

FADE IN:

EXT. DELTA COUNTY COURTHOUSE, ESCANABA, MICH., LATE
SEPTEMBER DAY, PRESENT

A big white building set on the main road. Behind it a small jailhouse connects it to the small brick building that overlooks the river, marked Delta County Sheriff's Office.

KANSAS is on the phone, a young, strikingly handsome detective, seemingly out of place in the rural office setting.

In front of him is a file marked MURDER OF HAWK RUNNING WILD - unemployed mute.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE HOLDING CELLS

ELLIE PEDERSON, is in one cell, ignoring TOM PEDERSON, who's in the cell next to her with a skinny bearded CELLMATE, who is staring from one to the other. Tom is blonde and thin, a flirtatious and charming Scandanavian type. Ellie looks more sensible than she is. She is half-Indian, but colors her hair blonde.

She leans against the bars facing the hallway.

ELLIE (V.O.)

What the hell have I done?

She turns to Tom in the other cell.

ELLIE

Tom? I'm sorry. I just didn't want you to think I was crazy.

TOM (V.O.)

Fine. Now Ellie's sorry. I suppose now I have to confess that I had to have sex with a witch to save Ellie's life. Not that she'd appreciate it.

Ellie holds a hand out to him, but he ignores her.

Cellmate shoves at Tom's shoulders, but he resists.

EXT. ESCANABA GRAVEYARD, LATE FEBRUARY, WIND AND SNOW
BLOWING, LATE DAY

The graveyard is an ordinary cemetery, gravestones in rows, older stones on one side of the car path, newer on the other, a small stone building set toward the road where wrought iron fences keep mortals out at night. The wind makes a low moaning sound. Access road is in the front through gates. Toward the back of the graveyard in a weeded over section is a large cross on a round pedestal. There are woods beyond it. This area is not fenced.

Standing at a headstone near the back of the graveyard is a tall, thinning Indian.

HAWK RUNNING WILD has his hands jammed in an old coat, his hair loose and waving about his face, his eyes on the stone, lips moving softly. Behind him an old woman, MILDRED, comes up with a large stick. She appears about to clobber him over the head, but sees his reverence and stops herself.

On the other side of the trees is a house with a for sale sign. It is a simple tri-level about 30 years old, in need of a new roof.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD, LATE AUGUST DAY

A white car is being following by a moving van, passing a sign that says 'Entering Delta County.' Tom is driving, tense, chewing gum. He spits the gum out of the window and lights a cigarette.

Ellie has a map on her lap and her head back against the window. The silence is thick - they'd just finished arguing.

There is a Catholic rosary hanging on the rearview mirror.

Passing them on the road is a big, noisy black 4x4 truck.

They pass another sign, "Welcome to Escanaba."

Behind them in the car are JODI and BILLY, both quiet, staring out their windows. Jodi is 6 and Billy, 9, both dark-haired, not resembling either parent. Neither look happy, at first giving the impression they're being kidnapped.

EXT. HOUSE FOR SALE, NEAR WOODS, ESCANABA, DAY

The white Ford is parked in the driveway behind the moving van. Tom pulls the For Sale sign out of the ground while Jodi and Billy take boxes into the house. MOVING MEN haul in the furniture.

INT. HOUSE, DAY

Ellie stands inside the front room, surrounded by boxes and a half-unwrapped couch. The walls need pain and the wood floors are scuffed and bare.

ELLIE (V.O.)

Wow, here we are. We made it. Wow.

Tom comes in with a box, followed by the kids carrying stuff. The kids continue to run in and out, not always carrying something, and sometimes in the way of the moving men, who carry in the heavy stuff.

TOM

It's no worse than what we left.

(puts box down)
Pretty nice neighborhood.

ELLIE
I saw white sheets on the line as we
drove in.

TOM
Ellie, don't look for trouble. These
are normal people in a normal city.
This is a good opportunity for both
of us. You'll adjust.

ELLIE (V.O.)
But why should I have to?

Ellie storms to the window and points out.

ELLIE
Have you seen any blacks around? Any
Indians? Japanese?

TOM
Maybe they color their hair.

She glares at him.

TOM
Come on, I'll take you out for
Chinese.

ELLIE
Doubt if they'll have it. And what's
with all the gas guzzlers?

TOM
Maybe because it snows here...

She glares, crossing arms this time.

TOM
(weakly finishing)
A lot.

Ellie peers out the window again.

ELLIE
That why the trucks are so loud?
Like a duck call, only calling for
snow.

Tom throws up his hands, grabs a box and leaves the room,
leaving Ellie at the window, looking helplessly out at her
strange new world.

EXT. HOLIDAY BOWL, NOVEMBER OF PREVIOUS YEAR, LOTS OF
SNOW ON THE GROUND, DUSK

Misty snow rolls in and around the bowling alley, crowded with mostly SUVs and pickup trucks.

HAWK, an overweight Menominee Indian & JOHN, older, slight and high strung, get out of a beat-up car. John is carrying a beat up bowling ball bag, as they walk inside.

TOM (V.O.)

We knew we were innocent of murder,
so while we lingered in lockup we
tried to figure out who the Indian
was and how he got us here.

INT. BOWLING ALLEY

Alley is noisy, smoky, in full use with people talking and pins falling.

Hawk accidentally bumps into bowler.

BOWLER

Hey, man.

HAWK

Sorry.

BOWLER

Yeah, right, sure.

Hawk is about to retort, but John grabs his arm and keeps him walking.

John and Hawk walk to the lockers.

HAWK

He coulda been polite. People like that, don't deserve apologies. Why here, John? Ain't it risky? Let's just put it in a bank and---

JOHN

Shut up already! I told you. This keeps ma from being suspicious. Couple months, that's all.

They stop at a locker and John inserts a key in the lock.

HAWK

Couple months? She'll kill ya before then. She already knows Freddie paid up.

John shushes him and puts the bag inside the locker. They keep a careful watch over their shoulders.

JOHN

She knows he says he did. Who she gonna believe - him or me? Besides, when we tell her all the case had in it was newspaper, she'll have a heart

attack. Take my word for it.

HAWK

But we could take the money and be in Canada---

John laughs outloud, then covers his mouth in alarm and pulls Hawk into a corner.

JOHN

What do you think she is, the fucking government? She's worse, she's insane. We gotta act like nothing's changed, go on with life as usual.

HAWK

I gotta see her again? I don't know, Hawk, your ma has a way of making me squeamish, I just might---

John pushes Hawk up against locker and pushes gun into his gut.

JOHN

You might what? Tell her? Is that it?

Hawk, sad, looks at the ground.

HAWK

Ain't got much of a track record for secrets.

JOHN

Yeah, you do have a big mouth, don't you. Shit. I remember the last time you opened your mouth. I ended up in jail! This time could kill us both.

He purses lips, thinking, pockets the gun.

JOHN

Come on, I got an idea.

HAWK

You gotta kill me?

JOHN

Hope not. We'll try something else first.

They walk out of bowling alley.

TOM (V.O.)
Well, must've gone something like
that, anyway.

EXT. HOUSE, LATE AUGUST, NIGHT

Ellie tucks Billy and Jodi into the same bed in a small
bedroom.

ELLIE
I'm sorry we had to move.

JODI
I'm not!

BILLY
Will you do my room tomorrow?

ELLIE
First thing. You think you're going
to like it here?

JODI
Sure!

BILLY
Dunno. Maybe if we make some
friends. New schools make me nervous.

ELLIE
You sound like your father. But he
could have turned the job down.

BILLY
(scolding)
Mom...

JODI
Can we get a dog?

ELLIE
(mock groan)
A dog? Dogs are mean and ugly and
small.

BILLY
Dad says everybody up here has dogs.

ELLIE
Well, we can be different, right?

BILLY
I'd like a dog.

ELLIE
Next thing you know you'll be wanting

a gas guzzler. My son, the redneck.

JODI

Mama, what's a redneck? Is that another name for an Indian?

ELLIE

Jodi, there is not such thing as a redneck, I was just teasing. The word is just...a mythology...to explain their source of creation.

They seem happy with this. She kisses them goodnight and leaves the room, turning off the light.

ELLIE (V.O.)

Are rednecks Indians. Whew. What a thought. Evolution in reverse.

(aloud, over her shoulder)

People are just people here, you'll see.

(V.O.)

I hope.

INT. LIVING ROOM, NIGHT

Ellie stands behind Tom who is unpacking books for the bookcase. She shivers, wrapping her arms around herself.

ELLIE

Now what do I do?

TOM

How about giving me a hand?

(V.O.)

Oh-boy, now you're asking for it.

Ellie surprised him by sitting down next to him and opening another box of books.

ELLIE

Why are they called rednecks, Tom?

TOM

I think it's sociological, descriptive of old lumbering days, flannel shirts and big muscles, of collapsing on the home hearth at night and getting up for more heavy work at dawn, cooler weather keeping them in long sleeve shirts all year so that only the neck gets sunburned...

Ellie is surprised, she thinks he's kidding.

TOM

I think so, anyway. And I'm not going to ask.

ELLIE

Then white sheets are really for bed?

TOM

A+, Mrs. Domingo, A+.

Ellie eyes him and leaps to her feet, headed for the door.

TOM

Where you going?

ELLIE

I'm going to try to find some place where I can be appreciated. Don't wait up, it could take awhile.

TOM

Ellie...

But the door slams, she is gone.

TOM

Stubborn squaw.

Tom looks up guilty as though she might have heard him. Takes out a cigarette, lights up, stares at the door thoughtfully.

EXT. HOUSE, NIGHT

Ellie sits beneath an old tree in her backyard.

ELLIE

I thought I married a man who knew me. I don't color my hair to avoid being Indian. Physical appearances just aren't important. Attitude is. I just don't like what I've heard about rednecks.

She hears a noise in the woods behind her and turns.

A deer stares at her.

ELLIE

Oh my...hello.
(slowly stands, V.O.)
This is a good sign. I think.

The deer bounds off through the woods behind the house.

ELLIE (V.O.)

Wait! What are you trying to tell me?

Ellie sprints after the deer through the unfamiliar woods, getting slapped and scratched by branches but keeps going.

She comes to a sudden clearing and freezes.

It is a graveyard. The deer looks back at her and disappears.

Ellie looks around and suddenly shivers.

ELLIE

Gets cold here awful fast. Could have been a wandering human spirit in the deer. But why bring me here?

She starts wandering up the graveyard gravel road.

HAWK stands up from behind the headstone where he was squatting.

She sees him and stops walking.

Hawk runs off into the woods in the same direction as the deer.

Ellie runs toward him but stops.

ELLIE

A ghost? Nah.

She waits a moment, finally shrugs and turns.

Coming face to face with an old woman, looks like Mildred, but her face is softer, sadder.

ELLIE

AHH!

The old lady shushes her and pulls her aside.

OLD LADY

You mustn't come here alone at night.

ELLIE

Why not?

OLD LADY

Too many old stories, too many old griefs. They possess you, make you do strange things.

ELLIE

Why are you here?

OLD LADY

You got a loved one buried here?

ELLIE

No, actually, I followed a deer---

OLD LADY

It's bad luck to visit where the soul
of a departed cannot protect you.
Bad!

ELLIE

Really? I'm sorry, I mean...most
everyone here has gone on to their
next life. Right?

OLD LADY

Do you think everybody who died was
ready for death?

The old lady walks to a headstone, squats down and disappears
into the ground.

ELLIE

People sure like visiting headstones
at night around here. First that big
fellow and now...wait a minute.
She's gone...and he's gone...and...
so am I.

She shivers and hurries out to the road, over the chain that
blocks the road, turns right, then left, then right again and
runs.

INT. LIVING ROOM, NIGHT

Tom is drinking beer and watching t.v. when Ellie bursts in,
breathless.

ELLIE

Tom! Ah.
(V.O.)
He'll think I'm crazy.
(aloud)
Refreshing air...

Tom puts the gum from his mouth in an ashtray and lights a
cigarette. He is fastidious in these movements, using gum to
cut back on smoking.

TOM

Yup, that's what they say about
rednecks, they're a healthy bunch.
They breathe a lot of air.

ELLIE

I'm going to look for a job tomorrow.

TOM

Not a bad idea. Want to come here
and join me?

(pats the sofa, tipsy)
Almost time for...weather.

She doesn't like the tone in his voice.

ELLIE
No, too much to do tomorrow.

As she undresses for bed, the night sky in the window turns orange...

INT. BEDROOM, EARLY NEXT MORNING

Sound of giggling kids awakens Tom. He looks at the time, 6 a.m., and groans.

INT. DINING ROOM, EARLY MORNING

Ellie and the kids make a mess with cereal and juice. Ellie lets the kids get their own food whenever possible.

Ellie sees Tom in the doorway.

ELLIE
Oh, did we wake you? We didn't sleep good.

TOM
Me neither.

He finds his cigarettes on the counter and lights up.

TOM
No coffee?

ELLIE
Forgot which box the pot's in. Have some juice.

Tom picks up her notebook, half covered in juice.

TOM (V.O.)
(sarcasm)
And it was written, the wife shall take a wife...

ELLIE
I was writing my resume. And my...thoughts from last night.

TOM
Let me guess. You don't know where the laptop is, either.

ELLIE
No. Good thing, too.

Tom throws the notebook back on the table and sprinkles Billy with some of the spilled juice.

BILLY

Hey!

TOM

Watch where you're pouring next time.

ELLIE

Tom!

TOM

(cig in mouth)

I'm going back to bed.

ELLIE

Good.

JODI

Doesn't daddy like it here.

ELLIE

He loves it here.

(V.O.)

He has to.

INT. HOUSE, WEEK PASSES

They unpack and decorate, and the house slowly looks like home.

INT. BEDROOM, EARLY SEPTEMBER, EARLY A.M.

Tom struggles out of bed and gets dressed for work with clothes that were laid out. The time is 8:15. He goes out to the kitchen and sees a similar mess on the table.

TOM

Ellie!

ELLIE (O.S.)

I'm busy! Stop at McDonald's, this time is full of 'em.

Tom grimaces but grabs a shoulder bag of binders and papers and checks it for supplies.

TOM

I'm leaving! And for supper I want coffee!

He leaves and slams the door, hard.

INT. CAR, MORNING

Tom gets in and starts the car. He looks at the rearview

mirror and doesn't see the rosary cross hanging there. Swearing, he gets it out of the glove compartment and hangs it back up before pulling out of the driveway.

TOM

Maybe I never really knew her. Or maybe I'm getting tired of arguing.

INT. BILLY'S ROOM, MORNING

Ellie and the kids finish unpacking Billy's room.

ELLIE (V.O.)

By the time we were in jail awaiting arraignment, we were so curious about the dead Indian and the name on the headstone that we tried to put together what had happened...

EXT. MIDDLE OF TOWN, A DINER, THE PREVIOUS FEBRUARY

Snow is piled up around a small diner. In the window sits Hawk and John. Hawk appears thinner now, his face almost ghostly.

INT. DINER

John, chewing, looks intently at Hawk. Hawk's mouth is working very carefully as he tries to eat. John looks down at Hawk's plate. He smacks a few times, then grabs Hawk's pickle.

JOHN

Didn't I tell them not to give you a pickle? You don't want a pickle.

Hawk doesn't look up.

JOHN

Ah hell, maybe I didn't. They'd make you pay for it anyway, right?

Hawk grunts.

JOHN

Man, I'm hyped. Another week and we're outta here. Bet you're looking forward to talking again, eh?

(rubs chest)

Oooh, shouldn't eat while I talk, or vice versa, huh?

John waits, but Hawk sighs and puts fork down.

JOHN

Try your shortcake. That'll cheer you up.

Hawk looks up, about to say something, but nods and picks up his fork. He takes a small mouthful and shoves the fork deep into his mouth.

John stops munching on pickle as his hand presses against chest, drops pickle, eyes glaze over.

Hawk looks up, pushes John's arm. John falls over. He is dead.

ELLIE (V.O.)

Everyone who could tell us anything is dead now, so all we can do is guess. The relationship between Hawk and the old lady, though, became quite clear.

EXT. CEMETARY, SOMETIME AFTER JOHN'S DEATH, NIGHT

A light drizzle falls but the fog begins to clear. Hawk, now thinner, walks with hands tucked in pockets, into the cemetery.

MILDRED, an old lady dressed poorly, follows behind him. She is short and walks with a slight limp, an odd grin always on her face.

Hawk kneels in front of John's headstone and puts his head down. He grunts softly a song without words.

Mildred frowns, marches up to Hawk and grabs his arm.

MILDRED

You lied to me, Injun! Admit it!
All this time making me think he
lied, but you did! It's my money!

Hawk grunts, pointing down.

MILDRED

He's not here to tell you what to do
anymore. If you ain't gonna use the
money, what you hiding it for?

Hawk grunts, terrified, looking between her and the headstone.

MILDRED

He ain't here to hurt you no more.
But I am. And I will if you don't
give me that money!

Hawk runs out of the graveyard.

Mildred chases him as fast as her legs would run.

EXT. MAIN STREET ESCANABA, EARLY SEPTEMBER, EARLY EVENING

Tom drives, chewing gum, as Ellie watches out the window. The kids are in the back seat, sharing comic books.

ELLIE

So what's it look like?

Tom spits out the gum and lights up a cigarette.

TOM

You'll like it.

He turns off the main street.

ELLIE

How's the job going?

TOM

(shrugs)

It was only the first day. Too early to tell.

ELLIE

Tell, tell! You're ready to move back home, aren't you?

(V.O.)

From grade school on the res to tech school professor, you're out of your league, honey.

TOM

(sighs)

I just taught a few minutes in the wrong room, that's all. No big deal.

Ellie laughs madly.

TOM

Not that funny.

ELLIE

So who finally noticed? The janitor?

TOM

I did, and after that, no problems...

INT. CLASSROOM, THAT MORNING

Tom's in front of the blackboard, demonstrating some difficult math.

He sees the legs of a student in the first row.

ANGEL is wearing shorts, her bare legs are long and shapely. She is studious looking, with glasses and long hair pulled back, but with a pouty mouth and flirty eyes.

Tom turns back to the board and catches himself making a very shapely line. Quickly he erases the board, laughing.

Behind him Angel perks up, grinning, her smile wide and almost sinister. She is wearing a pentagram.

INT. CAR, DUSK

Tom pops a piece of gum in his mouth, not noticing Ellie's puzzled look.

She picks up the cigarette burning in the ashtray and hands it to him.

He blows out the smoke, chews for a split second, grimaces and spits the gum out the window. With a sour look at Ellie, he tosses the cigarette out, too.

TOM

Will you cut that out? You're supposed to help me quit.

ELLIE

I am. Wanna talk?

TOM (V.O.)

No.

(aloud)

Sure.

Ellie looks out the window, at first not sure how to start.

ELLIE

I always thought I could live anywhere. Now I wonder. Maybe everyone has a limit to their tolerability.

TOM

Tolerability?

(V.O.)

Admit it! You're a racist!

(aloud)

I guess this is kinda like getting used to a whole different culture.

ELLIE

Kinda? I applied at a couple places today. Escanaba must have more people than they need. Why do they stick around? Ambiance? Weather? Sure isn't the price of fruit.

(beat)

Did you know they hate gays here?

TOM

You're kidding.

(V.O.)

Everyone or just those you were dumb
enough to ask?

Cars for sale on both sides of the road, one newer - one not.

ELLIE

(noticing both)

Are you sure you know where you're
gonig? Oooh, did you see that car?
Not it, huh. Oh man, look at that
hunk of junk, I hope it's not---

She frowns as Tom pulls up alongside the hunk of junk.

ELLIE

No, Tom, not that. Can't I get a bug?

TOM

Don't be crazy, no one drives bugs
this far north.

He starts to get out but Ellis sits angry, arms crossed.

TOM

Come on, this is in our price range.
This or the city bus.

THE OWNER

of the car comes out and the three discuss the car's 'finer'
points to the tun of "Leaving on a Jet Plane," with Tom
talking sensibly to the owner and Ellie pointing at different
things and shaking her head. Tom starts the car, and though
it shimmies, it starts right up - with a roar.

The kids chase each other around the car until the owner's
WIFE brings out a puppy, distracting them.

DRIVING BACK HOME

ELLIE

There've got to be other ones in our
price range.

BILLY

Can we have the puppy, mom?

TOM

After you finished pointing out its
attributes I couldn't offer him
enough. You don't insult a man's car
up here, Ellie.

ELLIE

Ooops.

BILLY

They were just giving it away.

ELLIE

Did you hear what he said about those tires?

(mimics)

"They's a little flat but the car's been sitting in the sun awhile, heat sucks the air outta 'em." Why didn't he just say, duh, yeah, but only flat on one side?

TOM (V.O.)

How much torment, God? Is this a test?

(aloud)

We'll talk about the puppy later, Billy.

ELLIE

No puppy, Billy, we'll get you a cat. They're just as good.

TOM

Where'd you go that first night, Ell? You came home all breathless.

ELLIE

Oh, nowhere special. What made you think of that now?

TOM

You were outside awhile.

ELLIE

I was just...thinking...

EXT. HILLS OF SHENANDOAH VALLEY, 11 YEARS AGO

Tom is sitting at a picnic table on the hillside, smoking. His hair is longer. He checks his watch.

He is sitting at a different part of the table, this time holding a thermos of water. He checks his watch. He stands and peers up the hillside.

Ellie, hair loose and free and black, walks slowly down the hill.

Tom waits for her at the table, leg up on the bench, expectant.

Ellie stops next to him, quiet.

TOM

Well?

She shakes her head.

TOM

Nothing?

ELLIE

Well, not what I expected. I mean, I had a lot of thoughts, but nothing I'd call a vision.

TOM

Well, look, you just found out about your biological mother. Maybe this Indian thing just needs to sink in.

ELLIE

Maybe it's all a lie. Do I look Indian to you?

TOM

Yes, my little princess.

He laughs. Ellis is about to respond in anger, but shrugs and gets into the car. Tom gets in next to her, still laughing.

ELLIE

What's funny?

TOM

You told me that when you were a kid you thought you were Indian in a past life. Now you find out you have Indian blood and you're upset.

He wraps an arm around her and brushes her hair back. He leans over to kiss her but she shrugs him off and points at the road.

Grinning, he starts up the car.

END FLASHBACK

INT. CAR, EARLY EVENING

Ellie sees Tom staring at her. She brushes the hair off her face.

ELLIE

You're asking a lot, Tom. Back off...
(softens, V.O.)
a little.

The car pulls into the driveway, a chill settling between them and upsetting the kids.

INT. HOUSE, A FEW MINUTES LATER

Tom and Ellie follow the kids in. Ellie plops down on the couch, distracted.

TOM

Look, you don't have to talk if you don't want to.

(V.O.)

I thought I knew you. Once.

ELLIE

Just once I'd like the chance to settle down somewhere, and I really liked South Dakota.

(V.O.)

Did you ever know who I was?

TOM (V.O.)

I want to settle down too! But I feel like I'm still trying to prove myself to you.

(aloud)

I know. But it just didn't work out.

ELLIE

You can't keep running from failure.

He looks at her like she just slapped him. She stands suddenly and walks into the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN, NIGHT

Tom wraps his arms around her.

TOM

Let's go to bed early. The door has a lock, I checked.

Ellie whacks him playfully.

ELLIE (V.O.)

You're the only man I know who finds insults sexy.

(aloud)

If you leave me alone a little longer, I'll find the coffee pot.

She struggles but not hard enough to get away.

TOM

We'll get a new one. Truce? For the sake of some hunking love?

ELLIE

I have to say what's on my mind. I

don't like to hold my---

Tom leans over her.

TOM

Breath...

He kisses her, forcing her down on the table.

After meager protests, she responds, kissing back.

TOM

Nothing on your mind now...

They start getting passionate. He picks her up to carry her to the bedroom. She glances out the window and gasps.

Ellie leaps out of his arms and runs to the door, looks outside. Tom follows.

TOM

We haven't done it outside in awhile.

Before he can step out, she comes back inside.

ELLIE

I've got to look at this thing from a whole new angle.

Tom shuts the door, looking frustrated.

TOM

What thing?

Ellie grabs her notebook off the couch, sits and starts writing.

ELLIE

A deer, a graveyard, and ghosts. A warning. And silence. How does it all add up?

TOM

(meager threat)

To divorce. It adds up to divorce.

ELLIE

I'll be there in a minute. Put the kids to bed, wouldja?

Tom turns off the light in the kitchen on his way to the kids' rooms, his face shaded with disappointment.

Ellie is writing furiously.

Tom tucks the kids in bed, and Ellie is still writing.

Tom brushes his teeth, and he can see her sitting on the couch.

Tom lays in bed in the darkened bedroom, listening to the pen scratching, twiddling his thumbs.

TOM

Damn.

He turns on his side and forces his eyes shut.

INT. TECH SCHOOL HALLWAY, NEXT MORNING

Tom walks down the hall, stiffling a yawn, trying to juggle his hot cup of coffee without spilling, briefcase under arm. He watches the cup, not where he is going.

Angel steps out of ladies room and bumps into him deliberately, although Tom doesn't suspect this.

He spills hot coffee on himself and her, and drops his briefcase on his foot.

TOM

Oh!

ANGEL

Oh, I'm so...sorry...

TOM

Oh, no, it's my fault.

ANGEL

It's all my fault.

TOM

I should have been watching.

ANGEL

Let me wipe you...

As she wipes his coat with her scarf they gaze at each other, entranced.

Suddenly embarrassed, he backs away, throws his coffee in a nearby wastecan and picks up his briefcase.

TOM

Ah, you're a student of mine, right?
The next...first class.

ANGEL

Shoot, I won't get a good grade now.
Might as well quit school.

TOM

No, this has no bearing.

ANGEL

It's my gypsy blood, I swear,
prevents me from settling down and
makes me curse my own success.

TOM

No, my fault, I didn't sleep much
last night.

(V.O.)

You're a gypsy?

ANGEL

You sleep alone?

They walk to the classroom. Tom is trying to keep his decorum while Angel is totally cool. The contrast is obvious.

TOM

No, I'm married, but yes, sometimes.
Last night she...watched a movie that
I saw already.

Outside the classroom they stare intently at each other.

ANGEL

I'm thinking we better get in.

Tom adjusts his jacket as Angel walks in the classroom.

TOM (V.O.)

Never met a gypsy before. Funny, I
had a different impression about
them. Like that there aren't any
around here.

He follows her inside, grinning.

EXT. HOUSE, MORNING

Ellie, dressed in a business suit, watches and waves as the kids get on the school bus.

EXT. HOLY CROSS CEMETERY, DAY

Ellie's new/old dark blue Chevy sedan rumbles through the graveyard, heading for the privacy of the back plots. She is still dressed in suit, nylons and heels.

She parks the car, and changes shoes from dress to tennis, as she looks at scenery through the car window.

She grabs a bag lunch and a blanket off the seat and gets out.

A big loping dog walks out of the brush toward her, then shies away and disappears again.

ELLIE

A coyote! Wait, aren't they night animals?

She sees a large cross with Christ on a round cement platform back in the overgrowth.

ELLIE

Wow, who'd they bury there?

She walks toward the cross. She hesitates at the overgrowth, and then steps in.

A swarm of bees rises up, and she backs away. One lands on her wrist.

ELLIE

Ouch! Hey, what the---

She runs back to her car as the small stinging bodies swamr her. She cries out as she's stung several times.

She struggles to get the door open and flings herself inside the car, gasping. She stares out the window watching them as they gradually disappear.

ELLIE

Whaa! The old lady was right, I have no protection here.

She rubs gently at her wrist and arm, at the cross, and frowns.

ELLIE

I'll just stay in the groomed area.

Cautiously she opens the door, and sees no sign of the bees. She gets out with the blanket and bag lunch and moves quickly toward the front of the graveyard.

Hawk stares at her from John McDonald's headstone, until she sees him.

ELLIE

Oh! Hello! Are you...ah...

Ellie walks toward him, and he backs up a little.

ELLIE

No, don't go. Can we talk?

Hawk shakes his head, and points to John's grave.

ELLIE

No, I suppose ghosts can't use voice to communicate with the real world.

Hawk shakes his head and grunts firmly, pointing at John's grave.

ELLIE

You are buried here. You're a ghost...and you followed me to my house the other night. You need me

to help you, right?

Hawk is frustrated, motions unlocking a locker and pulling out a case. Not understanding, Ellie looks at the name on the headstone.

ELLIE

John McDonald. Hmmm. You don't look like a John. But appearances aren't important, especially in the afterlife realm. This is you, right? And you don't realize you're dead?

You have

(watching his
pantomime)

unfinished business!

Hawk nods, grunts, but leans on headstone shaking his head in frustration.

Ellie looks around and backs away.

ELLIE

I'll just sit over here, and somehow, we'll figure out how to communicate. We need to spend a little time---

She throws out her blanket and sits, which Hawk finds puzzling. She offers him half of her sandwich. He shakes head and points to her banana. She hands it to him, and watches as he slowly unpeels.

ELLIE (V.O.)

He'll figure out he can't eat it, and that might be enough to...

She watches him closely, with interest.

As he is about to take a bite ---

MILDRED (O.S.)

You big oaf! Who are you talking to?

Hawk looks over his shoulder in fear, dropping the banana.

Mildred shuffles through the grass toward them, one fist in the air.

Ellie sees Hawk is afraid of the old lady and stands.

ELLIE

Don't worry about her. She's only
worried about me not having---

Hawk runs off, disappearing into the brush.

ELLIE

Don't go yet!

Mildred stands on MacDonald's grave, looking down.

Ellie, disappointed, turns to Mildred.

ELLIE

Hi, remember me? Why is John afraid
of you?

MILDRED

John? John's my son and he's dead!
Who the hell are you?

ELLIE

You're related? He looks like a
pureblood. Did you adopt him?

MILDRED

What are you, some kind of freak?
(looks into the brush)
Where'd that damn mute go?

Mildred runs off in the direction Hawk ran.

ELLIE

Wow. I need a real job.

She looks down to see her pantyhose are torn.

EXT. HOUSE, AFTERNOON

Ellie gets out of the car and unlocks the front door. She
turns, startled, and stares at the ditch across the street.

ELLIE (V.O.)

I began to feel him follow me
wherever I went. And that old lady
ghost haunted him. He needed my
help, that much I was right about.

As she turns to go into the house, a figure moves through the
underbrush.

ELLIE (V.O.)

What he did in the days leading up to
his death we can only imagine.

EXT. METAL TRAVEL TRAILER, DAY

Hawk looks over his shoulder, unlocks his door and sneaks inside, his furtiveness showing he doesn't want anyone to know where he lives.

IN THE BRUSH

Mildred peeks out. When Hawk disappears inside, she creeps up and peers in.

She backs away and runs as quickly as her little legs allow down the sidewalk.

Hawk comes out and sees her running off. He grunts, wide-eyed and fearful, and goes quickly back inside.

INT. METAL TRAVEL TRAILER, LOW LIGHT

He goes to a small metal chest and pulls out an envelope, checking the contents.

EXT. TRAILER

He goes to the window and looks out, his eyes haunted.

EXT. SMALL HOUSE DOWN THE STREET, DAY

Mildred drags herself to her front door, muttering.

MILDRED

Finally find him. Fucking savage.
Hammer, saw, small explosives, I'll
get in. That's where the money is.

She stomps into her house and flops into a beatup old chair.

She grabs a picture next to the chair of a well dressed man.

MILDRED

Freddy, you bastard. You're in on
this, aren't you. That's my money,
I earned it!

She drops the picture on the floor face down, and stomps on it. She starts to get up, but falls back and passes out.

INT HOUSE, KITCHEN, EARLY EVENING.

Ellie is making a turkey breast dinner with STOVETOP and MINUTE RICE. She has dabs of calamine lotion on her neck, hands and legs, still wearing wrecked clothes. SOUND OF T.V. in background.

FRONT DOOR OPENS AND SHUTS. Kids say hi to Dad.

ELLIE

Hi Tom!

TOM (O.S.)

In a minute.

ELLIE

I found the kids a daycare today, one that can take them before and after

school. Still no luck with a job but wait til I tell you about the bees.

(V.O.)

That is, if you're sure you want to know where I was the other night.

TOM

After the news.

SOUND OF CHANNEL TURNING, KIDS WHINING.

Ellie sighs.

KIDS SHOW COMES BACK ON.

Tom comes into kitchen.

TOM

Bees around here?

ELLIE

Nope, the graveyard.

He notices her dabs of Calamine Lotion as he turns on the small t.v. set.

TOM

Graveyard? Dead bees don't sting.

ELLIE

Very funny. Get the kids in here.

They all sit down at the table. She puts food on everyone's plate. Three of them dig in.

Billy looks at his plate, not digging in.

ELLIE

What's wrong, Billy?

BILLY

Luke's family says grace before every meal.

ELLIE

Oh. That's nice.

BILLY

Aren't we Catholic too?

ELLIE

Well, not exactly, see, Catholics don't have souls, they have fears, that's what gives them morals...

TOM

(scolding)

Ellie. We'll say grace, Billy.

BILLY

Luke says if they don't, their food will poison them.

ELLIE

Oh, now, wait a minute.

TOM

He was probably joking, Billy.

BILLY

How come we don't say grace, mom?

ELLIE

I find that being a part of nature is much more optimistic than---

TOM

Save it, Ellie. Your mom and I both believe in God, Billy. Sometimes he wears different faces, that's all.

JODI

Like masks! At Halloween!

TOM

(sighs)

Yeah. Just say grace, Ellie.

ELLIE

Fine. Um. Bless our food so that when we eat it we don't die. Amen.

Tom clears his throat, Jodi giggles, Billy frowns.

ELLIE

Anyway, Tom, first the coyote disappeared and then the bees attacked.

JODI

Here?

ELLIE

Oh, no, sweetie, this was at the graveyard, that's where I went today after my interview. Which sucked, Tom, thanks for asking.

JODI
(giggling)
Sucked!

TOM
Ellie...

ELLIE
Only mamas can say that word, Jodi.

JODI
Okay. Do bees hurt?

Ellie watches as Billy says a silent prayer and crosses himself before digging in.

ELLIE
Wonderful. Yes, they do, Jodi. But we don't have any around here. Just don't ever go into a graveyard.

BILLY
Then why did you?

ELLIE
I didn't know they were there. And by the time I did, I was all stung up, so I figured I may as well stay.

BILLY
(with mouth full)
How come a graveyard? I thought you liked nature that's just living---

ELLIE
Food can choke you if air gets at it while in your mouth.

Billy closes his lips tight and finishes chewing.

ELLIE
It all started with a deer the first night we were here.

TOM
It started before that.

ELLIE
All right, it all started when we moved here against my will.
(Tom rolls his eyes)
I thought the deer was sent with a message to help me learn---

BILLY
Were they all rednecks?

ELLIE

What?

BILLY

The ghosts.

TOM

Billy, don't use that word. Ellie, where is this graveyard? Is it close to the house?

ELLIE

Right in back, but you have to go to the next street over to access it. Anyway, the deer led me to the ghost, who seems to be waiting for---

Tom gets up to make coffee. He has to figure out how to use the new pot.

BILLY

Cool, you really met one!? Mom, can I see them, too, even if I'm Catholic like dad?

JODI

Mama...

Jodi drops her roll on the floor.

Tom watches Jodi pick it up, too distracted to stop her from taking a bite. A cat comes out from inside the cupboard and licks at the butter on the floor.

Tom sees the cat and jumps, startled.

TOM

Ellie, you didn't see a ghost. And when did we get a cat?

ELLIE

Actually I saw, too, there was an old lady who warned me first. And this morning. About the cat.

BILLY

Can you ask it to come to my school for show and tell? The ghost, I mean.

JODI

Mama, stop Billy from talking.

ELLIE

(ignores kids)

How do you know, were you there? And I think sometimes he follows me. The

one who needs my help.

TOM

Ellie, get a job.

ELLIE

His name is - was - John McDonald and I almost got him to eat something. Then he would have known he was dead and would have moved on. Now I have to figure something else out.

BILLY

You sound like a spy.

TOM

Ellie, did you stop to think this could be dangerous?

Jodi pushes her plate away and holds her tummy.

ELLIE

I was chosen by the ghost for a reason, Tom. I can't just turn my back on him.

TOM

(mutters)

Oh, I suspect any snoop would do...

BILLY

If you don't help, he'll haunt you forever!

TOM

Who told you that?

BILLY

Tommy McGee - he says if you pry into ghost's life - he'll pry into yours. Mom, what's pry mean?

ELLIE

It's what spies do.

JODI

Mama, I'm not hungry....

Tom gets up again to pour a cup of coffee. He sees it's not ready and waits impatiently, drumming his fingers on his chest and staring at the pot.

ELLIE

But I'm not prying, Billy. Just trying to help him find resolution.

TOM

We could all use some of that.

BILLY

Hey mom, can I come? Maybe I can find a ghost with guts hanging out.

ELLIE

Sure - we could make it a family outing.

Jodi shrieks and runs from the table.

ELLIE

What's the matter with her?

TOM

You scared her.

ELLIE

Oh, no, I didn't mean to---

She throws down her napkin and runs after her.

BILLY

Mom sure has fun when she doesn't have a job.

TOM

Oh, shut up.

He pours his coffee glumly.

INT. BEDROOM, THAT NIGHT

Tom gets in bed next to Ellie, who doesn't turn to him. He sits, staring at her back.

TOM (V.O.)

Playing in a graveyard. The mother of two children yet!

(aloud)

Ellie, does it make sense to try and solve dead people's problems when you can't get a handle on your own?

He sits, staring at her back.

ELLIE (V.O.)

Shut the hell up, Tom.

(aloud)

This might help me adjust to these new surroundings you forced on me.

TOM (V.O.)

Sure, throw that at me like it's my fault.

(aloud)

Fair enough. I just don't want any
dead people showing up for dinner.

Grinning, he lays back down, on his side away from her.

Ellie sits up, staring at his back.

ELLIE (V.O.)
I couldn't even begin to tell you
what I'm thinking right now.

She lays back down, eyes wide open.

INT. TECH SCHOOL HALLWAY, A WEEK LATER

Tom carries briefcase and cup of coffee with ease. He goes
into his classroom where most students look up at him and
quiet down.

He sees Angel's head is down, hair loose and he frowns.

TOM (V.O.)
Cool it, Tom, don't get involved.

He opens his briefcase and pulls out papers.

TOM
A couple comments on yesterday's
notes---

AN HOUR LATER

Everyone talking, shuffling papers, walking out, but Angel
doesn't move.

Tom erases the board, grinning.

TOM (V.O.)
I don't know what I was so worried
about. This is no harder than
teaching 10-year-olds...

He sees Angel still sitting there.

TOM (V.O.)
Uh-oh.

He shuffles papers around in his briefcase.

TOM
Angel? Class is over.

She doesn't answer. He pulls a chair close to her and sits.

TOM
Want to talk?

She looks up with red swollen eyes.

ANGEL

Oh, professor, I'm being prejudiced against.

TOM

(clears throat)

You? I mean, why you? I mean...

ANGEL

I'm from the wrong part of town.

TOM (V.O.)

Escanaba has a wrong part of town?

(aloud)

I've got another class in a few minutes---

Angel grabs his arm.

ANGEL

I never worried about what people thought of me. I figured just do my best and let fate take care of the rest. Sometimes I'd light a match to help fate along, but I prefer to win by talent alone.

TOM (V.O.)

Match? Fate?

(aloud)

Could you get to the point? I have---

He starts to rise but she pulls him back.

ANGEL

I wrote a paper for Comp. I was very proud of it. Came back with an F.

TOM (V.O.)

I realized at that moment the enormous power we teachers hold over our students, and how vulnerable they are, even at this age.

(aloud)

Did you talk to her?

ANGEL

How? I'm afraid of her now, and class is at 1:00 today.

TOM

Do you have the piece with you?

(she nods)

Meet me in the cafeteria at noon and I'll read it. You can go to your

class armed with a second opinion.

She sits upright in her chair, eyes bright.

ANGEL

Wow, hey, you'd do that, really? Oh,

Mr. Pederson, you're neat!

She throws her arms around him and hugs him. He hugs her back willingly.

TOM

Doesn't mean I'll like it, of course...

Angel pulls away and stands.

ANGEL

Of course! Professor, I own you big.

She leaves. He stares thoughtfully after her.

TOM (V.O.)

Did she saw owe? Or own?

He gets another set of papers out as other students stream into the room.

He looks out the window and sees her outside, waving at him.

TOM (V.O.)

Gypsy blood, huh. Next thing you know she'll be putting love potion in my coffee.

He waves back.

EXT. HOUSE, DAY

Ellie juggles the cat and her purse, struggling to get the front door of the house locked. She scurries with the squirming cat to the car on the side of the one stall garage.

ELLIE

Hang on, nice kitty, kitty.

She jerks at the door, but it's locked.

ELLIE

Tom! Nobody would steal this thing!

She digs her keys out and awkwardly unlocks the door. She throws the cat in the car and shuts the door quickly. The cat looks out the window, givng a plaintive meow.

DEBBER (O.S.)

Hello, neighbor!

ELLIE (V.O.)

Not now.

(turns, big grin)

Hello, Deb.

DEBBER is a pleasant looking woman, jeans and t-shirt, reddish hair as though home-dyed.

DEBBER

Remember, not so formal - call me Debber! Hey, Tom got you a car! A Chevy - very reliable. You betcha.

ELLIE

Yes, he almost let me pick it out.

DEBBER

Yeah? Say, do you watch Tomorrow is Another Day?

ELLIE

What?

DEBBER

It's on at 1:00 every day - oh, I suppose you don't, hey. Well, start watching, you'll love it. See, there's this Indian on there - my daughter told me your kids said you were half Indian - eh?

ELLIE

Yeah - I mean, yes.

(brushes at blonde hair guiltily)

But I don't see birth skin as---.

Ellie backs toward the car where the cat meows from the dash.

DEBBER

Did you know we have the oldest casino in the nation here? We're proud of our Indian heritage, brings in the tourists. Anyway, there's this Indian on this soap and I've been trying to figure her character out---.

ELLIE

Why don't you ask one of your friends at the casino?

DEBBER

One of my...

(laughs heartily)

Oh, that is a funny one. So why don't you come over today at 1:00?

ELLIE

Well, I've got some errands---

DEBBER

Okay, I'll tape it. Hey, come on over for supper tonight. I'll have brats on the grill. See you at 6:00 - bye!

Debber waves and runs back to her house.

ELLIE

She means well. I'll betcha. What's a brat?

She gets in her car after checking for the cat, quickly shutting the door.

EXT. RURAL ROAD, DAY

Ellie drives down the road, playing with the radio. She finds an NPR station for classical music, and after a moment of soothing music the announcer comes on louder than she expected, startling her. The car weaves on the road.

The cat prowls around under the gas pedal. Ellie leans down, trying to get the cat out.

A coyote runs across the street.

Ellie tries to slam on the brake but the cat SCREAMS, so she swerves, the car spins in the gravel on the side of the road, she loses control and hits the ditch.

Her head hits the steering wheel, and she sits back, momentarily dizzy. She opens her eyes and blinks, looking around.

ELLIE

Hell. Why do coyotes run around here in the daytime?

She gets out of the car GROANING, carefully testing her back, her neck. She examines the car. The right fender has a slight dent, and the ditch is half full of water.

In anger she kicks a tire and stomps in the water a few times. She pulls her cellphone out of her bag, quickly, so the cat doesn't get out, and tries dialing. Bangs on the phone in frustration.

A POLICE CAR

turns off the highway and pulls to a stop near her. A burly looking COP gets out.

Ellie sees him and leans on car in dismay.

ELLIE (V.O.)

Now I know why they drive 4x4s. To
get out of ditches before the cops

show up. Yeah, hey.

(outloud)

Morning, officer.

COP

You in a bind?

ELLIE

I guess, maybe.

COP

Let's see 'em.

ELLIE

'Em?

COP

Your license. You got one?

ELLIE

I was sideswiped by a coyote.

COP

This time a day? Probably a dog.

Ellie gets her purse from the car, careful to keep the cat in.

COP

It shouldn't make yas hit the ditch,
though, I'm thinking.

He takes her license and studies it, eyes squinting.

COP

Not been here long, then?

ELLIE

You can tell?

He walks to the back of her car.

COP

Got yourself a strange accent, dri-
ver's license from the wrong state.
You don't have a license plate on
this here car.

ELLIE

But it's mine, really. My husband
just bought it.

He looks at her strangely.

ELLIE

Not my idea.

COP

Car brakes outta whack?

ELLIE

Out of what? Ah, no, I tried to
brake, but....my cat....

The cop peers at the car windows and sees the cat mewing on
the seat.

COP

He ain't boxed.

ELLIE

I know, but I...Is that a crime?

COP

Otter be. Vern, over to the vet's,
would like to make it one.

ELLIE

Am I getting a ticket?

COP

Nah. You mighta learnt your lesson
about braking with a cat not in a
box. You needing a tow?

ELLIE

I don't know. Would you mind waiting
to see? My cell phone doesn't seem
to work...up here.

COP

You betcha.

She gets in her car and starts up. She guns the gas
nervously, but stops and buckles up. She takes a deep breath
and slowly drives forward and up out of the ditch. She rolls
her window down and waves at the cop.

ELLIE

Whew! Kind of a cross between Barney
Fife and Babe the Blue Ox.

CAR pulls into the vet's parking lot.

INT. VETERINARY OFFICE, DAY

Ellie's shoes are wet and squeaky as she walks in with cat
struggling in her arms. VERN, receptionist, stares at her,

and finally waves her into a seat.

Ellie sits straight, tightly holding the cat on her lap.

Vern occasionally gives her a sour look.

The doctor's door opens and Ellie takes the cat inside. The door closes.

WAITING ROOM

Now has an older man with a black lab on a leash.

DOOR OPENS AGAIN

Ellie comes back out with the cat. The cat SCREAMS at the dog and leaps out of Ellie's arms.

PANIC ENSUES

As the dog BARKS tries to chase the cat and everyone else tries to catch the cat.

The doctor scoots the dog into the exam room.

SANITY RESTORED

Vern has hold of the cat while Ellie writes out a check. A young vet's helper is cleaning a broken lamp off the floor.

ELLIE (V.O.)

They could have warned me about the dog.

Ellie hands the check over, takes her cat and leaves without saying goodbye.

Vern breathes a sigh of relief.

EXT. K-MART PARKING LOT, HALF HOUR LATER

Ellie's car is parked and the cat is mewing.

INT. K-MART, DAY

In the boys' dept. Ellie looks in rack after rack of jeans.

A CLERK walks by, attention elsewhere.

ELLIE

Excuse me? Ma'am?

The clerk, tired and in a hurry, stops reluctantly.

CLERK

Yeah? Can I help ya?

ELLIE

Yes, you can, thank you. Do you carry
RadiBlue Jeans?

The clerk stares dumbfounded.

CLERK

All we got is in them racks over
there. Don't recognize that name. We
got plenty other nice jeans.

She points to the rack Ellie had just looked through.

ELLIE

This is it? Logger jeans?

CLERK

Huh.

The clerk turns away.

ELLIE

Wait. I'm sorry, you're probably
married to a lumberjack or something.
Do you know where they might sell
RadiBlues?

CLERK

Try Wisconsin. Have a nice day.

Ellie watches her walk off.

ELLIE

I didn't mean to hurt her feelings.

Hawk emerges where the clerk disappeared, glances at Ellie
and moves on.

ELLIE

Oh my God. Even here!

She tries to follow him, but Hawk is gone.

He is hiding behind a rack of clothes, watching her.

EXT. GROCERY STORE

Ellie gets out of car and looks around cautiously as though
the ghost may have followed her.

She doesn't notice the cat jump out of the car and run off.

She walks slowly to the store, ignoring SQUEALING OF CAR
TIRES BEHIND HER.

INT. LUNCH ROOM, TECH SCHOOL, NOON

Tom sits back in his chair at the table, reading.

Angel watches him, calm and serene.

Finally he puts the paper down, and sighs before looking up.

TOM

This is very good.

ANGEL

I know.

TOM

She thinks you plagiarized. You need to address that with her.

ANGEL

Why? She was right.

TOM

Be serious.

ANGEL

From a source so obscure she never should have guessed it wasn't mine. So why did I get an F?

TOM

She guessed!

ANGEL

But she shouldn't have. It's unfair.

Tom leans forward, lowering his voice.

TOM

Angel, you've been the perfect student in my class. But now I wonder. Do you ever do your own work?

BELOW TABLE: Angel squeezes his knee.

ANGEL (O.S.)

Sure.

TOM (O.S.)

What are you doing?

Tom's legs tense and he pulls her hand away. Her hand clamps on again, harder.

ABOVE TABLE:

Tom's face is pained at first, gradually acknowledging pleasure.

TOM (V.O.)

She's good at this.

Startled, he makes a vain effort to stand.

TOM

Angel, I have to go.

Behind them, GEORGE, blustering but congenial administrator, comes into the cafeteria. He sees Angel leaning close to Tom and stops several tables away, watching.

ANGEL

You like it, don't you.

Tom puts her hand back on her lap and starts to rise.

TOM

I can't teach you this way.

ANGEL

What a misinformed observation.

She leans close enough to kiss his neck.

TOM

I teach business math.

Tom abruptly stands. Angel jumps in front of him.

ANGEL

One plus one, Tom. You're hexed.

TOM

I'm what?

ANGEL

I belong to the Bevy. A group of women dedicated to getting what we want. By whatever means.

She drapes her arms over his shoulders. He struggles to get away, but not too hard.

TOM

Whatever means?

ANGEL

Spells, curses, hexes. Witchcraft. I'm especially talented. I'm told it's because I have gypsy blood.

TOM

Come on, witches today practice white magic, nothing nasty.

ANGEL

What's nasty about me wanting you?

TOM

I'm married.

ANGEL

Relationships are meaningless, except
for sex.

TOM

Then I suggest you find yourself
another class because---

Angel gets close enough to kiss his lips, but doesn't.

ANGEL

When your marriage becomes intoler-
able you will find me irresistible.

She plants her thumb on his forehead, leaving a black
thumbprint, and kisses his cheek.

Frozen, he watches her walk off.

George frowns suspiciously at Tom.

TOM (V.O.)

I can't believe it. A gypsy witch.

(sly smile)

damn attractive...

(grabs his mouth)

oh god....she's taken over my mouth!

He wipes his hand against his forehead and stares at the
black smudge on his hand.

Behind him George crosses his arms over his chest.

INT. GROCERY STORE, AFTERNOON

Ellie stands in an aisle looking around.

ELLIE

Where on earth did they hide the taco
bread?

She sees a middle-aged lady dressed in jogging pants head her
way, pushing a cart.

ELLIE

Excuse me, do you know where they
keep the taco bread?

LADY

The what?

ELLIE

Taco bread. You stuff it with ground

beef and peppers and beans and...

LADY
(rudely)
Don't think so.

ELLIE
Okay. Sorry to bother you. Wait!

Know where the peanut butter is?

LADY
Sure, aisle 3.

ELLIE
Just checking to make sure I'm on the
right planet.

The lady shakes her head, walking away.

ELLIE (V.O.)
That was fun. Maybe it's all in how
you talk to them.

Continues walking.

ELLIE (V.O.)
Omigosh, did I just make that sound
like they're animals in a cage?

Ellie heads down one of the last aisles.

ELLIE
Look at the cute old ouple, holding
hands.
(comes alongside them)
Excuse me, I'm new here. Can I ask
you something?

OLD COUPLE
Sure, go ahead, we've lived here all
our lives, yup, you betcha.

ELLIE
I figured that. I'm putting together
a dinner party for all the black
population in town. Can you tell me
what section in the store they like
to hang out?

They exchange glances, shake their heads slowly, and hurry
away.

Ellie tries not to laugh.

EXT. STORE, AFTERNOON

Ellie loads groceries in the back of the car.

ELLIE (V.O.)

Maybe I'll even enjoy Debber's dinner tonight.

She gets in the car and drives off, not noticing the cat is gone.

DRIVING THROUGH SIDE STREETS.

ELLIE

At least my ghost wasn't there. He hasn't been dead that long, maybe he's still in the phone book. A family member should be able to give me some ideas how to communicate with him. Although they might not like hearing that he's still around...his unfinished business might involve them...Hey, cat, we're almost home.

(looks behind her)

Kitty kitty? DAMNIT!

She pulls over, stops the car and crawls into the back seat, calling for kitty.

INT. LIVING ROOM, LATE AFTERNOON

Front door opens and Ellie slouches in, looking exhausted. She sees the kids on the floor playing cards and smiles weakly.

JODI

Hi, mama.

BILLY

Yeah, hi mom.

ELLIE

I was thinking about how you kids want a dog and---

BILLY

Yeah! We can get a dog!

The cat jumps up on the couch above them.

ELLIE

Ahhh! You silly kitty!

She picks him up and hugs him.

JODI

When do we get a dog?

Ellie sighs and puts cat down.

ELLIE

As soon as your father finds a nice,
non-smelly one.

She heads for the kitchen.

KITCHEN

Tom is cooking hamburgers, humming.

ELLIE

Tom? Are you ill?

TOM

Nope, I'm hungry. How's the writing
coming?

ELLIE

Writing? You are sick. Ordinarily I'd
love this, but we're invited next
door for brats.

TOM

Hey, great!

ELLIE

Great?

She watches amazed as he puts everything away.

TOM

Sure, we can use the distraction...I
mean, friends. Right?

(V.O.)

God, don't let me flirt with the wife.

ELLIE

She wants me to watch a soap opera
with her.

TOM

Great! Great, it'll be fun!

ELLIE (V.O.)

It's too late. He's already turned.

She backs out of the kitchen, staring at him. When she's
gone....

Tom lean suddenly against the counter, knees weak.

INT. DEBBER'S HOUSE, LATE DAY

Ellie, carrying beer, and Tom and the kids walk into the
house and Debber takes their jackets. They all stare at the
HUGE STUFFED BEAR in the middle of the living room. Ellie

drops the beer.

DEBBER

Welcome and make yourselves to home.

TOM

Hell of a bag - shot it yourself?

Debber laughs as Frank comes into the room and names and hellos are exchanged again.

DEBBER

Frank here brought that beauty down.
It's a great conversation piece but
nobody knows the hell I go through
vacuuming it.

ELLIE

Beats stuffing it in a washer.

They all laugh.

FRANK

(yelling)

Trudy! Chrissie! Come down and show
the kids the pool table!

Ellie discreetly shakes her head, his voice is LOUD.

Tom keeps a big phony smile on his face. He chews gum only,
even when Frank blows smoke in his face.

Frank drapes his arm around Tom.

FRANK

I admire your guts driving that
little white car up here in snow
country. Come on out to the garage
and see what you should be driving.
A big honking, 400 cube hemmy, auto
4-wheel, 24-inch clearance for the
really big drifts and tires the size
of 500-year-old tree trunks...

And the men disappear about the back door.

Trudy takes the kids down the stairs to the basement.

Debber and Ellie smile at each other awkwardly a moment.

DEBBER

Give me a hand at the grill, wouldya?
Frank gets so distracted talking
engines, they'll burn in no time.

Ellie thinks she means the men.

ELLIE

They will?

They walk out to the patio where the grill is smoking.

ELLIE

Hmmmm, smells good. This is real nice of you, Debber.

DEBBER

You'll pay me back at the TV later. I get you hooked and we can talk about it every day.

ELLIE

Are there any other races on the show?

DEBBER

Races? Stock car races?

ELLIE

Stock car?

DEBBER

Stock.

ELLIE

No, you know, blacks, Chicanos, maybe a spick or a wop.

DEBBER

(laughs)

No, just mostly white folk. Of course every soaps gotta have a token this or that, but mostly white folk. Who else has got time to watch?

She shrugs as she flips the brats. Ellie watches, interested.

ELLIE

Will you sign my anti-Columbus Day petition?

DEBBER

Anti-Columbus Day? Why? Oh, you just made an Indian joke, didn't you. Pretty funny. You don't even look Indian.

Debber spreads out the supplies on the picnic table, as Ellie stares at the brats.

ELLIE (V.O.)

Yeah. Who am I trying to kid?

A brat spits at her and she imagines herself spitting back. Debber comes back to the grill.

DEBBER

What's funny?

ELLIE

I was just picturing how my ancestors used to cook that meat before gas grills.

DEBBER

Oh, you really are funny.

ELLIE

I am?

DEBBER

There weren't any brats in this country before the Germans came over. Indians can't take credit for everything, you know.

ELLIE

I suppose not. But I could be part German, too!

(they laugh. V.O.)

Get me out of here!

AT THE PICNIC TABLE

The women serve everyone brats and potato salad.

Ellie sees Frank talking a blue streak to Tom, who is grinning like a fool.

ELLIE (V.O.)

I didn't notice at the time that Tom wasn't all that happy either. I thought this was the life he wanted.

INT. BEDROOM, NIGHT

Ellie comes in and see Tom sitting quietly at the edge of his bed, smoking with a haunted grin.

ELLIE

Did you have a good time tonight?

TOM

Sure. I found out why the Seahawks are losing, why the Cardinals don't belong in Phoenix - actually why nobody does - how long it takes to stuff a bear, and he predicted how many times I'm going to be stuck in the snow this winter.

ELLIE

So you DID have a good time. Are you a football fan now?

TOM

You're darn right I had a good time. You see, some of us don't need totem animals to know who we are, deep down.

He crawls into bed and lays face up, hands drumming on chest. Ellie undresses and brushes hair, staring at blonde strands on brush, during conversation.

ELLIE (V.O.)

Bastard.

(aloud)

Good job, good friends, graveyard close by. What more could we want?

TOM

Not a thing. Nope.

ELLIE

You sound funny. Something wrong.

TOM

Nope. Not a thing. Uh-uh.

ELLIE

Well, good. The kids want a dog. I said you'd pick one out. A quiet one.

TOM

I will. Yup. A dog. I'll get us a dog.

ELLIE

School makes them nervous. I told them not to expect to make friends right away. Tell them you'll get them a dog in the morning and maybe they'll relax. But it has to like cats.

TOM

Nervous. Yup. That's right.

Ellie gets into bed and lays with her back to him, puzzled.

Tom puts out his cigarette and lays back staring at the ceiling, as his grin collapses into fear.

EXT NIGHT SKY - VIEW OF STARS

EXT. TRAILER, EDGE OF TOWN

Hawk stands by his bike, jiggling his keys.

ELLIE (V.O.)

He figured I was as good as anyone else to rid himself of a burden. I don't think he meant to put us in danger.

Mildred tries to sneak up behind Hawk. He wheels around suddenly, holding a hand out to stop her.

MILDRED

Hawk, don't run. Remember how we used to be friends?

Hawk shakes head and chains bike up to a metal post next to his front door.

MILDRED

John's dead, Hawk. I'm all you got. I can help you get your voice back.

Hawk looks skyward, as though seeking John's advice. He walks away from her, up his two steps and takes out his keys.

Instantly Millie grabs them away from him and starts running. He tackles her to the ground and wrestles keys away.

She jumps on his back and pounds on his head.

MILDRED

You big oaf! I'll kill you!
Freddy's money belongs to me!

He pulls her off him and throws her to the ground where she lies stunned. He shakes his head, quickly opens his door and disappears inside.

MILDRED

He better got it where it's making interest.

She staggers to her feet and limps away.

INT. TRAILER, SUNRISE

Hawk is packing a duffel bag. He glances outside to see Mildred limping back and forth on the sidewalk, a hammer in one hand.

EXT. ELLIE'S HOUSE, NEXT MORNING, SUNRISE

A school bus comes down the street.

Ellie opens the door and waves goodbye as Jodi and Billy run down to the road.

EXT. TECH SCHOOL, SUNRISE

Tom drives the white Taurus into the parking lot. He parks the car and grabs his briefcase. He reaches for the door handle, every move slow and reluctant.

Angel is walking toward the school, talking with a guy.

Tom sees her and freezes with the door half open.

ELLIE'S HOUSE

Ellie watches the school bus turn the corner, and senses something in the brush across the road.

ELLIE (V.O.)

I felt him watching me, even when I
couldn't see him. I didn't know how
to make him go away.

She starts to walk across, but a big honking truck comes barreling down the road, so she waits, and it blows her hair across her face as it passes.

ELLIE (V.O.)

And then reality strikes - what's a
semi doing on my street?

She walks across the street and studies a spot where he had been. She reaches down and picks up a still wet sucker.

Stands looking frightened and alone.

EXT. HAWK'S TRAILER, WINDOWS BOARDED UP, DAY

Mildred creeps up the house and starts hitting at a board with a hammer.

INT. TRAILER

Hawk's eating a banana, smushes a small part and places it to the back of his mouth, chews awkwardly and slowly. He ignores the pounding outside as Mildred tries to break in.

He places a small envelope on the sink faucet where it can be spotted, and goes to the door.

EXT. TRAILER

Quietly Hawk goes outside, gets on his bike and rides off.

Mildred doesn't see him ride off and continues pounding until she falls backward to the ground.

EXT. TECH SCHOOL

Tom gets out of his car and watches Angel with her friend.

TOM (V.O.)
Does this remove the hex?

He follows after them.

TOM (V.O.)
He looks like a loser. I better warn
her about guys like him.

He stops and covers his shocked face with a trembling hand.

INT. TOM'S CLASSROOM

He is teaching (no sound) a math rule on the board and avoids looking at the class. Angel doesn't take her eyes off him.

INT. TOM'S OFFICE

Tom is eating a lunch he brought. He turns the radio on and flips stations, stops at Doors' "People are Strange."

His door opens. Angel walks in and locks the door behind her.

Tom gets to his feet.

TOM
It's my lunch break.

ANGEL
The classroom was on fire this
morning. The way you looked at me,
the way you talked.

TOM
No...I didn't...

He holds his ground as she presses up against him.

OUTSIDE TOM'S OFFICE

George walks by, hears talking.

ANGEL (O.S.)
Husky. Low.

TOM (O.S.)
I wasn't---

ANGEL (O.S.)
You was.

INSIDE TOM'S OFFICE

They throw their arms around each other and kiss passionately.

OUTSIDE TOM'S OFFICE

George stops, backs up, puts ear to Tom's door.

INSIDE TOM'S OFFICE

She knocks stuff off his desk and pulls him down on top of her, pulls at his jacket. Doors continue to sing from the floor.

He stands and removes jacket, throws it to the floor, gets on her again.

They make out passionately, kissing, groping.

OUTSIDE TOM'S OFFICE

George recognizes the sounds and backs away.

INSIDE GEORGE'S OFFICE

George sits at his own desk, frowning heavily.

INSIDE TOM'S OFFICE

Tom, frightened, stands away from her.

TOM

I can't.

ANGEL

Yes, you can. To lift the hex, you gotta. It's got hold of me, too.

She pulls him down again.

Tom offers only meager resistance until...

THE PHONE RINGS

He jumps up, pushing her aside.

ANGEL

Why ain't that on the floor?

RING

TOM

I moved it over there by the window.

ANGEL

Why?

RING

TOM

I like to look outside when I talk.
One of the trees is turning, a little.

RING

TOM

I better get that.

(picks up the phone)

Yes?

Angel drapes herself around him, working her hands to his groin.

INSIDE GEORGE'S OFFICE

George, on the phone, forces a jovial tone.

GEORGE

Tom! Good to hear your voice. Was thinking you weren't in your office. Doncha usually eat in the lunchroom?

INSIDE TOM'S OFFICE

TOM

Oh, hello George.

He's trying to squirm from Angel's touch while keeping his voice normal.

TOM

Yes, I mean no. No, I had a...bread, peanut butter, hard to swallow. I couldn't get to the phone. At first.

His half-hearted attempts to discourage Angel only make her work harder to turn him on.

GEORGE (O.S.)

Ah, the nutritious meal of struggling teachers. A pain in the ass, eh?

Tom winces as she unzips his pants.

TOM

Well, til the wife gets at it...I mean gets a job.

GEORGE (O.S.)

So what do you think of our fall season, Tom? Kinda stirs the old groin, wouldn't you say?

TOM

What? Oh, the fall, yes. Nice weather...nice trees....

This time angry, he pushes her toward the door and his pants start to fall.

GEORGE (O.S.)

Ha-ha, you betcha. According to the weatherman, we'll be experiencing Indian summer this weekend. Didja hear?

TOM

No, I didn't. Indian summer? That's ...quaint. What does it mean?

INSIDE GEORGE'S OFFICE

He is playing with a long string of paperclips. His voice is friendly but his face is angry.

GEORGE

It means warmth, sunshine, a return to balmy summer, for a few brief and glorious days before old Mr. Frost moves in and puts his feet up. If we're lucky we'll have another in early October.

INSIDE TOM'S OFFICE

TOM

Say, maybe you should have been a weatherman.

Angel is leaning against the door, rubbing a hand inside her thigh.

He turns quickly back to the phone.

GEORGE (O.S.)

Ha! Yeah. The reason I'm calling is to see if you'd like to join me at Escanaba Country Club this Saturday. Ever play around?

TOM

(panicked)

Play around?

GEORGE (O.S.)

Of golf, my boy. A round of golf.

TOM

Golf? Yes, a few times, picked the game up quite well actually.

INSIDE GEORGE'S OFFICE

George pulls on paperclip string so hard it pops apart.

GEORGE

I'm sure you're a fast study. I'll

get us a teetime for a foursome for
noon tomorrow.

TOM (O.S.)

Foursome?

GEORGE

Time our little ladies get together.
I'd love to see the old battleax
who's got you eating peanut butter,
I'm thinking.

(laughs loud)

Got us a date, then?

INSIDE TOM'S OFFICE

TOM

Yes. All right, the wife and I, noon
tomorrow.

He hangs up the phone, staring outside.

TOM

Indian summer?

Eyes wide as he remembers Angel, he turns.

She is gone.

TOM

It didn't happen. I just imagined it.

He sees the mess and hears the radio playing on the floor,
the Beatles singing "I'm a Loser." He sits again, anguished.

EXT. RURAL STREET LEADING TO GRAVEYARD, DAY

Ellie is biking, a small bag of groceries dangling from
handlebars.

Her hair is now her natural black, her Indianness more
apparent.

She comes up to the graveyard, stops the bike and feels the
air.

ELLIE (V.O.)

Is it always colder here?

A GRUNTING behind her. Ellie looks over her shoulder.

Hawk is standing behind her, a hand on her bike frame.

ELLIE

Hello, John. I was just thinking...
about you. You're not...ah...
confined to the grounds, eh?

He grunts, shakes his head and indicates for her to get off her bike.

ELLIE

Well, okay.

(V.O.)

Easy girl, he won't hurt you.

She puts her kickstand down, and places her plastic bag on the ground. She takes a breath and faces him.

ELLIE

Whatever I can do for you, I will.
You will be much happier in the
afterlife---

He holds out a key to her.

ELLIE

What's that? You want me to have it?

Hawk grunts, frustrated. He points to the graveyard.

ELLIE

Well, okay. If that's what you need
done before you--.

She holds out her hand and he puts the key in her palm, his fingers touching her.

Ellie, startled, pulls away.

ELLIE (V.O.)

I felt him. And his eyes! He's real!

MILDRED (O.S.)

Those keys are mine! I'll kill to
get them!

Suddenly frightened, Hawk takes the key back and runs into the graveyard.

ELLIE

Wait! Who was that? Why did she...?

Ellie looks around but all is still again.

ELLIE

John was real! That means he isn't
John. But how can people disappear
so quickly?

(gets on bike)

This is a strange town.

She rides off.

INT. DINING ROOM, LATE AFTERNOON

Ellie is working on the laptop, typing at a furious pace.

ELLIE (V.O.)

I thought once in high school I could be a writer, but then I got busy doing volunteer work on the res while looking for my mother. This move has stimulated a new desire - writing creative nonfiction, the kind cemented in fact where we can pretend to get into the heads of others. That's the only chance I stand at figuring this mystery out. Or so I thought at the time.

INT. JODI'S BEDROOM, DAY

Appears empty. LOW NOISE from downstairs means someone turned on the TV.

A SUDDEN THUMP from beneath the bed and the bed shakes.

ELLIE (O.S.)

Ouch! Dammit.

She crawls out from under the bed with a duster.

HEARS A VOICE DOWNSTAIRS, DEEP, MALE.

ELLIE

Ohmigod, he's here. And he's talking!

She leans against the door, trapping herself in the room.

ELLIE

Let's not panic. I'm mixed up in something, but that doesn't mean he'd hurt me. He could have by now.

She cautiously opens the door and sneaks downstairs.

Jodi and Billy are watching cartoons.

BILLY

(not looking up)

Hi mom.

ELLIE

When did you two get home?

BILLY

When the bus dropped us off.

JODI

Yeah, after school.

ELLIE

I didn't hear you come in.

JODI

We're pretending we live alone and don't have a mama.

ELLIE

Very funny.

She turns to go into the kitchen but has a sudden thought.

ELLIE

Kids, I need to warn you---

BILLY

Can you wait for a commercial?

ELLIE

I guess. Don't you want to tell me about school---

BILLY

Shhhhh.

She watches the cartoon with them, laughing at alternate times, until a commercial comes on.

Ellie gets absorbed in the commercial until she sees the two of them staring at her.

BILLY

School was okay.

JODI

Yeah, okay.

ELLIE

Okay, well, not to make this a big deal or anything, but I met this fellow, an Indian, that doesn't matter, except as a way of recognizing him, I guess. But he might try to come here. Well, I want to remind you never to talk to someone you don't know, or let anyone in the house without me or your dad being here. Okay?

JODI

Are you afraid of Indians, mom?

BILLY

Only if they're rednecks!

They both laugh.

ELLIE

Kids, I'm serious. Do you understand?

They both mutter, yeah sure, okay mom, but they're already engrossed in the t.v.

ELLIE (V.O.)

I continued to blame Tom, but couldn't tell him about this. At least he's not a ghost, so I figured I could deal with him now. But then again, humans can be more dangerous than ghosts. Sometimes.

She starts to walk toward the kitchen but turns back to stare at the kids and freezes, as though stand vigil.

INT. KITCHEN, LATE DAY

Tom comes in the back door as she gets food from the freezer.

ELLIE

You're home early again.

(V.O.)

I couldn't tell him. There's no way to explain it when I didn't understand myself.

Tom can't look her in the eyes, busies himself with the mail on the table.

TOM (V.O.)

Do I tell her before this hex thing goes too far?

(aloud)

Let's go out for pizza and miniature golf. I need some practice putting.

ELLIE

Practice putting? This time of year?

(V.O.)

He wouldn't even listen to the bee story.

TOM

It's going to be Indian summer this weekend.

(V.O.)

She'll think it's my fault. That I encouraged this.

ELLIE

Indian summer? Don't make me laugh---

But he grabs her arm and pulls her into the living room.

TOM
Come on, kids, we're going out for
pizza.

They cheer and turn off the t.v.

All of them leave the house, Ellie reluctantly, closing the door behind them.

The house grows dark, one window lit by the moon. Hawk stares in the window. He disappears again.

ELLIE (V.O.)
Hawk never intended to get me into
trouble. I'm sure of that much.

INT. MILDRED'S HOUSE, NIGHT

Mildred paces. As she does, she deliberately smashes household items to the floor, reaching emotional explosion. She opens a drawer and flings silverware down.

She finds a butcherknife and holds it up. She grins as it glints in the moonlight through the window.

INT. LIVING ROOM, NEXT MORNING

The phone rings.

ELLIE (O.S.)
I got it!

She runs out in jeans, tennis shoes, t-shirt and golf hat, pulling on a sweatshirt, and grabs the phone.

ELLIE
Debber? Are you---
(laughs)
Oh, I guess so. Sure, no problem.
(hangs up, calls)
Tom, Deb wants me to walk the kids
over, she's hanging clothes out.

She hears a LIGHT KNOCK at the door.

ELLIE
(goes to the door)
Hanging clothes out. After that cold
spell, I thought snow for sure---.

She opens the door.

Hawk stands in the open doorway, holding a key out. His face is strained as he tries to speak.

BACKGROUND: Behind him, across the street, Mildred sits up in the brush, hand on head where Hawk clobbered her after she

stabbed him. Not real visible, Ellie doesn't see her, but important that she's there.

Ellie shrieks and steps back.

HAWK

(holds key up)

Oowwl.

ELLIE

(frightened)

Look, you can't come to my house. If you keep bothering me...

(takes a breath)

Oh, wait, I'll get a pen. You can write, right? At least tell me your name.

But he grabs her hand and shoves the key into it.

He falls face down on her carpeting, a knife sticking out of his back.

Ellie jumps back, clamping her hand over her scream. She crouches down next to him.

ELLIE

Oh God. What have I done?

(looks at key)

Tom! Tom, get out here!

She fingers Hawk's neck for a pulse and jerks back.

Tom comes out of the kitchen, followed by Billy and Jodi.

ELLIE

No! Tom, I'll take the kids to Debber's. Come on, kids, back through the kitchen....

Tom walks slowly toward the corpse.

ELLIE

Tom, don't move, don't do anything, I'll be right back.

Tom stares at the kitchen knife in Hawk's back.

TOM

It's the hex.

In shock he goes to the phone and starts to dial. Freezes.

TOM

(dazed)

This is how she gets rid of my wife.

He slams phone down.

TOM

This is how she gets rid of my wife.

He slams the phone down.

Ellie runs back in and stops short.

ELLIE

He's still here.

TOM

Ellie, I have to tell---

ELLIE

Tom, I'm so sorry. This is all my---

TOM

...you something. It's hard but---

ELLIE

...fault Tom, this is the Indian I met in the graveyard. I thought he was a vision or a ghost and then I thought he was threatening me---

TOM

So you killed him?!

ELLIE

No. I thought he was a ghost and then---

TOM

Ghosts don't die!

ELLIE

...and then I realized he was real when he grabbed my---

TOM

So it was self defense!

ELLIE

Tom! I didn't do this! But somebody did. Somebody who wants this key.

She holds the key up.

Tom takes it but quickly hands it back and wipes his hand on his pants as though fouled.

ELLIE

Why would he give this to me? Like his dying wish...and he said something...owl. Owl?

(tries imitating him)

Owl.

TOM

He was in pain! That must've hurt

like hell.

(V.O.)

Maybe it isn't the hex.

ELLIE

Do you think he's dead?

She runs to the phone.

TOM

(aloud)

Who am I kidding?

ELLIE

(at phone)

Is 911 for ambulance too?

She dials.

TOM (V.O.)

Angel gets my wife sent to jail and
before I know it she'll be in my bed,
feeding my kids...

He runs to Ellie and slams down the phone.

TOM

There's nothing more they can do for
him. Look.

They both stare at Hawk's face, eyes open, not blinking.

TOM

Why'd he have to die here?

ELLIE

(slow & deliberate)

Tom, I'm sorry I made such a fuss.
I really do like living here.

They both stare at the corpse as though her apology would
make him go away.

TOM

My God, a dead man on our living room
carpet. An Indian. Maybe it's tribal
or political.

(laughs hysterically)

That's all, tribal or political.
Nothing to do with us at all.

He suddenly notices she dyed her hair and is startled, and then horrified, as he looks from her to the Indian.

TOM

When did you color your hair?

ELLIE

No, it's me. He wanted me to have these keys. How'd he know I was Indian?

TOM

You colored your hair!

ELLIE

No, that's not why he did this. It's just because I was nice to him, and tried to him when I thought he was - dead. He tried to give me this key yesterday. That was - after I colored my hair...

TOM

Why didn't you take them then!?

ELLIE

The old lady! She did this! I didn't take it because she, or someone, frightened him off. That's when I realized he wasn't a ghost.

TOM

(trying to follow)

He got frightened...because he wasn't a ghost?

ELLIE

Those old ladies weren't ghosts then, either.

TOM

What two old ladies!?

ELLIE

Well, since this fellow I kept seeing at the graveyard is real, then all those ghosts were real. That means he's not John. Why didn't he just tell me?

TOM

Wait a minute. You went to a graveyard and got mixed up with ghosts?

ELLIE

Pay attention, Tom. They weren't

ghosts, I only thought they were.

TOM

Oh, good, now it all makes sense.

ELLIE

(patiently)

It's only natural I'd think he was a vision - a ghost, since i was in a graveyard. Then yesterday he treid to give me this and I was willing to take it but then the old lady screamed and he ran, just as I realized he wasn't dead. He thought she'd kill me! Or him...

(looking at the key)

It's obviously important.

TOM

Obviously! You better get rid of it or you could be next!

ELLIE

Tom, settle down. Let's think a minute before we panic.

TOM

That's not possible!

ELLIE

I wonder if the old lady knows what they're for. But which old lady? Why was he afraid of one - or both? Was he just paranoid? Although he is dead.

Tom, giving up on her story, goes to window and peers carefully outside.

TOM

Someone might have seen him at the door.

ELLIE

The second old lady was John's mother, so that means...

TOM

We have to get him out of here.

ELLIE

(crouches down)

I'm sick about this. He tried to protect me and now he's dead.

TOM

(looking outside)

Nobody rakes lawns anymore.

Ellie gently touches Hawk's hair.

ELLIE

I wonder why he couldn't talk.

She leans close, as though to look into his mouth.

TOM

What are you doing?

(jerks her to her
feet)

If you hadn't been so busy digging up
graves and got yourself a job---

ELLIE

Oh, for heaven's sake, none of them
were Indian.

Shocked, he grabs her shoulders.

TOM

My God, you really did?

ELLIE

What?

TOM

Dig them up?

Ellie breaks away.

ELLIE

Don't be foolish. I could tell by
the names.

TOM

(confused)

We've got to get him out of here.

ELLIE

I was calling emergency but you made
me hang up. You want me to call a
funeral home?

TOM

(firm)

Listen to me, just once. We're going
to have to move him ourselves.

ELLIE

What? Are you crazy? Our taxes pay
for that emergency number.

TOM

This is mistaken identity. He

thought you were someone else,
especially when you were no longer
blonde. If we're caught mixed up in
this I will be fired. They'll do it

in a polite, respectful way, but
they'll do it. This is the Midwest,
Ellie, you don't get involved with
corpses in the Midwest.

ELLIE

Damn. I didn't know.

TOM

It's your first time. Let's get him
out of here.

ELLIE

Are you saying hide him?

TOM

We'll put him in your car, it's used
and doesn't have plates yet.

He leans down to grab hold of the body, but has a hard time
bringing himself to touch him.

ELLIE

We can't!

TOM

Why?

ELLIE

I ran into the ditch the other day.
See my forehead?

She shows off her bump. He ignores her.

TOM

Not now, Ellie.

He lifts the Indian's torso with a grunt.

ELLIE

A cop came along and took some info.
I think that car's on record now.
Ha, if it wasn't on record already.

TOM

(drops body)

You have lousy timing. All right,
into the Taurus. I wish we had a 4x4.

ELLIE

(sarcastic)

Maybe we should plan better. Wait

here while I go rent a pickup.

He lifts the body again.

The PHONE RINGS.

ELLIE

Oh no. What do I say?

TOM

Just answer it, act normal and get rid of them.

He starts to drag the body, and pulls it out of room while she's on the phone.

ELLIE

(sarcastic)

Watching movies pays off, doesn't it?

(answers phone)

Hello? Oh, Debber, no, everything's fine. What? Still here? Who? Yes, we are. Oh, no, if it was cancelled I'd let you know. I wouldn't stick you with my kids unless it was important. Really important. Say, did you see us get a visitor? Oh good. And you won't see them leave, either. Bye!

She hangs up and looks down at the phone.

ELLIE

I have no idea what I just said.

EXT. TAURUS IN DRIVEWAY

Ellie sees the Taurus idling in the driveway.

She jumps into the passenger side, next to the dead Hawk, sitting on the seat protected by a blanket.

ELLIE

(jumps back out)

Ah! Tom!

TOM (O.S.)

Back here.

She runs to the back of the car, where he's starting to unscrew the license plate.

ELLIE

Tom! You want the neighbors to see?

Tom looks cautiously over his shoulder, finishes removing the plate, pockets the screwdriver and gets into the drivers

seat, tucking the plate under his seat.

Ellie gets in her side, sitting as far from the corpse as she can manage.

ELLIE

Did you have to put him up here?

TOM

In case anyone saw him at our door.

ELLIE

We shouldn't be moving him, this will make an even worse mess.

Tom backs up and pulls out into the street.

TOM (V.O.)

You have no idea how worse a mess this could be.

(aloud)

Just keep your fingers crossed this works.

DRIVING DOWN THE STREET

He turns a corner squealing and almost hits a neighbor's dog.

ELLIE

Watch out! Tom, not so fast, there are cops around here.

TOM

That was a dog, Ellie.

ELLIE

We don't really have to get one, do we?

TOM

(confused)

A cop?

ELLIE

(angry)

A dog!

TOM

Shut up! I'm trying to think.

ELLIE

Fine. This is your saga, I'm only along for the ride. That's what I'll tell the judge.

TOM

Thanks for your support! Crhissake,

this is your fault!

(aloud)

Actually it's mine but you don't need to know that.

ELLIE

Mine? I wanted to call the cops!

TOM

You...you had prior knowledge of him, it wouldn't look good. Anyway, it's too late now.

ELLIE

Why?

TOM

We already moved him from the scene! Where's that graveyard where you met this unfortunate bastard?

ELLIE

Tom! You're not.

TOM

Stop arguing.

His face is set.

Ellie sits back, resigned, as the corpse starts to lean her way. She sighs, puts her arm around 'it' and pats its shoulder tenderly.

ELLIE

It's too close. There's another one across town.

(V.O.)

I didn't want his ghost haunting me. By the time of our arrest, I realized why Hawk didn't want Mildred to have the key, but on the day of his death, I only knew he was human, knew too late the trouble I was in.

EXT. FRONT OF HOUSE, DAY

Fog swirling around white Taurus as they drive off.

Mildred stands up in the brush, hand pressed against her head.

She looks at her hand and sees blood.

MILDRED

Fucking savage - how dare he hit a helpless old lady!

She turns to Hawk's bike in the brush, grabs backpack and

empties out contents, searching frantically.

MILDRED

Damn! Damn devil mute! ROT IN HELL!

She staggers off down the road.

EXT. HAWK'S TRAILER

Mildred tries to force the door open with a crowbar. She picks up a sledgehammer and whacks at a boarded window, causing a small crack, but knocks herself backward to the ground, and out cold.

EXT. GOLF COURSE PARKING LOT, SHORTLY AFTER 1 P.M

Tom pulls the white Taurus into an open spot.

Ellie stares blankly out the window.

The spot between them is clean, the bloodied blanket on the floor of the back seat.

TOM

We're late. Hopefully they're relaxing at the bar.

ELLIE

Before 5 p.m.?

TOM

Smile. We're going to have fun.

Ellie and Tom get out of the car.

ELLIE

Fun. We drive a car with no plates to the graveyard, hide a dead man, and he wants me to have fun.

TOM

(grits teeth, smiles)
Fine. Don't have fun. I'm going back to yesterday to pretend none of this happened.

ELLIE

Great. I can't wait until tomorrow.

Tom shoots her a look.

INT. CLUBHOUSE

George and MARY CADDY greet them warmly. Mary is small and sincere next to the big blustery George.

Tom introduces Ellie, greetings made under proshop noise,

calls for golf cars, caddies, teetimes. People milling about renting clubs, buying balls, chatting, etc.

ELLIE

(too loud)

I was thinking you might be Native American, from your last name.

Proshop quiets, as though everyone heard her.

GEORGE

My last name?

ELLIE

It's an Indian tribe, down near the northeastern Texas and Oklahoma area, I believe.

GEORGE

Charming. Knows her geography. Well, let's go see if they can squeeze us in, how about it?

George pulls Tom to counter to wait their turn. The girls follow.

ELLIE

(whispers to Mary)

How about what?

MARY

It's just an expression.

ELLIE

It is?

MARY

Usually, yes, but sometimes it isn't.

They giggle, until the men look at them.

TOM

Sorry we're late, George. But it's almost October, most normal golfers have given up for the year, right? Shouldn't be

(suddenly noticing people and gets nervous)

...too busy...

GEORGE

(loud laugh)

Most normal golfers! Well, I'm thinking we'll take the first opening they got. Don't apologize for being late, Tom,

(wraps arm around him)
Men like you are always finding last
minute details to cover up.

George notices Tom tense. He looks over his shoulder and
sees the girls picking out Ellie's rental clubs.

GEORGE
Speaking of openings. I hope you
enjoy your job. Your wife's lovely.

Without waiting for an answer he turns to the pro shop
attendant, leaving Tom tense AND puzzled.

AT THE FOURTH HOLE, POND OFF TO ONE SIDE

Mary takes a swing and makes a decent hit.

Ellie hits a grounder but it's straight and it bounces.

George sails one almost to the green.

Tom hits his ball into the water.

GEORGE
Tough nuts there, Tom. Didn't
mentally prepare your game, didja.

TOM
Haven't caught my stride yet.

He pops a piece of gum in his mouth.

ELLIE
Tom doesn't usually get this much
exercise in one day.

Tom shoots her a look as they walk to their balls.

TOM
Ha-ha. Unfamiliar course, that's
all.

Ellie gets to her ball first and swings, keeping it low and
straight, but not far.

MARY
How's your job search going, Ellie?

ELLIE
Not very good. But I've been doing
some writing to kill the time.
(glances at Tom)
Just an expression, of course.

Tom breaks away to look for his ball at the pond.

MARY

Oh, I've always wanted to try my hand at writing. I'm a lawyer, so my time is limited but I'm loaded with ideas.

Of course I'd change the names!

(they laugh)

If you ever work on a legal piece and want some advice, let me know.

Mary lines up her shot.

ELLIE

Mary, you don't know how welcome that offer is.

She glares at Tom as Mary hits her ball.

AT THE POND WHERE TOM'S BALL LANDED

Tom stares down at the pond and puts another piece of gum in his mouth.

George wanders over to watch him as Tom gets down on his knees and sticks his hand into the water, feeling around. George kneels down next to him.

GEORGE

I'd let that one go if I was you. Tell you what, if you run out of balls, I got a couple extras I can sell you. Some fellas give their balls way too much range, eh?

TOM

Ah! I found it.

He pulls his hand out, holding a turtle.

GEORGE

Might want to try a wood on that one.

Cautiously Tom puts the turtle back in the water. He goes to his bag for another ball.

George follows him.

GEORGE

Speaking of balls and turtles, there are some who think taking extra curricular activities off campus is a pretty good idea.

Tom digs in his bag for a ball. He can't find one, and sheepishly smiles at George.

GEORGE

Way off campus.

Mary and Ellie are waiting for Tom to hit a ball.

MARY

What are those two up to now?

They watch as Tom hands George a bill and George hands Tom a ball.

ELLIE

Hmmm. looks like Tom's about to take up bowling.

George catches up to Mary and Ellie, while Tom watches, tightly clutching the new golf ball. He throws the ball to the ground and cautiously lines up his shot.

Tom hits his ball, not too bad, and everyone starts walking.

When the three are far enough ahead of him, Tom takes out a cigarette, lights quickly, smokes a couple of deep puffs and puts it out on the ground.

He walks a few steps and stops, spitting his gum out.

INT. CLUBHOUSE BAR

George laughs with the ladies as they add up the golf scores.

Tom is outside, wringing out his socks. When he walks in, George goes to him.

GEORGE

Damn most amusing game I ever played.
We'll have to do this again next year.
(leans close)
That is, if you're still around, eh?

He nudges Tom and goes back to the ladies.

GEORGE

Well, Mary, how about we eat some lunch here at the club. Ellie, you and Tom join us!

ELLIE

(glances at Tom)
I'm sorry, I promised the sitter we'd be back by---

GEORGE

Ah, nonsense, you---

Mary puts a hand on George's arm.

MARY

They have children, George. Ellie, stop by sometime, I'd like to read that ghost story of yours. Might give me some ideas of my own.

GEORGE

Ghosts! Now don't tell me, woman, that your latest plan is to give me a heart attack! I told you, just give me another year or two, and I'll accommodate you all by myself....

His voice trails off as they head to another part of the clubhouse.

ELLIE

That was fun. Let's do it again.

Tom stands next to her, takes her hand, shoves his wet socks in her hand, and walks out the door.

Ellie smiles wryly at the socks. She drops them into the garbage on her way out.

INSIDE THE CAR, DRIVING HOME.

The silence is deafening. Tom switches on the radio.

Ellie doesn't like the song playing so she changes the channel, catches the end of "Quinn the Eskimo." She tries singing along, but loses the words.

Tom gives her a mournful look that she ignores.

NEWS RADIO

Special bulletin from the Escanaba police. A body has been found unburied at a local cemetery. The mortuary has confirmed it is not a body that they'd simply misplaced.

Tom and Ellie listen intently, Ellie mouths "misplaced?"

NEWS RADIO

The man, not yet identified, had been stabbed in the back. The time of death has been established, but the police are not clear if he was murdered at the cemetery or dropped off from somewhere else, or if he was still alive when he was dumped. The name on the headstone where he was found may be a clue to his identity.

ELLIE

Tom! We didn't drop him at a headstone.

NEWS RADIO

Police have uncovered a witness who claims a white Ford Taurus without plates drove out of the cemetery

sometime between 10:45 and 12 noon. Anyone with any further information leading to---

Tom switches off the radio.

TOM (V.O.)

Damn that hex! I should have known Angel wouldn't let me get away with this!

(aloud)

Don't worry, gotta be a lot of white cars like this around town.

ELLIE

Tom, how did he move? Are you sure he was dead?

TOM

He was dead.

(V.O.)

We didn't kill him!

ELLIE

That's it, I promise never go in another graveyard. Please cremate me when I die. Why did he give me this key? What was he involved in?

(V.O.)

It's too late to turn ourselves in - way too late. Why did I let Tom do this!?

(aloud)

That doesn't mean I wanted him to die on our doorstep!

TOM

Just get rid of the key. This will all blow over.

ELLIE

He moved, somehow he moved!

TOM

(quietly)

We'll just keep saying it wasn't us. They can't prove anything.

(V.O.)

I don't know what else to do anymore. Except tell Ellis the truth - and I can't.

Tom slumps in the seat as he continues driving.

The car continues slowly down the road.

ELLIE'S KITCHEN, LATE AFTERNOON

Debber is feeding Jodi and Billy and her girls hot dogs in the kitchen when she hears the front door open.

DEBBER

Stay put, kids. I'll handle this.

She runs into the living room and sees Ellie staring at the floor where Hawk died.

DEBBER

Ellie, thank God you're home. I took the kids to the park today...

ELLIE

That's nice.

DEBBER

Ellie, I swear, nothing like this has ever happened in this town before! Nothing!

ELLIE

(thinks Debber knows the secret)

Like what?

Debber sits Ellie on the couch and sits next to her.

DEBBER

I took the kids to the park and your daughter was nearly abducted right out from under me!

ELLIE

What!?

PARK

Debber is walking her two girls and Jodi and Billy into the park.

Action is as she describes it.

DEBBER (V.O.)

I saw her getting off the bus but I didn't expect trouble. I didn't notice the blood until later.

Mildred asks kids to show her the frisbee.

DEBBER (V.O.)

She looked like she was interested in the toy the kids had. Then she grabbed Jodi.

Mildred pushes Debber's girls aside and grabs Jodi.

DEBBER (V.O.)

My Carolyn was closer but she pushed past my girls and grabbed Jodi. I thought I would die. She acted like she was Jodi's long lost crazed grandmother. Does Jodi have one of those?

SITTING ON COUCH

ELLIE

No.

IN PARK

Mildred is starting to drag Jodi away as Jodi struggles and cries. Debber, sitting on a park bench, sees what's going on, and runs, as in slow motion.

DEBBER (V.O.)

Thank goodness for Billy's quick thinking. He kicked her in the shins and pulled Jodi and they both came running to me.

Debber grabs Jodi and Billy, and Mildred runs off.

SITTING ON COUCH.

Exhausted, Debber sits back. Sees Ellie horrified expression and tries to smile.

DEBBER (V.O.)

She was kind of weak looking. I think maybe Jodi just reminded her of someone, that's all.

ELLIE

Did you call the police?

DEBBER

Hey, I don't have one of them cell phones.

ELLIE

She got away?

DEBBER

Well, Jodi was crying, I wanted to get her home.

ELLIE

Is the park near the graveyard?

DEBBER

No, why?

Ellie starts to get up but Debber stops her.

DEBBER

She seems okay now, eating a hotdog in there like nobody's business. Ellie, what's going on? You sounded strange on the phone earlier. Did you go golfing today?

ELLIE

Yes, we did. Are you accusing me of something?

DEBBER

Hey, I wouldn't accuse you of nothing.

Ellie goes into the kitchen.

Tom walks in the front door. He is barefoot and walking slumped, a cigarette dangling limply in his lips.

Debber watches as he goes down the hall to the bathroom.

DEBBER

But don't ask me to testify for him.

She goes to the front door, glances once over her shoulder, walks out and shuts the door quietly.

INT. LIVING ROOM, NEXT DAY AT NOON

Tom is stretched across the sofa, a beer in his hand, watching t.v., looking miserable, unshaven.

Ellie comes up behind him with a sandwich. She holds it out to him but he doesn't take it.

ELLIE

Hungry?

(sits)

Whatcha watching? What are all those people wearing on their heads? Looks like hunks of cheese. Look at that guy, he's wearing paint instead of a shirt! Oh, football. You like this?

Tom is unresponsive.

Ellie munches on the sandwich.

ELLIE

Why'd he wiggle his rear end like that? Is that a code?

TOM (V.O.)

There's only one way to break the hex. One way. Only one. Give her what she wants.

Ellie sighs and leaves the room, eating his sandwich.

ELLIE (V.O.)

He acts like this is my fault. He's the one who moved us here.

She looks at the sandwich in disgust and tosses it in the garbage.

EXT. HOUSE, NIGHT

Ellie sits on the front step, looking up into the sky.

ELLIE (V.O.)

Tom, I'm sorry, this is all my...no, I didn't do anything wrong! I was trying to adjust, trying to help, trying to be neighborly - I thought I was chasing a deer!

(squints at stars)

Is that Orion? Looks like a belted constellation.

(shivers, wraps arms around self)

Was that assault on my daughter part of this? Which old lady? Is there a third one? I have to end this somehow. But without telling Tom. I don't think he can take any more. Was this my fault? This key could solve everything.

She holds up the keys and they glitter in the moonlight.

KITCHEN, EARLY AM MONDAY MORNING

Tom drags himself into the kitchen. He hasn't slept for two days. He pours a cup of coffee and sits at the table. Off in the distance a CLOCK CHIMES, and he GROANS.

He sees the cigarette pack on the table and grabs it, but the pack is empty. He crumples it and flings it against a far wall.

Ellie stands in the doorway, watching.

ELLIE

Maybe it's time to quit.

TOM

Ellie, I'm sorry. We should have notified the police right away.

ELLIE

Call them today before they track us down. Tom, I know someone who can tell me about this key. But first I have a job interview and I'm going to keep it. I'll take whatever they offer.

(sits by him)

Go to the police and turn yourself in. I'll find a way to prove we didn't kill him. But we have to admit hiding him.

Tom puts his head down in his hands. He is fully aware of Ellie watching him, the clock TICKING, KIDS WAKING NOISE in the background.

TOM (V.O.)

Won't work, no matter what we do, until I get the hex removed.

(aloud)

I will. Just not today. I have to apologize to George today.

ELLIE

You have to apologize for a golf game?

TOM

I acted like a kid because I couldn't hit a ball. We both know why I couldn't hit the ball.

ELLIE

Because your boss makes you nervous?

TOM

Because we just hid a corpse!

ELLIE

Sssshhhhhh!

They both look over their shoulder guiltily as though the kids may have heard.

ELLIE

Tom, are you sure he wasn't still alive when we put him out there?

TOM

Pretty sure. Not real sure.

ELLIE

We may have invited an Indian curse
by---

Tom abruptly gets up and runs out. Ellie hears him WRETCHING.

ELLIE

Oh God.

(loud)

Whatever you got don't give it to the
kids. They've been through enough
already.

She gets up and goes to the fridge, taking eggs out.

EXT. PROSERV BUILDING, DAY

The white Ford is parked outside.

INT. OFFICE, DAY

CHARLES, a prudish older man, looks through his files, as
Ellie waits impatiently.

CHARLES

Ah, here's one. It's half days, just
down the street.

ELLIE

Everything's just down the street.

CHARLES

It pays \$6.75 but---

ELLIE

Isn't that minimum wage now?

She keeps glancing at her watch throughout the interview.

CHARLES

I could tell them I have a good
candidate who won't work for less
than \$7.00---

ELLIE

\$8.00. Can I call you Chuck?

CHARLES

Hmmm. Scratch this one. No, it's
Charles.

ELLIE

How about Chas? I knew a Chas once,
on the reservation.

CHARLES

(sits back)

Am I keeping you from something?

ELLIE

Oh. Sorry. No. Of course not.
What's more important than getting a
job?

CHARLES

Tell me, besides wanting \$8.00, what
kind of job will you take?

ELLIE

Challenging, stimulating, half days
preferably afternoon, I'm not a
morning person, not strictly secre-
tarial, editing maybe. I'm not big
on taking orders from those suited
types so I prefer a degree of
independence. I type real good and
am developing writing---

Charles stands quickly to stop her, knocks his chair over.

CHARLES

Tell you what. When a job comes
across my desk that fits that
description, I will give you a call.

He picks up the chair and holds his hand out to shake hers.

Ellie slowly stands and shakes his hand.

ELLIE

I'm sorry if I've been difficult.
I've got some things on my mind, I
really will take anything---

CHARLES

I'll keep your file open and give you
a call.

ELLIE

You think it might be in a couple of
days?

CHARLES

(holds door open)
You betcha.

Ellie turns to look at the door as it shuts in her face.

ELLIE

Yeah. You betcha.

EXT. PROSERV BUILDING

Kansas is studying her white Ford Taurus, making note of the

license.

Ellie, caught off guard, backs up so he doesn't see her.

ELLIE (V.O.)

Oh Tom, what do I do now? Go shopping?! Now I know why you took

the Chevy today. Thanks a lot.

(walks to her car, to
Kansas)

Hello. This a no parking zone?

KANSAS

Ever drive this car without plates?

ELLIE

Maybe, when it was new. No, then it would have had dealer plates. So I have to say in complete honesty, no, I have never driven it without plates.

KANSAS

Officer Archie Kansas, ma'am and I'm investigating a possible homicide. Anyone borrow your car last Friday or Saturday?

ELLIE

No, sir. Although come to think of it, I'm not sure where my second set of keys is. You think my car hit someone?

(V.O.)

Damn it, I can't do it! I can't turn Tom in.

KANSAS

Not quite. Ever see this man before?

He hands her a poor picture of a dead Hawk.

ELLIE

Wasn't he in that movie with Kevin Costner?

KANSAS

A local lowlife, but that doesn't mean we don't care about finding who murdered him. Can you verify your whereabouts this past Friday and Saturday, if we come to your house and so request it?

ELLIE (V.O.)

Come on, Ellie, spill your guts, explain our innocence, and take your

medicine.

(Mary's V.O.)

"If you ever need legal advice for one of your stories, let me know.

(V.O.)

This is as good a story as I could ever make up.

(aloud, to Kansas)

I suppose so, yes. Anything else? I'm going to be late for an appointment.

KANSAS

Just remember, ma'am, if you have any information that you're withholding that could help us solve this crime, you're making matters worse withholding it. And ah, you might want to get a different car. This one could be dangerous here come winter. Good day.

Ellie gets in the car as he walks away. With a shaking hand she puts the key in the ignition.

ELLIE

Get a different car. What is it with these people?

She reaches into her pocket and pulls out Hawk's key.

ELLIE

Time to make all this go away. I survived coyotes, bees and ghosts. What's one frail little old lady?

She starts the car and drives off.

EXT. MILDRED'S SMALL BUNGALOW, DAY

The white Ford pulls up in front of the cracked sidewalk.

Ellie parks. She's wearing a hat and sunglasses, as if trying to disguise herself. She grabs the key and a notebook, pockets the key and pulls out a pencil.

She opens the door, gets out with all kinds of determination. She takes two steps toward the front door, turns around and leans against the car.

ELLIE

Maybe she's not home. No! No excuses, get this over with. John's mother must know something about all this. I have to do this.

Mildred opens the creaking front door - she has cleaned up, and looks like a sweet little granny.

Except for the frying pan she's hiding behind her back.

MILDRED

Hello. Can I help you?

Ellie whirls around, smiles at Mildred and relaxes.

ELLIE (V.O.)

Like any good detective I braced myself to be on guard for any deviant activity.

(aloud)

Yes, did a John MacDonald used to live here?

MILDRED

My son? Well, yes. He's dead now, poor dear.

ELLIE

Yes, I know.

MILDRED

How do you know? Do I know you?

ELLIE

I knew your son. We went to school together.

MILDRED

Oh, really? You an ex-girlfriend or something? He get you pregnant and now you want money? After all these years?

ELLIE

I...I'm a private investigator and I've been assigned to the case of the dead...Indian.

MILDRED

Really? Well, do come in, Hawk was a good friend of mine.

ELLIE

Hawk?

Ellie keeps making notes as she walks through Mildred's front door. Mildred steps back, keeping the frypan hidden.

INT. MILDRED'S HOUSE, DAY

The furnishings are poor and worn, and the adjoining rooms are small. Ellie looks around in mock appreciation before

turning back.

ELLIE

I thought you might, I mean, my superiors mentioned your son and this Hawk had been seen together.

MILDRED

Seen together? Where?

ELLIE

Where? Oh, around, you know. Small town like this, neighbors can't stop talking for long, you know?

Mildred steps toward her.

MILDRED

And what have these neighbors been saying?

ELLIE

That's ah, confidential, never know when we might need a witness, eh?

(V.O.)

Something strange about her.

Ellie notices a cut on her head, nicely cleaned up.

ELLIE (V.O.)

She tried to grab my daughter?

(aloud)

Uh, now, this Hawk, has he ever been involved in anything nefarious?

MILDRED

Freddy sent you here, didn't he.

ELLIE

Freddy?

MILDRED

He's spying on me, thinks I'm getting close to finding where the money's hid. It's my money! Mine! I earned it! I had to sleep with him! And I hate men!

Mildred peers out the window.

Ellie has been trying to follow all this, taking notes.

Mildred scurries over to her, angry.

MILDRED

What are you writing?

ELLIE

Just taking notes.

MILDRED

That's your white car out there,
ain't it? You bitch!

She raises the fry pan up to bring down on Ellie's head, but Ellie's too tall and Mildred's loses her balance.

She hits Ellie in the arm, hard enough to make Ellie CRY OUT.

Ellie runs out of the house, as Mildred scrambles after her, swinging the frying pan.

MILDRED

You whore! You thief! Give me that
key! That's my money!

Ellie jumps in the car and locks the door.

Mildred smashes at the window without effect.

Ellie speeds off, and Mildred smashes a rear tail light with the fry pan.

ELLIE

Oh my God, she's crazy. Now I know
why Hawk was afraid of her.

(breathes hard)

She tried to hurt Jodi! She killed
Hawk!? For a key? For money?
Freddie's money?

(sobbing)

This car gave me away. Damn you, Tom!
I didn't tell him my plans. He has
to know, he has to help. This car -
sticks out like a snowball in hell -
got to get rid of it somehow. Just
like that nice cop said.

(buckles her seatbelt)

Come on, coyote, come at me! I gotta
get rid of this car.

She clutches the wheel tightly and peers into the road,
tensed for something to jump in front of her.

ELLIE

Come on, coyote, dog, bunny rabbit,
I'll swerve for anything!

The wind blows a pile of leaves across the road. Startled,
Ellie swerves the wheel and hits the ditch hard.

EXT. CAR REPAIR SHOP

Ellie gestures to a service man as they pull her car with a

crumpled right fender and smashed left headlight onto the lot.

The serviceman leads her outside and shows her a small 4x4.

Beaming, a smile a little too big to be sane, she nods and holds a hand out for the key.

BACK AT THE HOUSE, LATE AFTERNOON

She drives the rental 4x4 into the driveway, still grinning.

ELLIE (V.O.)

This is great! Intrigue, mystery, suspense and now a 4x4. I fit in, I guzzle!

She gets out of the car and runs inside.

INT. LIVING ROOM, LATE AFTERNOON

Tom sits on the couch. All the curtains are drawn tight. He is smoking and chewing gum at the same time, and not caring about either.

Ellie drops her bag on the floor trying to get her coat off, frustrated when her arm sticks, finally jerks coat off and flings it to the floor, runs to Tom and sits on couch, suddenly exhausted.

Tom ignores the whole routine.

ELLIE

Tom, I almost died today. Are you all right? I had a cop talk to me about the car, he took our license plate number, and an old lady nearly beat me senseless. Then I drove that white car into the ditch, and got us a rental. Guess what, Tom? A 4x4! Isn't that great!

She holds up the keys, hoping to excite him.

TOM

You should drive more carefully.

ELLIE

I did it on purpose. Look at this.
(holds up Hawk's key)
The key has an ittybitty address on it. I think that's where the trail begins.

TOM

Why would you crash the car on purpose?

(V.O.)

Angel - get out of her body!

ELLIE

Now we can move about a little more
freely, until I get this thing
solved. People see us coming a mile
away, Tom! Now we fit in, like you

wanted! You have to help me, we have
to search Hawk's house. I think he's
hiding Freddie's money. We have to
return it and end this.

TOM

I was put on 30 day probation today.

ELLIE

Probation? What for?

TOM

Angel told George about me, I think.
Somehow he knows.

(V.O.)

Ooops, I think I should have said
that to myself.

ELLIE

Who's Angel?

TOM

Angel is...Ellie, you were right. I
never should have moved us here.

ELLIE

Not now, Tom.

(grabs him and pulls)

You have to come with me.

TOM

NO!

(jerks away)

Whatever you have to do, go do it.
You've come this far without me.

He goes to the door and opens it. Slowly he turns back but
can't face her.

TOM

What I have to do is just as
important.

ELLIE

Wait, Tom! I have to tell you---

Tom shuts the door softly, leaving Ellie feeling very much
alone, clutching the door.

EXT. HOUSE, SCHOOL BUS PULLS UP, LATE AFTERNOON.

Debber is waiting for the kids in place of Ellie. She takes Billy and Jodi back to her house.

Billy looks over at his house with a worried frown.

EXT. ROADSIDE TAVERN, FAR NORTH PART OF TOWN, NIGHT

INT. LOW CLASS BEER BAR

Tom sits alone, drinking. Beside him is a gross looking ashtray of gum and cigarettes. He has the woozy look of someone who's feeling no pain.

Angel walks in.

Tom sees her in the glass behind the bar. She gets appreciative stares from other men but walks up to Tom. She wraps an arm around his neck and leans close.

ANGEL

Let Angel make your dreams come true.

TOM

You'll remove the hex?

ANGEL

Will you believe me if I swear on my own grave?

Tom grabs her hand and jerks her into the chair next to him, twisting her wrist.

TOM

If anything happens to my wife I will personally pluck every hair out of your head. One by one. And you won't feel it, you know why?

ANGEL

I said I would swear on my own grave.

He drops her wrist.

ANGEL

Trust me. You have to.

She leans to him and licks his neck.

ANGEL

Come on.

Tom slams down his drink, throws some money on the bar and strides outside. Angel follows. He lights up and points out his old beatup Chevy.

Angel shakes her head and points out her car, a newer model Thunderbird. She gets behind the driver's seat and starts the car.

Tom looks around. He gets in next to her and shuts the door.

She drives off, squealing.

EXT. HAWK'S TRAILER, EDGE OF TOWN, NIGHT

The small 4x4 slowly passes the trailer, and parks down the street a block away.

INT. 4X4

Ellie clutches the wheel tightly.

ELLIE

I hope she's not watching his house.
Please let her be far far away.

EXT. CHURCH, NIGHT

Small, white, with a gray misty fog around it.

INT. CHURCH

Mildred is alone in a front pew, praying.

TRAILER

A block away, Ellie, dressed in black, gets out.

There are no lights on in the trailer.

ELLIE (V.O.)

Gotta be careful. No backing out. How
will my kids grow up into decent
people with parents in prison?

Ellie darts from tree to tree, behind garbage bins, laying flat where there's nothing to hide behind.

She crawls along the ground until she gets to the next tree. She gets closer and closer to the trailer, and then disappears.

She reappears at the side of the house, trying to look through a crack in the boarded up window.

She pulls out Hawk's key. The address is a match.

EXT. NATURE PRESERVE, SECLUDED, NIGHT

The Thunderbird is parked hidden away.

Tom pokes his head up and grabs for the window.

Angel grabs his head and pulls it down again.

TOM (O.S.)

I can't stay...can't do this.

ANGEL (O.S.)

You can...you must.

TOM (O.S.)

Don't do that...

ANGEL (O.S.)

I can't stop now.

Car rocks again.

INT. CHURCH

Mildred is fervently praying, clutching an icepick between her hands.

MILDRED

I set Freddy up. I wrote the damned
blackmail letter! John couldn't
spell. And then John hides the money
and cuts Hawk's tongue out! How
could a son do that to his mother?

INT. TRAILER

SOUND OF KEY IN LOCK. The door opens.

Ellis scoots inside and shuts the door, throwing her body against it.

She holds up a flashlight and flicks the beam on.

EXT. CHURCH

Mildred walks out, headed for Hawk's trailer with the icepick.

INT. TRAILER

Flashlight beaming around a squallid surroundings. Beam lands on a bag of opened bean cans, covered with flies.

ELLIE

Oh, Hawk. This is how you lived?

Ellie sees several drawers and a few closed cupboards. The beam quickly passes over a white envelope.

A BLOCK AWAY

Mildred walks past the rental 4x4. She stops and looks into

it. She walks on but stops again, limping.

MILDRED

Oh Lord, haven't I suffered enough?

She leans against the 4x4, takes a shoe off and dumps out the stone.

INSIDE TRAILER

Ellie finishes digging in another drawer and shuts it, leans against the countertop.

ELLIE (V.O.)

If I only knew what I was looking for.

Her beam catches envelope and moves on, then jerks back.

Ellie picks up the envelope.

ELLIE (V.O.)

Hello?

She peers with the beam of light at the envelope. Words written - 'to the nice lady from the graveyard'.

ELLIE

Oh, Hawk, after the way I treated you?

She wipes at an eye, and starts to look into envelope but a sudden noise makes her look up.

Her beam points into a cracked window, where Mildred's eye is pressed, looking horrified.

ELLIE (V.O.)

The door!

She tucks the envelope in her bra and runs to the door, but Mildred bursts in and leaps on top of her, SCREAMING.

EXT. TAVERN, NIGHT

The steamy Thunderbird drives back into the parking lot and stops next to the old Chevy. The door opens and Tom stumbles out. He appears barely conscious. He backs away and the car's headlights come on.

Angel drives off into the night.

Tom takes his cigarettes out, puts one in his mouth and tries to tuck his shirt in.

He takes the cigarette back out and wipes his mouth. He flings the cigarette to the ground and stomps on it, throws his pack to the ground and stomps, nearly losing his balance.

He staggers to his car and gets in, puts his head back, and promptly falls asleep.

INT. TRAILER

Ellie, on the floor, struggles to push Mildred off.

The flashlight, laying on the floor, illuminates their struggle.

Mildred gets hold of Ellie's hair and tries to bang her head, but Ellie pinches Mildred's breasts and pushes her away. They roll around on the floor punching at each other. Ellie chokes Mildred and Mildred goes limp.

Ellie springs up to the door but Mildred grabs her ankles and leaps on her again. They both fall out of the trailer, rolling onto the grass.

Mildred bites her ankle. Ellie screams, kicks viciously, getting Mildred in the nose, causing a ferocious nosebleed.

Ellie gets to her feet and runs again, with Mildred on her heels.

Ellie doesn't take the time to get in the 4x4 but instead keeps running down the street.

Mildred finally stops, clutching at her heart, and staggers back to the trailer.

The door is open. She goes inside.

EXT. LOCAL SERVICE STATION, NIGHT

Ellie is in the rest room, cleaning her face.

ELLIE

I beat up an old lady! How could I do something like that?

(holds envelope up)

This envelope holds my future, even more than Freddy's past. Whoever he is. As soon as I get me and Tom out of trouble, she can have it back.

(sudden realization)

Hell no, she's going to jail, she killed Hawk!

She opens the envelope.

ELLIE

Damn....

Ellie pulls out a single sheet of paper, with faded writing. And another key.

She reaches over and turns off the light.

INT. TRAILER

Mildred is searching.

MILDRED

Where's the money! Where's the
GODDAM MONEY!?

EXT. TRAILER

Shakes violently as she searches and screeches.

INT. HOUSE, KITCHEN, DAWN

Ellie, wearing exercise pants and a loose shirt, is blending
eggs. She looks worn but alert.

KNOCK at the back door startles her.

Hesitant, she goes to the door and peeks out the door
curtain. She pauses, nods, and opens the door.

Kansas stands looking properly solemn.

KANSAS

Ellie Pederson?

ELLIE

Well. How's the investigation going?
(V.O.)
I should give him the envelope. End
this right here.

KANSAS

I want you to understand this is
strictly procedure, you're not being
charged with anything or harrassed.

ELLIE

(V.O.)
I risked my life for that envelope.
(aloud)
I don't feel harrassed.

KANSAS

Good. Ma'am, our department received
a call late yesterday---

ELLIE

Who did you say you were with?

KANSAS

State police, ma'am. It's not an FBI
matter.

(wistful)

Not yet.

(consults his notes)

---regarding a white Ford Taurus that showed up in a body shop with a right smashed up fender, and oddly enough, a left broken headlight.

ELLIE (V.O.)

(shock)

Auto repair called you? What about

patient confidentiality?

(aloud)

Yes, I was driving to the store yesterday when a bunny jumped in front of my car, I had to swerve and hit the ditch.

Kansas looks up from his notes.

ELLIE

Don't people swerve for bunnies around here?

KANSAS

As a matter of record, ma'am, we discovered you took out a rental vehicle. Can you tell me where that vehicle is at this moment?

ELLIE

Ah, I don't think so, see, my husband and I met for dinner, and I guess I got a little drunk because he drove me home and we left the car there, and I just can't remember where right now. My husband's still asleep, but when he gets up I'll go retrieve the car. Why, did that hit somebody too?

KANSAS

Where were you between the hours of 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. on September the 24th?

ELLIE

What day was that?

KANSAS

Last Saturday.

ELLIE

Here. And golfing. My neighbor took care of the kids. You can ask her.

KANSAS

So you went golfing? No stops

between here and golfing?

ELLIE

No, no stopping, none. Well, for the lights, of course.

(V.O.)

What difference does it make - he knows - but he doesn't get me until I'm ready!

Kansas looks up as though hearing her thoughts but instead sees Tom, wearing his robe loose at the waist so his underwear is visible

Tom glowers at Kansas from the doorway.

KANSAS

Good morning, Mr. Pederson. I may be back to question the two of you again, so I advise you not to leave town until this investigation has wrapped up. Thanks for your time.

He nods at Ellie and leaves.

Tom collapses at the table.

TOM

They're close, aren't they?

Ellie collapses next to him.

ELLIE

Yes, Tom, but I'm close, too.

(pulls envelope from shirt)

This is what Hawk wanted me to have - see?

Tom sees staggered handwriting.

TOM

Good.

(V.O.)

Did I?

He hangs his head, feels lousy with a hangover.

ELLIE

Tom, where did you go last night? It's your fault we hid the body, and I fought with the murderer---.

TOM

My fault!?

(gets to his feet)

You think this is MY fault?

Ellie turns away, unable to answer, but she's just as angry as he is.

TOM

I get this great new job in a nice little town and all I get are complaints! So I take a friendly smile in an unexpected place, and it's my fault?

He turns to leave, but she grabs his arm.

ELLIE

What did you do last night?

TOM

I don't know and that's the truth. Now leave me alone. I have a jail sentence to pack for.

He walks away from her.

Still angry, she picks up the scrambled eggs in the plastic bowl as though ready to throw at him, and in a smooth move turns and flings it at the wall above the stove.

BILLY (O.S.)

Mom?

Hearing her son, Ellie covers her eyes briefly to regain control.

ELLIE (V.O.)

I'll just tell them it slipped.

(aloud)

Yeah, hey, breakfast is almost ready.

She gets out the cereal for the kids.

EXT. MAIN STREET

Ellie drives the 4x4, holding the envelope, watching the buildings carefully, driving slow.

ELLIE (V.O.)

A three digit number written in the envelope and that's it. He doesn't have a mailbox, so I'm playing a hunch.

She pulls up outside post office.

ELLIE (V.O.)

Three numbers and two small letters that could be a p & an o. This piece of paper's been fingered a lot - like

he worried over whatever it is that
got him killed. Poor Hawk.

Holding the keys tightly, she walks inside.

INT. POLICE STATION

Kansas walks up to a desk sergeant and sits on his desk.

SERGEANT

What'd you turn up?

KANSAS

Couple specks of blood, all right.
Could be hers. Could be someone
else's.

SERGEANT

You trying for a match to the
Indian's?

KANSAS

Are you kidding? I'm betting my
first born on it.

Kansas picks up the phone.

EXT. TECH SCHOOL

A cab pulls up and Tom gets out.

Angel runs over to him and grabs his arm.

ANGEL

You didn't thank me for last night.

TOM

(grits teeth)

Unless you want me fired and off
campus today, I suggest you walk into
school behind me. Well behind me.

Angel, stunned by the tone of his voice, stops and watches
him walk inside.

ANGEL

(softly)

The hex is lifted.

EXT. POST OFFICE PARKING LOT

Ellie runs out of the post office, as though she'd just
robbed it.

She sits inside the 4x4, staring at an old piece of paper
with pieces of tape stuck to it and two smaller keys.
Remains of two words 'OLID BO'. The rest have rubbed off.

A # is fairly legible, '12'.

ELLIE

What's this? More keys? Will this never end?

She puts her head back against seat.

ELLIE

Olid bo. What the hell's an olid bo? Wait, he said something before he died. Owl. The bird? Or Owl. Oh, it

could have been an expression of pain, I don't know. But there must be a place in town that has these letters. If there isn't, the trail is gone and Hawk died for nothing.

EXT. MAIN STREET, DAY

Ellie drives down the street in the rental 4x4, slowly, looking at the names of the business. She passes one -

HOLIDAY BOWL

and keeps going, but at a light looks behind her. She puts on her blinker.

EXT. PARKING LOT, HOLIDAY BOWL, MIDDAY

The rental 4x4 in lot, no other cars.

Ellie, sitting behind the wheel, checks her watch, puts her head back, closes her eyes, and wraps arms tight to stay warm.

INT. TECH SCHOOL, TOM'S CLASSROOM, DAY

He writes on the blackboard in front of his class.

KANSAS (O.S.)

Mr. Pederson?

Tom sees Kansas with two cops facing him.

KANSAS

You are under arrest for the murder of Hawk Running Wild.

TOM

Wait a minute....

One cop turns him around and slaps cuffs on him.

KANSAS

Save it for your lawyer. Take him out.

Angel runs to him and draws a symbol on his chest.

ANGEL

Don't worry, darling, you are
protected with my love!

She sits again.

KANSAS

Who was that?

TOM

A pest. Want her phone number?

KANSAS

I'll pass.

Kansas sees students watching them.

KANSAS

He could still prove his innocence.
Ah, class dismissed.

He grins, as though he's always wanted to say that.

They walk down the hall, passing George.

GEORGE

Caught for seducing a student,
Pederson? You know what this does to
your probation?

TOM

Think your wife can take on another
client?

George jogs to walk alongside them.

GEORGE

Sure. I'll give her a call. What
are the charges? Seducing a student?

KANSAS

Murder.

GEORGE

Wow. Guess the seducing thing can
wait then. One problem at a time.
Mary can handle murder, you betcha.
Don't know if she's had many chances.
But she's a good sport. She'll give
it a try. Are you guilty?

He watches as Tom is tucked into police car.

EXT. HOLIDAY BOWL PARKING LOT, MIDDAY

Another car drives into the lot.

Ellie jerks up straight, looking around. She watches a man get out, unlock the front door, walk inside.

She runs out and tries the door, but it's still locked. Hours posted - 1:00 p.m. Tuesday, Thursday. She looks at her watch and leans against the door.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Tom is led in, his belongings taken by the cell clerk as Kansas watches. Tom is shown to a room and given orange clothing to put on.

Dressed in orange he is taken to a cell. The Cellmate (from first scene), is hanging on the bars, watching.

Tom stands in the open cell door, unable to move. Kansas gives him a gentle push and the doors clang shut behind him. Tom sits and squeezes eyes shut.

The cellmate shakes his shoulder.

CELLMATE

Hey buddy. Got a smoke?

Tom groans and lays back.

INT. HOLIDAY BOWL, EARLY AFTERNOON

Ellie walks into the bar area, dark, empty.

Ghostly images of Hawk and John materialize sitting in chairs, watching her as she moves slowly toward the alleys.

Ellie doesn't know what she's looking for but looks at the note and around.

JOHN

Why did you give her the money?

HAWK

I couldn't use it. Couldn't get my tongue fixed without you. I figured she'd do the right thing with it. What did you go and die for?

JOHN

Hey, I didn't expect it neither. You know, my first dead thought was that you poisoned me?

They walk past her to the lockers.

HAWK

Nah. I didn't hold nothing against

you. Never could find the rest of my tongue you got on ice, though.

JOHN

I had it stuck in the back of ma's freezer and she ate it. Couldn't bring myself to tell ya.

HAWK

Guess it's a good thing you died, then.

JOHN

Yeah.

HAWK

I shoulda given your ma the money but you made me swear. Then I started hating her. Sorry.

JOHN

Nah, it's okay. I hated her too. Why not just give it to your people?

HAWK

I don't gamble.

JOHN

That's right.

HAWK

Look how nice she is.

(laughs)

You should have seen the way she fought your mother. It was---

His laughter fades as he sees John staring at him.

HAWK

That's right, you were watching too.

They follow Ellie and at one point she walks through them, shivers, and then sees the lockers.

JOHN

She's never bowled.

HAWK

Bowling's just a game. She's got a deep soul, just has to learn how to reach it.

JOHN

There's more to you than I thought.

HAWK

Always is more to people than we

think. Too bad we gotta die to learn it.

They start to fade away as she studies the locker numbers.

JOHN (O.S.)

Come on, we got another life waiting. Do you think she'll have any of our

money left by the time I catch up to her?

HAWK (O.S.)

Hah! You have a lot to learn about being born again, friend.

Ellie stops and opens an empty locker.

ELLIE (V.O.)

What are these for? They shower after bowling?

She looks further down and finds #12. Hand shaking, she inserts a key and turns.

INT. COUNTY JAIL CELL

Tom hasn't moved. The cellmate is staring at him.

Kansas comes up, cup of coffee in one hand, computer mouse in the other.

KANSAS

Hey, Pederson. We're trying to locate your wife. Any ideas?

TOM

No. She's not in on this. Just me.

KANSAS

Sorry, that's not up to you.

He turns away, but turns back again, holding the mouse out.

KANSAS

You wouldn't know anything about fixing computer gadgets, would you?

TOM

Mouse? Probably dirty. Get the ball out, clean it with some rubbing alcohol and a Q-Tip.

KANSAS

Really? Hey, thanks.

He leaves.

CELLMATE

You don't have to say anything. Save
it for your lawyer.

Tom hangs his head. There's nowhere to escape an annoying
cellmate.

INT. HOLIDAY BOWL, AT THE LOCKERS, DAY

Ellie slowly pulls out the bowling bag.

ELLIE (V.O.)

An old bag with a lock. Who locks a
bowling ball in a bag? Maybe if it's
solid gold. Bag's heavy enough.

(holds up final key)

I'll bet this one fits.

She takes the bag over to a bench and sits. She unlocks it,
but notices the manager staring at her.

She locks it again and stands.

ELLIE

(loud)

Gosh, look at the time! I guess
playing...bowl will have to wait!

She runs out, tightly clutching the bag.

EXT. BOWLING ALLEY

Ellie climbs into the car and makes sure all the doors are
locked. Slowly she opens the bowling bag, peers inside and
shuts it again quickly.

ELLIE

WHOA! Okay.

After a pause, she opens it again.

ELLIE

Hawk, why hide all this money? Did
you hate that old lady this much?
Mildred must have blackmailed this
Freddie fellow and somehow Hawk and
that dead John got it away from her.
No wonder she was frantic. But what
would an old lady want with all this
money? Enough to kill for? We'll
just have to get her arrested and
find out!

(shuts bag)

Maybe Hawk has relatives who could
use this money. I know we could. We
could take our time, plan a move

together, not worry so much about
taking the best offer that comes
along...

She locks the bag, sets it carefully on the floor, and starts
the car.

Sits, looking alone and lost, behind the wheel of the 4x4.

EXT. POLICE STATION

Ellie stands in front of the police station with the bag.

ELLIE

I hope this helps free us. But right
now, I'm not sure how.

She walks up the steps and goes inside.

Jodi and Billy are sitting in chairs in front of glass cased
office area with Joan.

JODI

Mama!

They run into Ellie's arms.

BILLY

Mom, where have you been? We get
home from school yesterday and you
weren't home, and then you came home
real late, and we were asleep when
dad came home and then dad got us up
to give us cereal because you were
gone and there was egg mess dripping
on the stove and dad didn't know how
it got there and now dad is in jail.
Did you have a fight?

ELLIE

Yes, Billy, but we'll get over it.
Debber, would you stay a little
longer?

DEBBER

You betcha. I want to know how this
all comes out. This is almost as
good as Chelsea on Tomorrow is
Another Day.

ELLIE

Thanks.

(turns to police
behind glass)

Hello. I'm Ellie Pederson.

Kansas comes in through the waiting room door.

KANSAS

Well, here's our bunny rights
activist.

ELLIE

I wanted to tell you the truth. But
without me you wouldn't have this.

She hands him the satchel.

Kansas, puzzled, opens it and sees the money. He whistles
lightly and closes it again.

KANSAS

I suppose you think bringing this in
on your own accord makes you look
innocent. Don't have to answer that,
by the way. But I'd like to hear off
the record why you think your help
was so invaluable.

ELLIE

Pardon me for asking, but you're not
from around here, are you.

KANSAS

(surprised)
Born and raised, why?

ELLIE

Really? Hey, that's great! Sorry,
um...You weren't there when Hawk
died. You weren't at the graveyard.
You didn't talk to the old lady.
Believe me, we didn't kill Hawk. The
old lady did, and she did it for this
money. Money that drove her crazy
because Hawk wouldn't let her have it.

KANSAS

Ah, you must mean the old lady we
found dead in Hawk's trailer.

ELLIE

Dead?!

KANSAS

Heart attack, by the looks of it.
Mildred McDonald. An old Escanaba
beauty queen. She was tearing Hawk's
trailer apart.

ELLIE

How could you tell?

KANSAS

We had to pry his mattress out of her hand. You could be right, she wanted that money. But we can hardly accuse her of murder now.

ELLIE

Wait - you can't get her, so you'll settle for us? That's not fair!

KANSAS

Neither is moving a murder victim from a crime scene.

(beat)

There was a small blood stain in your Taurus that you so conveniently smashed. And it matched our dead friend's blood, right down to his red corpuscles.

ELLIE

We were scared! Tom was...

(V.O.)

Tom wasn't thinking clearly - because of Angel?! Who is Angel?

Kansas sees she has clammed up.

KANSAS

(snaps handcuffs on)

Smart lady, save it for your lawyer.

Ellie holds her cuffed arms out for her kids. They both scramble close for a hug.

ELLIE

Joan's got to take you home now. But don't worry, we'll be home before you know it. This is just...a misunderstanding.

She kisses them, trying not to cry.

Debber leads the kids out, both are quiet, tearful.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE HOLDING CELLS

Scene now looks identical to opening scene.

Ellie is holding hand out to Tom and the cellmate is pushing on his shoulder.

ELLIE

Tom?

He stands - it seems only to get away from cellmate - and turns to Ellie. Cellmate makes kissing noises behind him.

TOM

What?

ELLIE

I really, honestly never expected anything like this.

TOM

I know. I didn't either.

ELLIE

I didn't give this move a chance.

TOM

Well, that's true. I have to tell you - I was beginning to hate you.

ELLIE

I guess I wanted you to. I thought that would make all this go away. Remember all those dreams we had when we got married? Where did they go?

Tom remembers Angel, and winces.

TOM

I screwed up too. If I had told you from the beginning how nervous I was about this move, instead of...

ELLIE

Instead of what?

They draw closer, holding hands through the bars. They are talking again.

INT. COURTROOM, PRELIMINARY HEARING, A WEEK LATER, DAY

There are a smattering of people for the hearing; the kids with Debber & Frank, the arresting officers and Kansas, the prosecutor conferring with his secretary, George sitting with Debber.

SMALL ROOM

Mary is sitting with Tom when paralegal enters with Ellie. He is still in prisoner orange and she is in street clothes.

Tom and Ellie embrace. They had been separated for a week and honestly missed each other.

ELLIE

You okay?

TOM

The kids needed you. I survived.

ELLIE

They miss you. I'm not sure I survived. I'm glad they took your word that I'm innocent, but leaving you here---

TOM

Ellie, about that night---

ELLIE

I got a job. At a bakery. If you're not convicted.

Mary, studying papers, comes between them.

MARY

Now don't worry, I've looked through your statements thoroughly and there's not a discrepancy to be found. Hiding the body is a federal offense, but with extenuating circumstances we should be able to get you off with a fine.

ELLIE

What extenuating circumstances?

Tom looks ashamed.

MARY

One of Tom's students - he believes put a hex on him. To get rid of you, Ellie. That's why he was scared, and hid the body.

Ellie, not surprised, nods.

ELLIE

Will the judge go for it?

TOM

Got a better idea?

ELLIE

Not me, I'll only get you in worse trouble. Freddy could get us off the hook if only we could figure out who he is - or was. I know he must have been rich. And since blackmail worked - maybe a politician.

MARY

We'll try to locate him if this goes to trial, but it won't be easy. Don't worry, we'll do the best for you. Come on, time to go in.

INT. COURTROOM, PRELIMINARY HEARING, DAY

Mary enters with Tom and Ellie and they take their seats.

ELLIE (V.O.)

Please let us get off. I'll stop trying to force happiness and just be happy. I'll stop searching for who I am and just be me. I'll even stop

talking to myself and just listen to others! Please let him get off.

Tom clutches her hands and they smile at each other.

TOM (V.O.)

If only she had kept the money, we'd be in Canada by now. It's not very far. What we could have done with a hundred grand.

Ellie looks behind her and over to Mary.

ELLIE

I'm surprised there isn't any media hype around a murder and all that money.

MARY

Me, too. Kansas told me this morning that the governor had the media locked out. And I had my hair done for this.

ELLIE

Bummer.

MARY

You betcha.

ELLIE

Why would the governor---

BAILIFF

(standing)

All rise.

Everyone stands.

JUDGE ALLIE SMITH walks in from her chambers and sits. She rubs her head before sitting down. She is attractive and heavysset, late-40s, and dark-skinned.

ELLIE (V.O.)

Wow. She's black...

JUDGE

(abrupt manner)

We have a hearing on the matter of
the state vs. Ellie and Tom Pederson.
Where are they?

MARY

I represent Ellie and Tom Pederson.

They stand and Tom nods briefly, Ellie waves.

JUDGE

Ah, you're a nice looking couple.
Crime happens with the best of 'em.

(cranky)

But if you can't win me over here,
you'll stand trial.

PROSECUTOR

Your honor, if it please the court,
I would like to present the case on
behalf of Hawk Running Wild, deceased.

JUDGE

Hawk who?

PROSECUTOR

Running Wild. He's American Indian.

JUDGE

Indian? Well, then, we can't hold a
hearing. This is an international
matter. He's from a sovereign state.

PROSECUTOR

Already cleared that up, your honor.
Didn't happen on casino or
reservation land. He's represented
here as a private U.S. citizen.

JUDGE

Not on reservation land? Is that
possible?

PROSECUTOR

I conferred with Governor Watson on
this, your honor, and he agrees. Hawk
hasn't had anything to do with the
tribe in years. Was registered to
vote and paid taxes on private land.
We at first thought he was---

JUDGE

Point made.

(sits back)

Forgive me if I'm abrupt but I have
a headache and can't take any aspirin
because of the time of the month.

(beat)

Wait a minute, why is Fred Watson interested in this?

PROSECUTOR

Why, this is his old hometown, your honor. I'm sure there's nothing more to it than that.

As he talks, Ellie realizes there is more to it.

ELLIE

Fred? Freddie!

MARY

What?

Judge and Prosecutor frown at Mary and Ellie.

Mary shushes Ellie, but Ellie's bouncing with excitement.

PROSECUTOR

(continues reading his notes)

The victim was unemployed. He was mute because his tongue got cut off.

JUDGE

Euyhh. Is that part of this hearing?

PROSECUTOR

Ah, no, your honor. Nothing to show it has any bearing...

ELLIE

(to Mary)

Yes, it does. If he could have told me...

MARY

Shhh. Save it for trial.

JUDGE

(rubs head)

Then kindly refrain from mentioning it.

PROSECUTOR

Sorry, your honor. Perhaps we should recess---

JUDGE

Are you calling anyone to the stand? Or are we here just for fun?

The Prosecutor steps back.

PROSECUTOR

I'd like to call Detective Kansas to the stand.

Kansas takes the stand, is sworn in by the court clerk, and takes a seat. The Prosecutor takes position in front of him.

PROSECUTOR

You have arrested Tom and Ellie Pederson on the charge of murder. What led you to believe in their possible guilt?

KANSAS

A white car, a blood sample, and the acts of the party themselves.

TOM (V.O.)

I thought the hex was gone.

He pulls gum out of his pocket, but Ellie frowns at him and he puts it away again.

PROSECUTOR

Please explain for the judge.

KANSAS

A white car without plates was seen at the graveyard around the time of established death. A trace of blood was found on the car seat.

JUDGE

Wait a minute. Had you secured a warrant to search their vehicle prior to their arrest?

KANSAS

Wasn't necessary, your honor. Because of a deliberate act on the part of the defendant, the car was in a public lot, waiting for repair. The owner of the property called us and allowed access.

JUDGE

Ah.

(looks at Tom)

Not too good at this, are you.

ELLIE

(stands)

I object!

JUDGE

You can't object. Is this your first

time?

(Ellie nods and Mary
pulls her down)

You'll get the hang of it. Counsel,
obstruct your client.

(to Kansas)

This deliberate act have anything to
do with their bizarre behavior?

KANSAS

Mrs. Pederson claims to have swerved

for a bunny. But I believe she
deliberately drove the car into the
ditch to get it off the road, knowing
it could point at their guilt.

MARY

(stands)

Would the prosecutor like to explain
why she would do that, since she had
already spoken to the arresting
officer hereto sworn?

Ellie looks up at her in awe.

JUDGE

Good question.

PROSECUTOR

I believe that information will
become clear at the trial.

JUDGE

Continue.

PROSECUTOR

(to Kansas)

So on the charge of murder, would you
please state clearly the facts you
have on the defendents?

KANSAS

They moved the body from the scene,
which they admit to being their front
door, left it at the graveyard, and
went about their business without
reporting that a murder had taken
place. This offense is nearly as
grave as that of murder itself.

PROSECUTOR

Reason for the murder, and subsequent
hiding of the body?

KANSAS

(takes a breath)

To retrieve the money.

PROSECUTOR

And so, your honor, with these facts placed before us---

JUDGE

(impatient)

I've heard enough. Tom and Ellie Pederson, you are hereby ordered to stand trial for murder. The date

will be set and you will be notified.

TOM (V.O.)

Just our luck to get a judge with PMS.

Ellie leaps to her feet.

ELLIE

No! Don't we get to tell you our side?

MARY

Your Honor, I can show just cause why these folks were frightened at the time. If you'll listen, we'll save the taxpayers' money on a trial.

She tries to get Ellie to sit, without success.

JUDGE

Really? This isn't the place for the plea bargain, but---

ELLIE

I know why Governor Watson is interested in this case. I know where the money came from. The old lady told me she blackmailed Freddie, who was rich and running for office. Governor Fred Watson!

PROSECUTOR

That is an outrageous accusation that must go no further than this room!

JUDGE

(to prosecutor)

Why?

ELLIE

Why is he locking the media out of this? He doesn't want this to get out. I don't think you do either.

She points at the prosecutor, making it look like he's on

trial.

PROSECUTOR

Your honor, where the money came from is not an issue and never has to be made an issue. It has no bearing---

The judge stands, as talking erupts. She waves her arms and talking dies abruptly.

JUDGE

Mr. Barnes, I think you and the governor may have some explaining to do. I'll meet both sides of this farce in my chambers. Now.

Ellie and Tom solemnly follow Mary, the Judge, Prosecutor and Kansas into the judge's chamber.

EXT. HOUSE, ON PORCH SWING, NIGHT

Ellie and Tom are sitting snugly close, looking up at the stars.

ELLIE

So we're staying?

TOM

You want to?

ELLIE

Thanks for asking. What about Angel?

TOM

Did I ever tell you she was part gypsy? Never can stay anywhere for too long. It's in her blood.

He laughs, but Ellie just looks up at him.

TOM

About Angel...

Ellie smiles suddenly and looks up at the sky again.

ELLIE

Look at the stars, Tom, don't talk.

TOM

You know?

ELLIE

Enough. Imagine blackmailing him over a rigged beauty contest.

TOM

It's a crazy world.

ELLIE

I don't think we should call Debber
and Frank rednecks anymore.

TOM

I didn't know we did.

ELLIE

I haven't talked them into signing my
anti-Columbus Day petition yet but
give me time.

TOM

A petition?

ELLIE

I'm glad we're staying, Tom.

TOM

Really?

ELLIE

As long as it isn't forever. But
while we're here I'm going to work on
that gap.

TOM

You got a job at a clothing store?

ELLIE

My identity gap. If only my birth
mother had left me some kind of
legacy. Will you read my article?

TOM

On what?

ELLIE

On what makes minorities racist.

TOM

You're not racist - or a minority.

ELLIE

How about a fruitcake who can't tell
the difference between a ghost and a
normal human?

TOM

I'm not fond of fruitcake - be a hot
fudge sundae instead.

He licks her face, she laughs, and they kiss, passionately.

ELLIE

I spent so much time developing my Indian side I forgot my soul has no side. So now I've got to find out who I really am. That's going to take some time.

TOM

OOkay, but...we're still raising the kids Catholic, aren't we?

ELLIE

You raise 'em Catholic. I'll raise 'em better.

Yeah, right. Wait, your identity research isn't going to take you near a graveyard, is it?

ELLIE

Of course not. Unless I happen to find where one of my past lives is buried.

Tom takes out a piece of gum and pops it in his mouth.

ELLIE

What are you doing?

TOM

I can't handle all this honesty. I'm going to keep some thoughts to myself before I get into trouble---

Ellie grabs him and kisses him hard, spits out his gum, and kisses him again.

As the moon breaks free of clouds and lights up the keys she now wears around her neck.

