

# **"Pleading Insanity"**

an original screenplay by Sam Nicolas

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"PLEADING INSANITY"

FADE IN:

A white STRAITJACKET on a blurred, multi-colored background. Suspended in air.

The straitjacket, empty and limp, falls onto a white, tiled floor.

INT. MENTAL HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY

A long corridor. Antiseptic. Every 10 feet, metal doors with small windows. Four

BLACK CASTERS

roll on the floor. A hospital orderly's

SHOES

step behind the casters. The casters roll beside the straitjacket lying on the floor. A thick

HAND

picks up the straitjacket.

TINY JOHNSON (male, 30), a burly hospital orderly, tucks the straitjacket under his arm. He pushes the cart forward again. On the cart are small paper cups with medicine pills.

Johnson stops at the next metal door. He looks into the room on the other side of the door.

INT. MENTAL HOSPITAL SHOCK THERAPY ROOM - DAY

A single surgical table. High-powered operating lights. White sheets. Indentations indicate someone was lying on the table not long ago. An EKG machine. Operational lights are lit.

Dials. A voltage meter and two cables with electrodes on the ends. On the device a sign: "WARNING High Voltage. Bodily Injury or Death may result from Failure to follow Manufacturer's Instructions. Do Not Remove This Label."

In the door to the room, a small viewing window. On the glass of the window the back side of:

ELECTROCONVULSIVE THERAPY (E.S.T)

Johnson's face suddenly appears in the window. The metal door opens. Johnson looks around the room. He shuts off the EKG machine Then he turns off the surgery lights.

EXT. INTERSTATE HIGHWAY 80 NEAR VACAVILLE, CA - DAY

A summer morning. Moisture rises from the hot black pavement. Traffic is fairly light. A Fairfield Police van travels north in the slow lane of this six-lane freeway. There are passengers inside the van.

INT. FAIRFIELD POLICE VAN - DAY

BUDDY WARD (21) sits alone in the middle of the twelve-passenger panel van, his hair matted, his eyes red and swollen. Tears stain his cheeks. He stares out the window.

A meshed, metal screen separates Buddy and the Police Officers, EARL (30) and RUSTY (28) sitting in front.

EARL

Rusty, I've seen this kind of thing before. The guy's nuts.

RUSTY

Perps can do some pretty wicked things. Not every one of them is psycho.

EARL

But Psychos kill weird. There was one guy in New York I read about who killed a woman and then cut her open and climbed inside.

RUSTY

Earl, that's sick.

EARL

It happens. A regular killer, he cuts your throat. Heat of passion murder, maybe five or six whacks after you're dead. But the guy who's lost his marbles, he stabs you three hundred times trying to kill the imaginary things all over your body.

RUSTY

That's really sick. The kid is slow, but I didn't think he was crazy.

EARL

Yeah. He was always friendly to me.

RUSTY

Maybe the fumes at the truck stop got to him.

EARL

It's too bad. Everybody liked him. I never thought he would go off.

The Fairfield Police van approaches an off-ramp marked "CALIFORNIA STATE PRISON, CALIFORNIA STATE MEDICAL FACILITY, VACAVILLE, THIS EXIT."

RUSTY

Here we go, Wacko Central.

Tears again well up in Buddy's eyes as he sees where the van is now heading. Buddy tries to ease the discomfort of the straitjacket. The effort is useless. He sits still again, moving only to balance himself. The van turns off the freeway and begins to slow.

EXT. CALIFORNIA MEDICAL FACILITY AT VACAVILLE (CMF) - DAY

AERIAL view of this California State Corrections facility. A 600-acre, multi-building complex houses over 3,000 mental patients incarcerated for criminal acts. High, secure fences extend the perimeter.

The Fairfield Police van pulls up to a gate in the fence.

The gate opens.

EXT. CMF MAIN BUILDING ENTRANCE - DAY

The Fairfield Police van parked at the patient unloading entrance. Rusty and Earl help Buddy maintain his balance as he gets out of the van. Johnson, the hospital orderly, and a CORRECTIONS OFFICER, greet the Police Officers.

INT. CMF MAIN BUILDING - VISITORS' AREA - DAY

Classical music bellows through the overhead loudspeakers. CORRECTIONS OFFICERS move about.

An INMATE, head shaven, in handcuffs and leg-irons.

ANOTHER INMATE with a lobotomy scar.

TWO INMATES sit staring at one another, rocking.

Johnson escorts Buddy through the visitors' area. Buddy is frightened by what he sees and hears. Johnson takes a two-way radio from his hip and calls in to the security office.

An announcement interrupts.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)  
Opening gate 17. Dr. Monson to  
Evaluation, please. Dr. Monson.

A BUZZER sounds.

A metal door opens at the rear of the reception area. Above the door a sign: Gate 17.

Buddy SHUFFLES toward the door.

INT. CMF EVALUATION ROOM - DAY

An 8 X 8 room. Padded walls. Thick. White. The floor is padded also. The cell is empty. There is one metal door to the room. The door opens.

The soothing, classical music flows in from the hallway.

Buddy stands in the hallway outside the room. The Corrections Officer holds the leg irons and chains that were on Buddy.

Johnson holds Buddy's straitjacket.

JOHNSON

Where did they get this?  
I ain't seen one like this before.  
Don't worry though, we'll save it  
for you. It's got your name on it.

Johnson motions for Buddy to step inside.

JOHNSON

Okay, in you go.

Buddy doesn't move.

Johnson shoves him in.

Buddy trips on the thick, padded floor of the cell and falls face first onto the ground.

JOHNSON

Welcome to Hell, Buddy.  
Dr. Monson's private hell.

Johnson closes the door. The music stops. The door locks. Buddy turns onto his side. He curls into a

FETAL POSITION.

He SCREAMS once, then sobs.

INT. WARD HOUSE - DOWNSTAIRS GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

A FLASHBACK TO THE MURDER SCENE, IN BLACK AND WHITE:

There is a LIGHTNING STORM outside. It is RAINING hard.

Two white bed sheets hang drying on two temporary, makeshift clotheslines stretched between an oak hat rack, attached to one wall, and two lamp fixtures on the opposite wall. The two lamps illuminate the room.

The soothing classical MUSIC from the halls of the Mental Hospital is the only thing that can be heard.

Between the sheets is

THE SILHOUETTE OF A WOMAN.

Only the top of her head is visible above the sheets.

LIGHTNING FLASHES.

The lights from the lamps FLICKER.

SLOW MOTION:

A shadow on the sheets. A man's shadow.

END FLASHBACK

A SERIES OF FLASHBACKS OF THE EVENTS LEADING UP TO ARREST OF BUDDY:

EXT. FAIRFIELD OFF-RAMP I-80 - DAY

An 18 wheel Semi-tractor rig exits Interstate 80 on the Fairfield off-ramp. Its engine ROARS and brakes CREAK and HISS as the truck downshifts, then comes to a stop. Light rain sprinkles the truck's windshield. Across the street, the FLYING T Truck Stop, a large facility with gas pumps on several service islands under a large canopy, a diner and mini-mart.

The large number of trucks in the truck stop's parking lot.

EXT. FLYING T TRUCK STOP - DAY

Under the tall canopy of the Flying T Truck Stop

BUDDY

cleans the windshield of a semi-tractor truck with a spray bottle, squeegee and towel.

Buddy's name is embroidered on his overalls in a cross-stitch done by hand. He wears a Flying T employee shirt that shows under the suspenders of his overalls, and a Flying T cap, tipped up high.

50's Music plays over the loudspeakers in the canopy.

PETE OVERLAND, a short-haul trucker, exits the front of the diner. Buddy finishes cleaning Pete's windshield.

PETE

Thanks, Buddy. It's raining, ya know.

Buddy dismounts the truck. He stands tall in front of Pete. Pete hands Buddy some small change.

PETE (CONT.)

Here ya go.

BUDDY

(stuttering)

Th...Th...Thank you, Pete.

Buddy's speech is very slow and he stutters in nearly every sentence he speaks. When he is excited or nervous the stuttering worsens.

PETE

You're Welcome.

BUDDY

You're W...W...Welcome.

PETE

Oh, I almost forgot.

Pete takes a paperback book from his back pocket and hands it to Buddy. Buddy is excited. He reads the front cover.

BUDDY

Thanks, Pete.

PETE

See you next time through, Buddy.  
Stay out of trouble, ya hear!

Buddy nods and waves as Pete gets into his truck. Buddy turns and runs to the diner. Buddy stops to excitedly shake hands with a couple of truckers just coming out of the diner.

INT. TRUCK STOP DINER - DAY

A neon clock. 5:30.

A paper tear-off-one-day-at-a-time calendar. July 24.  
Saturday.

Thirty customers, mostly truck drivers. A tough looking crowd. Every seat is filled at the dining counter.

A strange collection:

A head completely shaven bald.

Multiple bizarre earrings in both ears.

A bleeding hand wrapped up. Pain.

Army fatigues from head to toe, but tennis shoes instead of boots.

Pills sneaked from a pillbox into a cup of coffee.

A nervous tic.

A bulge under a jacket giving the distinct impression of a shoulder holster with a gun inside.

The large windows of the diner allow the truck drivers to keep an eye on their rigs while they eat. And they do. Booths along the windows, tables in the center, and a very

long dining counter. A cash register and telephone on a separate counter close to the door.

Near the counter a modern version of a 1950's jukebox. LED digital display. CD's of "oldies" music from the 50's, 60's and 70's.

SHERRY STEWART (35) waits on the customers in the tables and booths. She wears a conservative waitress uniform, complete with dark pantyhose and thick shoes. She works hard.

MANDY (19) waits on the truckers at the counter. A tight-fitting Flying T truck stop T-shirt, the front tied in a knot to her side, exposes her midriff. The silver ring piercing her navel matches the rings piercing her eyebrows and ears. Part of her brown hair is dyed deep red and a few strands are dyed green. Black polish on the nails.

MANDY

(singing)

"Sugar, ah honey honey  
You are my Mandy girl  
And you've got me wanting you.

DANNY MILLER (26), the short order cook, works at the grill behind the dining counter in the kitchen. An experienced cook. His customers like the food and he knows it. Tall, muscular and fit.

Danny watch's Mandy. She knows.

Mandy FLIRTS with the customers at the counter.

A CUSTOMER (30, male) at the end of the dining counter, hangs his head down and covers his ears. The Customer wears a heavy green army jacket and white pants.

Mandy hands Danny a plate of food with a steak on it.

MANDY

Danny, I got a new one on the end  
down there. Burn it, OK?

DANNY

Forget it. Tell him to eat it or take a hike. I only make 'em one way.

MANDY

You're holding me up. Come on. Just burn it.

DANNY

Don't push me.

MANDY

Come on, Danny. What am I supposed to tell him?

DANNY

Tell him? You tell him that if he wants it cooked longer he can take it out and put it on his freakin' radiator.

Danny hands the plate back to Mandy. Danny's tight forearm bears a large TATTOO of the emblem of the U.S Marine Corp.

MANDY

Please.

Mandy offers the plate to Danny with pleading eyes. Danny melts. He pauses, then takes the plate. Danny eyes the Customer with the green army jacket at the end of the counter.

The Customer hunches over in his seat and rocks back and forth ever so slightly. Danny POUNDS the steak violently with a meat hammer, then throws it back on the grill. The steak SIZZLES on the hot grill.

Buddy comes in the front door of the diner. He wipes his feet. Buddy smiles and waves at some of the regular customers. They nod and wave back at him. He sees Sherry and nods at her.

Buddy takes off his hat and tucks it into his back pocket.

BUDDY

Mandy, you n...n...need me?

Mandy halts her conversation with a customer.

MANDY

Hey Buddy. Sherry wants you to stay inside now and help bus tables. Nobody needs their windows washed now. It's raining. OK?

BUDDY

OK. But they still need their g...gas pumped, right?

MANDY

It's supposed to be self-service. Sherry and I need your help in here until the end of the shift.

BUDDY

I l...l...like helping you, Mandy. Can I w...work the counter?

MANDY

Sherry's the boss. You go ask her.

BUDDY

N...N...No. You ask for me, you ask for me!

MANDY

If you want to work the counter, you have to go ask. Or go help Sherry.

Buddy hangs his head. He grabs a gray, plastic tub and begins clearing one of the tables in Sherry's area. He bangs loudly some of the silverware against the dishes.

Buddy and Mandy trade glances.

INT. BUDDY WARD'S HOUSE - DOWNSTAIRS GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

FLASHBACK AGAIN TO THE MURDER SCENE in BLACK and WHITE.

Again, the soothing classical music, but there is more this time:

Lightning storm outside. Hard rain. Behind the sheet, the silhouette of the woman hangs one half of a second sheet on the clothesline, then the other half. She moves the sheets so they hang straight.

Lightning FLASHES.

The lights from the lamps FLICKER.

SLOW MOTION:

A shadow appears on the sheets. It is the shadow of a man.

The lamps in the room suddenly turn off. Lightning outside illuminates the room.

The attacker raises his arm.

The woman shrinks back.

In his hand, a weapon.

INT. TRUCK STOP DINER - DAY

Buddy busses tables. Sherry passes close by as she works.

SHERRY

Hi. Buddy. Kinda wet outside?

Buddy doesn't respond. Sherry notices the evil eye exchange going on between him and Mandy. Sherry works her way over to Mandy's counter.

MANDY

He wants to work with me behind the counter. I told him to ask you.

SHERRY

You watch him.

MANDY

He'll be OK. It's the rain.

Danny DINGS the bell again. The steak is well done.

Mandy delivers the steak to the Customer, who takes from a pocket inside his jacket his own

KNIFE AND FORK.

The Customer cuts the steak into small pieces. His hands show the grease of someone who has been working on an engine. Mandy watches.

The bell DINGS again and Mandy hustles back to pick up more orders from Danny.

MANDY

Hey, can Buddy help you back there? He's upset and Sherry is...

DANNY

(interrupting)

This is not a playground. I'm busy.

Mandy storms down the counter. She deposits the plates in front of two hungry customers. She turns and sees Buddy setting up a table that he had cleared earlier.

Her eyes well up in TEARS.

INT. TRUCK STOP DINER - KITCHEN - DAY - CONTINUING

Clean but cluttered. Food orders in the process of being prepared.

MANDY

You don't know him. You don't know anything about him! You have no idea what he's been through.

DANNY

I'm sorry. I didn't mean it that way.

Mandy wipes away her tears. A deep breath.

MANDY

He's not stupid. He knows things.  
You'll see.

INT. TRUCK STOP DINER - DAY - CONTINUING

Buddy watches as JOYCE and MARY, the second-shift waitresses, come in through the front door and put their purses down behind the same counter. Mandy comes back in from the kitchen. Buddy points to the clock on the wall. 5:58.

Two truck drivers and the Customer from the end of the counter follow Mandy and Buddy out the door.

INT. TRUCK STOP DINER - KITCHEN - DAY

Danny nervously, secretly, opens a prescription bottle, removes two small pills and takes them. He calms himself a moment, then proceeds to clean the grill.

SHERRY

Dan, you got a minute?

EXT. TRUCK STOP - BACK DOOR TO KITCHEN - DAY

Light rain. Under a porch overhang:

DANNY

Problems?

SHERRY

Sort of. Amanda's different.  
You're not from around here.  
There's stuff you don't know.

DANNY

Like about her mom?

SHERRY

What'd you hear?

DANNY

Dead in the bathtub. And they weren't sure she did it herself.

SHERRY

It doesn't matter. That was a long time ago. Amanda's taken good care of her brother. He took it real hard. It's been tough on them both.

DANNY

What about her old man?

IN THE DISTANCE: Mandy and Buddy walk toward their home, an old two-story farm house about a half-mile away down an unimproved, gravel road.

SHERRY

I'm not sure.

EXT. FAIRFIELD STREET - DAY

A summer evening rain. Danny's hat is still in his back pocket. Mandy opens her small umbrella. She tries to hold it over Buddy as well. Buddy doesn't stay under the umbrella very well. The rain soaks Buddy's shirt.

BUDDY

Is Dad going to be h...h...home tonight? You gotta talk to him.

MANDY

She's not that bad.

BUDDY

I wish I had Cin...Cinderella's stepmom.

MANDY

Very funny, Buddy. You should just stand up to her. It's abuse. Maybe call the police.

BUDDY

I'll wait for my f...f...fairy  
godmother. I sure wish someone  
would make her disappear. Maybe  
there's room for her in Vac...Vac...

MANDY

Vacaville?

BUDDY

The looney bin.

MANDY

Maybe so. If she'd just take her  
Prozac it wouldn't be so bad.

BUDDY

Did Mom take Pro...Prozac?

MANDY

I don't know. She was sick.

BUDDY

Can you get sick from your  
p...p...parents?

MANDY

You mean...

BUDDY

Uh-huh. Yes.

MANDY

Sometimes, but not always.

BUDDY

That's g...good. Now I can stop  
w...w...worrying about you!

Mandy tries to punch Buddy in the arm, but he moves away  
into the rain.

BUDDY

You like Danny. I ss...ss...saw.

MANDY

You're crazy! I do not!

Buddy holds his mouth open toward the sky and gulps at what moisture he can get.

MANDY (CONT.)  
You're getting all wet.

BUDDY  
S..so what? I don't care.

MANDY  
You are looney!

Mandy laughs.

BUDDY  
Crackers. Just box me up and send me to Va...Va...Va...

MANDY  
Vacaville.

BUDDY  
The Looney Bin!

Mandy and Buddy laugh. Mandy puts down the umbrella and opens her mouth to the sky to catch some of the summer rain.

MANDY  
If you're nuts, I'm bonkers. Open up the gates, Vacaville, we're commin' in!

Buddy spies a strategically located puddle of water.

BUDDY  
SUGAR! NANA NA NA NANA

Buddy jumps with both feet into a small puddle, sending a splash in Mandy's direction in time with the "Na Na Na's."

MANDY  
Ah HONEY, HONEY! NANA NA NA NANA

Mandy jumps into another puddle trying to splash Buddy back.

BUDDY  
YOU ARE MY MANDY GIRL!

MANDY  
AND YOU GOT ME WANTING YOU!

Again and again they jump at puddles, splashing back and forth at one another, in rhythm to the music.

BUDDY  
HONEY! NANA NA NA NANA

MANDY  
AH, SUGAR SUGAR! NANA NA NA NANA

BUDDY  
YOU ARE MY MANDY GIRL!

MANDY  
AND YOU GOT ME  
WANTING YOU!

BUDDY  
AND YOU GOT ME  
WANTING YOU!

The music continues live and strong in their ears as the two siblings dance and splash their way through the rain to the front of their house. The porch light is on waiting for them.

EXT. WARD HOUSE - NIGHT

In the front yard driveway: a late model mid-sized sedan, and an old pick-up truck. One of the rear tires of the truck has been flat for a long time. Leaning against the flat tire is a rusting

CROWBAR.

Mandy and Buddy go inside the house. The door's dead bolt CLANKS shut behind the door.

INT. WARD HOUSE - DOWNSTAIRS GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

FLASHBACK AGAIN TO THE MURDER SCENE IN BLACK AND WHITE.

Classical music in the background. We see even more this time:

The lights from the lamps flicker.

SLOW MOTION:

The man's shadow appears on the sheets. The lamps of the room suddenly turn off. The woman SCREAMS!!

The attacker raises his arm. In his hand is the

CROWBAR.

The woman shrinks from her attacker, raising her hands over her head. The crowbar CRASHES down upon the silhouette of the woman's head. The sheets FALL IN on top of her. The attacker straddles the victim and turns the body over.

Lightning again illuminates the room.

He's looking at his victim's face. He raises the crowbar again.

INT. WARD HOUSE - BUDDY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Buddy sits cross-legged in his wet clothes on the floor in his bedroom. He plays Nintendo. A car racing game. The posters on the walls in his room reflect Buddy's preferences for Mack trucks and the San Francisco '49ers. Next to the door is Buddy's desk. The paperback novel Buddy got from Pete is on the desk. The door is open.

Mandy, wearing dry clothes now, pauses at the doorway in the hall.

MANDY

Buddy. Dinner. And get changed.  
You're wrecking the carpet.

Buddy, engrossed in the game, doesn't stir. The Nintendo system is dated and the graphics leave a lot to be desired. Mandy moves on.

CLOSE OF TV SCREEN - NINTENDO GAME

Buddy's Mack truck swerves to avoid an oncoming school bus.

He passes the lead car. First Place. Across the finish line. The Nintendo crowd applauds wildly.

MARGE, a skinny 55-year old woman, wearing an old housedress most definitely picked out of a catalogue, legs unshaven, leans in the doorway.

Marge was born ugly and has been losing ground ever since.

She claps her hands in mock applause.

MARGE

If I didn't see this, I don't think I would believe it. You have to be the biggest moron that ever lived. You've been home for nearly an hour and here you sit still soaking wet!

Buddy cowers. He slowly rolls over and gets up.

MARGE (CONT.)

Did someone blow out your pilot light? You have the brains of a houseplant. If you were any slower you would have to speed up to stop. Come on, stupid, move. Oh, I'm sorry, calling you stupid is an insult to stupid people. Put both oars back in and meet us downstairs. If you're not down in 2 minutes, I'm giving yours to the dog.

BUDDY

(muttering)

P...P...oor dog.

MARGE

What was that, did you say something? When are you going to learn to talk! Moron!

Marge sees the paperback novel. She picks it up. Someone is coming upstairs in a hurry.

Marge turns and walks out with the book.

MARGE (O.S.)  
 (yelling)  
 And you, you're the only person I  
 know who could get fired from  
 McDonald's for having a short  
 attention span.

Buddy sits back down on the floor with his head in his hands.

MANDY (O.S.)  
 (pleading, timidly)  
 You can't treat people like that.

Buddy curls up on the floor. He hides his face.

Mandy rushes in. She kneels beside Buddy.  
 She puts her arms around him. Strokes his head.  
 She feels his pain. She also feels how wet he is.

MANDY (CONT.)  
 Buddy. Buddy. Buddy. Come on. You  
 better get dressed. Dad's home.  
 You need to eat.

INT. WARD HOUSE - DINING AREA - NIGHT

Around a formica table adorned with old Corelle Ware, mismatched flatware, and paper napkins sit Marge and JOE WARD (50). Joe's hands show that he is an auto mechanic. So does his shirt.

In the distance, the front door to the house is closed. The large dead-bolt latch is locked.

Marge dishes out a casserole topped with corn flakes.

MARGE  
 I don't know why you like this.

Mandy comes in and joins them at the table.

JOE  
 I never get tired of tuna  
 casserole...

The three begin to eat. An uncomfortable lack of conversation. Marge and Mandy make eye contact several times. Marge stares at Mandy's eyebrow rings.

MANDY

What?

MARGE

Exactly what went through your mind?

Mandy touches her eyebrow rings.

MANDY

So?

MARGE

Why don't you just put signs on both ears that say "Space for Rent?"

Mandy looks to her father for help. Joe shrugs his shoulders. More uncomfortable silence. Buddy comes down the stairs. He joins the family at the table.

MARGE (CONT.)

(to Buddy)

Tick, tick. Your clock have all its numbers?

JOE

Hey, Buddy.

BUDDY

Hey, Dad. No washing tr...tr...trucks today. It r...r...r...rained.

JOE

Another storm tomorrow evening, too. A guy came in to the shop this morning. Wants a complete engine overhaul. He said he worked over at the diner. He said he was the cook.

MANDY

Really?

JOE

Nice car, too. An old restored Mustang.

BUDDY

That's Danny. Mandy likes Danny.

MANDY

Buddy...

Mandy is only slightly embarrassed. She changes the subject quickly.

MANDY (CONT.)

Sherry switched everybody's schedules at work. Buddy and I both have the same hours now. It's a 6/6 schedule: six hours a day, six days a week.

BUDDY

F...F...Fridays off.

MANDY

Yeah, and we get off at six now.

MARGE

Dead end jobs.

Marge picks up her plate and disappears into the kitchen.

MANDY

(loud whisper)

Dad, she is killing us. We can't breathe. She is so negative. The way she treats Buddy is terrible.

JOE

I know. I know. I'll deal with it.

Joe reaches for his table knife. He examines it closely, incidentally pointing it at his chest.

Marge returns from the kitchen.

MARGE

Hari Kari?

Marge sits down. Mandy stands.

Eyes meet eyes around the table.

EXT. FLYING T TRUCK STOP - DAY

A partly cloudy late afternoon sky. Evidence of some rain from the night before. A new storm front of serious magnitude looms in the western sky. There are only a few trucks in the parking lot now.

EXT. TRUCK STOP - TRUCK WASHING BAY - DAY

Buddy is on the end of a hose washing a truck. He works the water carefully back and forth, top to bottom. The dirt and road grime come off under the power of the water with little effort and run down the drain in the middle of the bay.

Buddy is dwarfed by the size of the rig.

As Buddy moves toward the far end of the semi-tractor trailer rig, the hose SNAGS under the front tire.

Buddy turns off the flow of water at the nozzle. He YANKS on the hose. This only compounds the problem.

Buddy violently SHAKES the hose.

No effect.

Buddy lets out a YELL.

He runs to the front of the rig looking down to see where the hose is caught.

As Buddy comes around the corner of the front of the tractor, he nearly bumps into DANNY.

DANNY

Hey, Buddy. This is quite the set up! You ever drive something like this?

Buddy shrugs.

DANNY (CONT.)

I used to drive these, you know. In the Corp. Also troop transports, half-tracks and tanks. You ever been inside a tank Buddy? A real tank?

Buddy shakes his head, no. Danny walks over and picks up the end of the hose.

DANNY (CONT.)

High technology inside those babies. Seventy tons that can spin on a dime. We used to race 'em. We'd get 'em going 45 miles an hour over rough desert.

Danny has now captured Buddy's attention.

BUDDY

R...R...R...Really?

DANNY

Sure. M48 series, M60 series, M551 Sheridans, any of the M1 series tanks. My favorite is the M1 Abrams. 67 and a half tons of pure armored fighting machine. One hundred twenty-two-millimeter cannon out in front, three machine guns, and it's got a laser range finder and thermal optics.

BUDDY

W...Wow!

DANNY

I still got some friends in the Corp. Would you like to see the inside of a tank sometime?

Buddy eagerly nods affirmatively.

DANNY (CONT.)

I'll see what I can do.

Danny reaches down and YANKS HARD on the hose to free it from under the tire of the semi-tractor. It comes loose.

DANNY (CONT.)

Buddy, you know what the Marine Corp. teaches a guy? That he's gotta be tough. Take care of things yourself. Be your own man. You're not going to have someone to take care of you forever. You have to stand up for yourself. And sometimes that means you have to fight for what you believe in. Kill or be killed. You know what I mean?

Buddy is spellbound. He nods.

DANNY (CONT.)

Hey, I need a favor from you. Could you help me out? It would sure mean a lot to me.

BUDDY

Okay. W...What?

DANNY

Mandy/ Does she like flowers?

BUDDY

(excited)

Sure, she likes fl..flowers.

DANNY

What kind?

BUDDY

Oh, I don't know. It doesn't matter.

DANNY

Don't tell her, Okay? I want it to be a surprise.

BUDDY

A surprise.

INT. TRUCK STOP DINER - DAY

The Neon clock. 4:00.

The tear-off-one-day-at-a-time calendar. July 25. Sunday.

Another "oldie but goodie" tune from the 1950's comes from the Jukebox. The diner is half full of customers.

Mandy waits tables and takes care of the counter too. She has a coffeepot in each hand and moves from customer to customer refilling coffee mugs.

Mandy's shirt is tucked in today.

Sherry does some paperwork in one of the booths.

A few of the Customers from yesterday have returned.

The Customer with the green army jacket, who was at the end of the counter yesterday, now sits in the booth next to the door, a cup of coffee in front of him.

Danny enters through the front door. Those are not his work clothes. He sits down in the booth next to the one where the Customer with the green army jacket sits.

Mandy sees Danny enter. She likes what she sees.

Danny nods at Mandy. Mandy finishes topping off mugs at the counter, keeping an eye on Danny.

Danny looks out the window.

THROUGH THE WINDOW:

Buddy fills up cars and washes windows at the auto service islands. He sees Danny and waives enthusiastically.

Danny waives back. Mandy sees this. Mandy grabs a coffee cup and comes over to Danny's table.

MANDY

Paying customers only, Sir.

DANNY

No one ever complains about my tips.

Mandy sets down the coffee mug in front of Danny. Mandy pours. She looks around, sees the customers are content, and sits opposite Danny in the booth.

DANNY

I ran into him outside. After yesterday, well, I wanted to, you know, get to know him better.

MANDY

And?

DANNY

And you were right. He's OK.

Mandy looks quizzically at Danny.

DANNY (CONT.)

You home tonight? I gotta little surprise for you.

MANDY

No where else to go.

Danny looks out the window at Buddy who is visibly upset and coming toward the front door of the diner.

MANDY (CONT.)

What's the surprise?

DANNY

It's a surprise.

Mandy nods affirmatively as Buddy bursts through the door.

BUDDY

Mandy, Mandy.

Buddy takes Mandy by the arm and pulls her aside. Buddy is nervous and shaking.

MANDY

Buddy?

BUDDY

The b...b...boss, said I have to g...g...o home. I don't want to go home.

MANDY

What?

BUDDY

I always top-off, Mandy. You know I do. Even when it says not to, I top off.

MANDY

What happened?

Buddy composes himself.

BUDDY

(pointing outside)

The pump came out. Lot's of it. Everywhere. I'm sus..suspended. But just for today and tomorrow.

MANDY

You'll be OK. Go home. I'll see you at dinner.

BUDDY

Can you come home with me n...now?

Buddy looks intently at Mandy.

BUDDY (CONT.)

MARGE!

Mandy looks at the clock. It's only four o'clock.

MANDY

No. I'll be home at 6:00.  
Buddy, you'll be OK. Go on home.

Mandy pats Buddy on the back and sends him out the front door of the Diner.

The Customer with the green army jacket exits.

EXT. WARD HOUSE - DAY

A large electrical storm looms. Lightning strikes again and again in the distance. Only the truck with the flat tire is in the driveway. Buddy walks along the path to home. It begins to rain. His pace quickens. The rain starts to pour down.

Buddy makes a dash for home.

INT. WARD HOUSE - DAY

Buddy comes in the front door slowly, trying to make as little noise as possible. He takes off his hat and shakes the water off of it. He looks around for Marge but doesn't see her.

He hears Marge working in the downstairs bedroom. The door to that room is slightly ajar.

He starts to walk. His soaked running shoes SQUEEK. Buddy stops. He reaches down and PULLS HIS SHOES OFF.

He moves toward the stairs.

He stops still.

He looks back at the dead bolt latch. It is unlocked. His hands are full.

He looks to the stairs to his room and again back at the dead bolt.

Buddy tiptoes forward in his socks across the front room without a sound.

INT. WARD HOUSE - BUDDY'S ROOM - DAY

Buddy puts his wet hat and shoes on the bed.

He opens his bedroom closet and takes a shoebox from the top shelf.

Inside the box are nearly a hundred plastic green army men. He pulls out several of the army men and arranges them in a formation on the bed. He digs around in the box looking for something special. He finds it.

An army tank.

INT. TRUCK STOP DINER - DAY

The Neon clock. 5:45. Sunday, July 25.

It is raining hard outside now. The diner is nearly full. Not only truckers, but also many of the locals have stopped in early for Sunday dinner. Sherry and Mandy are in the middle of serving customers.

The telephone near the cash register RINGS. Sherry answers it. Mandy notices.

Sherry hangs up the receiver, then picks it up again and dials a number. After a moment, Sherry hangs up.

Mandy looks at the clock, then at the rain outside.

SHERRY

Mandy, Joyce is sick. I called Sue. She said she can't come in 'till seven. Can you stay? I really need you. I'm already covering for Mary.

MANDY

Sure. But only 'till seven, OK?

SHERRY

Great. Maybe the rain will let up by then.

EXT. FLYING T TRUCK STOP - NIGHT

AERIAL VIEW. The worst of the storm has arrived.

Lightning illuminates the parking lot again and again. Only a few cars and trucks remain.

EXT. WARD HOUSE - NIGHT

AERIAL VIEW.

The storm is intense, the wind fierce.

Lights are on in the downstairs guest bedroom and one room upstairs.

INT. WARD HOUSE - DOWNSTAIRS GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

The entire murder scene in COLOR. The classical music is gone.

The rain BEATS on the windowpanes of the room. It is raining very hard.

The lightning is now followed by THUNDER.

Only one white bed sheet hangs drying on the makeshift clothesline stretched between the oak hat rack and the lamp fixtures.

Behind the sheet, a silhouette of MARGE.

Marge hangs one half of a second sheet on the clothesline, then the other half. She straightens the sheets so they lay flat.

Lightning Flashes.

The lights from the lamps flicker.

SLOW MOTION:

A shadow appears on the sheets. It is the shadow of a man.

The lamps of the room suddenly turn off.

Marge SCREAMS!!

The attacker raises his arm.

In his gloved hand is the crowbar.

Marge shrinks from her attacker, raising her hands over her head. The crowbar crashes down upon the silhouette of the Marge's head.

The sheets fall in on top of her. The attacker straddles her and turns the body over.

A final round of lightning again illuminates the room.

CLOSE of Marge's face. Blood runs down the side of her head.

The attacker stands erect.

He raises the crowbar again.

Over and over we see the crowbar fall. Then he reaches down and rips at her head with his hand.

Finally the deed is complete.

The crowbar drops to the ground. The attacker turns to leave.

The thunder and lightning have passed. Only the sound of the rain continues.

INT. WARD HOUSE - BUDDY'S ROOM - NIGHT

There is no one in the room. Only the hum of the TV screen can be heard.

CLOSE ON TV SCREEN

Buddy's Nintendo system is on. The game "Mortal Kombat" is loaded. Two figures are on the screen, one standing over the other having vanquished its opponent.

INT. WARD HOUSE - DOWNSTAIRS GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

The room is dark, except for a column of light streaming in from the main room of the house through the doorway.

Someone stands near the body breathing heavily.

Within the column of light, the CROWBAR lies on the hardwood floor. The rusty crowbar from the front yard. There is BLOOD on the crowbar. Also within the column of light is part of the pool of blood that has formed next to the body.

A SOCKED FOOT stands in the pool of blood.

TWO HANDS reach down and pick up the crowbar. The crowbar is raised a few inches from the ground. The hands DROP the crowbar back to the ground.

BUDDY

sees the BLOOD on the palms of the hands. His body trembles as he wipes his hands across the front of his shirt. Anger. Hatred. Fear. Buddy RETREATS from the room.

INT. WARD HOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUING

Buddy panics. He runs from the door of the Downstairs Guest Bedroom to the front door.

The bolt is unlocked.

Buddy throws opens the door. LIGHTNING FLASHES. The lightning flash dissipates. Outside in the rain, its

JOE.

INT. TRUCK STOP DINER - NIGHT

Most of the crowd is gone. A few truckers sit at the dining counter. Mandy pours coffee for them. Sherry, quite tired now, sits at the counter, too.

The Neon clock. 6:55.

Mandy looks away from Sherry as she speaks.

MANDY

Danny was coming over tonight.

Mandy quickly looks for a reaction from Sherry.

SHERRY

You going out?

Mandy fishes for more.

MANDY

I don't know.

From outside: A SIREN from an emergency vehicle.

SHERRY

All right, go. Thanks for staying late.

MANDY

Thanks, Sherry.

Mandy reaches down under the counter, retrieves her purse and pocket umbrella, and walks to the front door.

EXT. FAIRFIELD STREET - NIGHT

Mandy walks with her head down. She struggles with the umbrella in the wind. She is still two blocks from her house. Mandy avoids the puddles that just yesterday she delightedly jumped into.

Mandy looks up.

FLASHING EMERGENCY LIGHTS.

Two police cars, a fire truck and an ambulance parked in front of her house. Mandy THROWS down her umbrella and runs.

EXT. WARD HOUSE - NIGHT

TWO POLICE OFFICERS quickly escort Buddy from the house, down the porch steps.

Buddy is in handcuffs, his hands behind him. Barefoot and shirtless.

He STRUGGLES VIOLENTLY.

He YELLS INCOHERENTLY.

The Police Officers move Buddy across the front lawn toward a squad car parked at the front curb. Buddy sees Mandy running up the road toward him.

BUDDY

MANDY!

Mandy RUNS for Buddy. A WOMAN POLICE OFFICER catches her from behind.

MANDY

BUDDY, NO! BUDDY!

The Police Officers swiftly load Buddy into the squad car. In the back seat of the squad car, Buddy strains to see his sister. Their eyes make contact. The squad car pulls away into the rainy night.

INT. WARD HOUSE - NIGHT

Police, fire and ambulance personnel move around in the front room. Joe sits on the sofa. Soaking Wet. Emotionless. He stares straight ahead. The POLICE SERGEANT in charge of the scene stands in front of Joe.

POLICE SERGEANT

Joe. Joe. Joe, do you hear me?

Joe nods slowly.

The Woman Police Officer brings Mandy into the house through the front door.

WOMAN POLICE OFFICER

The trauma unit is on the way.  
Sir, there'll be people here to help in just a few minutes.

EXT. WARD HOUSE - NIGHT

A CROWD of neighbors and other onlookers stand on the street curb observing the police activities. We have seen many of these people in the diner earlier.

A POLICE OFFICER keeps the crowd at the curb.

Danny joins the Crowd from behind. He moves forward.

DANNY  
(to Neighbor)  
What happened?

NEIGHBOR  
Murder. The old lady got it. They  
took away the boy.

Danny moves methodically through the crowd until he is face to face with the Police Officer keeping the crowd in check.

Danny speaks to the Police Officer.

INT. WARD HOUSE - NIGHT

Mandy sits on the couch next to her father. A Police Officer guarding the front door blocks Danny's entrance to the front room.

DANNY  
Mandy?

Mandy hears her name.

MANDY  
Danny?

Mandy turns and sees Danny trying to gain access to the room. She rises quickly. The Police Officer at the door moves aside. Danny enters.

DANNY  
Are you OK?

MANDY  
They took Buddy. It isn't right.

Mandy falls into Danny's arms. She's in shock. Danny moves her to the dining area and sits her on a chair.

TWO MEN in unbuttoned trench coats ENTER. They shake off the rain as they come inside. Under the trench coats, they are dressed in casual street clothes. The Police Officers in the room recognize the presence of the Chief of Police, MACK DUFFY (45) and the District Attorney, JOHN WHEELER (50).

Wheeler takes out his ID and clips it to the outside of his trenchcoat.

WHEELER

Joe. I came as soon as I heard.  
I'm so sorry. This is Mack Duffy,  
the new Police Chief. Is there  
anything we can do for you right  
now?

Joe shakes his head, no.

DUFFY

Sir, it's better if you don't stay  
here tonight. Do you have friends  
or family you can stay with?

Joe nods his head, yes.

WHEELER

Joe, if you need anything, you  
just ask.

Wheeler and Duffy walk over to the door to the Downstairs Guest Bedroom. They look in but do not enter. Many crime experts are collecting and bagging evidence inside. A crime scene photographer makes good use of his flash camera.

DUFFY

(to Wheeler)

You know 'em?

WHEELER

Family friends. I used to date  
Joe's first wife, before she  
married him.

DUFFY  
His first wife?

WHEELER  
Suicide, six years ago. Their boy  
took it real hard. He's had some  
problems since then. Joe married  
this one a few years ago. I can't  
tell you what he saw her. The book  
matched the cover, if you ask me.

A female crime scene TECHNICIAN, wearing a white lab coat,  
comes out with a large lidless cardboard box. Inside the  
box are resealable plastic bags of various sizes containing  
evidence, including the crowbar. The Technician OFFERS a  
look at the evidence to Duffy and Wheeler.

Duffy reaches out and TOUCHES the bag with the crowbar.  
There is blood smeared inside the plastic bag.

DUFFY  
Murder Weapon?

The Technician nods.

Duffy reaches into the box and pulls out two other bags. He  
shows these to Wheeler.

BUDDY'S BLOODY SOCKS AND SHIRT.

WHEELER  
You take these off the boy?

The Technician nods again. Duffy places the bags back in  
the box.

DUFFY  
(to Technician)  
What do you think?

TECHNICIAN  
Looks clear the boy did it. Trauma  
to the head most likely killed  
her. He really smashed her.

TECHNICIAN (CONT.)

About forty blows to the head. As many to the body. Textbook psychotic killing, if you ask me, Sir.

DUFFY

Why's that?

TECHNICIAN

He ripped her tongue out.

Wheeler and Duffy wince.

DUFFY

Thanks.

The Technician returns to the guest room.

WHEELER

Damn. The boy was just never quite right. Mack, I'll see if Vacaville can take him. I know the people up there.

DUFFY

I'd appreciate whatever you can do.

WHEELER

Maybe we can get him transferred in the morning. I'll call tonight.

Wheeler shakes hands with Duffy and starts for the front door to leave. He suddenly stops, turns and walks back to Duffy.

WHEELER (CONT.)

Oh, and Mack, let's make sure the media understand what happened here.

DUFFY

Right. You got it.

END OF THE SERIES OF FLASHBACKS.

EXT. CALIFORNIA MEDICAL FACILITY AT VACAVILLE (CMF) - DAY

AERIAL VIEW

Only a few scattered clouds remain from the prior night's storm.

INT. CMF EVALUATION ROOM - DAY

Buddy lies curled up on the floor.

DR. MONSON (60) wearing a white lab coat and carrying a medical chart, opens the door. Dr. Monson's dress and mannerisms are dark, cold, and precise. He speaks calmly and slowly.

MONSON

Buddy? I'm Dr. Monson. I want to talk with you. Can I talk with you, Buddy?

Buddy doesn't move.

Dr. Monson steps inside the room. He balances himself on the padded floor. Outside, in the hallway, the orderly, Johnson looks in through the open door.

MONSON (CONT.)

Buddy, do you know why you are here?

No reaction from Buddy.

MONSON (CONT.)

Son, I need some cooperation. Buddy, can you hear me?

Buddy moves. He pushes himself up into a sitting position.

MONSON (CONT.)

Good. That's very good. Buddy as long as you cooperate, we will get along just fine. I want to help you, Buddy. But you need to cooperate. Do you understand me?

Again, no reaction from Buddy.

MONSON (CONT.)  
Do you understand me?

Buddy nods, yes.

MONSON (CONT.)  
I'm glad we have this understanding. I'm going to prescribe some medication for you. Buddy, have you ever taken any neuroleptics, anti-psychotic medications? Haldol, Risperdal, Prolixin? Anything like that?

Buddy shakes his head, no. He bows his head and closes his eyes.

MONSON (CONT.)  
(to Johnson)  
He probably wouldn't know anyway. Let's start him on Haldol three times a day. If he gives you any problem taking it, let me know. We can always switch him to injections. Also, let's keep him sedated for another week. Leave him here for 24 hours. For observation. By then there should be an open bed in "B" ward. Also, get him over for an initial physical.

JOHNSON  
What about a psych evaluation? Do you want me to schedule him?

MONSON  
No Need. Just read the police report. If this isn't affective schizophrenia, nothing is.

Johnson WRITES OUT A NOTE on a medical chart.

Dr. Monson CROUCHES down so that he is almost at eye level to Buddy.

MONSON (CONT.)

Buddy, from now on you will do exactly as you are told. You will never be left alone. Someone will be watching you every minute of the day and night. You will learn to ask permission before you do anything. Before you talk, before you walk, before you urinate, you will ask permission. Do you understand?

Buddy opens his eyes. Anger is brewing.

MONSON (CONT.)

The room you are in now is what we affectionately call the "Evaluation Room." If you cooperate, Johnson is going to take you to another room tomorrow. It's a big room with a bed and a pillow and lots of nice things. Buddy, listen to me very closely, now. If you don't take your medicine, you will end up back here. If you don't ask permission when you are supposed to, we will put you back in here. If you don't do what you are told, or you try to hurt yourself, you come back here. There are a lot of other patients in this facility. They all have problems, but you have to get along with them. If you bite, hit, fight, or have any unauthorized contact with another patient, you come back in here. I hope I have made myself very, very clear.

Dr. Monson backs out of the room, taking the medical chart from Johnson as he departs.

Buddy curls up again on the floor. The door shuts.

EXT. THE OLD SOLANO COUNTY COURTHOUSE - DAY

SUBTITLE: "Friday, July 30  
SOLANO COUNTY OLD COURTHOUSE"

Downtown Fairfield traffic is light mid-morning.

Lawyers and their clients approach the Old County Courthouse. They admire the grand architecture of the building as they prepare to enter.

INT. COURTHOUSE HALLWAY - DAY

Outside one of the courtrooms, Mandy and Joe sit side by side on a polished wooden bench. The courtroom door is open. On the door a sign indicates this is the courtroom of Judge Horace S. Hightower.

A BAILIFF from the Solano County Sheriff's Department stands at the door checking the hallways as if waiting for someone.

Joe and Mandy stand as attorney HARRY GREEN (38) approaches them. Harry is dressed for court. Polished. Not a typical court-appointed public defender.

GREEN

Mr. Ward?

JOE

Yes.

GREEN

My secretary spoke with you on the phone. Harry Green. How do you do?

Joe nods and shakes hands with Green.

JOE

This is my daughter, Mandy.

GREEN

Nice to meet you. Sorry I'm late.  
Thanks for meeting me here. I'm  
truly sorry for your loss.

JOE

Thanks.

GREEN

I hope you understand this is just an arraignment. All that happens is a plea is entered. It shouldn't take too long.

JOE

We really can't afford a private attorney.

GREEN

The State pays me. I'm appointed by the court. It's a new program.

MANDY

Can I see Buddy?

GREEN

I can arrange for you to visit him. You'll see him inside today.

This news brightens Mandy's spirits.

INT. JUDGE HIGHTOWER'S COURTROOM - DAY

An older courtroom adorned with wood paneling. The Great Seal of the State of California occupies the entire wall behind the Judge's bench. Modern computer equipment, television monitors, and a microphone system are additions to the older, stately courtroom. To the right of the Judge's bench, a COURT REPORTER sits preparing for the court session. A COURT CLERK, busy on the telephone, occupies a desk on the left. Two large wooden tables in the middle of the room. An empty jury box on the left.

The District Attorney, Wheeler, stands next to the table nearest the jury box. He turns and watches as Green leads Joe and Mandy to audience seats at the rear of the courtroom.

Wheeler nods, acknowledging Joe.

The Bailiff closes the courtroom door and Green makes his way to the table beside Wheeler. Green SHAKES HANDS with Wheeler.

A door opens to the left behind the Judge's bench.

JUDGE HORACE HIGHTOWER (65) enters.

BAILIFF

Remain seated and come to order.

The Judge takes his seat on the bench. Wheeler and Green sit at the counsel tables.

JUDGE

Good morning.

WHEELER

Good Morning.

GREEN

Good Morning, Your Honor.

The court clerk hands a file to the Judge.

JUDGE

Mr. Wheeler, I don't have the pleasure of seeing you in my courtroom very often.

WHEELER

No, Your Honor. But this is a special case. I wanted to make sure you were aware of the circumstances.

JUDGE

I see. This is just an arraignment, Mr. Wheeler?

WHEELER

Yes, Your Honor. The clerk has the filed charges.

JUDGE

I've read the complaint. Is defense counsel ready to proceed?

GREEN

Harry S. Green, for the defendant,  
Arnold Ward. We are, Your Honor.

WHEELER

Your Honor, we have arranged for  
tele-video arraignment. The  
accused, Arnold Ward, is currently  
in the California Medical Facility  
at Vacaville. He...

JUDGE

(interrupting)

Did he escape?

WHEELER

No...

JUDGE

Then how did he do the crime? It  
was this last Sunday. Right? Am I  
missing something?

WHEELER

Your Honor, the accused was not  
previously committed to the CMF.

(beat)

Rather than place the accused in  
the County lock-up, I contacted  
CMF and arranged for him to be  
held there, pending disposition.  
I know the family.

Wheeler looks back at Joe and gives another nod of  
acknowledgment.

JUDGE

Mr. Wheeler, the District  
Attorney's Office does NOT commit  
people? Only the Court does that.

WHEELER

I know, but...

JUDGE

Hell's bells, Jon.

WHEELER

Your Honor, I've personally this boy severely depressed. His mother committed suicide a few years ago. The boy was the one who found her. The County lock-up's not staffed for this and, frankly, I uh...

(more formally)

believed it was in the State's interest that the defendant receive immediate psychiatric care and treatment.

JUDGE

Mr. Green, are you aware of all of this? Have you met with your client yet?

GREEN

Judge, I was just assigned this case yesterday. District Attorney Wheeler was kind enough to bring me up to speed. I have met briefly with the father and sister of the defendant. They are present here in Court today.

Green turns and motions for Joe and Mandy to stand. They do for a moment, then sit again.

JUDGE

Thank you. We are not dealing with a minor here, are we?

WHEELER

No, Your Honor. Buddy is 21.

JUDGE

Buddy?

WHEELER

Excuse me, Your Honor, the accused is known in the community as Buddy. A nickname.

JUDGE

Thank you, counsel. Does the accused, Buddy, have any mental capacity whatsoever?

Mandy squirms at the suggestion.

WHEELER

Your Honor, there is, uh... some question about that.

Mandy starts to fume inside.

JUDGE

I see. Is there a psych report yet? I didn't see one in the file.

WHEELER

I haven't seen one yet either. I'll make sure one gets filed.

JUDGE

Mr. Wheeler, lacking any real psychiatric evidence that the accused is without mental capacity, I am going to require that a plea be entered by the accused, rather than the Court. Is there any objection with proceeding in that manner, Counsel?

WHEELER

No.

GREEN

No, your honor.

JUDGE

Very well.

The Bailiff moves to the TV Monitor on the right hand side of the room. He adjusts the screen so that Mandy and Joe can see as well. The Bailiff picks up a remote control and turns on the Monitor and teleconference equipment.

INTERCUT: CLOSE OF TV MONITOR AS NEEDED

After a moment, Buddy appears on the screen. He sits on a chair behind a table. Buddy is wearing the standard CMF issue white jumpsuit. Standing next to Buddy is Johnson. Buddy is motionless. His eyes are glazed.

JUDGE

Is it working? Can you hear me?

JOHNSON

Yes, we can hear you and we can see you.

JUDGE

Very well. This is an arraignment by tele-video conference as permitted by local Court rules. The court has received and accepted the Criminal Complaint filed by the Office of the District Attorney. Does Counsel for the Defendant wish to waive reading of the Complaint?

GREEN

Yes, Your Honor, the defendant waives reading of the complaint.

JUDGE

Very well. Mr. Arnold Ward, pursuant to a complaint duly filed by the District Attorney of Solano County in the Superior Court of the State of California, you are accused of the felony of Murder in the First Degree, with Special Circumstances, in that you did maliciously murder one Margaret Ward in a manner manifesting exceptional depravity. Are you prepared to enter a plea?

GREEN

We are, Your Honor.

JUDGE

Very well.

GREEN

The defendant pleads...

(beat)

Not Guilty By Reason of Insanity.

Mandy tugs on her father's sleeve. Joe ignores her.

JUDGE

(to the TV Monitor)

Mr. Ward, is this your plea?

Buddy does not react.

JUDGE

Can he hear me?

JOHNSON

Yes. We can hear you.

Buddy's head droops pitifully, as if his neck muscles would no longer support his head.

WHEELER

Your Honor...

JUDGE

Mr. Ward? Mr. Ward, do you understand what you are accused of? Mr. Ward?

WHEELER

Please, Your Honor. The State requests that under the circumstances the Court enter the plea.

The Judge continues to look at Buddy for some kind of a response. There is none.

JUDGE

Very well, the Court hereby enters the plea of Not Guilty By Reason Of Insanity, AND THE ADDITIONAL PLEA OF NOT GUILTY, to the charges of the complaint, on behalf of the defendant.

JUDGE (CONT.)

The Court further orders the defendant be held without bail, committed to the California Medical Facility at Vacaville, pending trial, eight weeks from today.

WHEELER

Thank you, your Honor.

JUDGE

Jon, I want to see a psych report by then.

WHEELER

That won't be a problem.

JUDGE

Thank you. Court will stand in recess. And may I see both counsel up here for just a minute.

Wheeler and Green look at each other somewhat puzzled by the Judge's intentions. Together they approach the Judge's Bench.

The Judge unbuttons his robe.

He wears a SPORTS SHIRT underneath.

The Judge speaks in adamant but hushed tones so that only he and the lawyers can hear.

JUDGE

Off the record, gentlemen. First, it is highly irregular for me to commit anyone without getting a psych report first. I don't even know if I can legally do that. Jon, don't do that to me again.

WHEELER

Sorry, Judge. He's a friend of the family.

WHEELER (CONT.)

I didn't want the newspapers to get everyone in a frenzy over this and end up with a mob beating on my office door demanding we hang the kid. I got an election next year. So do you. The murder was a textbook psychotic killing. We got his fingerprints on the murder weapon. The victim's blood was all over him. You saw him.

JUDGE

Mr. Green?

GREEN

Sir, my client's facing the death penalty at worst, and 25 to life hard labor in a maximum-security penitentiary at best. If the DA is willing to offer full-time psychiatric care, room and board, arts and crafts and cable TV at a the local hospital..

JUDGE

Let's get this one put to bed then. Work out the details. I'm going on vacation for a few weeks. Costa Rica. The marlin are biting like nuts right now. I'll be back in a couple of weeks. You can either get on my calendar after that or, hell this isn't going anywhere, just show up on the trial date and we can put the plea bargain on the record then. All right?

WHEELER

That will be fine.

GREEN

Whatever works for you.

JUDGE

But Jon, I do want to see a psych report. I'm serious about that.

WHEELER

Understood. I'll even bring in the doctor, if you like.

JUDGE

I'd like that too. Thank you, gentlemen.

WHEELER

(to Green)

Harry, I'll give you a call next week.

Green meets Joe and Mandy at the rear of the courtroom.

Green checks his watch.

GREEN

I'm late for another hearing, but I think the DA is going to offer a sweetheart deal. I don't know the details yet, but I should by next week. My secretary will call you.

INT. CMF WARD B - SECURITY OFFICE - DAY

Jensen and another Corrections Officer sit at a security console replete with small TV monitors and electronic devices.

Above the console large panes of glass loom over the hospital ward floor below.

Through these windows to another world, the Corrections Officers stoically observe the inmates' movements.

Every movement.

Security is tight.

Sixteen hospital beds. Neatly made with gray blankets and white pillows.

Small wooden dressers by each bed. On top of each dresser, the personal pictures, knick-knacks and other token belongings of the inmate assigned to the bed.

Johnson sits at an office desk at the far end of the room, opposite the security office.

The INMATES mill or work on an "arts and craft" project at a center table.

The sounds of Ward B fill the security office through audio speakers located in the console.

The soothing classical music resonating in the Ward matches the lethargy of all of the inmates, except two who play Ping-Pong on a table in a game area near Johnson's desk.

INT. CMF WARD B - DAY

Buddy sits cross-legged on his bed.

On his dresser: a Flying T cap, the shoebox of plastic green army men, the dime-store novel from the trucker, and an unframed picture of Mandy.

Buddy appears healthier and cleaner than when he was first brought to the CMF. Shaven, hair neatly combed. A stark contrast to earlier. His white, hospital issued jumpsuit has a number above the pocket and on the back below the collar, just like the other inmates' jumpsuits.

Buddy observes the other inmates as they move about. He listens intently to the conversation of the two vocal inmates, JIM KATZ (35), and LARRY MORSE (40), playing Ping-Pong very near him.

The small white ball is batted back and forth over the net on the green table. The pace is steady. Neither player plays to win. Johnson also watches the two inmates' game from the corner of his eye.

JIM

Mouse, you must be a twin! No one person could be that stupid.

LARRY

All I'm saying is that psychotherapy for Multiple Personality Disorder is worthless. The therapist can spend hours, even months trying to integrate two personalities, and then another can pop up out of the blue. And so it goes, over and over. Therapy never gets to the root cause. Brain Disease.

Jim grabs the ball in mid-flight with his hand, momentarily stopping the game.

JIM

Brain disease? Mouse, you're delusional again. Did you take your meds? Look, there was a guy I knew who was an MPD brought in from Death Row at San Quentin. He'd killed his nine-year-old stepdaughter. After 5 years of psychotherapy he was completely integrated. Cured. They sent him back.

Jim serves the ball again.

LARRY

Yeah, back to death row. See, a lot of good that did him. I'm serious. Who am I? Who are you? Who are we? Murderers, rapists, robbers? No. We are the diseased. Mentally diseased. There are places like this all over the country, all over the world. Care and treatment. Care and treatment. They want to cure us. But they can't.

Jim grabs the ball with his hand, again interrupting the game.

JIM

(agitated)

I'm cured. And you know it, Larry.  
You and me, we are as sane as  
anybody watching us.

LARRY

(intensely)

No, you're medicated. So am I and  
so is that guy, and that guy, and  
everyone in here. Of course you  
feel normal. Of course you act  
normal. But your brain is  
diseased. And that's a fact you  
can't do anything about.

The decibel level of their conversation is growing  
exponentially.

JIM

Then why do they make every single  
one of us spend 20 hours every  
week in psychotherapy?

LARRY

BINGO!

JIM

So, if I stop taking these two  
little pills three times a day,  
you think I'm going to kill  
someone again?

LARRY

Yep.

JIM

But what if I keep taking my  
medication...

LARRY

Do you really think Tiny there is  
going to let you out of here on  
your Boy Scout's promise that  
you'll keep taking your meds? Ha!

JIM

But I heard they let out John Hinckley, Jr., the guy who shot Reagan.

LARRY

Sure. They let him out. He wasn't really crazy. They don't let crazy people out. Not us. No, you and me and every one of them like us, we come in, but we never leave.

(a beat)

They once let a guy out who had tried to kill his own grandmother. Within a month he quit taking his meds, traveled across the whole country, found her and sliced her.

Johnson gets up and walks over to where Jim and Larry are letting the sparks fly.

LARRY (CONT.)

You ain't leaving. Not ever.

JOHNSON

(to Larry)

Mr. Morse, either keep it down, or find something else to do.

JIM

(to Johnson)

Tiny, what do you think?

JOHNSON

About what?

JIM

About what? About what? About us! Do you think we are really insane, or did we just fake it to avoid lethal injection?

JOHNSON

I think you are both very sane, but only temporarily. If you don't keep it down, you'll both be going back to Evaluation.

LARRY

(less loud)

Oh, I like that concept.  
Temporary sanity. Medicated  
temporary sanity. That has lots of  
potential.

JIM

I'm guilty as charged. Please lock  
me away for the rest of my life  
for being temporarily sane.

JOHNSON

Just keep it down.

The Ping-Pong game resumes.

Buddy ponders what he has heard.

INT. GREEN'S OFFICE - RECEPTION AREA - DAY

Rich woods. Marble. These are successful lawyers.

On the wall the law firm name is etched in a glass that  
glows, lit from behind: Jessup, Jackson & Green.

Mandy waits in a high-back leather chair.

She feels the richness of the leather and marvels at the  
luxury of her surroundings. With her dyed, multi-colored  
hair, eyebrow rings and dark clothing, she is out of place.

Mandy looks at her watch and sighs.

A well groomed, professionally dressed RECEPTIONIST (25,  
female) sits behind a large counter made of fine imported  
woods. She works the PBX.

One of the firm's clients enters through the tall glass  
doors to the lobby.

MS. PATTON, a 35 year-old woman, is the same height and  
build as Mandy. In fact, she is what Mandy could look like  
in a few years if Mandy had a \$200 hairdo, large pearl

earrings, a tailored navy-blue business suit, expensive hose, black pumps, and a flowing multi-colored silk scarf.

Ms. Patton gives a "what are you doing in here" look to Mandy.

Mandy notices Ms. Patton's clothes, the elegant way Ms. Patton walks, and listens closely to Ms. Patton's charming voice.

RECEPTIONIST

Hello Ms. Patton.

PATTON

Good Afternoon. It is very nice to see you again. Mr. Jessup please. He is expecting me.

RECEPTIONIST

Certainly. One moment, please.

The receptionist calls through.

RECEPTIONIST

(into headset)

Ms. Patton is here to see you.  
I'll send her on back.

Ms. Patton gives the Receptionist a wink and a tiny wave of her hand, then proceeds to the lawyers' offices through an opaque glass door to the side of the Receptionist.

Mandy looks at her watch again. She pauses, then rises to her feet.

The Receptionist anticipates Mandy's approach with a look of disdain.

Mandy hesitates and then comes forward anyway.

MANDY

Excuse me. Will Mr. Green be much longer?

RECEPTIONIST

(snobby)

I really don't know.

Mandy backs down. As she turns to go back to her seat, the opaque glass door opens. Mr. Green pokes his head out.

GREEN

Ms. Ward. Come on back. Sorry to keep you waiting.

(to Receptionist)

Hold my calls.

Mandy gives an evil eye to the Receptionist as she follows Mr. Green through the door.

INT. GREEN'S OFFICE - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

A large conference room, tastefully decorated in a motif similar to the Reception Area.

Green closes the door behind Mandy and points to the seat closest to her. He sets a manila file folder on the table.

GREEN

Please, sit down. Can I get you something, a Coke or some water?

Mandy shakes her head, no. Mandy sits. She is uneasy in these surroundings.

GREEN (CONT.)

Your father wasn't able to come today?

MANDY

No. Sorry.

GREEN

Nothing to be sorry about. I was just reviewing your brother's file. Have you been up to see him yet?

MANDY

I tried. They said no.

GREEN

I'm sorry. My secretary has been out sick. I'll call and arrange for you to see him. Can you go up on Monday?

MANDY

Yes, anytime.

GREEN

I'll arrange it.

Green sits down, opens the manila file and reviews its contents.

GREEN

Your brother is charged with violation of Penal Code sections 187 and 190. That's first degree murder with special circumstances. If he is convicted, he could be sentenced to death. Because of your brother's condition, the Judge entered the plea for him. Actually two pleas...

MANDY

Two?

GREEN

Yes. Not Guilty, and, Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity. Under the law, if you only plead not guilty by reason of insanity, then it's presumed you did the crime, but lacked intent due to your mental condition.

MANDY

What does that mean, exactly? Will he go to jail?

GREEN

That depends. The District Attorney has offered a deal. Buddy pleads insanity and agrees to a minimum of 25 years.

GREEN (CONT.)

If we accept the plea bargain then the Judge will change the plea to simply "not guilty by reason of insanity." Then there won't be any trial, and the Judge will order your brother committed. He can stay in Vacaville.

MANDY

But he doesn't belong there.

GREEN

He doesn't belong in the State Penitentiary either. He'd never survive there.

MANDY

But what if he didn't do it?

GREEN

Did do what?

MANDY

Kill Marge.

GREEN

Now look. I understand how you feel. But the choice is whether he goes to prison, or maybe even gets the death penalty, or gets placed in a medical facility, a mental institution for the criminally insane. Don't you really want what's best for him?

MANDY

And how long does he stay there?

GREEN

He Pleads Insanity, he stays in until the doctors there determine he is no longer... ill... and the Court agrees that he can be released.

MANDY

So how long is that?

GREEN

The maximum term of commitment can't exceed the maximum term he would have served in prison if he had been found guilty.

MANDY

How long?

GREEN

In your brother's case, because first degree murder has a maximum penalty of life imprisonment, indefinitely.

MANDY

He'll be in there his whole life?

GREEN

Most Likely. At a minimum 25 years.

MANDY

But there's no way that he killed Marge. Buddy isn't a murderer. I know him. He couldn't have done it. He couldn't have!

GREEN

With the evidence that the DA has, there's a 99% chance your brother would be convicted.

MANDY

Maybe if the police looked for the real killer...

GREEN

Reasonable doubt. It's that simple. You bring me any evidence that will create a reasonable doubt in a juror's mind that your brother did it, and I'll be happy to tell the DA no plea bargain.

MANDY

Reasonable doubt?

GREEN

That's right. But everything, and I mean everything, I have seen says your brother did it. Your brother needs to take the plea bargain.

MANDY

I just can't believe...

GREEN

(interrupting)

Mandy, I know it is difficult to accept this. But when someone becomes mentally ill, they will do things that are completely out of character for them. Even kill someone.

Mandy sits back in her seat and folds her arms.

GREEN (CONT.)

This is the best for Buddy. He's lucky the DA knows your family. I'm not sure he would make the same offer to anyone else.

MANDY

Why's that?

GREEN

The DAs office is under constant pressure to contest every insanity plea. The public is very skeptical about anyone who claims temporary insanity. It's a convenient defense and hard to disprove. Ever since the attempted assassination of President Reagan, where the shooter was committed instead of going to prison, there has been a backlash against letting anyone avoid prison time by going into a mental hospital.

GREEN (CONT.)

In fact three other States have outlawed the insanity plea altogether. These days more than 40 percent of the prison population are really in need of psychiatric care. They should be in mental institutions getting treatment, but instead they rot in prison.

MANDY

What can I do?

Green pauses and looks her over. The red-green hair, the eyebrow ring. The clothes.

GREEN

Talk to your brother. Tell him the Plea Bargain is the right thing to do.

MANDY

But...

Green stands up.

GREEN

Mandy, it's his life we're talking about.

INT. CMF PSYCHOTHERAPY ROOM - DAY

A small room with a table and two chairs placed in the center. A red emergency call button has been wired into the table. Buddy sits up tall and straight, facing Dr. Monson across the table.

Dr. Monson scratches on the medical chart.

MONSON

Are you comfortable?

BUDDY

Yes.

MONSON

Good. You have been here almost two weeks now. Is that right?

BUDDY

I'm not sure.

MONSON

(reading chart)

Let's see. We first prescribed a sedative, something to calm you down, and also an anti-psychotic. That helps those little voices in your head go away -- and then we replaced the sedative with an anti-depressant, which should have cleared your head a bit. Buddy, have you been taking all your medications?

BUDDY

Yes.

MONSON

How do you feel right now?

BUDDY

I'm fine. I just want to go home.

Buddy notices his stuttering is gone.

MONSON

You should continue to improve over the next week. The anti-psychotic medications take about three weeks to be fully effective.

BUDDY

I want to go home.

MONSON

No, not quite yet.

(beat)

Buddy, do you remember what happened? Why you were brought here?

BUDDY

(recalling)

Yes. I found Marge dead downstairs. Then some policemen brought me here. And then I saw you.

MONSON

Hmmm. Substantial memory loss. It's not uncommon. Do you remember killing your stepmother?

BUDDY

(excited)

No. I didn't kill her. She was dead when I found her.

Monson checks the medical records again.

MONSON

(calmly)

Buddy, have you been treated by a psychiatrist previously?

BUDDY

No.

MONSON

How about a doctor Cruthers? Didn't he give you a prescription for an anti-depressant?

BUDDY

That was after my mom died. I didn't take it. Why are...

MONSON

(interrupting)

This is just our first session. We don't have to go over everything today. We can discuss your mother's death another time. Unless, of course, you want to talk about it now?

BUDDY

No.

MONSON

Well, then, why don't we stop for today. I'll see you again on Monday.

EXT. FLYING T TRUCK STOP - DAY

AERIAL.

A summer heat wave has turned the region dry and brown. In the early afternoon hours, the truck stop is nearly empty.

INT. TRUCK STOP DINER - DAY

Sherry sits at a table working on employee shift schedules.

Mandy delivers a Coke to a trucker at the counter, then jumps into the chair directly across from Sherry.

MANDY

Sherry, no matter what they say, I still can't believe he did it.

Sherry continues working while she talks.

SHERRY

Me either. Have you talked to him?

MANDY

Not yet. I see him this Monday. But I saw his lawyer.

SHERRY

A lawyer? Is he married?

MANDY

Don't start.

SHERRY

Not for you, for me!

MANDY

I'm serious.

SHERRY

OK. So, what's this lawyer going to do?

MANDY

Nothing. He said that before he would do anything, he needed evidence. Evidence of 'reasonable doubt.'

SHERRY

So, go to the police or the DA or whoever and get them to open an investigation.

MANDY

Right. Like anyone will listen to me. I'm nobody.

Sherry looks up from her paper work. She looks Mandy square in the eyes.

SHERRY

Mandy, can I tell you something?

MANDY

What?

SHERRY

Check the mirror. If you want people to listen to you, you have to reflect confidence. Look the part. And be assertive. That's all there is to it.

Sherry picks up her papers and leaves Mandy thinking at the table.

INT. CMF MAIN BUILDING - VISITORS' AREA - DAY

Buddy sits waiting. He tests the strength of the chains connecting his handcuffs.

The leg irons are painful.

He watches out the front glass doors with great anticipation.

Johnson stands beside Buddy.

Mandy comes through the automatic sliding glass doors into the visitor's area. She's taken aback by the site of Buddy in chains. But it is Buddy.

Buddy stands. He looks at Johnson, who gives his approval. Buddy reaches out and takes Mandy's hands in his. She throws her arms around him.

MANDY

I miss you so much.

BUDDY

It's OK Mandy. I'm all right.

Mandy and Buddy sit on a couch. Johnson looks at his watch.

MANDY

How are you? I tried to come see you earlier, but they wouldn't let me. I dropped off some things for you.

BUDDY

I know. I got them. I'm glad you came. It's good to see you, Mandy.

MANDY

Your lawyer got me in.

BUDDY

A lawyer?

MANDY

Well, sort of. He's supposed to be defending you, but he says he can't.

Mandy looks deep into Buddy's eyes.

BUDDY

I didn't kill Marge. I didn't kill anybody. Believe me Mandy.

MANDY

Of course I believe you.

(beat)

The police found your fingerprints  
on the murder weapon.

BUDDY

The crowbar? I picked it up when I  
found Marge.

MANDY

Buddy, I'm not sure what to do.  
The attorney wants you to take a  
plea bargain. He says that if you  
plead insanity, you won't go to  
prison. He says it's the best  
thing for you, because of the  
evidence.

BUDDY

I didn't kill Marge!

Johnson checks his watch again and steps up to Buddy and  
Mandy.

JOHNSON

I'm sorry Miss.

MANDY

I need a few more minutes with  
him.

JOHNSON

Time's up.

MANDY

(pleading)

Please!

JOHNSON

Doctor's orders. Let's go Buddy.

Buddy stands. He walks ahead of Jensen a few steps, then  
turns back to Mandy.

BUDDY

I didn't kill Marge, Mandy! Please  
help me, Mandy! Please!

Mandy watches Buddy disappear into the bowels of the building. She POUNDS HER FISTS on the couch in frustration.

She stops. She looks at her clothes. She touches her eyebrow ring. A determined look.

INT. WARD HOUSE - MANDY'S BEDROOM - DAY

The morning sunshine streams into Mandy's bedroom. A boom box on her dresser plays a fast-paced popular song. Mandy lays a Macy's box on her bed. She breaks open the box and takes out an attractive navy blue business suit.

Mandy holds it up against her and turns to look in the wardrobe mirror on the closet door.

Then she turns and shows

SHERRY.

The verdict: a thumbs up.

Mandy holds out a strand of her hair, suggesting to Sherry that the hair is next.

INT. WARD HOUSE - MANDY'S BATHROOM - DAY

Mandy has a bath towel wrapped around her, and a smaller towel is on over her hair. A bottle of hair dye is on the counter. Hair clippings are on the floor.

Sherry unwraps the towel around Mandy's head to reveal a shorter, cleaner, attractive new hairstyle. The multi-colored hair is gone. Mandy dries her hair and combs it into place. Mandy leans into the bathroom mirror. Very carefully she removes the eyebrow ring. She brushes her eyebrow ever so slightly to cover the pierce hole. Sherry moves in to help apply some make-up.

Mandy puts on one pearl earring and then another.

Mandy backs away from the mirror.

Sherry agrees.

Mandy looks great. This is going to work.

INT. WARD HOUSE – MANDY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Mandy slides on the second of the new black pumps over her new hose. Mandy smooths the blue dress.

Sherry wraps a silk, flowery scarf around Mandy's neck.

Mandy's beautiful. Her make-up is impeccable.

She's excited.

She's ready.

She's Ms. Patton, but younger.

INT. GREEN'S OFFICE - RECEPTION AREA - DAY

Mandy enters with a sense of purpose. She moves confidently to the receptionist's desk.

RECEPTIONIST

Hello, may I help you?

MANDY

Good Afternoon. It is very nice to see you again. Mr. Green, please. I would like to see Mr. Green.

The Receptionist knows there is something familiar about the woman in front of her.

RECEPTIONIST

Certainly, may I have your name, please?

MANDY

Amanda. Amanda Ward. He's expecting me.

The Receptionist tries to ring through to Green but there is no answer.

RECEPTIONIST

I'm sorry, Mr. Green isn't...

MANDY

That's OK, I'll just go on back.

Mustering courage, Mandy proceeds through the opaque glass door to find Green. The Receptionist hurriedly tries to ring through to Green again.

INT. GREEN'S OFFICE - HALLWAY - DAY

Green stands outside his office. Mandy strides down the office hallway toward him.

GREEN

May I help you?

Mandy gets nearly nose to nose with Green.

MANDY

My brother says he didn't kill her.

GREEN

Mandy? Is that you?

MANDY

He says he didn't do it, and I believe him.

GREEN

I didn't recognize you.

MANDY

I want... no I demand an investigation. There's a killer out there, and somebody's got to find him.

GREEN

Mandy, hold on. Like I told you before...

MANDY

(interrupting)

No. My brother didn't kill anyone. He doesn't belong in prison.

GREEN

But he won't be going to prison. It's a mental hospital.

MANDY

It's a prison! He'll never come out! He didn't do it! He doesn't belong there!

GREEN

Mandy, he's sick.

MANDY

I know my brother! He doesn't belong in a mental institution!

Mandy turns and walks away.

She stops suddenly.

Thinking quickly, she decides on a new tactic and turns back to give it a try.

MANDY (CONT.)

Maybe he needs a better lawyer.

There is no reaction from Green.

Mandy starts again for the door.

GREEN

Ms. Ward. Wait.

Mandy's face brightens. She turns back to Mr. Green.

GREEN (CONT.)

Did Buddy actually tell you he didn't kill her?

MANDY

(excitedly)

Yes. That's exactly what he said.

GREEN

Interesting. The guys in prison, every one of them will say they aren't guilty, they didn't do it. But the ones in the mental institutions, after they are on medication, they usually admit what they did. Interesting.

MANDY

(gleefully)

So you'll get the police to open an investigation?

GREEN

Hold on. I only said it was interesting. I still need something I can show the DA. Something that will convince me... convince the DA that there is at least some possibility that your brother didn't do it.

The disappointment begins to show on Mandy's face.

GREEN (CONT.)

Tell you what. Trial is set for next Friday. That still gives you a few days. See what you can find. You bring me something, anything that casts just some reasonable doubt, and I'll tell the DA no deal. Fair enough?

MANDY

You got it!

INT. CMF WARD B - DAY

Most of the inmates are huddled around a television set at the end of the hallway watching an episode of the Jerry Springer Show.

A bit of morning sunshine comes through a distant window.

Buddy sits on top of the covers of his neatly made bed.

Larry and Jim sit across from one another at one of the "arts and crafts" tables in the middle of the room. They are playing chess. The game has progressed nicely for Jim.

LARRY

I think that's check.

JIM

No, that's checkmate. See.

Jim points out that Larry can't move.

Jim stands and walks over to Buddy's dresser.

He picks up the picture of Mandy, examines it and puts it back.

JIM

I hear you're going to court this week.

Buddy nods, yes.

JIM (CONT.)

I remember going to court.

BUDDY

What happened?

JIM

With me. Schizophrenia. I was at home in bed trying to sleep. I roll over and look at my wife, and this alien is sucking blood out of her neck. I reach under my pillow and take out my gun. The next thing I know I'm in here.

JIM (CONT.)

They put me on anti-psychotic medication. And, poof, no more aliens. And no more wife.

(beat)

How about you?

BUDDY

I didn't do anything.

Jim sits on the foot of Buddy's bed.

JIM

(whispering)

They say you ripped out her tongue.

BUDDY

(emphatically)

No. I was home upstairs. I heard a thud. I came down to see what it was and there she was. I didn't kill her. I didn't. I was in my room!

JIM

So you don't remember killing her?

BUDDY

No! I didn't kill anybody.

JIM

And you didn't see things or hear voices that told you to kill her?

BUDDY

No! I was awake the whole time. Don't you believe me?

JIM

Kid, I believe you. I do.

BUDDY

I just want to go home.

JIM

We all do.

BUDDY  
Can't you help me?

Jim gets up off the bed.

JIM  
Hey Mouse. Mouse. Come here a  
minute.

Larry gets up from the center table, leaving the chess  
board he has been staring at for the past several minutes.

JIM (CONT.)  
Mouse, this is Buddy.

LARRY  
Larry Morse. Everybody calls me  
mouse. How ya doin'?

JIM  
Larry was a real lawyer.

LARRY  
Attorney General's office.

JIM  
Mouse. I think the kid might be  
innocent. They say he off'ed his  
step-mom, but the kid says he was  
somewhere else and denies any  
hallucinations. Is there anything  
he can do?

LARRY  
Sure. But it's risky.

Buddy sits up straight, wipes his eyes and listens  
intently.

LARRY (CONT.)  
Listen, you got a constitutional  
right to a trial. If you tell the  
Judge no deal, and you plead not  
guilty, and you waive the right to  
plead insanity, they gotta try  
you.

LARRY (CONT.)

The risky part is if a jury finds you guilty, you could get life in prison... or worse.

JIM

There you go, kid. You tell the Judge you're pleading not guilty, you waive insanity, and you want a trial. Can you remember that?

BUDDY

I think so.

LARRY

You'll have to be your own man on this one, though. Your lawyer will probably try to convince the Judge your brain account is overdrawn.

BUDDY

What do I say?

LARRY

(slowly)

I plead Not Guilty, I waive insanity, I want a trial.

BUDDY

I'm not sure...

JIM

We'll help you with it. Don't sweat it, kid.

Larry picks up a 3 X 5 card and pencil from off the arts and craft table and writes several notes on it. He hands the card to Buddy.

LARRY

Here like this.

BUDDY

Okay. I say this stuff and I can go home?

LARRY

At least you'll be out of here.

JIM

Yeah, this place is only for crazy  
folk like us. Right, Mouse?

Jim distorts his face with his hands and sticks his face in  
Buddy's.

Buddy pulls back, not sure what to make of this.

LARRY

Come on, Jim, leave the kid alone.  
Let's go ride the pink elephants  
around.

Larry and Jim have some fun and pretend they are getting  
onto small animals and ride them around the room. Johnson  
comes over and tells the two to quit their antics, so the  
two dismount the pink elephants and return to their chess  
game.

Buddy takes the card and puts it in his pocket.

He then picks up the picture of Mandy and places it over  
his heart.

EXT. FAIRFIELD POLICE STATION - DAY

Another hot, sunny August day. Mid-morning.

Mandy, dressed up in her blue suit, comes out of the Police  
Station with several pieces of paper. She hurries down the  
steps to Danny's '65 Ford Mustang, waiting at the curb.

Danny leans across and opens the passenger side door.

Mandy confidently holds up the papers to let him know she's  
making progress.

EXT. THE OLD SOLANO COUNTY COURTHOUSE - DAY - LATER

Mandy runs up the stairs to the main entrance to the courthouse. Danny's car is in the parking lot.

Danny waits in the car.

INT. COURT CLERK'S OFFICE - DAY - CONTINUING

A small interior office in the Courthouse. The door is open. A FILE CLERK hands Mandy a large court file. At the top of the file it reads, STATE v. WARD.

EXT. FAIRFIELD COUNTY OFFICES - DAY - LATER

It's midday. It's hot. Very hot.

Mandy stands in front of the office directory. She sees the listing for the District Attorney's office, points to it, and then jots down the room number on her note pad.

She hurries off in the direction of the DA's office, toting a satchel with the results of her investigative efforts.

EXT. SOLANO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY - LATER

Mid-afternoon. Only a few patrons are in front of the large library facility. Mandy is getting tired, but she manages to pull open the large glass door and goes inside.

Her satchel is fuller and heavier now.

EXT. FBI RESIDENT AGENCY OFFICE - DAY - LATER

Late afternoon. Mandy comes out of the FBI's local satellite office in downtown Fairfield. She is tired. Her satchel is full. On her face, a look of disappointment.

She sees Danny parked across the street.

INT. DANNY'S CAR - DAY

DANNY

Any luck?

MANDY

Dead end. The FBI never even looked at the autopsy. They said the police crime lab handled the case. I don't know what else I can do.

DANNY

You tried. How about we get something to eat?

MANDY

Sure. But not the Diner.

DANNY

Anything but the Diner. Besides the service is terrible there.

(beat)

That was supposed to be a joke.

Danny puts the car in gear and pulls away from the curb.

INT. WARD HOUSE - NIGHT

Mandy comes slowly through the front door. She is very tired. She takes off her black pumps and puts them into the satchel on top of the papers she has collected.

MANDY

Dad? Dad? Are you home?

Mandy climbs the stairs to the upstairs bedrooms.

Her father's bedroom door is open slightly. She peeks in and listens to her father, who is speaking to someone on the telephone.

INT. WARD HOUSE - JOE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Joe sits on the edge of the queen-size bed, which takes up most of the small room. Joe is on the telephone

Several opened envelopes and the letters that were enclosed in them are on the bed next to him.

Joe is upset.

JOE

No, I haven't got the check yet!  
That's what I've been trying to  
tell you. ...right, one hundred and  
fifty thousand dollars. It's been  
two months. ...yes, I purchased the  
policy myself. I just want the  
check!

INT. WARD HOUSE - NIGHT

Mandy steps back slowly from the door to her father's bedroom. She trembles as she contemplates what she has just heard.

Suddenly, Joe emerges from his bedroom.

JOE

Mandy, I didn't hear you come in.

Mandy is pale and trembling.

JOE (CONT.)

Are you all right?

MANDY

I'm just really tired. I'll see  
you in the morning.

Mandy steps past her father and into her bedroom, closing the door behind her.

Joe pauses outside her door.

INT. CMF PSYCHOTHERAPY ROOM - DAY

Buddy is in another session with Dr. Monson.

MONSON

And you are certain you were upstairs when your stepmother was killed?

BUDDY

Yes. Playing Nintendo.

MONSON

Nintendo? My grandson plays Nintendo. Which Nintendo game were you playing? Donkey Kong?

Monson makes a few notes on the medical chart.

BUDDY

Mortal Kombat.

MONSON

I see. How did you feel when you were done playing Mortal Combat?

BUDDY

Wet.

Monson makes more notes.

MONSON

Why did you feel wet?

BUDDY

I was out in the rain.

MONSON

After you played Nintendo, you were out in the rain?

BUDDY

(irritated)

No. Before. I walked home in the rain. I was wet.

BUDDY (CONT.)

I played Nintendo. I heard noises.  
I went downstairs. Marge was  
dead. See?

MONSON

Tell me again about the noises.

Buddy stands.

BUDDY

No! No! I didn't kill anybody.  
I want to go home. You can't keep  
me here.

MONSON

(calmly)

Buddy, sit down. Sit down or I'll  
call security.

BUDDY

I'm going home!

Dr. Monson pushes the small RED BUTTON on the desk.

Buddy BOLTS for the door, KNOCKING Dr. Monson over in the  
process.

Monson TUMBLES to the ground hitting his head on the chair.

As Buddy reaches for the door,

JOHNSON

opens it and GRABS Buddy's hand.

Johnson TWISTS Buddy's arm behind his back and forces  
Buddy's face against the wall.

Monson gets up and brushes himself off. He winces as he  
touches the bruise on the back of his head.

MONSON

(angry)

Put him in Evaluation. Two days.  
And schedule him every day next  
week! E.S.T.!

Johnson takes Buddy out.

Dr. Monson throws the notepad with his written evaluation on the table.

CLOSE on the notepad:

ARNOLD WARD

Diagnosis:

Schitzoaffective psychoses.  
Major Depressive Disorder.  
Dependent Personality.  
Level of function = 4  
Habitual liar.

Tendency to Violence.

INT. TRUCK STOP DINER - DAY

The Neon clock. 3:30. The calendar shows Thursday, October 13.

The Diner is full of the usual suspects.

Danny works at the grill in the kitchen.

Danny watches Mandy closely as she takes a customer's order at one of the tables in the middle of the diner.

The changes in Mandy's appearance are quite evident. The rings are gone. The hair is fashionable. She wears a more traditional waitress uniform now.

Joyce takes care of the customers at the counter.

Mandy talks earnestly with a TRUCKER about something, and he smiles, says "sure" and gives a big 'thumbs up'. Mandy says thanks and gives the Trucker a pat on the back. The Trucker leans over to the table next and passes on the message given to him by Mandy.

Mandy brings an order up to Danny's shelf.

She props open the door to the kitchen and leans inside.

MANDY  
Thanks for yesterday.

DANNY  
Not a problem. How about tonight?  
Dinner?

MANDY  
Sure. Around Seven?

INT. CMF EVALUATION ROOM - DAY

Buddy stands looking out the lone, small window of his padded cell.

He repeatedly screams and POUNDS HIS FISTS against the door.

BUDDY  
MANDY!!!  
MANDY!!!  
MANDY!!!

BLOOD TRICKLES from the sides of Buddy's hands where the pounding has broken the skin.

Buddy BEATS his hands against the door again and again.

Finally, he puts his head against the wall, exhausted.

INT. DANNY'S CAR - NIGHT

Mandy is silent as the car travels down a street in Fairfield.

DANNY  
How can you be so sure that he's  
not, you know...?

MANDY  
Crazy? I guess I don't know. But  
I love him. He needs my help. I  
just want to have him home again.  
The way things used to be.

DANNY  
Things change.

MANDY  
Sometimes.

DANNY  
So if Buddy takes the plea  
bargain, no prison time at all?

MANDY  
That's right. And then he stays in  
the mental hospital and they fill  
him full of drugs that are  
supposed to help him. And even if  
they don't think he's really sick,  
they still won't ever let him out  
because they think the only things  
that are making him OK are the  
medications.

DANNY  
And if he accidentally stops  
taking the medications, he kills  
somebody again.

MANDY  
He didn't kill anybody!

DANNY  
Sorry, I didn't mean it that way.

MANDY  
Can I ask you something?

Danny swallows hard.

MANDY (CONT.)  
Buddy's attorney said I just have  
to give him one thing that might  
prove Buddy's innocent. If I do,  
then he won't have to take the  
insanity plea bargain and there  
will be a full investigation.

DANNY

So?

MANDY

What if that one thing points to someone else, someone else I care about - but I really don't think that that person did it either?

INT. CMF EVALUATION ROOM - NIGHT

Buddy lies on his back on the floor. His arms are outstretched.

He stares straight up.

He says over and over to himself

BUDDY

Mandy... Mandy... Mandy...

INT. CMF MAIN BUILDING - VISITORS' AREA - DAY

The area is now active with inmates and visitors.

Green sits waiting with a briefcase by his side. Green stands when he sees Gate 17 open.

Buddy emerges.

Buddy appears not to have slept in some time. He is in the straitjacket that he first wore when he came to CMF.

Johnson escorts Buddy to a chair next to Green. Johnson lets the lawyer and his client have a small amount of privacy, but doesn't stray far.

GREEN

Hi Buddy. I'm Harry Green. I'm your attorney. I met with your sister Mandy...

Buddy slowly rocks back and forth in his chair.

BUDDY

Mandy. Mandy.

GREEN

She'll be there today. In court.  
Do you understand?

BUDDY

Mandy. Mandy.

GREEN

I've been working on your case and  
I worked out a plea bargain.

BUDDY

Plea Bargain?

GREEN

Yes. The District Attorney offered  
commitment with a minimum of 40  
years. I got him to go down to 25.  
Do you understand?

BUDDY

(shaking his head)

No. No, Plea Bargain.

GREEN

It's the best thing for you,  
Buddy. You can stay here as long  
as you need to.

BUDDY

I want to go home.

Green pauses, thinking of a new approach.

GREEN

I can help you go HOME Buddy. But  
you have to help me. This is  
important Buddy.

Buddy stops rocking and listens closely.

GREEN (CONT.)

In Court, I need you to say you  
agree to the plea bargain.

GREEN (CONT.)

When the Judge asks you if you agree, and you need to say yes. OK?

Johnson moves toward Green and Buddy, pointing to his watch. Green nods and holds up one finger, delaying the end of the conversation momentarily.

GREEN (CONT.)

When the Judge asks you if you agree, you need to say yes. Can you do that?

Before Buddy has a chance to respond, Johnson's patience expires and he moves in and helps Buddy up.

JOHNSON

Sorry, he has to get ready for court. Let's go, Buddy.

Green gathers his things and watches as Buddy is escorted toward Gate 17.

GREEN

Buddy, I'm counting on you.

Buddy looks back to Green.

EXT. FLYING T TRUCK STOP - DAY

Early afternoon. Mandy walks quickly from the direction of her house across the truck stop parking lot. She has her blue suit on. As she approaches the diner, she checks her watch, then enters.

INT. TRUCK STOP DINER - DAY

The Neon clock. 1:30. The calendar indicates Friday, August 13. The truck stop is nearly empty.

Sherry has just picked up a tip off an empty table as Mandy comes in.

MANDY  
(out of breath)  
Hi Sherry.

SHERRY  
Hey Mandy, I thought you were  
going to court today.

MANDY  
First my dad calls and says he  
can't go because there's too much  
work at the shop. Then Danny  
dissapears. Is he here?

Mandy moves for the kitchen.

SHERRY  
No. He hasn't shown up yet.

MANDY  
I gotta get there.

SHERRY  
Come on, I'll run you over to the  
Courthouse, we can check Danny's  
place on the way.

Mandy and Sherry head out the door.

EXT. FAIRFIELD STREETS - DAY

Sherry drives in an area where there are many older homes  
that are not very well kept up.

INT. SHERRY'S CAR - DAY

SHERRY  
Did you find anything that will  
help Buddy?

MANDY  
Yeah. But I don't know if I can.

SHERRY

What is it?

MANDY

Dad took out an insurance policy  
on Marge.

SHERRY

Are you sure?

MANDY

I overheard him on the phone.  
There was a letter from the  
insurance company...

SHERRY

Do you have the letter?

MANDY

(anxious)

You think I need it?

SHERRY

I don't know. What time is it?

Mandy checks her watch.

MANDY

One forty. It's too late to go  
back.

Sherry pulls the car into the driveway of one of the small  
older houses.

SHERRY

I think this is it. Let's go.

EXT. DANNY'S HOUSE — DAY

Sherry and Mandy run from Sherry's car to the front door.

The screen door is old and tattered. It's closed. Mandy  
opens it.

The wooden front door is not closed securely. Sherry pushes open the door half-way and takes a step inside.

MANDY

Danny? Danny, you home? It's  
Sherry and Mandy.

Sherry and Mandy pause a moment and then proceed inside.

INT. DANNY'S HOUSE - DAY

The house is nearly unfurnished. A mattress is in the corner of the front room. Next to the mattress is a military duffel bag.

A folding card table and two chairs serve as the dining area furniture. A stack of mail and newspapers is on the table.

Sherry picks up a piece of mail as Mandy examines the duffel bag.

MANDY

Are you sure this is the right  
place?

SHERRY

Yes. This is his mail.

Sherry opens the door to the bathroom.

She sees on the counter several PRESCRIPTION BOTTLES. The tops are off and the bottles are empty.

Sherry picks up one bottle. She quickly reads the label.

CLOSE on label. It reads:

Patient: Daniel L. Miller

Risperdal.

Warning. Do not discontinue use of  
this or any other anti-psychotic  
medication without the supervision  
of your physician.

SHERRY  
Mandy, come here!

Mandy rushes to Sherry's side and looks at the bottle too.

SHERRY (CONT.)  
Did you know about this?

MANDY  
Me? No.

SHERRY  
Mandy. Think for a minute. Where was Danny the night Marge was killed? Was he with you?

MANDY  
No. We were working late. He'd already left.

SHERRY  
Mandy, let's go.

EXT. OLD SOLANO COUNTY COURTHOUSE - DAY

ARIEL VIEW

Semi-tractor trailer rigs encircle the courthouse, some double-parked.

A line of TRUCKERS enter the front door.

INT. JUDGE HIGHTOWER'S COURTROOM - DAY

The courtroom audience seats are nearly full.

Buddy's friends, the TRUCKERS from across the County and the DINER REGULARS, have showed up to support him. Several MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA are also present in the audience.

The Judge sits behind the bench.

District Attorney Wheeler is seated at the prosecution counsel's table. Attorney Green is at the defense counsel's table. Next to him is

BUDDY.

He is in the straitjacket. His legs are bound with leg irons. He sits up straight. He has a determined look on his face.

Green looks back to the back door, waiting.

Dr. Monson, Jensen and another CORRECTIONS OFFICER are seated in the front row of the audience seats behind the District Attorney.

The audience members whisper or talk very quietly among themselves waiting for the proceedings to begin. The Judge looks at his watch.

GREEN

I'm sorry your honor, I thought... I thank the court for waiting. We can proceed.

JUDGE

Very well.

The Court Reporter works the stenotype machine to take down the proceedings. The Bailiff moves to the rear of the courtroom and stands in front of the door.

WHEELER

May it please the court, the State and the defendant have come to an agreement under which the Defendant will plead insanity and accept a commitment term of not less than 25 years to life. We would request the Court's approval of the agreement, that the agreement become the order of the court and that the court enter the order in the Court records. A copy of the agreement has been provided to the Court.

JUDGE

(examining papers)

This looks in order. I did have a question about the Psych report, Counsel.

WHEELER

Yes, Your Honor. Dr. Monson prepared the report. He's here today.

JUDGE

Good. Thank you for coming. My question has to do with the method of evaluation. The report, well it seems a bit conclusory. Can you help me with that?

Dr. Monson becomes just a bit uncomfortable.

WHEELER

Judge, Dr. Monson has been a licensed psychiatrist for over 30 years, and with the State's Department of Mental Health for over 25 years.

JUDGE

That's very well and good. Dr. Monson, can you address this?

Dr. Monson hesitates, then stands to address the court.

MONSON

(being creative)

Yes, Your Honor. The State's reporting procedures have been streamlined in order to reduce the burden on the courts in reading lengthy technical reports.

Several of the Truckers in the audience make coughing noises. Dr. Monson sits down. Attorney Wheeler stands quickly.

WHEELER

If the court would like to take testimony from Dr. Monson, we can do that.

JUDGE

Mr. Green. Have you had a chance to meet with your client?

GREEN

Yes I have, Your Honor.

JUDGE

And you have recommended this plea bargain to your client?

GREEN

Yes.

JUDGE

And has your client agreed to it?

GREEN

I believe so your honor.

A small RUCKUS occurs at the rear of the courtroom as

MANDY

tries to come in and is stopped by the Bailiff. Everyone in the courtroom turns to see what is happening.

BUDDY JUMPS TO HIS FEET.

BUDDY

MANDY!

The judge reaches for his gavel. Green pushes Buddy back into his seat.

JUDGE

Order. Order.

Mandy holds still momentarily as the courtroom calms. Mandy motions to Green that she has something urgent to tell him.

JUDGE (CONT.)

Is this the one that kept us waiting?

GREEN

Yes, Your Honor. May I have just a minute with her?

JUDGE

Very well.

The Bailiff lets Mandy pass.

Mandy and Green meet in the front row of the audience seats, away from Dr. Monson.

They speak in whispers only loud enough for each other to hear.

GREEN

What are you doing?

MANDY

My father took out an insurance policy on Marge six months before she died!

GREEN

Your father? You can't be serious.

MANDY

It's true. There's a letter.

GREEN

Do you have it?

MANDY

No, but...

GREEN

All the evidence says the killer was psychotic, not someone trying to collect on an insurance policy. Look, I'm sorry. I have to do what's best for your brother.

Mandy takes Danny's prescription bottle from her pocket.

She hands the bottle to Green.

GREEN

What's this?

MANDY

A guy I work with. At the diner.  
It's his. He's wasn't at work when  
Marge was killed.

GREEN

Was he supposed to be?

MANDY

Well, no...

Green returns to the defense counsel table, leaving Mandy distraught and confused.

Mandy sits down and looks at Buddy, who has been straining in his seat trying to make eye contact with her the whole time.

Sherry comes into the rear of the courtroom and sits in the audience.

Buddy is happy to see Mandy. He mouths the words, "It's OK" to Mandy.

Mandy mouths the words back, "I love you" to Buddy.

JUDGE

Mr. Green, are you ready to  
proceed.

GREEN

Yes, Your Honor.

JUDGE

Is your client able to consent to  
the plea bargain?

Mandy looks back at Sherry. She motions for Mandy to stand up.

GREEN

Yes, I believe so, Your Honor.

Mandy musters every ounce of courage and springs to her feet. With tears welling, her emotions burst.

MANDY

WAIT! WAIT! YOU CAN'T DO THIS! HE  
DIDN'T DO IT! HE DIDN'T DO IT! HE  
DIDN'T DO IT!

The Judge reaches for his gavel again, and this time he uses it.

JUDGE

Order! Order! Miss Ward.

Mandy sits down.

There are RUMBLINGS among the Truckers.

The Judge looks at who is in the audience and thinks twice about not letting Mandy have a chance to speak.

JUDGE (CONT.)

Miss Ward, you obviously have  
something to say. Let's hear it.

Mandy stands again. She walks forward a step. Her tears flow freely.

MANDY

I'm sorry, Sir, BUT THIS ISN'T  
RIGHT. Ask my brother. My brother  
can talk for himself. He can. He  
told me he didn't do it. He  
didn't kill Marge. And I believe  
him. He may not be like you or me,  
but HE IS NOT INSANE. You have to  
let him tell you! Please.

Monson slides down in his chair a bit more.

Green stands to address the court. So does Mr. Wheeler.

GREEN

I'm sorry about this...

JUDGE

Mr. Green. Why don't you sit down  
a minute. You too, Jon.

The lawyers sit. The Truckers hush. The courtroom is  
silent.

JUDGE

Mr. Ward? Buddy? You obviously  
have some friends here today.  
If you're able, I would certainly  
like to hear whatever you have to  
say.

Buddy slowly stands up.

BUDDY

(deliberately)

My name is Buddy Ward. Mandy is  
my sister. I love Mandy. I was  
upstairs in my room and I heard a  
noise.

INT. WARD HOUSE - DOWNSTAIRS GUEST ROOM NIGHT - FLASHBACK

The murder scene in BLACK AND WHITE.

The rain BEATS on the windowpanes of the room.

Marge hangs one half of a second sheet on the clothesline,  
then the other half. She straightens the sheets so they  
lay flat.

Lightning Flashes.

The lights from the lamps flicker.

A shadow appears on the sheets. It is the shadow of a man.

The lamps of the room suddenly turn off.

Marge SCREAMS!!

The CUSTOMER from the diner, in his green army jacket,  
raises the crowbar over Marge.

Marge shrinks from her attacker, raising her hands over her head.

INT. WARD HOUSE - BUDDY'S ROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK CONT.

Buddy hears Marge SCREAM and drops the Nintendo controller on the ground and runs from his room.

CLOSE TV SCREEN -- Buddy's Nintendo system is on. The game "Mortal Kombat" is loaded and two figures are on the screen, one standing over the other having vanquished its opponent.

INT. WARD HOUSE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK CONT.

Buddy stops on the top of the stairs. The front door is open.

He listens to the POUNDING sounds coming from the guest bedroom.

He runs down the stairs.

Buddy reaches the bottom of the stairs.

The Customer with the green army jacket comes out of the guest bedroom.

The Customer, dripping in sweat and rain, has blood on his gloves and face.

The Customer sees Buddy.

The Customer turns and runs out the front door.

Buddy rushes into the guest bedroom.

BUDDY (V.O.)

I went downstairs and I found  
Marge. She was dead.

INT. JUDGE HIGHTOWER'S COURTROOM - DAY

BUDDY

I didn't kill her. I didn't kill anybody. I am not insane. I know people who are. I'm not. A man from the diner killed Marge. A man with a green jacket. I didn't do it.

Buddy reaches into his top pocket and takes out a 3 X 5 card and reads from it.

BUDDY (CONT.)

(very slowly)

Your Honor, I plead not guilty, I waive the right to plead insanity, and I want a trial!

First one, and then another, and then another of the people in the audience clap. The Judge nods his head in agreement.

When the clapping has about subsided, the Judge restores order with a couple of TAPS with his gavel.

JUDGE

Buddy, I think that this case is pretty screwed up, to use a phrase. It may be my fault that it got to be this way, but now the Court is going to fix that.

JUDGE (CONT.)

And this time we'll try to follow the Constitution a bit.

Wheeler tries to stand up.

JUDGE

Sit own Mr. District Attorney. I'm not done yet. First, the Court accepts the defendant's plea of not guilty. Second, absent any CREDIBLE psychiatric report, the Court orders the defendant released from the County Jail pending a preliminary hearing. Third, Mr. District Attorney, I want a full investigation of this

crime done by the County Sheriff's office. And you may want to work with the FBI on this as well. And I don't want to see you in here again with a half-baked investigation report. Fourth, Mr. Green, while I'm sure you didn't want this case in the first place, and I probably think civil lawyers like you should stick to your high-paying clients. Nevertheless, I'm ordering you to prepare a first-rate defense for this young man. A first-rate defense, you understand? Finally, Miss Ward. I want to thank you. You did the right thing. I can see why your brother loves you so much. The court orders the defendant released to your custody.

(to Bailiff)

And get that damn straitjacket off him.

The Judge picks up the gavel and taps it loudly once.

As the Judge stands, Mandy rushes to Buddy and hugs him tight. The other members of the audience APPLAUD and rise, except for Dr. Monson who sits stunned.

As Buddy and Mandy part, we can see the straitjacket on the table between them.

Buddy reaches for the straitjacket and picks it up. He slowly turns back toward Dr. Monson.

SLOW MOTION:

Buddy throws the jacket high into the air toward Dr. Monson.

With the straitjacket at its highest point of flight, the motion stops, the scene frozen in time.

The wall of the courtroom becomes a blurred, multi-colored background.

ROLL CREDITS OVER:

A white STRAITJACKET on a blurred, multi-colored background. Suspended in air.

FADE OUT.