins to cry.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Jennifer... Don't cry.

Jennifer and Mike run across the lawn towards the house. April emerges just in time to catch her two crying children in her arms. She looks across at Frank and shakes her head...

49 INT. WHEELER LIVING ROOM - EVENING. 49

Frank sits on the couch reading the Times with a drink. He studies a dramatically lighted fashion photograph of a beautiful, slender WOMAN overlooking the sea. He folds away the paper, replacing the idealized image with April working in the kitchen.

50 INT. WHEELER KITCHEN - EVENING. 50

April stands over several steaming pots on the stove.

FRANK
Where are the kids?

APRIL
Having a bath.

FRANK
I thought maybe I'd read 'em the
funnies after dinner... Smells
good. What're we having?

April slams shut the oven door.

APRIL

Pot Roast. (turns, yells) Mike!
Jennifer! Get out!

Frank lays his hands tenderly on her shoulders.

FRANK

Listen. I don't care who's wrong
or right or what this whole thing's
about... Couldn't we just cut it
out and start acting like human
beings for a change?

APRIL

Until the next time you mean...?
No thanks. I'm tired of playing
that game.

FRANK

Don't you see how unfair you're
being? What do you want from me?

APRIL

Two things at the moment. I want
you to take your hands off me and I
want you to keep your voice down.
You've already scared the hell out
of the kids today.

Frank drops his hands at his side.

FRANK

I don't know what you're trying to
do, April.

APRIL

I'm trying to make a roast, Frank.

FADE TO:

51 INT. KNOX BUILDING ELEVATOR - MORNING. 51

Frank rides pressed against the wall in a crowded elevator.
He looks completely downtrodden. The ELEVATOR MAN, a black
man in his 60's, calls out each floor as they stop.

52 INT. KNOX 15TH FLOOR, FRANK'S CUBICLE - MORNING. 52

Frank sits down at his desk. He opens the bottom right
drawer and props up his feet and lights a cigarette.

JACK ORDWAY (O.S.)
I need your help, Franklin.

FRANK
Morning Jack.

Seated behind Frank, JACK, 41, slight and trim, with graying hair is holding his once handsome face from the surface of his desk with the help of his right hand, also used to shield his eyes so that he can keep them closed.

JACK ORDWAY
Nothing good about it, I assure you.

FRANK
Rough night?

JACK ORDWAY
For the next few hours, you're to warn me of Bandy's every approach; you're to protect me from Mrs. Jorgensen, and you may have to screen me from public view in case I begin to throw up.

FRANK
That bad?

JACK ORDWAY
Yes. Saturday, these crazy friends of Sally's came in from the coast.

FRANK
Again?

JACK ORDWAY
Could we show them the town, they wanted to know? Indeed we could. Lunch at Andre's. I've never seen such enormous Martinis. And not one or two. I lost count. After that, there was nothing to do but drink until cocktail hour. The rest is a blur.

Frank looks up as BANDY, 46, a small bald man, in a short-sleeved shirt approaches the cubicle.

FRANK
Here he comes.

JACK ORDWAY
Oh, Christ.

BANDY
Morning, Frank... Jack.

Jack mumbles something and waves.

Bandy places a large envelope on Frank's desk.

BANDY (CONT'D)
Something for you from Toledo,
Wheeler. Third one this month.
Beginning to look like a 'Real
Goody.'

Frank glances inside the envelope, then up at Bandy.

FRANK
I don't think so.

BANDY
Good.

Bandy walks off through the maze of cubicles.

JACK ORDWAY
What's that about?

Frank chucks the envelope in his in-box.

FRANK
Branch manager in Toledo wants a
revised brochure for the conference
on "The Knox 500 and Production
Control..." I told him they were
in the mail six weeks ago.

JACK ORDWAY
And?

FRANK
I don't know what the Knox 500
does... Do you?

JACK ORDWAY
Don't insult me.

Frank contemplates his overly-full In Box. He opens a drawer
and empties the box inside and closes it with a BANG.

53

INT. WHEELER KITCHEN - DAY.

53

April sits at the kitchen table alone. The room is utterly still, the table covered with the remains of breakfast, the sink full. April looks pale and exhausted. For a long moment, she does nothing but take in her surroundings as if she had no idea how she got there. She begins to stack the dishes, scraping lumps of cold scrambled eggs and hardened bacon, but then she break down, weeping helplessly... The TOOT of a horn. April looks up. She wipes the tears from her eyes and fumbles a cigarette to her mouth.

MRS. GIVINGS (O.S.)

Yoo-hoo!

April turns to see -

MRS. GIVINGS, 60, a determinedly happy, made-up face, smiling through the screen door.

MRS. GIVINGS (CONT'D)

Don't you look comfy?

APRIL

(struggling to smile)

Hi Helen.

Mrs. Givings steps inside holding a tray of small green shrubs.

MRS. GIVINGS

You were simply divine the other night, April. Really. Poor Shep Campbell, but never mind. It didn't detract from the real show: and that was you.

APRIL

Thank you.

MRS. GIVINGS

I brought you some sedum from our garden. We've got more than we know what to do with.

April stares blankly at the shrubs.

MRS. GIVINGS (CONT'D)

Maybe you could put it in the bare patch down by the driveway there.

Mrs. Givings places the tray on the table.

APRIL

Frank's working on a path down there actually... So people know to come in by the front door rather than through the kitchen.

April resumes cleaning up breakfast.

MRS. GIVINGS

Well, you'll find somewhere. Make sure they get plenty of water.

Mrs. Givings moves around the room taking in the details.

MRS. GIVINGS (CONT'D)

I've always loved this sweet little house. Good clean lines, nice yard for the kids. And that picture window!

Mrs. Givings walks across the kitchen into the living room. April continues washing dishes.

MRS. GIVINGS (O.S.)

You having guests?

April looks from Mrs. Givings through the open doorway to the couch in the living room where there is a pillow and blankets.

APRIL

...Frank's brother.

MRS. GIVINGS

Was he at the play the other night? I didn't see him.

APRIL

No. Did you want a cup of coffee or something, Helen?

MRS. GIVINGS

Oh no. I don't want to be any trouble.

APRIL

No trouble.

MRS. GIVINGS

If you're sure it's no trouble.

April starts making coffee.

MRS. GIVINGS

(lets out a long sigh) Oh, what a day. And it's barely begun! I've got about five appointments this afternoon, mostly young couples like you, moving out of the city to raise a family.

Mrs. Givings looks at the stack of dirty dishes in the sink.

MRS. GIVINGS (CONT'D)

You must be glad to have your life back after all those rehearsals. I don't know how you kept up with the house work... I heard that director from the city had you working almost every day.

APRIL

Four nights a week.

April places coffee on the table and goes back to the dishes.

MRS. GIVINGS

It's great for our little community though, our own theater: "The Laurel Players." What's next?

APRIL

I think I've done my bit.

MRS. GIVINGS

I don't blame you. I wouldn't have the energy, but you're so young. I remember seeing you two come off the train the first time. You were simply ravishing and I thought Frank probably did something terribly important in town. I went home and told my husband all about you.

April turns off the taps and dries her hands.

APRIL

And we looked... happy... to you?

MRS. GIVINGS

Oh yes. And of course I knew what you wanted; something a little out of the ordinary.

(MORE)

MRS. GIVINGS (cont'd)

A little cottage or a guest house on an old estate and I had to break your hearts and tell you there was no such thing available around here any more... But I did find you this place, didn't I? I remember your expressions as we drove past those horrible Revolutionary Road estates where your friends the Campbells live, and I kept saying, don't panic, this one's different. Then as soon as we got here, I could tell you fell in love. You always know right away... Frank didn't think much of the picture window I remember, but he said, I'll never forget it, he said, "I guess a picture window's not going to ruin our personalities." Isn't that marvellous?

APRIL

I suppose it is.

MRS. GIVINGS

I assured him it would grow on him. And I was right, wasn't I? He loves it now, doesn't he?

APRIL

No. He can't stand it, actually.

MRS. GIVINGS

Oh... Well, I guess I was wrong...

She smiles awkwardly, sips her coffee.

MRS. GIVINGS (CONT'D)

Good coffee. (checks her watch) Oh, look at the time. I've got about five appointments today.

APRIL

Was there something you wanted Helen?

MRS. GIVINGS

Hm? Oh... I almost forgot. Now that you mention it, though, I did have a small favor to ask... It's about my son John.

Mrs. Givings studies April's face for a reaction.

APRIL

Yes?

MRS. GIVINGS

He's just moved back to the area and he doesn't know many people his age. I think he finds my friends a little conventional and I thought... well, I don't mean to be a burden, but if you and Frank had some time perhaps we could bring him around to meet you?

APRIL

Sure Helen.

MRS. GIVINGS

Only if it's no trouble.

APRIL

No trouble.

MRS. GIVINGS

It's so kind of you. It'd do him a world of good to meet a young couple like you. Happy and talented and such a beautiful little family. It really would.

54 INT. FRANK'S CUBICLE - DAY.

54

The thin face of VINCE LATHROP, 39, and the round one of ED SMALL, 36, appear above Frank's cubicle.

VINCE LATHROP

Gentlemen... Shall we dance?

Frank and Jack look up from their cubicle.

JACK ORDWAY

I thought you'd never ask.

55 INT. KNOX HALLWAY/COFFEE MACHINE - DAY.

55

Frank, Jack, Vince and Ed stand around the coffee machine drinking cups of burnt coffee. Frank looks painfully bored.

JACK ORDWAY

I couldn't keep count. There was nothing left to do but drink straight through until dinner.

FRANK

I heard this once already.

Vince nods knowingly.

The men make way for MAUREEN GRUBE, 23, a ripe and young if not genuinely pretty, receptionist. She smiles shyly and continues on. Only Frank watches her go. She has a nice womanly sway to her hips and the sight of it adds a spark of life to Frank's tired eyes.

ED SMALL

Sally sure has some crazy friends.

JACK ORDWAY

You don't know the half of it.

Frank drops his cigarette in his coffee cup.

FRANK

Stop dawdling in the hall fellas.

56 INT. KNOX 15TH FLOOR MEN'S ROOM - DAY. 56

Frank contemplates his reflection. He turns his face back and forth, trying different practised expressions.

57 INT. KNOX 15TH FLOOR, FRANK'S CUBICLE - DAY. 57

Frank opens the drawer where he recently deposited his In Box. He retrieves the contents and puts them on his desk.

JACK ORDWAY

I knew they'd break you, Franklin.

FRANK

A man's gotta make a living.

Frank searches through the contents until he finds the file he's looking for: "TOLEDO CONFERENCE."

58 INT. KNOX 15TH FLOOR, MAUREEN'S DESK - DAY. 58

Maureen types a letter at her desk.

FRANK (O.S.)

Maureen?

She turns to find Frank smiling down at her.

MAUREEN
 ...Frank, isn't it?

FRANK
 That's right. I was wondering if I
 could get your help with something.

MAUREEN
 If I can be of any use.

59 INT. KNOX 15TH FLOOR, RECORDS ROOM - DAY.

59

Frank and Maureen stand close together in a narrow space
 between rows of metal file cabinets.

FRANK
 I need everything you can get on
 the Knox 500 in relation to
 Production Control. I have to come
 up with a brochure of some kind.

She smiles.

FRANK (CONT'D)
 I don't even know what the Knox 500
 does. That's where you come in...
 I hope you weren't planning on an
 early lunch.

MAUREEN
 I'm not really hungry.

FRANK
 I'll stop back in a while, see how
 you're getting on. Thanks Maureen.

MAUREEN
 You're welcome.

60 INT. KNOX 15TH FLOOR, FRANK'S CUBICLE - DAY.

60

Frank is deep in thought at his desk.

SID ROSCOE (O.S.)
 Eat?

Frank looks up to see Ed and Vince on either side of SID
 ROSCOE, 47, an enormous man chomping on a pipe. Jack Ordway
 slips into his jacket.

JACK ORDWAY

About time.

FRANK

No... I got to finish this Toledo thing or Bandy will have a fit.

JACK ORDWAY

Oh come on! You've got to come or they'll make me go to The Awful Place where a man can't get a beer.

FRANK

You're on your own Jack.

Jack huffs and walks away with the others.

51 INT. KNOX 15TH FLOOR, FRANK'S CUBICLE - DAY, LATER. 61

Frank peers over the top of his cubicle to see that the floor has emptied out for lunch. He slips into his suit jacket.

62 INT. KNOX 15TH FLOOR, RECORDS ROOM - DAY. 62

Maureen has her lips wrapped provocatively around a pen and is working diligently through a stack of files.

FRANK

What do you say we grab a bite?

MAUREEN

I'm only about half way through.

FRANK

I think lunch takes precedent over the Knox 500, don't you?

MAUREEN

(smiles)

Absolutely.

63 INT. HOTEL RESTAURANT - AFTERNOON. 63

The CLANK of silverware and HUM of conversation. Maureen and Frank sit in a secluded corner of a Hotel restaurant. Maureen is already a little drunk.

MAUREEN

I love these old hotels. They're so charming. We could be anywhere.

Frank waves at a waiter and raises his empty martini glass.

FRANK

You been in the city long?

MAUREEN

Six months; since my marriage ended.

FRANK

You're divorced?

MAUREEN

Annulled. I married a boy I knew growing up. Mostly because I hate my last name so much... *Grube*.

She rolls her eyes. Frank laughs. Maureen beams. She sips her martini and spills a little over the brim.

MAUREEN (CONT'D)

I'd better be careful. I'm not used to martini lunches yet.

FRANK

Martini lunches are essential for survival at Knox.

MAUREEN

Have you been there long?

FRANK

Seven years.

MAUREEN

You must like it.

FRANK

Actually, I hate it.

MAUREEN

Oh? I don't understand. Why are you still there?

FRANK

That's a very good question. And it deserves an answer. In past lives I was a soldier, a Columbia student, a longshoreman, a philosopher...

MAUREEN

You were a longshoreman?

FRANK

Sure. Then, about seven years ago, I set myself the task of finding a very special kind of job... One that pays adequately but involves no work whatsoever.

Maureen laughs.

FRANK (CONT'D)

At Knox, I hit the jackpot. (he leans closer) Now, you can't tell anyone this but...

She crosses her finger against her formidable breast.

FRANK (CONT'D)

What I do is the most boring, unimportant job in the entire world.

Maureen laughs and places her hand on his.

MAUREEN

You're funny.

FRANK

I'm perfectly serious.

MAUREEN

What happened seven years ago?

FRANK

My wife got pregnant.

MAUREEN

...Oh.

Maureen takes back her hand and looks into her glass.

FRANK

You're lucky to have met me.

MAUREEN

Oh yeah?

FRANK

Yeah. I can help you. There's an art to survival at Knox. It's not easy. If you're not careful, the great grey machine known as Knox will eat your soul... Let me show you what I mean.

He waves over the waiter.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Bring me the telephone would you?
And two more martinis.

Maureen looks daunted at her empty glass.

MAUREEN
Wow.

The waiter brings over the phone. Frank dials. He holds his finger to his lips.

FRANK
Hello... Mrs. Jorgensen...? Frank
Wheeler here. Just wanted to let
you know that I've had to send
Maureen Grube down to Visual Aides
for me. I hope you won't miss her.
I'll probably need her the rest of
the day... Okay? Fine. You too.

Frank hangs up and smiles at Maureen.

MAUREEN
Does that mean I've got the rest of
the day off, Frank Wheeler?

FRANK
That means we both do.

He raises his glass. They drink.

MAUREEN
I never even heard of Visual Aides.

FRANK
That's because it doesn't exist.

Maureen grins. She finishes her martini and stands.

MAUREEN
Excuse me.

He watches her wobble off on her heels towards the ladies room. The waiter approaches with two new martini's. Frank gazes around the room. He's getting drunk. He watches red-faced business TYPES, lunching LADIES, fading old PEOPLE dining alone. He takes on a bitter expression and gulps down his martini.

MAUREEN (O.S.)

I guess you got me a little drunk.

Maureen slides into the booth looking green. She pushes away her martini. She stares at the table, trying to focus.

FRANK

Do you know what today is?

MAUREEN

Monday.

FRANK

I'm thirty years old today, can you beat that?

MAUREEN

Happy birthday.

FRANK

And I'm spending it with you...
Cheers.

Frank doesn't look particularly happy about it, but Maureen is too drunk to notice. They raise their glasses.

MAUREEN

...What was the name of the department you made up again?

FRANK

Visual Aides.

MAUREEN

...What-a-joke.

FRANK

Want to hear a real joke...? My old man worked for Knox.

MAUREEN

Yeah?

FRANK

He was a salesman in Yonkers. Once a year, he used to take me into the city for lunch... To a place like this, actually. It was supposed to be a special, life-advice sort of occasion.

MAUREEN

Nice.

FRANK

Not really... I used to sit there
and tell myself, 'I'm never going
to end up like you.'

Frank grins as if it was the best joke in the world. Maureen sways drunkenly.

FRANK (CONT'D)

And here I am... A thirty-year old
Knox man. Funny isn't it?

MAUREEN

I guess I kinda lost you... Your
father worked for Knox...? I'm
sorry, but everything's kinda going
out of focus.

FRANK

We should get you some coffee.

64 INT. HOTEL ROOM - EVENING.

64

Maureen lies naked beneath luxurious white sheets, gazing out the window. In the background, Frank gets dressed.

FRANK

I guess this wasn't what you had in
mind when you went to work this
morning?

Maureen rolls over to watch as Frank gets dressed.

MAUREEN

Can I get a cigarette?

Frank lights one for her. She stares at the ceiling.

MAUREEN (CONT'D)

I could live up here.

FRANK

Stay as long as you want.

MAUREEN

You going?

FRANK

I got to catch a train.

MAUREEN

Of course.

He bends down, kisses her gently on the lips.

FRANK

You were great. Take care now.

He goes out. Maureen lies back on the bed, smoking her cigarette.

65 EXT. SPACE BETWEEN TRAIN CARS - NIGHT. 65

Frank rides between train cars, the wind whipping his hair. He takes a deep breath of fresh air, as if he's never felt so alive.

66 INT. WHEELER MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT. 66

Edith Piaf's "Je t'ai dans le peau" PLAYS as April applies lipstick in a vanity mirror. She's dressed in a black cocktail dress and looks lovely. Her face is alive and animated.

67 EXT. WHEELER HOUSE - NIGHT. 67

Frank's station car turns from the road into the driveway.

68 INT. FRANK'S STATION CAR/WHEELER HOUSE - NIGHT. 68

Frank turns off the engine. He sits thinking.

APRIL (O.S.)

Frank...?

Frank looks around.

69 EXT. WHEELER HOUSE DRIVEWAY - NIGHT. 69

Frank fully emerges from the car to see April standing there full of excitement.

APRIL

Frank, listen. Before you come in I've got to talk to you.

FRANK

Why are you all dressed up?

APRIL
 (waves away the question)
 It's important.

FRANK
 What is it?

APRIL
 So many things... First of all, I missed you and I'm sorry and... I love you... (smiles) The rest can wait. Now come on.

She pulls him towards the house, then she stops.

APRIL (CONT'D)
 Now, wait here till I call you.
 Okay?

FRANK
 Okay.

She leaves Frank looking dumbfounded.

70 INT. WHEELER KITCHEN - NIGHT.

70

The room is dark. Giggling children's VOICES.

APRIL
 All right! Come on in now!

Frank enters. The light goes on, revealing Jennifer and Michael and April around the table in paper birthday crowns with a birthday cake. They sing Happy Birthday.

Frank's face. April comes over and kisses him on the lips.

APRIL
 You thought we forgot?

FRANK
 No.

JENNIFER
 Can I cut the cake, Daddy?

He goes over and tenderly touches her head.

FRANK
 Of course you can, sweetheart.

71 INT. WHEELER MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT.

71

A SHOWER runs. April wears a beautiful silk slip. She carefully arranges herself on top of the covers. A bottle of brandy and two glasses rest on the night stand. The SHOWER stops. Frank enters wrapped in a towel.

APRIL

Better?

FRANK

Much. I'm sorry, I just had to get clean.

APRIL

Come and have a drink.

She pours two brandies while he sprawls out beside her.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Will you forgive me?

FRANK

For what...?

APRIL

For everything. The way I've been since that stupid play.

She lies down beside him and kisses his lips. Frank strokes her hair. A beat.

FRANK

Of course... I understand how you feel April.

APRIL

Do you?

FRANK

Sure I do.

APRIL

I watched you back down the drive this morning. I saw you look up at the house as if it would bite you.

FRANK

No I didn't.

APRIL

I watched you and I started to cry.

FRANK
 (kisses her hair)
 April, honey...

APRIL
 I began to wonder, how did we get here? How did we become these people neither of us like? I wondered about it all day.

FRANK
 I like you April.

APRIL
 I love you Frank. But not the way we are here. We weren't going to have this life: me miserable and you working a job you can't stand... How did it happen?

FRANK
 (kissing her face)
 April...

APRIL
 You know the worst part? Our whole existence here is based on the notion that we're somehow superior to all this and I realized today we're not.

FRANK
 (trying to kiss her mouth)
 April.

APRIL
 We're just like the people we talk about. We are the people we talk about. And when Mike and Jennifer are old enough, they're going to hate us, just like every one else's kids who live around here.

FRANK
 Don't say that.

APRIL
 Well it's true. Remember when I first got pregnant? I told you I didn't want it...

FRANK
 Let's not talk about that.

APRIL

I need to tell you this Frank... I gave you all the responsibility. I said if you make me have this baby then you're going to have to turn yourself inside out to provide for us. And you played along with it. With this ludicrous notion that people have to resign from real life and settle down when they have families. That's how it started.

FRANK

You're going to have to let me talk.

APRIL

Please, not yet. And this stupid play. I've been moping around here as the girl who could have been The Actress if she hadn't gotten married so young... But, I never wanted to be an actress. I only went to the Academy to get away from Aunt Claire. You see, it wasn't enough that I'd spoiled your life; I wanted to make it seem like you spoiled mine. Isn't that awful? But it's true.

FRANK

You haven't spoiled my life.

APRIL

You're telling me these last few days you've enjoyed being around me?

FRANK

Don't be so hard on yourself.

APRIL

Everyday you leave for the city and I'm alone here.

FRANK

You've got the kids.

APRIL

I'm alone! I'm suffocating with how alone I am... We have to do something. We have to save ourselves.

FRANK
 (hopeless)
 What can we do?

APRIL
 I'll tell you exactly what we can do... You know how much money we have saved? We've got enough to live on for six months without you earning another dime. And with the money we could get from the house and the cars, longer than that.

FRANK
 Where are we going?

APRIL
 ...Paris...

Frank stares at her a moment, then breaks into a laugh and rolls away onto his back.

APRIL (CONT'D)
 Like we always talked about.

FRANK
 What kind of job can I get in Paris, April?

APRIL
 No kind of job.

FRANK
 And after the six months are up? Then what? We join the circus?

APRIL
 I'll get a job in Paris.

FRANK
 You?

APRIL
 You know what they pay for secretarial work in the embassies over there? I read about it. Enough for us to live on if we're willing to be a little unconventional and maybe even enough for a part-time nanny.

FRANK
 You're sweet.

Frank raises himself to kiss her, but she pushes him away.

APRIL
I'm not being sweet!

FRANK
You're serious aren't you?

APRIL
Absolutely.

FRANK
And what am I doing while you're at
the embassy?

APRIL
You? What will you be doing?
You'll be doing what you should
have been allowed to do seven years
ago... You'll have time to find
out what you really want to do.
And when you find out you'll have
the time to start doing it.

FRANK
...It's not very realistic.

APRIL
Really? Well, I happen to think
it's unrealistic for a man with a
fine mind to waste it working at a
job he can't stand.

A beat as Frank thinks it over.

FRANK
First of all, you didn't force me
into the job at Knox... It was my
idea. Second, you say you weren't
meant to be an actress. Who said
I was meant to be anything special?

APRIL
If you're asking who said you had a
first rate mind, well, everybody.

FRANK
(shrugs)
I was a promising kid.

APRIL

Everybody thought you could be whatever you wanted to be if you had the chance, but you didn't get the chance.

FRANK

Well... Maybe if I had a talent; if I were an artist, say, or a writer.

APRIL

Why should artists and writers be the only people entitled to lives of their own? I don't care if you decide to be a brick layer. It's got nothing to do with talent. Don't you see what I'm saying? It's your essence that's being stifled here. It's what you are that's being denied and denied and denied in this kind of life.

FRANK

And what's that?

APRIL

Don't you know?

She moves forward and kisses Frank on the mouth.

APRIL (CONT'D)

...A man.

They fall back on the bed and make love. When it's over, they lie side by side looking at the ceiling.

APRIL (CONT'D)

We're really going through with it?

FRANK

Yes.

APRIL

It hasn't just been talk?

FRANK

No.

APRIL

I don't want to tell the kids if we're not sure.

He reaches out and takes her hand.

FRANK
...We're sure.

She kisses him.

APRIL
I love you Frank Wheeler.

FRANK
I love you too.

FADE TO:

72 INT. COMMUTER TRAIN - MORNING.

72

Frank gazes around the train car full of sleepy commuters. A smile creeps across his face. A MAN next to him...

MAN
What are you smiling about?

FRANK
I'm moving to Paris.

MAN
(grumpy)
Good for you.

73 INT. KNOX 15TH FLOOR, MAUREEN'S DESK - MORNING.

73

Maureen glances up as Frank strides forward from the elevator bank. She tries to look busy.

FRANK
You have any trouble yesterday?
With Mrs. Jorgensen, I mean?

MAUREEN
No. She didn't say anything.

FRANK
Good. I had a good time yesterday.

MAUREEN
Me too.

FRANK
I hope you don't have any regrets
because I don't.

MAUREEN

No regrets.

FRANK

Then I hope we can be friends.

MAUREEN

I'd like that Frank.

74 INT. KNOX 15TH FLOOR, FRANK'S CUBICLE - MORNING.

74

Frank enters his cubicle: Jack is concealed behind the paper.

JACK ORDWAY

What happened to you yesterday?

FRANK

I gave myself the afternoon off.

JACK ORDWAY

You deserve it... Bandy's looking for you, by the way. There's something from Toledo on your desk.

Frank reads. It's clearly not good news, but this time he doesn't avoid the problem. He rolls up his sleeves and reaches for the mouthpiece to his Dictaphone.

FRANK

Intra-company letter to Toledo... Attention B.F. Chalmers, branch manager... Uh... We wholly agree that the existing brochure is unsuitable... Fortunately, the problem is now solved... As you know, the delegates will be given dozens of competitor's promotion booklets, most of which will end up on the convention floor... What is required, then, is... something unique. Something the average delegate would want to take home with him.... To this end we have developed... Speaking of Production Control... The new brochure relies on no slick format or advertising jargon. It gives the delegate what he wants: the facts.

He stops the machine and lights a cigarette.

JACK ORDWAY
 (folding away the paper)
 Well, I think I need a coffee...
 Coming, Frank?

FRANK
 I got to finish this.

JACK ORDWAY
 You're working much too hard. It's
 not good for the rest of us.

Jack goes. Frank leafs through a series of files, scouring for information. He reaches for a dictionary and looks up the word "production." He clears his throat

FRANK
 Heading: Speaking of Production
 Control... Production control is,
 after all, nothing, more or less,
 than... putting the right materials
 in the right place at the right
 time... according to a schedule...
 Paragraph.

Frank's face: it sounds pretty good.

75 INT. WHEELER KITCHEN - DAY.

75

An atlas open on the kitchen table depicts a colorful western Europe... April, Jennifer and Michael study the map.

JENNIFER
 But why?

APRIL
 Well, sweetheart. It's a big world
 out there and we thought maybe we
 should go see a little bit of it.

JENNIFER
 But why France?

APRIL
 Because it's beautiful and they
 have wonderful food and speak in a
 lovely accent.

MICHAEL
 Can I bring Monkey?

APRIL

We're not going anywhere without Monkey. I've got some paper here. We're going to make a list of everything we'll need.

JENNIFER

How far is it?

APRIL

We have to take a long boat ride over the sea to get there.

MICHAEL

Are there sharks in the water?

APRIL

Maybe in the deepest part, but we'll be in an enormous steamer!

JENNIFER

Will the Campbells come visit?

APRIL

Well, it's pretty far. And you'll meet new friends in Paris just like you did when we moved here from the city.

Jennifer looks sad.

APRIL (CONT'D)

You know what they eat in Paris? Snails.

JENNIFER

They do not.

APRIL

They do. Daddy ate them when he was there during the war... And when we're there we can go to the top of the Eiffel Tower...

April draws an Eiffel Tower with four smiling faces at the top. Jennifer takes particular interest.

76

EXT. CAMPBELL HOUSE - AFTERNOON.

76

Jennifer and Michael run across the grass in some disorderly game of tag with the THREE Campbell BOYS, 9, 6, and 4. They skip over a small wooden sign that reads: "The Campbells."

77 INT. CAMPBELL LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON.

77

Shep, Milly, April and Frank sit around the living room with drinks.

MILLY

Shep was up half the night kicking himself for flubbing those lines.

Shep glares at his wife. April smiles tenderly at Shep.

APRIL

It wasn't Shep's fault.

MILLY

Well, it was a lot of fun, anyway.

SHEP

Not from where I was sitting.

FRANK

Not from where any of us were sitting.

MILLY

At least it's over.

SHEP

I'll drink to that.

They do and then the silence returns. April beams at Frank.

MILLY

April, you look like the cat who ate the canary. Do you have any news or what?

SHEP

Not to pry or anything.

MILLY

I'm not prying, Shep. Am I prying?

APRIL

Well, actually... I guess we do have some news...

MILLY

Well, spill it, come on!

FRANK

We're going to Europe.

APRIL
To Paris. For good.

MILLY
Oh my God!

SHEP
What...? When?

FRANK
September.

MILLY
When did you make this decision?

APRIL
Last week.

MILLY
Last week and you tell us now!

APRIL
We had to get used to the idea.

SHEP
What are you going to do there?

FRANK
I'm not going to do anything.

SHEP
...I don't understand.

APRIL
I'm going to work. Frank's gonna figure out what he really wants to do.

Shep and Milly look at their friends blankly.

MILLY
...Well, it just sounds wonderful... Really wonderful... We'll certainly miss you kids, though. Won't we Shep?

SHEP
Sure.

MILLY
So, let's have a celebratory drink, or something.

Shep pours drinks, they raise glasses. The couples look at one another across the new gulf dividing their futures.

APRIL

I hope we'll get a good price for the house. (turns to Frank) We'll have to talk to Helen about that.

MILLY

Helen Givings?

APRIL

That's right.

MILLY

Did you hear the news? I don't think I even told Shep?

SHEP

Told me what?

MILLY

About her son.

APRIL

John?

MILLY

That's right. He's supposed to be brilliant. He went to MIT and then he taught mathematics at Stanford, or someplace out west.

FRANK

So?

MILLY

So, he's not teaching anyplace now. He's in Greenacres...

SHEP

The insane asylum?

MILLY

And apparently, he was taken there by the Police.

FRANK

What are you talking about?

MILLY

Their housekeeper told me. She said he's been in and out of private hospitals in California for years, then, he seemed to level out, you know, started teaching again. Until one day out of the blue, he turned up at his parents' place in some kind of rage. He smashed up the place and sort of held them captive for about three days.

APRIL

Helen came around the other day. She didn't say anything. She said she wants us to meet him.

MILLY

Did you say you would?

APRIL

What else could I do?

MILLY

Can you imagine, one of your own turning on you like that?

Shep takes Milly's hand. She looks up, surprised, smiles.

FRANK

How decadent can you get? This country's the psychoanalytical capital of the world, right? Freud couldn't have dreamed up a more devoted bunch. It's our national religion. The answer to everything can be found on the shrink's couch if you lie there long enough.

SHEP

Some people benefit from it.

FRANK

And what happens when a man really blows his top...? Lock him up before he wakes the neighbors.

MILLY

He did sound dangerous.

FRANK

Reality's dangerous! This whole suburban life is designed to keep reality at bay - and when it finally pops out and says Boo, we pretend it didn't happen.

Shep watches April gaze lovingly at Frank.

MILLY

I guess you're right.

SHEP

But, like you said Milly, he sounded dangerous.

FRANK

Helen Givings asks us to meet her son and doesn't even mention his break down? With that kind of denial, it's no surprise he lost it.

MILLY

Imagine having Helen Givings for a mother.

SHEP

When you put it like that.

FRANK

As far as I'm concerned the sooner we're out of here, the better.

April takes his hand.

18 EXT. CAMPBELL HOUSE - EVENING.

78

Shep waves as the Wheelers drive away. He wanders across his yard to the edge of the property. It's built on the hill such that he can watch the Wheelers' car drive down the hill and turn right onto another street and park in front of their house. The two families live absurdly close to one another. He watches April help Michael out of the back seat...

CLOSE: Shep's face.

79 EXT. RUE ST. ANDRE DES ARTS, PARIS - EVENING (SHEP'S VISION)9.

Edith Piaf SINGS in the background as April strides down the cobblestone street dressed as a stylish, experienced Parisian woman. She turns and looks into the camera.

APRIL

Qu'est-ce que passe, Monsieur? Eh?

MILLY (O.S.)

Shep?

80 EXT. CAMPBELL HOUSE - EVENING.

80

Milly comes over to Shep and he puts his arm around her.

MILLY

What are you doing?

SHEP

Just getting a little air.

Together they look down at the Wheeler's place.

SHEP (CONT'D)

You know what I think?

MILLY

What?

SHEP

I think this whole plan sounds a little immature.

MILLY

Oh God, I'm so relieved. Me too.

They turn and walk back towards the house.

MILLY (CONT'D)

I was thinking that the whole time.

SHEP

What is this idea about her supporting him? What kind of man is going to sit around in his bathrobe picking his nose while his wife goes off to work everyday?

MILLY

I don't know, Shep.

She stops and looks at Shep. There are tears in her eyes.

SHEP
What is it?

MILLY
Nothing. I'm just so relieved.

He embraces her and rubs her back comfortingly, but he looks back in the direction of the Wheelers'.

81 INT. WHEELER KITCHEN - NIGHT.

81

Frank sits at the table frowning into a French phrase book.

APRIL
How's it going?

Frank lowers his head to the table.

FRANK
It's not going to be easy.

APRIL
You know anything worth doing that is?

April sits down. She unbuttons the top two buttons of her shirt and opens it. She places her finger on her chest just below her collar bone.

APRIL (CONT'D)
Qu'est-ce que c'est?

Frank looks up.

FRANK
Uh... Skin?

April frowns and closes her shirt again.

APRIL
Qu'est-ce que c'est?

Frank flips through the book.

FRANK
...Peau.

April continues unbuttoning her shirt and slips it off her shoulder. She points at her shoulder.

FRANK (CONT'D)
 ...Epaule.

April stands, and turns her back to Frank. She unbuttons the rest of her shirt and lets it fall to the floor.

FRANK (CONT'D)
 ...Dos.

She walks over to him. She unhooks her brassier and holds it against her chest. She exposes one breast. Frank moves forward to kiss her breast, she backs away. He leafs frantically.

FRANK (CONT'D)
 ...Sein.

She sits down on his lap facing him. She points at her lips.

FRANK (CONT'D)
 ...Levres.

She kisses him.

APRIL
 Bisou.

They begin to make love right there on the kitchen table.

82 INT. WHEELER HOUSE, JENNIFER AND MIKE'S ROOM - NIGHT. 82

Michael sleeps sprawled out on his bed with his bum in the air. Jennifer lies in bed listening to the SOUNDS coming from beneath the door. She slowly pulls back the sheets.

83 INT. WHEELER HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT. 83

Jennifer walks down the darkened hall in her nightie.
 VOICES.

84 INT. WHEELER LIVING ROOM - NIGHT. 84

April sits on the couch, her legs folded beneath her, while Frank paces the room in an unbuttoned shirt and trousers.

FRANK
 It's the whole country. Maybe just since we've decided to get out of here, but... I mean, the television.

(MORE)

FRANK (cont'd)
 Every joke is built on the premise
 that daddy's an idiot and mother's
 always on to him.

APRIL
 I know.

FRANK
 And these loathsome little "the"
 signs people put up. Did you see
 Shep and Milly have one now? "The
 Campbells?" "The Donaldsons?"
 "The Wingates...?" "The Givings"
 for Christsake.

APRIL
 ...Did we wake you Honey?

Frank turns to see Jennifer standing in the room.

JENNIFER
 I can't sleep.

Frank goes over to her and picks her up.

FRANK
 Let's see what we can do about
 that.

85 INT. WHEELER KITCHEN - NIGHT.

85

April sits at the table with Jennifer on her lap. Frank
 stands at the stove warming up milk.

FRANK
 You have a bad dream?

JENNIFER
 No.

He puts a glass of warm milk in front of Jennifer.

FRANK
 That should do the trick.

JENNIFER
 Why are we moving to France, Daddy?

FRANK
 Because we'll be happier there,
 sweetheart.

Jennifer drinks her milk.

APRIL

Hey, Niffer. Know how they say I
love you in Paris?.

Jennifer looks blank.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Je t'aime. Isn't that pretty?

JENNIFER

...Jedame.

Jennifer looks from one beaming parent to the other.

86 INT. MIDTOWN RESTAURANT "THE NICE PLACE" - DAY.

86

Frank sits opposite Jack Ordway in a secluded corner of the
restaurant.

JACK ORDWAY

So that's it? You're flying the
coop?

FRANK

That's right.

JACK ORDWAY

Pretty nifty, Franklin. When's the
big day?

FRANK

September.

JACK ORDWAY

Three months.

FRANK

Eleven weeks to be exact.

JACK ORDWAY

Terrribly exciting.

FRANK

It'll be a big change.

(beat)

JACK ORDWAY

There's one small point I don't
grasp... I don't mean to be dense,
but what exactly will you be doing?

FRANK

I told you.

JACK ORDWAY

I know, finding yourself, but... I'm not sure I see you languishing indefinitely at sidewalk cafes while your good Frau commutes to the embassy. I don't know what I see you doing. Writing? Painting?

FRANK

Are artists and writers the only people entitled to lives of their own...? Look, I just happen to think people are better off doing some kind of work they actually like.

JACK ORDWAY

Certainly... My only simple-minded question is: what kind do you like?

FRANK

If I knew that I wouldn't have to take a trip to find out.

JACK ORDWAY

Yes, of course... but don't you think, assuming there is a true vocation lurking in wait for you, you'd be just as apt to discover it here as there?

FRANK

No. I don't think it's possible for anybody to discover anything on the fifteenth floor of the Knox Building, and I don't think you do either.

Jack's face.

JACK ORDWAY

Fair point... And when did you say this noble experiment would begin?

FRANK

It's not a noble experiment... We'll be gone by September. October on the outside.

Jack nods. He rubs away a stain on the tabletop.

JACK ORDWAY

Well. Best of luck to you. Fine city, Paris... From what I hear.

A beat as it dawns on Frank: Jack Ordway, the experienced, cultured man of mid-Atlantic accent has never been to Paris.

FRANK

What do you say I buy you a brandy... for old times sake.

JACK ORDWAY

I won't say no to that.

79

79

Frank raises his hand and beckons a waiter. He spots Vince Lathrop instead. Vince comes over.

VINCE LATHROP

Gentlemen.

JACK ORDWAY

Join us for a brandy?

VINCE LATHROP

Not for me. What's the occasion?

JACK ORDWAY

We're mourning Wheeler's departure. He's moving to Paris in the fall.

VINCE LATHROP

You and the rest of the beatniks.

FRANK

We're keeping it quiet actually. I haven't said anything to Bandy.

VINCE LATHROP

Sure. He's looking for you by the way. Seems pretty important... See you later, fellas.

87

EXT. AMERICAN EXPRESS OFFICE - DAY.

87

Shep walks along the street, his hands thrust in his pockets. He passes the American Express office. An instant later, April comes through the revolving door onto the street.

88

EXT. CITY STREET, TRAFFIC LIGHT - DAY.

88

Shep waits at the curb. April comes up beside him.

APRIL
I thought that was you.

SHEP
April? What are you doing in town?

APRIL
Just getting organized. There's so much to do for the trip. I thought I'd get a start on things.

SHEP
Oh, right.

Shep crosses the street. April walks beside him.

APRIL
Have you had lunch...?

Shep looks reluctant. He checks his watch.

APRIL (CONT'D)
It's such a nice day. I thought I'd have a sandwich in the park. Would you join me?

She shines her vibrant smile on him and Shep has no choice.

89 EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK - DAY.

89

Shep and April sit on a park bench beneath a tree eating sandwiches.

APRIL
I love it down here.

SHEP
You lived nearby, didn't you?

APRIL
Bethune Street.

SHEP
I spent a lot of time down here when I was a kid. Smoking cigarettes in the fountain. Getting into trouble. I liked it a lot better than where I grew up. There's not much for a kid to do in Sutton Place.

APRIL

Sutton Place...? You grew up in Sutton Place?

SHEP

Yeah. My mother had an apartment looking out over the river.

APRIL

I had no idea you grew up in such elevated circumstances, Shep.

SHEP

Not elevated, exactly. There wasn't much money, but all the other stuff... Theater, art. I even had a French Mam'selle growing up.

APRIL

When I was growing up my Aunt Claire's idea of fine art was the cover of Life Magazine. ...So how'd you get to Revolutionary Road from Sutton Place anyway, if you don't mind my asking?

SHEP

I don't mind. Pigheadedness I guess. When I got out of the army, my mother had a place at Princeton for me. All the men in her family went. But I insisted on going to the Oklahoma Institute of Technology. "On the GI Bill." As if I couldn't have afforded it.

APRIL

Maybe it was important to feel you made it on your own.

SHEP

I'd always looked up to men who worked with their hands. Guys who made stuff, you know? Construction guys. Guys who climbed up eighty stories to work on sky scrapers. Railroad guys. Seemed like honest work to me.

APRIL

I can see that... And you met Milly in Oklahoma.

82

SHEP
That's right... Poor kid. I gave
her a hard time a few years back.

82

APRIL
Why'd you do that?

SHEP
One day I woke up and realized I
hated Oklahoma, I had three kids to
feed, and I was married to a simple
gal who never heard of Sutton
Place... Just a reaction I guess.

APRIL
I see.

SHEP
Don't get me wrong, Milly's a doll,
a wonderful mother... But...

APRIL
But?

SHEP
Well, sometimes I think I might
have been happier with a more
sophisticated woman. More like the
world I grew up in, I guess...
Someone more like you.

April turns and looks at him, acknowledging the frank
compliment. Shep looks at the ground, his heart beating
fast. They chew their sandwiches in silence.

90

EXT. BETHUNE STREET - DAY.

90

Shep and April walk along a quiet sun-lit Village street.
April stops and points up at a window.

APRIL
That one there. On the fourth
floor. See it?

SHEP
I think so.

APRIL
Frank rented it with some guys he
knew at Columbia, then we kind of
took it over. It was just one room
and cold in the winter.

(MORE)

APRIL (cont'd)
 Some days I'd wait all day under
 the covers for Frank to get home.

Shep's face.

APRIL (CONT'D)
 Sometimes I wish we'd never moved
 away.

SHEP
 How'd you and Frank meet again?

APRIL
 At a party.

SHEP
 He just walked up and said hello?
 I wouldn't have had the guts.

APRIL
 Frank was the most interesting boy
 I'd ever met. He had big plans.

She turns and smiles at him.

APRIL (CONT'D)
 It's not too late for Frank and
 me... I'm sure of it.

91 INT. KNOX 15TH FLOOR, BANDY'S OFFICE - DAY.

91

Bandy sits at his desk across from BART POLLOCK, an imposing
 figure smoking a large cigar.

BANDY
 Frank... Come on in.

Bart Pollock twists his massive self around in his chair and
 looks Frank up and down.

FRANK
 You wanted to see me?

BANDY
 You know Bart Pollock of course.

Bart reaches out his hand and Frank shakes.

BART POLLOCK
 Glad to know you, Frank.

FRANK
 Likewise.

BANDY
Bart and I were just going over the
brochure you did for Toledo.

FRANK
(ready for trouble)
Oh...

BART POLLOCK
It's a crackerjack.

FRANK
Really?

BART POLLOCK
You bet, 'really.' They're tickled
to death in Toledo. Pull up a
chair... I've been looking for a
guy like you, Wheeler.

92 INT. COMMUTER TRAIN - EVENING.

92.

Frank sits against the window in a commuter car frowning into
the French phrase book.

MAN (O.S.)
How's it coming?

A friendly-looking older MAN nods at Frank's phrase book.

FRANK
Not great, to be honest.

MAN
I know the feeling. Vacation...?

FRANK
Sort of. My wife wants to see
Paris.

MAN
She'll love it. I took my wife a
few years ago. Great time. Food's
fantastic. I'll tell you, though,
the French are a filthy bunch.

FRANK
Oh?

MAN
A race of public shitters if you
ask me.

(MORE)

MAN (cont'd)
Walking along the Seine one
afternoon I almost tripped over a
grown man squatting there relieving
himself. Can you believe that?

FRANK
No.

MAN
Had a mind to push him in, but,
well, it's his city. Am I right?

FRANK
Sure.

MAN
Of course I'm goddamned right.

93 INT. WHEELER KITCHEN - EVENING. 93

April is cooking with Jennifer, who's not much help. April
lets her drop a handful of green beans into a boiling pot.

94 INT. WHEELER LIVING ROOM - NIGHT. 94

Frank sits on the couch with the phrase book. He drops the
book on the floor and rubs his eyes.

APRIL (O.S.)
Dinner!

Frank stands, stretches. He looks at the phrase book on the
floor. He kicks it under the couch.

95 INT. WHEELER KITCHEN - NIGHT. 95

Frank, April, Mike and Jennifer sit at the table eating.

APRIL
You think Shep and Milly are happy?
Jennifer blows bubbles into her glass of milk.

FRANK
Cut it out, Niffer.

APRIL
I bumped into Shep today. He kinda
gave me the impression things
aren't great between them.

FRANK
You were in town?

APRIL
Just for a couple of hours.
There's so much to do.

FRANK
Right.

APRIL
I got the passport applications.

Mike begins blowing bubbles into his glass.

APRIL (CONT'D)
Oh, and we should discuss how much
to change into traveller's checks.

FRANK
Thanks, Niffer...

APRIL
I made steamer reservations. We
can change them if we need to, but
we shouldn't wait too long he said.

FRANK
Mike, enough.

APRIL
And I scheduled a typing test.
Apparently, they need to know my
"word per minute" to place me ahead
of time.

FRANK
You were busy.

April watches Frank pick at his food.

APRIL
I just got excited... I'm sorry,
Frank. I guess I could have talked
to you first.

FRANK
No big deal.

APRIL
No, I should have talked to you.

(beat)

FRANK

Want to hear something funny?

Mike starts blowing bubbles in his glass again.

APRIL

Mike, your Dad said to stop.

Niffer grins triumphantly. Michael sulks.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Sorry, Frank. You were saying?

FRANK

Just something funny that happened.

APRIL

What's that?

FRANK

You remember Bart Pollock?

APRIL

No. Should I?

FRANK

I may have mentioned him. He's some heavyweight at Knox. Weighs about 300 pounds. Real Presidential material in the worst sense.

APRIL

What about him?

FRANK

He's never more than nodded in my vague direction, not a 'good morning,' 'hello' or anything and today I'm his favorite bright young man.

Jennifer winds an imaginary crank at the side of her head and begins to expose a mouthful of chewed food.

APRIL

Oh? Niffer, that's disgusting.

FRANK

I did some dumb brochure right off the top of my head just to get Bandy off my back, and today it's, "We've been looking for a guy like you, Wheeler..."

APRIL

Wow.

FRANK

Yeah. He wants me to do a whole series of these pamphlets now.

Mike begins to wind his own imaginary crank.

APRIL

Mike, don't you start.

FRANK

We're supposed to have lunch next week to talk the whole thing out. If it gets too thick I'll have to tell him I'll be leaving in the fall, but...

APRIL

Why don't you tell him anyway?

FRANK

There's no point in saying anything before I give official notice.

APRIL

Why not? What can they do to you?

FRANK

It's not a question of him doing anything. It's just not necessary.

Jennifer cranks out chewed food, dropping some into her lap.

APRIL

That's it. You're excused.

JENNIFER

Why?

APRIL

You know why. Go to your room.

FRANK

...April.

JENNIFER

It was an accident.

Mike spits food onto his plate.

APRIL

You want to be like your sister?
Okay. Both of you, out!

Jennifer slams down her napkin and exits with Mike marching behind. A long beat.

APRIL (CONT'D)

She's been impossible.

FRANK

Think it's about Paris...?

APRIL

Who knows?

FRANK

I guess it's pretty inconsiderate
of us.

APRIL

What do you mean?

FRANK

It'll be tough on them, that's all.

APRIL

They'll get over it.

FRANK

Sure... I mean, if we tripped 'em
up and broke their arms, they'd
'get over it.'

APRIL

Are you suggesting we call the
whole thing off?

FRANK

No! Of course not.

APRIL

It's a question of who's in charge.
If the children are to be in
charge, then obviously we stay here
until we rot. On the other hand...

FRANK
I never said that.

APRIL
If we're to be in charge - and I think we should - then we go. It also means making the transition as easy as possible on them.

FRANK
That's all I'm saying.

APRIL
And I think we're doing that.

FRANK
That's all I'm saying.

Frank gets up and clears his plate. A beat.

APRIL
I've arranged for the kids to go to Milly's tomorrow.

FRANK
What for?

APRIL
Did you forget?

He turns and looks at her.

APRIL (CONT'D)
We're having the Givings.

96 INT. WHEELER LIVING ROOM - DAY.

96

The room is tidy. A tray of sandwiches rests on the coffee table with a bottle of sherry. April sits on the couch, while Frank stands at the picture window.

FRANK
I think this is them.

April gets up and joins him at the window.

97 EXT. WHEELER HOUSE - DAY.

97

Mr. and Mrs. Givings get out of the car. Mrs. Givings fiddles with her coat and the tinfoil covered baking pan she carries while Mr. Givings opens the back door.

JOHN GIVINGS, 39, tall, glasses, and neatly dressed in new looking trousers, a button-down shirt and an orange cardigan emerges from the back seat. He places a fedora on his head.

98

INT. WHEELER KITCHEN - DAY.

98

The screen door opens and the kitchen is suddenly crowded with Givings, Frank and April, talking simultaneously.

MRS. GIVINGS

Sorry to be late.

APRIL

You're not late.

MRS. GIVINGS

The traffic was terrible.

MR. GIVINGS

Good to see you.

MRS. GIVINGS

Wasn't it terrible, Howard?

MR. GIVINGS

Route 12.

MRS. GIVINGS

Where are your darling children?

Hands are shook, the baking dish exchanged.

APRIL

You didn't have to do that.

FRANK

The time they finish that stretch of road, they'll start again.

APRIL

The kids are at a birthday party.

John stands by himself closest to the door.

FRANK

And you must be John?

Silence settles over the room.

MRS. GIVINGS

Say hello, John.

JOHN

Hello.

APRIL

Nice to meet you.

John smiles exposing a mouthful of deeply-stained yellow teeth and high, eroded gums.

99

INT. WHEELER LIVING ROOM - DAY.

99

Mr. and Mrs. Givings are seated along with April while Frank pours glasses of sherry. John inspects the shelves.

FRANK

John... Sherry?

John takes the glass and puts it untouched on a shelf.

MRS. GIVINGS

Look at all this food! You didn't have to go to any trouble for us.

APRIL

It's just some sandwiches... John, would you like a sandwich?

She offers the plate and he takes four, piled up in his hand and retreats back to the bookshelf where he drops to a squat. He lays his hat on the ground and places the sandwiches inside. Mrs. Givings watches with horror.

MRS. GIVINGS

I must say, the house is looking sensational. You know, John dear, I found this house for these kids.

JOHN

You a lawyer Frank?

FRANK

No, I'm not.

JOHN

I could use a lawyer.

FRANK

I could recommend one.

MRS. GIVINGS

Have you painted in here?

APRIL

Not since you were last here.

MRS. GIVINGS

Well it looks wonderful.

JOHN

What do you do, then?

FRANK

I work for Knox Business Machines.

JOHN

You design the machines?

FRANK

No.

JOHN

Make 'em, sell 'em, repair 'em?

MRS. GIVINGS

All these questions.

FRANK

I help sell them, I guess. I work in the office. It's not very interesting to be honest.

MRS. GIVINGS

Oh, Frank...

JOHN

Interesting?

MRS. GIVINGS

John, come and have a look out this fabulous picture window.

Mrs. Givings gets up and looks determinedly out the window.

FRANK

No. I don't like the job much.

MRS. GIVINGS

The yard looks just lovely.

JOHN

Then why do you do it?

MR. GIVINGS

Maybe Frank doesn't want to be questioned like this, son.

JOHN

I know the answer. If you want a house, you got to have a job. If you want a nice house, you got to have a job you don't like. Anyone comes along and asks why, he's probably on a pass from the funny farm.

Frank laughs. John smiles his yellow grin.

MRS. GIVINGS

Sorry, Frank.

FRANK

Don't be. I agree with everything you said, John. We both do. That's why I'm quitting the job in the fall and we're taking off.

MRS. GIVINGS

What?

APRIL

We're moving to Paris.

MRS. GIVINGS

You didn't mention anything.

APRIL

It all came together just these last few weeks, actually.

MRS. GIVINGS

But why?

APRIL

A lot of reasons.

JOHN

(to his mother)

You should see your face. The nice young Wheelers are taking off!

His laugh is painful and continual, like a bray.

MRS. GIVINGS

John... Please.

FRANK

How about some fresh air, John?

John stops laughing abruptly. He looks at his parents.

FRANK (CONT'D)
That all right with you?

MR. GIVINGS
Fine. If John wants to.

MRS. GIVINGS
Do you think that's a good idea?

FRANK
Sure. You going to be warm enough?

JOHN
I've got my hat.

He removes the sandwiches and places it on his head.

100 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY.

100

Frank, April and John walk through the woods. The ground is freshly rained on and damp, but the sun is bright. John looks around wonderingly. He buttons up his top button and pulls his sleeves down over his hands.

APRIL
I hear you're a mathematician.

JOHN
You hear wrong. It's all gone now.

APRIL
All gone?

JOHN
You know what electrical shock treatments are?

APRIL
I think so.

JOHN
I've had thirty-seven.

He pushes his hat back and turns his head at April.

JOHN (CONT'D)
See?

APRIL
I think so.

JOHN

Supposed to jolt out the emotional problems. Just jolted out the mathematics.

APRIL

How awful.

JOHN

'How awful...?' Why, because mathematics is so interesting?

APRIL

No. Because the shocks must be awful and because it's awful for anyone to be made to forget something they want to remember. I think mathematics are dull.

John stares at April and smiles.

JOHN

I like your wife, Frank.

FRANK

Me too.

JOHN

I get the feeling she's female. There's a difference between female and feminine. My mother's feminine. She shaves her armpits and never farts.

April laughs. John is pleased to have made her laugh.

JOHN (CONT'D)

But, Mrs. Wheeler here is a female.

APRIL

Call me April.

JOHN

And I've get the feeling you're a male. There aren't too many males either.

APRIL

You're right about that.

JOHN

So, what do a couple of people like you have to run away from?

FRANK
We're not running.

John comes to a stop.

JOHN
So what's in Paris?

APRIL
A different way of life.

FRANK
So maybe we are running... We're running from the hopeless emptiness of the whole life here.

JOHN
The hopeless emptiness? Now, you've said it. Plenty of people are on to the emptiness. It takes guts to see the emptiness, but it takes real guts to see the hopelessness... Wow.

John continues walking. April and Frank exchange a look and keep walking behind him.

101 INT. WHEELER LIVING ROOM - DAY. 101

Mrs. Givings paces. She finishes her sherry, glances around and tops up her glass. Mr. Givings is reading Frank's Times.

MRS. GIVINGS
They seem to like him, don't they?

MR. GIVINGS
Just relax, Helen. Let them do the talking.

MRS. GIVINGS
You're right. I know you're right.

The SOUND of the screen door, then the SOUNDS of an ongoing conversation proceed Frank, April and John into the room.

FRANK
Bobby Benson... I think he came on just after 'Little Orphan Annie.'

MRS. GIVINGS
Hi there!

APRIL

Hi. And that other one. Something about a bee?

JOHN

The Green Hornet? That was later.

MRS. GIVINGS

I don't understand.

JOHN

Remember the one about the naval officer? What was his name?

APRIL

Oh yes... wait a minute...

FRANK

Don Winslow of the U.S. Navy.

JOHN

That's right. Don Winslow.

MRS. GIVINGS

I don't understand, what is it?

FRANK

We're talking about old radio shows.

JOHN

Remember how I liked those?

MR. GIVINGS

We used to listen together.

MRS. GIVINGS

While I made supper.

JOHN

That's right.

Mrs. Givings looks at her son with real tenderness.

MRS. GIVINGS

You remember that...? I'm glad.

A beat. Mrs. Givings turns abruptly to April and Frank.

MRS. GIVINGS (CONT'D)

Well, anyway... You've been too kind.

102 INT. WHEELER KITCHEN - EVENING.

102

April and Frank sit on the couch with drinks.

FRANK
Wasn't so bad, was it?

APRIL
You were wonderful.

FRANK
I just treated him like anyone
else, is all.

APRIL
That's what I mean... Funny how he
seemed so much saner the moment we
got him away from her. And some of
what he said actually seemed kind
of intelligent, don't you think?

FRANK
Sure.

APRIL
He's the first person who seemed to
know what we were talking about.

FRANK
Maybe we're as crazy as he is.

APRIL
I don't care if we are. Do you?

FRANK
...No.

She snuggles down in his lap.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

103 EXT. WHEELER HOUSE - MORNING.

103

From the road we look up at the pretty little house with its
flowers in bloom and a hot blue sky shimmering above.

Frank reverses the station car out of the driveway.

104 INT. WHEELER LIVING ROOM - MORNING. 104

April stands at the window watching Frank drive away. She turns away from the window and surveys the room, angrily.

105 INT. WHEELER HOUSE KITCHEN - DAY. 105

All the cabinet doors stand open. On her hands and knees, April scrubs out the oven...

106 INT. WHEELER LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON. 106

April rigorously vacuums the carpet...

April is on her knees. She reaches under the couch, retrieves several toys and the French phrase book.

107 INT. MIDTOWN HOTEL RESTAURANT - AFTERNOON. 107

Frank sits at a large corner table with Bart Pollock.

BART POLLOCK

This place okay for you?

FRANK

Fine.

BART POLLOCK

Bandy's all right, but you know what makes me sore...? I'm having another martini, you?

FRANK

Sure.

BART POLLOCK

Waiter... Two more... What makes me sore is he's been keeping you under a bushel all these years.

FRANK

I don't know about that.

BART POLLOCK

Well, I do. You know what I like most about your piece? Its direct approach. It was like a man talking straight at you.

FRANK

That's how it was conceived
actually.

BART POLLOCK

One thing interests me and one
thing only: selling the electronic
computer to the American
businessman. A lot of people look
down on selling, but I'll tell you
something a wise old man once told
me: everything is selling. Where
would you be, for instance, if your
father hadn't sold your mother a
package of goods? Nowhere, that's
where...

Frank finishes his drink, and a new one appears at his elbow.

BART POLLOCK (CONT'D)

What most people don't understand
is that The American Businessman
doesn't want to hear technical
facts and figures. He wants to be
sold straight-forward business
solutions. That's where you come
in... God, that's a good
martini... Want another?

FRANK

I'm not sure I should.

BART POLLOCK

'Course you should.

He signals to a waiter.

BART POLLOCK (CONT'D)

I've been looking for men like you.
I'm assembling a team to help me
sell the computer the way it ought
to be sold. Men like you, not your
average salesman. Men with a
certain sophistication. Men who
others look up to.

FRANK

I'm flattered.

BART POLLOCK

It will mean more money, and I got
to be honest, maybe more of a time
commitment...

(MORE)

BART POLLOCK (cont'd)
But damn it, you'll be part of something exciting. And I think we've yet to discover a more effective sales tool than the human voice. You've got one hell of a voice, Wheeler. So what do you say?

Frank looks down at his plate.

FRANK
Did you know my old man worked at Knox?

BART POLLOCK
Is that right? So, it's in the blood.

FRANK
I guess it is, yeah.

BART POLLOCK
He get you into it?

FRANK
No. In fact, I didn't even tell him when I came for the job interview.

BART POLLOCK
You wanted to make it on your own steam, didn't you? That's why you're my kind of man.

FRANK
I guess so. He was a salesman. Probably before your time.

BART POLLOCK
Now, wait a minute. I seem to remember a Wheeler from when I first started. Central Office?

FRANK
No. Yonkers.

BART POLLOCK
(snaps his fingers)
Of course! Yonkers. Hell of a salesman, am I right?

FRANK
Fair.

BART POLLOCK
 And I tell you what else I know.
 He'd want you to take this
 opportunity. Am I right?

FRANK
 Yeah. You are.

BART POLLOCK
 Well, all right then.

FRANK
 Before you go any further, Bart...
 Well, I guess I should have made
 this clear in Bandy's office...
 I'm leaving the firm. In the fall.

Bart looks blank.

FRANK (CONT'D)
 I should have mentioned it earlier.

BART POLLOCK
 Now I am sore at Bandy. To let a
 guy like you slip away. Another
 outfit?

FRANK
 No.

BART POLLOCK
 If it's a question of money, I'm
 prepared to match any offer.

FRANK
 I appreciate that, but...

BART POLLOCK
 Let me ask you this. How definite
 a commitment have you made?

FRANK
 Pretty definite.

BART POLLOCK
 Uh-huh... Frank, nothing's ever as
 definite that a man can't change
 his mind. Otherwise, what kind of
 man is he...? Discuss it with your
 wife, at least. Where would any of
 us be without our wives, anyway?
 (MORE)

BART POLLOCK (cont'd)
 And anytime you want to call me up
 and say, let's have another chat,
 Bart. I'll be ready. Okay?

FRANK
 ...Okay.

108 INT. DOCTOR'S EXAMINATION ROOM - DAY.

108

April sits on an examination table, looking despondent. DR. KENDALL, 51, sympathetically handsome with broad features and strong hands sits on the corner of his desk with a notepad.

DR. KENDALL
 Not good news, then?

APRIL
 We had plans to move overseas. I
 was going to work. In Paris.

DR. KENDALL
 These things happen.

APRIL
 They don't just happen. You have
 to be careless.

DR. KENDALL
 It could be a joyful experience for
 the two of you, even if you didn't
 plan on a third child.

She begins to cry. Dr. Kendall hands her a box of Kleenex.

APRIL
 Can't you help me?

DR. KENDALL
 If I can.

She looks up, drying her eyes and trying to look reasonable.

APRIL
 Could you help me get rid of it?
 You must know doctors who
 specialize in this sort of thing.

DR. KENDALL
 There are doctors, April, but I
 can't recommend them to you. You
 have a home, a husband who loves
 you. You're situation isn't
 desperate.

APRIL
But it is...

DR. KENDALL
I can imagine it feels that way.

APRIL
I knew a girl at school who did it
herself with s syringe and hot
water, she...

DR. KENDALL
April, I can't discuss this. It's
dangerous, not to mention illegal.
I'd be putting my practice at risk.

APRIL
(covering her face)
I'm sorry.

DR. KENDALL
The change in hormones is probably
affecting your mood.

She nods. He goes to his desk and writes out a prescription.

DR. KENDALL (CONT'D)
I'm going to prescribe a mild
sedative. That might help.

APRIL
(pulling herself together)
...Thank you.

109 INT. WHEELER KITCHEN - EVENING.

109

Frank and April sit at either end of the kitchen table. We
enter in the midst of their conversation.

APRIL
Don't tell me you haven't noticed?

FRANK
You sure?

APRIL
I went to the Doctor today.

FRANK
...Wow.

APRIL
Yeah... Wow.

A long beat.

FRANK
It doesn't mean we can't go...
We'll just have to figure out
another way of going, that's all.

APRIL
There is no other way.

FRANK
We'll have to wait a while, maybe.

APRIL
How long do you think it's going to
be before I can take a full time
job: two years, three years...?

FRANK
Take it easy... A couple of years,
you say?

APRIL
At least.

FRANK
I could take that job Pollock
offered.

April looks at him.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Just for a couple of years. The
money's good. We could save and go
over in more style. In the
meantime, maybe we could move to
the city, at least to a better
suburb.

April gets up and goes back to the steaming vegetables.

FRANK (CONT'D)
We could go out more, see more.

Frank comes up behind her, strokes her back.

FRANK (CONT'D)
We'll figure this out. Okay...?

110 INT. WHEELER BATHROOM - EVENING. 110

Frank enjoys a pee. He comes to the sink and washes his hands. He looks up at his reflection. He can't suppress a broad smile: he's relieved. He reaches for a towel to dry his hands; there aren't any. He turns and opens the closet. He takes a towel from a shelf. Something catches his eye. He reaches to the back for a small brown paper package.

111 INT. WHEELER KITCHEN - EVENING. 111

April places a bowl of steaming vegetables on the table.

112 INT. WHEELER LIVING ROOM - EVENING. 112

Mike and Jennifer lie on the floor in front of the TV. Frank storms through the room clutching the open brown package. Mike and Jennifer turn away from the TV to watch.

113 INT. WHEELER KITCHEN - EVENING. 113

Frank enters, holding out the plastic syringe in his hand. April wheels away from the stove.

FRANK

What the hell are you going to do with this?

APRIL

And what do you think you're going to do? You're going to stop me?

FRANK

You're damn right!

APRIL

Go ahead and try!

She glances over to the doorway that leads into the living room. Mike and Jennifer's worried faces peer inside.

114 INT. WHEELER MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT. 114

April and Frank occupy opposite ends of the bedroom, with the bed between them.

APRIL

I don't want to fight, Frank.

FRANK
We have to talk about it.

APRIL
I just don't want to fight.

FRANK
Okay. We won't fight.

APRIL
It would be for you, Frank, don't you see? So you can have time.

FRANK
How can it be for me if the thought makes me sick to my stomach?

APRIL
Then it's for me... Tell me we can have the baby in Paris, but don't make me stay here, Frank. I can't!

FRANK
We can't have the baby in Paris. You know that. Our life can be different here.

APRIL
Why? Because we'll have a bigger house and go out to restaurants?

FRANK
It'll help... We're talking about a child, April.

APRIL
A child we don't want! It's not even a child, yet. It's an idea; it doesn't exist. Are we going to let that hold us back?

FRANK
I guess so.

APRIL
Why?

FRANK
...Because it's wrong.

APRIL
You really believe that?

FRANK

April... Things aren't always
going to turn out the way we want
them. This is real life.

April glares. She snatches s pillow and a blanket from the
bed. Frank reaches as if he'll try to stop her, but then
changes his mind and withdraws.

FRANK

We'll take a vacation to Paris.

April storms out.

115 INT. KNOX 15TH FLOOR, FRANK'S CUBICLE - EVENING.

115

Frank is on the phone.

FRANK

Is Bart Pollack available...? Yes,
I called earlier. Wheeler. Frank
Wheeler. We had lunch the other
day...? You told him I called...?
Okay... Thank you...

He hangs up. He switches off his desk lamp and stands.

116 INT. KNOX 15TH FLOOR, ELEVATOR BAY.

116

Frank waits for the elevator looking exhausted. The CLIP of
high heels. He turns and sees Maureen walking towards him.

MAUREEN

You look tired.

FRANK

Yeah.

MAUREEN

I heard you were going away.

FRANK

Thinking about it... I don't know.

MAUREEN

You look like you could use a
drink.

She tries a practised, sophisticated smile on him.

117 EXT. JERSEY SHORE BEACH - DAY.

117

A baking hot day at the Jersey Shore. The sky is electric blue. Radios PLAY, children CRY, dogs BARK. A horde of fleshy, white suburbanites cover almost every inch of sand. Moving through the crowd, we find Shep, Milly, Frank and April, all looking a little over-heated. A child wrapped in a towel with a zinc-covered nose sleeps on Milly's lap. Frank and Shep sip beer. April sits slightly apart behind a pair of dark glasses.

MILLY

The rest of them love the water, always have. I don't know what's wrong with him.

FRANK

He'll grow out of it.

MILLY

You never know what you're going to get, though, do you? Sometimes they do things you recognize. You know, like being afraid of the dark or something, and other times you think who's are they? Where'd they come from? Know what I mean?

FRANK

I bet Helen Givings wonders about that crazy son of hers.

MILLY

Sure.

APRIL

I thought you liked him.

FRANK

I liked him. He's crazy as a loon, but I liked him.

APRIL

You said he seemed perfectly sane once we got him away from his mother.

MILLY

(trying to lighten it up)
With a mother like that.

FRANK

I don't know about "perfectly sane." The guy takes no responsibility for his life whatsoever.

APRIL

There are different ways of taking responsibility. Just because he doesn't have a job and a house in the suburbs.

FRANK

Well, checking into Greenacres isn't one of them.

APRIL

I'm going to get wet.

She walks down to the water's edge.

SHEP

She okay?

FRANK

She's fine.

118 EXT. JERSEY SHORE BEACH, WATER'S EDGE - AFTERNOON. 118

April stands in the water staring out over the sea in the vague direction of Europe. Shep comes up beside her.

SHEP

You okay?

APRIL

I'm fine. Thanks.

She turns and walks away. Shep watches her go.

119 INT. WHEELER CAR - AFTERNOON. 119

Jennifer and Michel are sacked out on the back seat. Frank drives while April sits beside him sucking hard on a cigarette. They all look pink from the sun and exhausted.

APRIL

You really are a much more moral person than I am, Frank.

FRANK

It's nothing to do with moral... at least in a conventional sense.

APRIL

Don't moral and conventional mean the same thing?

FRANK

I know you know better than that.

APRIL

Better than what?

FRANK

Moral versus conventional.

APRIL

I don't know the difference. I never have.

FRANK

'Moral' was your word. I just think under the circumstances, the mature thing...

APRIL

There you go again. I don't know what 'mature' means either. You could explain it all day and I wouldn't know. My whole life I've never known. Is there something wrong with me?

FRANK

All I know is how I feel, okay...?

Frank glances at her sideways.

FRANK (CONT'D)

There's nothing wrong with you... Maybe there's some stuff we haven't touched on. Things that have nothing to do with Europe... Things from your childhood, maybe. Emotional things.

April turns to look at him.

APRIL

You mean I'm emotionally disturbed?

FRANK

No! Jesus... I'm just saying we learn things from the way we grow up. Look what a mess I am... I don't know how you survived growing up the way you did.

He glances over for an indication it's safe to go on.

FRANK (CONT'D)

It's a wonder someone who was rejected by her parents could be such a first rate mother... But...

April stares out the window blankly.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Considering that rejection, I don't think it's a huge surprise you've had the impulse to abort two of three pregnancies. (he whispers) Niffer and now...

APRIL

But I've had two children. Doesn't that count in my favor?

FRANK

Jesus. The fact that you even put it that way... You make it sound like having children is a punishment.

120 EXT. WHEELER DRIVEWAY - EVENING. 120

The car pulls into the drive and eases to a stop

121 INT. WHEELER CAR - EVENING. 121

Frank turns off the ignition. April stares at the house in front of them.

APRIL

And supposing all this is true? Suppose I've got some compulsion to abort my offspring... What am I supposed to do about it?

FRANK
All I'm saying is we should think about it... Maybe get someone to help you think about it.

APRIL
...You mean a psychoanalyst...

FRANK
If it helps.

APRIL
The new job will pay for that too?

FRANK
It will if you need it.

April thinks about it a moment.

APRIL
I'll carry Mike.

She reaches for the door.

122 INT. WHEELER BEDROOM - MORNING. 122

Frank wakes. He rolls over and looks at the other side of the bed: it has not been slept in.

123 INT. WHEELER KITCHEN - DAY. 123

April sits at the kitchen with a magazine. Frank enters.

FRANK
You slept on the couch again?

APRIL
I was reading and fell asleep.

Frank pours himself a cup of coffee. He stands behind April so that he cannot see her face.

APRIL (CONT'D)
So I guess Paris was a pretty childish idea, huh?

April stares at her magazine, but she isn't reading. Everything hangs on Frank's answer.

FRANK
I guess maybe it was.

April closes her eyes. He comes over and takes her in his arms.

FRANK (CONT'D)
We're going to be okay.

APRIL
I hope so... I hope so very much.

FRANK
I'll tell the kids.

APRIL
No. I want to.

She gets up and leaves the room.

124 EXT. WHEELER HOUSE - MORNING. 124

April stands at the doorway watching Jennifer and Mike dance through the sprinkler.

125 INT. WHEELER LIVING ROOM - MORNING. 125

Frank stands at the picture window watching...

April squats on the ground, talking to their two young children. Michael tries to get into her arms. Jennifer turns away and walks sulkily across the grass.

126 INT. BART POLLOCK'S OFFICE - DAY. 126

Bart Pollock sits at his desk, in a hot, cramped office, perspiring through his shirt. A fan creaks. A KNOCK.

BART POLLOCK
Come.

Frank enters. Bart takes several moments before looking up.

BART POLLOCK (CONT'D)
Wheeler. Pull up a chair... Sorry we couldn't meet for lunch; I'm up to my eyeballs. So, what's on your mind?

FRANK
I've been thinking about what you said the other day at lunch... about the team you're organizing...

BART POLLOCK

Uh-huh?

FRANK

And about a man being able to change his mind... I think I've changed mine.

Pollock puts down his pen and leans way back in his chair giving Frank a full view of his girth.

BART POLLOCK

That's fine, Wheeler. Drink?

Bart retrieves a bottle and pours two bourbons with ice.

BART POLLOCK (CONT'D)

Like I said the other day, the whole project is still in the development stage. I'll get you in here for the odd conference, but in the meantime, just sit tight and keep working on those whaddycallits, promotion pieces of yours. I'll tell Bandy you're working on something for me. That's all he needs to know.

FRANK

OK. I guess it really is in my blood.

BART POLLOCK

Meaning?

FRANK

Oh... Nothing. Just glad to be aboard.

Bart finishes his drink and leans back to his desk, indicting the end of the meeting.

BART POLLOCK

Good news, Wheeler. Now I got to get back to this.

Frank looks at his full glass.

BART POLLOCK (CONT'D)

You can leave that there.

Frank leaves his drink on the desk and exits. Pollock reaches for Frank's drink.

127 INT. KNOX 15TH FLOOR, ELEVATOR BAY - DAY. 127

Frank steps out of the elevator. He spots Maureen down the hall.

128 INT. KNOX 15TH FLOOR, MAUREEN'S DESK - DAY. 128

Maureen is on the phone. Frank approaches. Maureen smiles, holds up her finger.

MAUREEN

Oh, he didn't... Your kidding...
Uh-huh...? Uh-huh...? (laughs)
Norma, let me call you back.
Something's come up.

She hangs up.

MAUREEN (CONT'D)

Sorry.

FRANK

I got to talk to you about something. What about lunch?

MAUREEN

Can't. I'm meeting some gals. I can't keep cancelling on them.

She smiles provocatively.

MAUREEN

Come to my place, seven-thirty.

FRANK

Your place...? Can't we meet for a drink instead?

MAUREEN

My place. And don't be late.

129 INT. NICE PLACE - DAY. 129

Frank and Jack sit in a booth at The Nice Place.

JACK ORDWAY

Hell of a blow... Foiled by faulty contraception... How's the wife taking it?

FRANK

She's okay.

JACK ORDWAY

Well, I can't say I'm sorry.
Wouldn't be the same without you
around here... And of course...
Well, it's none of my business.

FRANK

What?

JACK ORDWAY

It's nothing. Just... Well, the
plan always seemed a little
unrealistic. None of my business,
of course..

FRANK

Of course.

JACK ORDWAY

Now, allow me to buy you that
brandy back. You look like you
need it.

130 EXT. WEST 10TH STREET - EVENING. 130

Frank walks along the street with his jacket over his
shoulder. It's hot and the city feels heavy.

131 EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - EVENING. 131

Frank trots up the stoop stairs and presses a buzzer.

MAUREEN

(thru intercom)

Yes?

FRANK

It's me.

The door buzzes and Frank slips inside.

132 INT. APARTMENT BUILDING, MAUREEN'S DOOR - EVENING. 132

The door is on the latch. Frank TAPS.

MAUREEN

Frank...? Come on in, I'll be out
in a minute.

133 INT. MAUREEN'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING.

133

Frank enters.

MAUREEN (O.S.)

Make us some drinks, would you?

Frank pours drinks at the cabinet. He takes a large gulp and then moves to the mantle and examines PHOTOS of Maureen in a cheerleader outfit, of Maureen with her big-boned parents; a few ceramic Cats; a post card from Hawaii. He goes to the couch and lights a cigarette.

MAUREEN (O.S. CONT'D)

I'll be right there... You alone?

FRANK

Of course I am.

MAUREEN (O.S.)

You close the door and lock it?

FRANK

Yes. What's this all about?

The bedroom door flies open revealing Maureen on tiptoe in full naked glory except for a robe over her shoulders.

FRANK

(flabbergasted)

Maureen...

The robe falls to the ground and she begins to dance across the room to a RHUMBA, undulating her wrists like an oriental dancer, twitching her hips, and wobbling her breasts. Before Frank can say anything more, she performs a final spin and lands heavily in his lap.

MAUREEN

(husky, sexy)

Hullo, Frank.

She gives him an enormous wet kiss. For several moments, the only sound is Maureen's practised moans of pleasure.

FRANK

Maureen... We need to talk.

She studies his face and suddenly gets worried.

MAUREEN
What do you mean?

FRANK
...I think you're a great girl, you
know that and...

All at once the nature of that talk becomes painfully clear. She struggles from his lap and darts for the robe. She covers herself quickly with her back to him.

MAUREEN
Jesus, Frank. You might have said
something sooner.

FRANK
If I've ever given you the
impression that I'm not happily
married or anything... Then I'm
sorry. I am.

MAUREEN
I cooked dinner... (suddenly
remembering) Oh my God, the dinner!

She darts towards the kitchen.

134 INT. MAUREEN'S KITCHEN - EVENING.

134

Maureen opens the oven releasing a belch of black smoke. Frank enters behind her. She removes a blackened lamb and drops it on the table.

MAUREEN
It's ruined. Everything's ruined.

She covers her face and begins to cry.

FRANK
It doesn't look too bad.

MAUREEN
I think you should go.

FRANK
Let's eat first.

MAUREEN
Just go!

She storms out. A door SLAMS. Frank's face.

135 INT. CAMPBELL LIVING ROOM - EVENING.

135

Shep and April sit in silence on opposite ends of the room. Shep swirls the ice in his glass trying to think of something to say. April looks at the floor. Milly enters with Frank trailing behind.

MILLY

April's just told us the happy news.

April offers a weak smile.

MILLY (CONT'D)

I know it's a damn shame for you folks, but selfishly I'm just happy we're not going to lose you.

SHEP

Must be bittersweet... At least Europe's not going any where.

April looks into her glass.

FRANK

...I need a drink.

Shep gets up and pours one.

MILLY

(dabs at her eyes)

Look at me... I'm just so happy. Our little gang's back together again. Hey, I've got an idea. What do you say we go over to The Log Cabin. For old time's sake... Shep?

SHEP

(to the Wheelers)

It's up to you two.

FRANK

If April wants to.

SHEP

April....?

APRIL

...Sure.

136 EXT. VITO'S LOG CABIN - NIGHT. 136

A mess of cars are parked in front of a log cabin structure lit up with a neon sign that blinks "Cocktails."

137 INT. VITO'S LOG CABIN - NIGHT. 137

On the stage, The Steve Kovick Quartet plays loudly and not very well. High School STUDENTS, and middle-aged COUPLES navigate the dance floor.

138 INT. VITO'S LOG CABIN, BOOTH - NIGHT. 138

The Wheelers and Campbells occupy a booth on the side of the dance floor. Several empty glasses have accumulated. They have to talk over the loud MUSIC.

FRANK

This place is worse than I remember.

MILLY

Remember the first time you brought us here? You said, it takes a special kind of taste to enjoy Vito's Log Cabin.

FRANK

It's so awful it's kinda nice?

MILLY

That's right.

Conversation stops. April holds herself aloof, a weight on all of them.

FRANK

Milly, you want to dance?

MILLY

Sure.

Frank takes Milly by the hand, leaving Shep and April alone.

SHEP

Did you want to dance?

APRIL

No thanks.

SHEP

I'm sorry you're not going away. I know how important it was for you.

APRIL

I guess it was too late after all.

139 INT. VITO'S LOG CABIN, DANCE FLOOR - NIGHT.

139

Frank and Milly dance. Frank is a good dancer and Milly's a little too drunk. She hurries to keep up, perspiring through her dress. He spins and jostles her.

MILLY

(breathless)

I forgot what a good dancer you are.

He spins her again, around and around, back and forth into his arms. Milly begins to look slightly dizzy.

MILLY (CONT'D)

...Frank.

He doesn't hear her.

MILLY (CONT'D)

Frank... I...

He spins her away again but this time, she stops dancing. She grabs Frank to steady herself.

FRANK

(sudden remorse)

You okay?

MILLY

Gee... I'm afraid I'm not very...

Her body spasms with the need to be sick. She turns and rushes for the lady's room.

140 INT. VITO'S LOG CABIN, BAR - NIGHT.

140

Frank sits alone at the bar. He orders a drink and lights a cigarette. He looks into the mirror above the bar and sees himself in a line of single men drinking.

141 EXT. VITO'S LOG CABIN - NIGHT. 141

Shep supports Milly as April walks alone and Frank searches amongst the cars. He turns helplessly back and forth.

SHEP
Where the hell did we park?

FRANK
I don't know... No, wait a minute.
Over there.

Frank leads them off in another direction.

142 EXT. VITO'S LOG CABIN - NIGHT, MOMENTS LATER. 142

Shep, Milly, April and Frank stand in front of Shep's car, which is trapped between another car and a tree.

SHEP
I'm completely blocked in.

MILLY
Of all the inconsiderate...

FRANK
Why don't I take Milly home and
then run Shep back? Maybe it'll be
free by then.

SHEP
That's a lot of driving Frank. And
you've got the sitter. Why don't
we all go and I'll borrow your car
to come back alone?

APRIL
Look, it's simple. Frank takes
Milly home then go home yourself
and that takes care of both
sitters. Shep and I will wait
until the car's free and then he
can run me home.

FRANK
Fine... All agreed?

Frank walks off towards his car.

143 INT. VITO'S LOG CABIN, BAR - NIGHT.

143

April and Shep sit at the bar.

SHEP

Drink?

APRIL

Sure.

He orders two drinks. An awkward silence settles.

SHEP

God, this Steve Kovack guy really
is the worst... Or the best as
Frank would say...

Shep checks his watch. He looks out over the dance floor.

SHEP (CONT'D)

These kids keep getting younger.

APRIL

We're getting older Shep.

SHEP

That's what I meant.

They sip their drinks.

SHEP (CONT'D)

I guess I'll go check the car.

144 EXT. VITO'S LOG CABIN - NIGHT.

144

Shep comes out the door. He approaches the few wooden steps down to the parking lot, loses his footing and falls onto his hands and knees. He struggles to his feet and is suddenly overwhelmed with how drunk he is. He puts his hand on a car to steady himself. He balances on his feet and breathes deeply. He begins to run in place, pumping his fists madly.

145 INT. VITO'S LOG CABIN, BAR - NIGHT.

145

Shep approaches the bar, but the stool where he left April is empty. He spots her in the booth where they sat before.

146 INT. VITO'S LOG CABIN, BOOTH - NIGHT.

146

Shep slides into the booth.

SHEP
Still blocked in, I'm afraid.

APRIL
Oh well. I don't really mind.

SHEP
...Me neither.

He studies her lovely face as she gazes at the dance floor.
The band is playing an old Big Band number.

APRIL
This is the sort of music that's
supposed to make people of our
generation sentimental, isn't it?

SHEP
I guess.

APRIL
I missed out on the whole Jitter-
bugging and Trucking On Down thing.

SHEP
Oh?

APRIL
I remember watching the older
girls. When I was twelve I wanted
nothing more than to be seventeen.

SHEP
What about when you were seventeen?

APRIL
(shrugs)
I was at boarding school. And
there wasn't any jitterbugging...
I didn't really have my first date
until after the war.

SHEP
That's hard to believe.

APRIL
Is it? Why?

SHEP

...What about on vacations?

APRIL

All I ever did on vacation was go to the movies alone or fight with my Aunt Claire... So I guess you're right. I can't just blame it on boarding school. It's my own Emotional Problem. Nine times out of ten, take someone who worries about life passing them by, and it's their own emotional problem.

SHEP

I don't know. I can't picture you being lonely.

APRIL

No? That's nice. I prefer it that way. I've just always had this sense that there were people who knew what they were doing, who never had to make the best of bad decisions, because they always got it right the first time. People like those seventeen year-old's dancing and going on dates. People who didn't feel that their life was passing them by. I wanted to be like them.

SHEP

I think I know the feeling.

APRIL

I hope you don't.

She looks back at the dance floor.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Hey, Shep... Wanna do it?

SHEP

...Do what?

APRIL

Jitterbug.

She grabs his hand and pulls him from the booth.

147 INT. VITO'S LOG CABIN, DANCE FLOOR - NIGHT. 147

April and Shep perform a rusty, but spirited jitterbug. April looks happy. Shep watches her with an enormous grin. As the song progresses, they get the hang of it and for a few moments at least, they make an elegant pair.

148 EXT. VITO'S LOG CABIN - NIGHT. 148

April and Shep stumble across the parking lot laughing...

Shep's car sits alone under a tree in pale moonlight...

April falls back against the hood of the car laughing. Shep is beside her fumbling with the keys. Their laughter fades. They look at one another breathing heavily...

SHEP

You're beautiful April.

APRIL

You think so?

SHEP

God yes.

He inches towards her. She watches passively. When he's within reach, he's suddenly overcome: he embraces her forcefully, kissing her frantically. She remains perfectly still, allowing him to kiss her, to search under her clothing, to kiss her skin and finally, to lift her skirt and pull her clothing aside and make love to her against the car beneath the stars... As suddenly as it began, it's over. Shep collapses against her. April stares into the darkness.

SHEP (CONT'D)

April... This is what I've always wanted... I love you.

APRIL

Don't say that.

SHEP

I mean it, I love you.

APRIL

Please, be quiet. Then you can take me home.

She steps away. They quietly assemble themselves. A moment ago Shep was in heaven and now he is miserable again.

SHEP
You think I'm a fool.

APRIL
No... You just don't know me Shep,
that's all.

She walks around and gets in the passenger side.

149 INT. SHEP'S CAR - NIGHT. 149

April looks out the passenger window. Shep is about to turn the ignition. A terrible thought occurs to him.

SHEP
(with horror)
But April... You're...

He can't bring himself to say it, he gestures at her stomach.

April turns her face to the window.

APRIL
It doesn't make any difference.
Will you take me home now?

SHEP
Of course.

He turns the ignition.

150 INT. WHEELER BEDROOM - MORNING. 150

Frank slowly wakes. He rolls over and looks at the empty side of the bed. He rolls his eyes.

151 INT. WHEELER BATHROOM - MORNING. 151

Frank scrubs his scalp under the shower...

152 INT. WHEELER MASTER BEDROOM - MORNING. 152

Frank buttons up a shirt. He goes over to April's vanity mirror and bends down to check his reflection.

153 INT. WHEELER LIVING ROOM - MORNING. 153

Frank walks through the living room.

154 INT. WHEELER KITCHEN - MORNING.

154

April sits at the kitchen table preparing little sandwiches.

FRANK
Good morning.

APRIL
Morning.

He pours himself a coffee and sits down with the paper.

FRANK
Where are the kids?

APRIL
At Shep and Milly's.

FRANK
I thought I'd read them the
Funnies.

APRIL
You can do it later.

FRANK
What time did you get in?

APRIL
Late.

Frank looks across the table at April.

FRANK
Listen... This has been a crazy
summer. And I know you're under a
strain. We both are. I just hope
we can pick up the pieces.

APRIL
How do you propose we do that?

FRANK
Well, I'd like to know why you've
taken permanent residence on the
couch. It can't be good for the
kids to see that.

APRIL
The kids?

FRANK

Yeah.

APRIL

I don't really feel like talking about it, okay?

FRANK

Okay... What do you feel like talking about?

APRIL

Would it be all right if we didn't talk about anything? Can we just take each day as it comes without talking about everything all the time?

FRANK

I don't think I was suggesting we talk about everything all the time.

APRIL

Okay, Frank.

FRANK

Okay? Okay what?

APRIL

I'm sleeping on the couch because I don't love you.

A beat. Frank smiles foolishly.

FRANK

I wonder what you really feel?

APRIL

That is what I feel.

FRANK

No it isn't... It's been a tough summer. We've both been under a lot of strain. I've been thinking it might be a good idea for me to go see the head shrinker as well... I haven't been myself lately either... I've been with a girl a few times in New York.

April's face, calmly watching Frank who is sounding increasingly out of control.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I hardly know her. It was nothing to me, but she got a little carried away. She's just a kid... I don't know why I did it. Maybe with the talk of abortion I wanted to, I reenforce my masculinity or something... But it's over. It's over.

APRIL

Why did you tell me?

FRANK

Like I said, maybe some subconscious...

APRIL

No, Why did you tell me? What am I supposed to do? Am I supposed to say I love you? Am I supposed to be jealous?

FRANK

Say what you feel.

APRIL

I have. I don't feel anything.

FRANK

You mean, you don't care who I sleep with?

APRIL

I guess I don't.

FRANK

But I want you to care.

APRIL

I know. And I would if I loved you I suppose, but I never really have. I only just figured that out.

April stands. Frank is reeling.

FRANK

Bullshit.

She leaves the room. Frank is out of his chair, knocking it backwards with a CRASH.

155 INT. WHEELER LIVING ROOM - DAY.

155

Frank follows April into the living room. He grabs her and wheels her around forcefully.

FRANK

Listen to me, God damn it. You know perfectly well you love me!

MRS. GIVINGS (O.S.)

Yoo-hoo! Any one home?

Frank and April stand there glaring at each other. Frank breaks away and walks back to the kitchen.

156 INT. WHEELER KITCHEN - DAY.

156

Mrs. Givings pushes open the door and peers in.

MRS. GIVINGS

I hope we're not early.

FRANK

(barely covering his rage)
No... Come in.

Mrs. Givings glances around the room tentatively and enters followed by John and Mr. Givings. They all stand awkwardly around the kitchen. Frank picks up the chair.

MRS. GIVINGS

Is this a bad time?

April enters.

APRIL

No. It's not a bad time.

157 INT. WHEELER LIVING ROOM - DAY.

157

Mr. and Mrs. Givings sit on the couch with glasses of iced-tea. John sits on a wooden chair with his hat on his knee.

APRIL

Any more tea, John?

John holds out his glass, but he stares at Frank. Frank smiles at John and looks away.

FRANK
I think I'm going to have a drink?
Any one join me?

He waits for a response and goes over to pour himself a drink. John watches Frank's every move.

MRS. GIVINGS
How's the path coming, Frank...?
John, Frank's building a path.

With his back to the party, Frank takes a long drink. He pours another. He looks more relaxed now.

FRANK
Slowly, Helen, slowly. I hope to
have it done by winter.

MRS. GIVINGS
The road to hell...

JOHN
I thought you were leaving in
September.

(beat)

FRANK
Change of plans.

MRS. GIVINGS
Oh?

JOHN
Change of plans? Why?

Frank walks over and lays an arm around April's shoulders.

FRANK
Our plans were changed for us...
April's pregnant.

April smiles unconvincingly and then looks at the floor.

MRS. GIVINGS
What wonderful news! How far long?

APRIL
Not far.

MRS. GIVINGS
I thought there was something about
you two.

John stands up.

JOHN
Hold on. I don't get this.

FRANK
What don't you get?

JOHN
Don't people have babies in Europe?

MRS. GIVINGS
Oh, John...

JOHN
Please don't do that. Please don't interrupt me. I'm asking Frank a question.

FRANK
Let's just say people anywhere aren't well advised to have a baby they can't afford. And we can only afford it if we stay here.

JOHN
So it's about money?

FRANK
That's right.

JOHN
Money's a good reason.

FRANK
It's a pretty important one.

JOHN
But it's not the real reason. What's the real reason?

FRANK
That is the real reason, John.

JOHN
The wife talk you out of it? She decide she didn't want to give up a nice house...? But she looks too tough. Too female... Must have been you, Frank.

MRS. GIVINGS
John...

JOHN

Did you get cold feet? Decide you like it here in the hopeless emptiness after all?

MR. GIVINGS

All right, son. Maybe we should be going.

Mr. and Mrs. Givings get to their feet.

JOHN

Look at your face! I got it, didn't I? You knocked her up just so you wouldn't have to go through with it.

John laughs. Frank steps forward, getting in his face.

FRANK

Now look here you son of a bitch. You think you can come in here and say whatever you like? I don't care if you are crazy. You keep talking and I'll break you in half.

MR. GIVINGS

Let's get out to the car.

JOHN

Big man you got here, April. But maybe you deserve each other. You must give him a hard time if making babies is the only way he feels like a man.

MRS. GIVINGS

I'm sorry April.

JOHN

Yeah, sorry. If anybody's got something to be sorry about, it's me. But I'll tell you one thing I'm not sorry about...

He points at April's stomach.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I'm glad I'm not going to be that baby.

Frank lunges forward, but Mrs. Givings gets in the way, holding up her hands to protect her pathetic son. Her eyes fill with tears.

MRS. GIVINGS
He's not well, Frank.

Frank steps back. The Givings make their way out through the kitchen. The SOUND of the screen door closing.

April sits on the couch. Frank pours another drink, fuming.

FRANK
Don't tell me. I made a disgusting spectacle of myself. And everything that crazy son of a bitch said is true, right?

APRIL
Right.

FRANK
You're wrong. That man is insane. And you know what the definition of insane is? The inability to love.

A beat and then Aril begins to laugh.

FRANK (CONT'D)
What are you laughing about...?

She continues to laugh, on the verge of hysteria.

FRANK (CONT'D)
April...

APRIL
You really are a wonderful talker, Frank. I'm crazy because I don't love you, is that it?

He comes towards her.

FRANK
No. You're not crazy and you do love me. That's it!

APRIL
But I don't love you. I despise the sight of you right now.

FRANK
No you don't.

APRIL

Don't come any closer. If you come
any closer, I'll scream.

He tries to take her in his arms and she does, she screams at the top of her lungs... Frank recoils. She stops and looks at him. He turns and throws the coffee table across the room. Then he comes towards her with his fist clenched.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Are you going to hit me now to show
me how much you love me?

Frank struggles to gain control over himself.

FRANK

...No. You're not worth the
effort. Because you're a liar.
What are you doing living in my
house if you don't love me? What
are you doing married to me? What
are you doing having my baby?

He points at her belly.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Why don't you just get rid of it?
I wish to God you would.

He turns and stomps out of the room.

158 INT. WHEELER MASTER BEDROOM - EVENING. 158

Frank enters the bedroom and slams the door. He paces, slowly calming. He sits on the bed and rests his head in his hands. Suddenly, he looks up and rushes for the door.

159 INT. WHEELER LIVING ROOM - EVENING 159

Frank enters, but the room's empty.

FRANK

April...?

He walks into the kitchen.

160 INT. WHEELER KITCHEN - EVENING. 160

The kitchen is empty.

161 INT. WHEELER BATHROOM - EVENING. 161

Frank pushes open the door and looks into the bathroom.

162 INT. WHEELER LIVING ROOM - EVENING. 162

Frank goes over and picks up the coffee table. He glances out the picture window. He sees April.

163 EXT. WHEELER YARD - EVENING. 163

Frank jogs towards the trees at the edge of the property.

164 EXT. WOODS - EVENING. 164

April leans against a tree smoking...

FRANK (O.S.)
April...?

She looks around...

Frank moves through the woods, breaking twigs as he goes.

FRANK (CONT'D)
April?

He comes to a stop, within sight of April.

APRIL
Please leave me alone. I don't
want to talk right now.

FRANK
I'm sorry for what I said. I
didn't mean it.

He comes closer.

APRIL
Is there any way to stop you
talking?

FRANK
I didn't mean it. I'm sorry.
Please.

APRIL
Please don't come any closer.

FRANK

Come down.

APRIL

Do you want me to scream again...?

Frank has no choice. He reluctantly turns back the way he came.

165 INT. WHEELER KITCHEN - NIGHT.

165

Frank picks up the phone and dials.

FRANK

Milly? Frank here... Are they?
Good? Listen, would you mind
keeping them overnight? April's
not feeling well... Just flu, I
think... Thanks. Bye.

He hangs up.

166 INT. WHEELER LIVING ROOM - NIGHT.

166

Frank pours a drink and takes the bottle with him to the couch. He checks the window. In the growing darkness, he can just make out the glow of April's cigarette.

167 INT. WHEELER LIVING ROOM - NIGHT, LATER.

167

From above, we see Frank lie back on the couch, his eyes bloodshot and red. He's now very drunk.

168 INT. WHEELER LIVING ROOM - NIGHT, LATER.

168

Frank sleeps on the couch. A hand strokes his hair. He opens his bleary eyes and strains into the darkness. He can barely make out the figure seated beside him. He reaches out and touches her.

FRANK

Please don't leave...

APRIL

It's okay...

FRANK

Am I dreaming...?

APRIL

Shush. Go to sleep. Everything's going to be all right, Frank.

FADE TO:

- 169 INT. WHEELER LIVING ROOM - MORNING. 169
 Frank wakes. He sits up and rubs his painful head. He looks around the room. He's alone, but the mess from the previous evening has been tidied up.
- 170 INT. WHEELER BATHROOM - MORNING. 170
 Frank finishing shaving at the mirror. He combs his hair.
- 171 INT. WHEELER KITCHEN - MORNING. 171
 April stands at the stove. Frank sits down at the table. His place is set along with coffee and a cup of orange juice.

APRIL

Scramble okay?

FRANK

Sure. That'd be great.

He sips his orange juice. She places a plate in front of him and sits down at the other end of the table.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Thank you.

He begins to eat. He looks up at April and smiles tentatively.

FRANK

It's nice having breakfast without the kids, for a change. Don't you think?

APRIL

Yes. So, what do you have to do today?

FRANK

I have a meeting with Pollock. No big deal.

APRIL

I imagine it's a pretty big deal to them... You always say what you do isn't a big deal, but you're obviously good at it. And you're obviously valued. So you should value yourself.

FRANK

Thanks.

APRIL

You've never really told me what it is you're working on, you know?

FRANK

I haven't. Well, it's basically a really big adding machine, but instead of mechanical parts it has a lot of these vacuum tubes.

APRIL

I see. At least, I think I do. It sounds sort of interesting.

FRANK

Well, I don't really know much about it beyond the basic idea...

He looks at April and smiles bashfully.

FRANK

But, yeah. It's kind of interesting.

Frank fishes his beakfast.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I guess I better get going... You know, April, this was really nice. I think this might be the nicest breakfast I've ever had. I mean it.

APRIL

I'm glad. I enjoyed it too.

Frank folds his napkin on the table.

FRANK

Then... You don't really hate me?

APRIL

No. I don't hate you, Frank.

He stands... He comes tentatively towards her.

FRANK

Good bye.

He leans down and gently kisses the side of her face. He straightens and touches her shoulder fondly.

APRIL

Good bye, Frank.

He exits. After a beat, April stands up and goes to the phone.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Hello... Milly? It's April.
Thanks. Oh he did call? Good.
No, I'm afraid I'm not feeling much
better... If it's not an
inconvenience for you... This
evening would be great. Thanks,
Milly. Good bye.

She hangs up.

172 INT. WHEELER KITCHEN - MORNING, MOMENTS LATER.

172

April sits at the kitchen table writing a note.

APRIL (V.O.)

Dear Frank...

April places a pot of water on the stove.

APRIL (V.O. CONT'D)

When I said that I didn't love
you...

She opens the brown paper package revealing the syringe.

APRIL (V.O. CONT'D)

...what I meant to say was that I'm
not really sure who I am ...

She places the syringe in the boiling water to purify it.

173 INT. WHEELER HALLWAY - DAY. 173

April carries the pot of boiling, sudsy water down the hall.

APRIL (V.O.)

How can someone love another person
if they don't know who they are?

174 INT. WHEELER BATHROOM - DAY. 174

April lays a series of towels across the bathroom floor.

APRIL (V.O.)

For a while I thought I'd find the
sort of person I was supposed to be
in Paris.

April closes the bathroom door...

175 INT. APRIL'S AUNT'S HOUSE, HALLWAY - DAY (PAST). 175

APRIL, 9, walks along a hallway.

APRIL (V.O.)

I know you think that that's
because of the way I was brought
up.

She spots several cases. A hatbox has a sticker with a
picture of the Eiffel Tower.

AUNT CLAIRE (O.S.)

April will be pleased to see you.

April walks around the corner and looks into the living room.

176 INT. APRIL'S AUNT'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY, PAST. 176

A tall, gallant MAN and a glamorous WOMAN wearing too much
make-up sit on the couch. The woman holds a long cigarette
holder and wears a hat with a small veil.

APRIL (V.O.)

I keep thinking about the last time
I saw my parents...

April sits awkwardly on her father's knee.

APRIL
Have you brought me a present?

AUNT CLAIRE
Don't be rude, April.

APRIL'S FATHER
Did we forget... No, wait a
minute...

He reaches into his pocket and produces a small bottle of White Horse whiskey with a ribbon around its neck on which there is a small plastic white horse.

APRIL'S FATHER (CONT'D)
I've got something here for little
girls.

April's Aunt averts her eyes.

April's father snaps off the ribbon and lays the Horse in April's outstretched hand.

APRIL (V.O.)
So maybe you're right. All I know
is that I need to find out who I
am.

Little April looks up at her parents with a wide smile.

177 INT. WHEELER LIVING ROOM - DAY.

177

April sits on the couch shivering and pale.

APRIL (V.O.)
And that I cannot blame you any
more.

April looks down at her leg.

A DROPLET of blood slides down her knee.

APRIL (V.O. CONT'D)
Whatever happens... Please don't
blame yourself.

April struggles to her feet. She walks tentatively out of the room, towards the kitchen. The camera remains stationary and watches her go. As she passes, we see a bright maple leaf of blood seeping through the back of her skirt. She continues out of the room.

APRIL (O.S.)
I think I need an ambulance.

178 INT. CAMPBELL KITCHEN - DAY. 178

Milly rinses a glass in the sink. She looks up to see -
An ambulance turn into the Wheeler's Drive Way.

179 INT. KNOX 15TH FLOOR, FRANK'S CUBICLE - AFTERNOON. 179

Frank is hard at work at his desk. The phone rings.

FRANK
Frank Wheeler... Hey Shep...
What...?

He listens intently and then holds his head in his hands and
begins to shake with silent sobs.

196 FADE OUT: 196

FADE IN:

180 INT. CAMPBELL LIVING ROOM - EVENING. 180

Shep and Milly sit in their usual places in the living room.

INSERT: "ONE YEAR LATER"

Opposite them sits MR. BRACE, 31, and MRS. BRACE, 29, holding
drinks.

MILLY
It was the worst experience of my
life. Such wonderful people.
Weren't they Shep? Poor April.
They couldn't stop the bleeding. I
wouldn't have thought you could
bleed to death that fast, but
apparently...

She glances at Shep.

MILLY
Frank lives in the city now with
his kids.

MRS. BRACE
Such a shame.

MILLY

I'll never forget the look on his face the last time I saw him. Like someone who'd been really sick, for a long time. That pallor.

MRS. BRACE

Have you seen Frank since?

MILLY

No. I don't think he would want to come out here. Too many associations. Shep has. Haven't you Shep?

SHEP

I bumped into him in the city.

MILLY

And he seemed all right? Wouldn't you say? I mean, considering?

SHEP

I don't know. How does a man recover from something like that?

Shep walks out of the room.

SHEP

Excuse me.

Milly watches him go.

181 EXT. CAMPBELL HOUSE - EVENING. 181

Shep walks across the grass. He stops at the edge of his property and looks down at what was once the Wheeler house. He has tears in his eyes.

182 EXT. BETHUNE STREET - DAY (SHEP'S MEMORY). 182

Shep walks along Bethune Street. He stops in front of the apartment building April showed him. He looks up at the open window, the breeze blows a white curtain in and out.

183 EXT. VILLAGE STREET - DAY. 183

Shep stands at the corner waiting for the light. He looks across the street and sees -

Frank Wheeler walking along with Michael and Jennifer. He carries their school bags slung over his shoulder. He looks older, his hair a little thinner, a little more tentative. He dotes on his children and listens intently as they talk about their day at school.

Shep watches them go...

MILLY (O.S.)

Shep...?

184

EXT. CAMPBELL HOUSE - EVENING.

184

Shep turns to see Milly come towards him.

MILLY

You okay?

SHEP

I don't want to talk about the Wheelers any more.

He wipes at his eyes. She puts her arms around him.

MILLY

Okay... We don't have to.

SHEP

...They still here?

MILLY

Yeah.

SHEP

We better get back then.

They walk back towards the house together.

FADE TO BLACK.