

Fearless

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FADE IN:

EXT. CITY SKYLINE -- NIGHT

City skyline. SUPER: 1982. There is a cacophony of telephone voices. When distinct speech is heard it has to do with tele-surveys/tele-marketing e.g.

SURVEYOR'S VOICE 1 (VO male or female) (tele fx)  
Good evening ma'am, I represent the Myers  
Holding insurance group and we are phoning  
people in your area to ascertain if you are  
happy with the type of household and personal  
insurance you currently carry.

SURVEYOR'S VOICE 2 (VO male or female) (tele fx)  
Hello, sir, my name is Shirley and this  
evening I am calling you to see if you feel  
your dwelling is secure. Are you the owner of  
the property?

MAN 1'S VOICE (VO tele fx)  
Yes.

SURVEYOR'S VOICE 3 (VO male or female) (tele fx)  
And we are giving owners in your area the once  
only offer of perma-shield, with free  
installation. Are you familiar with the name  
of our product?

WOMAN 1'S VOICE (VO tele fx)  
No, I'm not.

SURVEYOR'S VOICE 4 (VO male or female) (tele fx)  
Now this comes with our bonus gift to you  
which is supplied at no extra cost. Would you  
be interested in a free gift, sir?

MAN 2'S VOICE (VO tele fx)  
Hey, how'd you get my number?

SURVEYOR'S VOICE 5 (VO male or female) (tele fx)  
And I emphasize we are not a tele-marketing  
company but that we are just doing a survey in  
your area regarding home security. May I ask  
if you currently have a contract with a local  
security firm?

FX: Camera encounters a building and penetrates its walls.

INT. TELEPHONIST'S AREA -- NIGHT

Continuing across the room, numerous telephone SURVEYORS are at work. They sit before computers and wear micro-headphones. Overlooking the telephonist's area is a glass booth wherein two supervisors, MARSHA and ALICE, monitor calls.

Marsha and Alice scroll on computer screens using a highlighting bar over a list of names, from Surveyor to Surveyor, thereby monitoring calls. So, as they change from caller to caller snippets of those conversations can be heard.

Marsha is a pragmatic-looking middle-aged woman, medium attractive. Her look is slightly stern, switching between calls.

SURVEYOR'S VOICES (VO tele fx)  
 ...and in doing our survey you will not be  
 compelled to answer any questions you are not  
 comfortable(switch)....Question 4 is, do you  
 own your own car?

MAN'S VOICE (VO tele fx)  
 Yes, I do.

SURVEYOR'S VOICES (VO tele fx)  
 ...and that vehicle carries full comprehensive  
 insurance? (switch)  
 ....and you own how many TV sets?

ANOTHER MAN'S VOICE (VO tele fx)  
 Ah, we have five.

SURVEYOR'S VOICE (VO tele fx)  
 Wow, that's a lot. And so I take it you have a  
 four bedroom house with a TV in each and one  
 in the living room or lounge area?

MAN'S VOICE (VO tele fx)  
 No, it's a three bedroom and there's one in  
 the sitting room and one in the garage.

Marsha sighs, irritated, and presses 'Enter' over the Surveyor's name. She is presented with a message space and types quickly with the words appearing on her screen. - "Do not ad-lib, follow your script exactly. This is your fifth and final warning!" Marsha hits the 'Enter' key and the word 'Sent' appears in red beside the message, then it and the message disappear.

INT. TELEPHONIST'S ROOM -- NIGHT

SURVEYOR 1 who was being monitored is reading her script off the screen and the message from Marsha appears in a dark band at the top of her screen. She purses her lips, irritated.

SURVEYOR 1 (sighing, bored)  
And question number 11 is: Do you currently or  
have you ever smoked cigarettes or cigars, or  
do you use other nicotine products such as  
chewing tobacco?

INT. TELEPHONIST'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Tracking on floor level, angled up at a row of Surveyor's backs, the unintelligible sounds of their voices are heard. Camera eventually comes to a halt behind a male surveyor, MARTIN.

INT. TELEPHONIST'S ROOM -- NIGHT

INTERCUT ECU'S between the monitor screen, the keyboard and Martin speaking. Although portions of his head as he listens via his headset are seen, his full face/eyes are not seen at anytime.

Martin always wears a baseball cap.

A telephone number is generated onto the screen. The 'Enter' key is struck. Sounds of the number being fast-dialed, the phone rings, it is answered.

WOMAN'S VOICE (tele fx)  
Hello.

Martin is reading the text off the screen, with 'Martin Lake' in red lettering. Martin has a distinctive accent.

MARTIN  
Good evening, ma'am. My name is Martin Lake  
and I am working for the Mako-Jefferies survey  
company...

WOMAN'S VOICE (VO tele fx)  
Not interested.

The phone is hung up and the line goes dead.

MARTIN  
And fuck you too.

In ECU Martin's finger hits a key marked 'Pause Break'. A new number appears on the screen. He hits the 'Enter' key and the number is fast-dialed and rings. The call is answered.

MAN'S VOICE (VO tele fx)

Yeah?

MARTIN

Good evening, sir. My name is Martin Lake and I am working for the Mako-Jefferies survey company. This evening I just wanted to ask you a few questions if I may regarding statistical...

MAN'S VOICE (VO tele fx)

Hey, how'd you get this number? I got a silent listing.

Martin hits a key and the screen quickly changes to an alternative script that he reads.

MARTIN (reading)

All telephone numbers are randomly generated by our central computer, sir.

MAN'S VOICE (VO tele fx)

Yeah, then how come you're the third telemarketing company that's phoned me this week?

MARTIN (reading)

Well, we are not telemarketing, sir. I assure you that...

MAN'S VOICE (VO tele fx)

Yeah, well whatever it is I'm busy. And take my goddamned number outa your computer!

He hangs up.

MARTIN

And fuck you too.

Martin switches back to his original screen. His finger hits a key marked 'Pause Break'. A new number appears on his screen. He hits 'Enter' and the number is dialed and rings. The call is answered.

KATHY'S VOICE (VO tele fx)  
Hello, this is Kathy.

MARTIN  
Good evening, Kathy. My name is Martin Lake and I am working for the Mako-Jefferies survey company. This evening I just wanted to ask you a few questions if I may regarding statistical information for research. This is not a sales pitch and our only intention is to gather information for government and corporate concerns. May I proceed with my questions?

Beat.

KATHY'S VOICE (VO tele fx)  
How long will it take?

MARTIN  
Our survey usually lasts between five and seven minutes. May I proceed?

Beat.

KATHY'S VOICE (VO tele fx)  
Okay.

SUGGESTED END OPENING CREDITS.

Having snagged a customer Martin sits up in his chair. He hits 'F2' and changes screens to the questionnaire.

MARTIN  
Great. First I need some background information. You're a female?

KATHY'S VOICE (VO tele fx) (small laugh)  
Yeah. What else would I be with a name like Kathy?

MARTIN  
Well, sometimes we have respondents that are transgender. I take it you are not transgender?

KATHY'S VOICE (VO tele fx)  
No. Just female.

MARTIN

And although you do not have to answer this question would you mind identifying your age group, please. Are you 20 to 25, 26 to 30...

KATHY'S VOICE (VO tele fx)

I'm 24.

MARTIN

Great, thank you. And are you married, single, divorced...?

KATHY'S VOICE (VO tele fx)

Single.

MARTIN

And do you live alone or in shared accommodation?

KATHY'S VOICE (VO tele fx)

Alone.

MARTIN

And is your gross annual income between 10 and 20 thousand dollars, 21 to 30 thousand dollars, 31 to...?

KATHY'S VOICE (VO tele fx)

Do I have to answer that?

MARTIN

No, all answers are voluntary, Kathy.

KATHY'S VOICE (VO tele fx)

I'd prefer to miss that one, please.

MARTIN

Fine, that's fine. And finally may I have your zip code, please?

KATHY'S VOICE (VO tele fx)

Yeah, it's (zip code required).

The back of Martin's head - he looks toward the monitor's booth. Marsha and Alice have their heads down, looking at their screens. Martin's head turns the opposite way and down to his notepad.

Martin's hand quickly jots the zipcode onto a notepad, the telephone number already written above it. He also writes the word, 'Kathy'.

MARTIN

(zip code required). And your surname should our manager wish to confirm details of your interview?

KATHY'S VOICE (VO tele fx)

Why would he want to do that?

MARTIN

Ah, she. It's purely quality control to see that my interview was conducted accurately. You're under no obligation to give your surname, Kathy, and...

KATHY'S VOICE (VO tele fx)

But you've already got my number, how come you don't have...?

MARTIN

We don't look the numbers up, Kathy, our computer generates them randomly.

INT. KATHY'S PLACE -- NIGHT

Tracking behind a high-backed chair, camera sweeps round in an arc to discover its occupant.

KATHY (OS)

Oh, okay, it's Butler. My name's Butler.

BACK TO:

Martin's hand quickly jots down the name on the notepad.

MARTIN

Butler, thank you.

INTERCUT:

MARTIN (VO tele fx)

Now our first question is: Are you aware of the bill presently before Congress regarding right to life issues?

KATHY is finally seen, she is painting her toenails.



KATHY

I think so.

MARTIN

I take that as a 'yes'?

KATHY

Yes.

MARTIN

Are you aware of the President's position on this matter? Is he pro-life or pro-choice?

KATHY

By pro-choice you mean pro-abortion?

MARTIN

Yes.

KATHY

I think he's pro-abortion. I think.

As Martin asks the next question Marsha is now out of her booth, strolling behind rows of Tele-Surveyors, keeping an eye on them. She asks one Surveyor to get his feet off the desk. As he is speaking Martin notices Marsha and quickly tears off the top page of his notepad and slips it into his shirt pocket. He narrowly misses being detected as Marsha passes behind him.

MARTIN

Moving to household products: Do you use a solid soap bar to shower with or a liquid form of soap gel to shower with?

KATHY

Liquid.

MARTIN

Are you aware that soap in the liquid form is usually twice the price of soap in the solid bar form?

KATHY

No.

MARTIN

Are you aware that you usually get twice as much product in the bar form over the liquid form?

BACK TO:

Kathy, not Martin, is now heard as she paints her nails.

KATHY

No...Yes...Yes, I've heard of it...Yes...I don' usually vote...I work in computers, program designer... Yes...Occasionally, no, change that to quite often, I think...Oh, okay.

BACK TO:

MARTIN

And that concludes our questions. On behalf of Mako-Jefferies I want to thank you for partaking in our survey, and if you have any complaints regarding the way I conducted this interview I remind you once again my name is Martin Lake.

KATHY'S VOICE (VO tele fx)

Not a problem.

The line is hung up.

Martin's hand pushes the piece of paper further into his pocket and pats it securely.

INT. MARTIN'S HOME -- NIGHT

There is a desk with a lamp light on. On the desk there is considerable paraphernalia: notably a bottle of whisky and a half-filled glass, a fax machine, the piece of crumpled notepaper with Kathy's details on it, and a laptop computer. There is also an expensive stills camera with a large zoom lens. A small KITTEN wanders over the desk. As the scene opens a modem connecting to the internet can be heard.

Martin's naked, shaved torso enters frame and he sits, picking up the Kitten and stroking it. As he sits a glimpse of his stomach reveals a black tattoo of a serpent up one side, coming from his groin. He picks up the whisky glass and drinks, waiting on the modem.

The internet connection kicks up and a search engine appears on the screen. The keyboard is being tickled rapidly: "Kathy Butler (zip code required)". The arrow cursor clicks onto the 'GO' button on screen. Shortly a series of listings appear. Using a highlighting bar to go through the listings Martin scrolls to 'K. Butler 42 Napier Street, Wilmington 9978440374'. He holds the piece of paper next to the screen and checks the phone number. They match.

Martin's finger (his hand holding the whisky glass) taps the screen listing thoughtfully, almost affectionately.

EXT. KATHY'S HOME - LATE DAY

A comfortable house in a quiet, leafy suburb.

Coming home from work, Kathy gets out of her car in the driveway and checks her mailbox.

STILLS CAMERA FX: Her photograph is taken. Kathy proceeds to the house.

INT. MARTIN'S HOME -- NIGHT

ECU: A switch blade knife is being sharpened to a razor edge on a load stone. Martin, dressed in black, is in the background.

The blade is held up to lamp light and Martin tests it with his thumb.

Following the knife in Martin's hand it travels to the desk. On the desk beside the camera there is now a pile of photographs. The top one is of Kathy by her mail box.

The tip of the blade rests on Kathy's face. Martin presses the activator button. The switch blade retracts instantly.

EXT. KATHY'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Establishing. Very quiet, perhaps a breeze about.

INT. KATHY'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Kathy sleeps, her back to clear glass terrace doors, leading to a garden.

EXT. KATHY'S GARDEN -- NIGHT

Martin's gloved hand appears and adjusts a timing device attached to a garden tap.

A sprinkler jumps to life.

BACK TO:

Kathy sleeps, but through the terrace doors a sprinkler is now active in the garden.

BACK TO:

The sprinkler sprays noisily.

BACK TO:

Kathy wakes. She frowns and looks into the garden, groaning with annoyance.

Kathy appears beside the terrace door, looking out at the sprinkler.

Shaking her head, she opens the door and steps outside.

EXT. KATHY'S GARDEN -- NIGHT

Kathy approaches dark corners and moves toward the garden tap. A cat suddenly hurries from the shadows, startling her. She finally turns the tap off. The sprinkler dies down and is still. Kathy looks around suspiciously but decides it is nothing and so heads back to her bedroom. She makes it inside and secures the door.

INT. KATHY'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Kathy crosses to the ensuite and turns on the light.

INT. KATHY'S ENSUITE -- NIGHT

Kathy sits on the toilet. She leans forward and pulls the towel toward her on the rack opposite, drying her toes. The hazy form of a man standing in the shower cubicle is glimpsed over her back. Kathy leaves without noticing the black form and turns out the light.

INT. KATHY'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Kathy walks toward the bed. She is suddenly struck from behind. She sprawls onto the bed, unconscious.

Martin, wearing a balaclava, steps into frame and looks down on her.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. DETECTIVE'S OFFICES. MAX'S OFFICE -- DAY

CU: An open file with 10 by 8 glossies uppermost is dropped onto a letter on a desk. The top photograph shows Kathy Butler's body hanging from a tree.

It is an old, musty building. DETECTIVE MAX STEELE, late middle-age, sits at his desk. The letter he was reading is under the file. He looks up, annoyed.

CHIEF OF DETECTIVES

This guy thinks he's a criminal genius.

MAX

Not interested.

CHIEF

You'll like it, no clues.

Max pulls his letter out from under the file and continues reading.

CHIEF

It's not a request, Max.

Max hands the letter he was reading to the CHIEF. The letter is headed: RETIREMENT BENEFITS FUND.

MAX

In two months I walk. (indicating his office doorway) Right through there. I could walk right now with all the leave I got. Just want to give the next guy a clean desk, is all.

He holds out the file to the Chief and glances through the adjoining glass to a Detective, FRED, in the next office.

MAX (quietly)

Give it to Fred.

CAMERA notes Fred on the phone. Fred notices them looking.

CHIEF (wearily)  
 You know his orders come from on high.  
 Besides, (quietly) you're better at serials  
 than he is.

MAX  
 Oh, but he's better at cop-killers than me?

CHIEF  
 Oh, so that's what this is about...

MAX  
 No, I'm using your logic. What this is 'about'  
 is you stacking my case-load beyond reasonable  
 limits. You want a shitload of trouble from  
 the union...

He picks up the phone.

I'll call my rep right now.

CHIEF  
 Who's your delegate?

Max hesitates.

CHIEF  
 Me...We always have to chase you for your  
 fees, and I know you got no extra leave.

Max realizes his bluff is called.

CHIEF  
 C'mon, Max, just dot the i's and cross the  
 t's. Then we can get back to the ones we can  
 solve.

MAX (annoyed)  
 (keeping the file)  
 Jesus...So how do you know this creep's gone  
 serial?

CHIEF  
 (leaving)  
 He was nice enough to tell us.

MAX  
 Larry.

The Chief hesitates by the door.

MAX

You really my rep?

CHIEF (grinning)

See? That's why you never made chief.

He exits the office.

Max snorts ironically to himself. He opens the folder and immediately frowns.

Uppermost on the folder is a hand printed note:

MAX (reading)

Hi, I am a serial-killer. I'm telling you because you seem too stupid to work that out.

Here is a list of the girls I have killed so far: Bernice Holden, Jan Richardson, Kylie Hunter...And of course, this one, Kathy Butler.

I look forward to working with you further on this.

Sighing heavily, Max leans back to read the whole file. He notices Fred is now up and doing a blow-fish face on the adjoining glass. Not reacting, he looks back at the file.

MAX

Idiot.

INT. DETECTIVE'S OFFICES. COFFEE MACHINE, HALL -- DAY

The Chief is getting himself a cup of coffee. On the same errand, Fred appears.

FRED

Big boss man.

Chief glances at him, unresponsive.

FRED

Old Max sticking it to you again?

CHIEF

You know, I love that old bastard, but I'm counting the seconds, minutes and hours 'til he finally leaves.

FRED

Bet you say that about me.

CHIEF

No, I hate you. That's why I want you to stay in this pisshole forever.

FRED

See, now that's comforting, we know where we stand. What was he trying to palm off on me?

CHIEF

Oh, that girl got hung. Looks like the same MO as a few others. Pisses me off.

FRED

What?

CHIEF

We're so undermanned the killer had to tell us the cases were related. Hey, still doing my kid's party?

Fred demonstrates his ability as a ventriloquist. The voice appears to come from the coffee machine and is very different from Fred's.

COFFEE MACHINE (accent)

Hey, c'mon, let me out, let me out!

FRED

Why should I let you out?

COFFEE MACHINE

So I can do the kid's party!

FRED

No, you stay there 'til Saturday, then I'll let you out.

The Chief, walking away, chuckles and shakes his head at Fred's impressive ability.

The smile fades from Fred's face as he stares after the Chief.



INT. HALLWAY -- DAY

Max, carrying Kathy Butler's file, comes through a doorway. He is stunned as he is immediately assailed by TV INTERVIEWERS.

INTERVIEWER

Detective Steele, do you have any further leads on the serial-killer known as the hang-man?

MAX

The who?

INTERVIEWER

The hang-man, the serial-killer who hangs his victims from trees.

MAX

Who the hell are you?!

INT. CHIEF'S OFFICE -- DAY

Max enters briskly, carrying the file.

MAX (indignant)

Just got ambushed by the press.

CHIEF

About what?

MAX

The 'hang-man' serial-killer.

CHIEF

Oh, chalk that up to the Commissioner's Office. Rang earlier, wanted to know if we had any serious cases.

MAX

Thought I was just supposed to dot the i's and cross the t's?

CHIEF

You are.

Max waits impatiently.

CHIEF

Commissioner's running for office again.

MAX

Well? Does it have priority or not?

CHIEF

Didn't say.

Max looks confused.

CHIEF

The usual bullshit, Max. They want to make the public start thinking 'law and order' before the next election.

Max stares hard. The Chief holds up his hands in surrender.

CHIEF

I don't know, Max. I don't know.

MAX

Listen, Larry, if you want me to work this case the way you want it I'm not going to be compromised by the Commissioner's office looking for free publicity...

CHIEF

I know...

MAX

...because if they do that the public's going to want me to have real answers...

CHIEF

I know...

MAX

...and you told me not to bother with real answers...

CHIEF

I know...

MAX

...and you know it's the worst thing to do,  
give a serial-killer free press...

CHIEF

I know!

MAX

Christ, they're even calling him 'The hang-  
man'. What sort of bullshit's that?

CHIEF

Max...

MAX

Listen, you tell the Commissioner's Office to  
back off!

CHIEF

Max, stop telling me what to do, I know what  
to do, I tell you what to do! Now here's the  
thing. They probably don't want this case  
solved. They probably want this guy to kill as  
many people as possible before the election. I  
don't know. I don't even know if it was them  
that leaked it to the press. All I know is  
they asked if we had some serious cases and I  
told them about yours. Now will you go away,  
please, and do your friggin' job.

MAX (leaving, muttering)

I'll be glad when I get out of this goddamned  
nuthouse.

CHIEF (to himself)

(going back to work)

Not half as much as me.

INT. MARTIN'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

A TV screen. The interview with Max is being continued.

INTERVIEWER

Can you explain why the police department did  
not know there was a connection between the  
Kathy Butler killing and the slaying of three  
other women in similar fashion?

MAX

I've just been assigned the case. You'll have to take that up with my superiors. Now, if you'll excuse me.

He escapes through the door through which he came.

PRESS

Detective Steele! Detective Steele!

The TV goes off.

Martin's naked torso as he sits, remote control in hand - the Kitten is on his lap and he strokes it. Martin smokes a cigar.

INT. BAR -- NIGHT

Fred stands at the bar. He smokes a cigar. As a BARMAN places a scotch before him he looks around. He sees the TV INTERVIEWER (featured in the news report with Max) standing with his CREW on the far side of the bar. At the same time the Interviewer notices Fred and gives him a nod.

Fred looks over to a table and sees a GOOD LOOKING WOMAN sitting alone. He collects his drink, saunters over, and sits opposite.

FRED

Name's Fred.

WOMAN

What luck. Rhymes with 'drop-dead'.

FRED

Got a date?

WOMAN

Yeah, and he'll tie your arms on top of your head if he catches you sitting there.

Fred shows his badge.

FRED

Doubt it.

WOMAN

He's a linebacker, he has two traffic cops for breakfast every morning.

FRED

Well, now, see, I'm part of an elite squad. We catch the cop-killers. Sounds like your man might just qualify.

WOMAN

(getting up)

Well for an elite cop you can't pick a wedding band from a friendship ring, and I'd rather lick an ashtray than kiss a smoker.

FRED

Honey, smokers don't kiss for the taste.

WOMAN

So...are you going to go or do I have to call a bouncer?

FRED

Take it easy, I just want to know something...

She waits. Fred looks her up and down.

...do you fuck?

GIRL

Do you?

Fred nods.

Good. Then fuck off.

FRED

(in the same manner as Martin says it)  
And fuck you too.

Seemingly unaffected, Fred saunters to the bar, however he turns and gives her a cruel look, suggesting his true feelings. He throws down his drink, in a temper, and indicates he wants another.

EXT. KATHY'S SIDE YARD -- DAY

CU: a telephone line close to the ground. Max's hand appears and examines the severed ends.

Max stands and dusts his hands, looking around, then shakes his head and sighs.

EXT. KATHY'S BACK YARD -- DAY

Max wanders to the tree Kathy was hung from and looks up at it, then at the terrace doors to the bedroom.

SID (OS)

Hello?

Max looks round. A young man, SID, enters the yard. He slips comically down an embankment and comes to a halt, embarrassed.

SID

You Max?

Max nods. Sid gets up, offering his hand.

SID

Sidney Travolta.

Max looks at the now dirty hand and doesn't take it. Sid realizes why and dusts his hand to re-offer it, but Max has turned his back.

SID

Ah, the Chief, Larry Burke, told me to report to you. I'm new.

MAX

Oh? So...you related in any way?

SID

John Travolta?

MAX

See you've been asked before.

SID

All my life.

MAX

Well?

SID

No, but I was named after Sidney Poitier.

Max is mildly amused - Sid is white.

MAX

Something about the eyes.

SID

Prefer Sid.

MAX

University graduate, Sid?

SID

No. Came up the hard way.

MAX (ignoring him)

Well, that's something. God knows I don't want some dick with a criminology degree up my ass.

Max checks the eye-line from the tree to the bedroom. Sid appears awkward.

SID

Ah, I was told this is a murder-rape.

Sid waits.

SID

Want to fill me in?

MAX (reluctantly)

Guy raped her in the bedroom, hung her from that tree.

Sid nods.

MAX

Listen, I'll be straight with you, kid. This guy is a serial-killer and we won't catch him this time. Truth is I really don't have time for this right now.

Sid frowns, perplexed. Max is already walking toward the terrace. Sid follows.

Max enters the house without pausing (although he has already noticed a clue which is later revealed).

INT. KATHY'S BEDROOM -- DAY

Max checks the bed. Sid is by the terrace door.

SID

So how can you be sure he's a serial-killer,  
not just a pissed-off boyfriend?

MAX

Look around, tell me what you see.

Sid looks.

SID

Ah, bed's been slept in. Looks like only one  
person. Um...No signs of a struggle.

Max pulls back the bedspread a little. He tuts with annoyance and  
collects some tape in an evidence bag.

MAX

(muttering) Jesus, amateur hour in forensics.  
(To Sid) Still got her lip prints on it. Check  
the terrace door. Anything wrong with the  
lock?

Sid checks.

SID

No.

MAX

Notice anything?

Sid stares at him and frowns.

SID

No.

Max's look suggests Sid has missed something obvious. But he ignores  
him and checks a chest of drawers.

MAX

Well, I'll give you a clue. Then, if you're  
going to be a detective you should be able to  
tell me why this guy is a serial-killer and  
how he did the crime. First clue is, the  
telephone line's been cut outside. Second  
clue, you slipped coming into the yard.

Sid thinks hard. Max wanders in and checks the bathroom.



INT. KATHY'S ENSUITE -- DAY

Max stands in the doorway and casts his eye around. He jerks his head and presently Sid appears beside him. Max points.

Sid looks, becoming frustrated.

SID

What...?

MAX

Not trying to show you up, kid, just teaching you detective work. This is the third and last clue right here.

Sid looks hard.

SID

Toilet seat's down? But women...

MAX

What else?

Sid looks but eventually shrugs.

MAX

Forget the bullshit you learnt at the academy. To be a good detective you have to allow yourself to become deviant. You've got to think the same way as the fucked up animal that did this thinks. Look.

He leans down.

ECU: He presses his finger to the floor below the towel rack.

He shows Sid that grass droppings are stuck to his finger.

MAX

This is a meticulously tidy house. This girl, Kathy Butler, lived a very ordered life. (nodding toward the chest of drawers). She folds her underwear. She's not going to leave grass droppings on the floor.

Max rubs his fingers together.

MAX

Still wet. See the way the towel is pulled down in front, yet all the other towels are even, and look...

He lifts the front of the towel and shows that grass droppings are on the underside.

MAX

She put the seat down to wipe her toes, pulling the towel forward. A real neat person wouldn't leave that mess, small as it is, unless they just couldn't be bothered at that time, like as if it was the middle of the night and she wanted to go back to bed. A neat person would have straightened the towel but for the same reason.

He leaves the bathroom. Sid looks at the towel rack, then the floor. The tiles are dark and he squints to see the grass droppings. They are barely visible. Sid touches them, studies his finger, impressed.

INT. BEDROOM -- DAY

Max crosses to the phone on the bedside table. As he speaks Sid comes from the ensuite and looks out the terrace door.

SID

So you're saying she went outside and got her feet wet in the middle of the night?

MAX

You slipped 'cause the grass was wet.

SID

But I don't... You know, I could barely see the grass in there. How could...?

MAX

Always start with your entrances. You know for sure the killer or the victim passed that way. I knew about the bathroom because of that grass by the door.

Sid looks down. Small grass droppings are on the carpet. Sid looks back to see Max staring at him expectantly.

Sid shifts uncomfortably. Max puts him out of his misery.

MAX

Sprinkler's been used, and as luck would have it for the killer, it has a timer attached.

SID

So? Oh, wait! So, so, he activated the timer. She woke up, heard it, went out to turn it off.

MAX

Progress at last.

SID

That's why the lock is undamaged. No forced entry. But why not just attack her outside?

MAX

Where's the fun in that?

SID

You mean he lured her out so he could come in?

Max nods.

SID

He was inside when she dried her feet.

MAX

So he cracked her on the back of the head and while she was stunned...

Max leans on the bed, sighting the tree branch through the doorway.

MAX

...handcuffed her, taped her mouth, raped her both vaginally and anally.

SID

Lab report in?

MAX

No DNA. Probably wore two condoms just to be sure.

SID

Pubic hair?

MAX

Only the kind she was wearing. Probably shaved himself. This guy's clever. Intelligent, thorough, and he's up with the times, forensically speaking.

SID

So why take her outside to hang her from a tree? Why not just do her here?

MAX

Be deviant. She obviously passed out with the raping. Look.

CU. He nudges the phone. It is slightly out of its cradle and falls back into place.

MAX

This phone was hung up in a hurry, in the dark. He was sitting up in that tree the whole time with the rope, watching her come to.

He leans down and indicates the tree.

MAX

From that branch you can see the bed perfectly.

SID

No fun in killing someone unconscious.

Max crosses to look out the terrace door.

MAX

He cut the phone line. She came to, pulled the tape from her mouth. Naturally, she tried to phone for help. Line's dead. She looks up, sees the open door, knows it's the shortest route to the neighbor's house.

SID

Why wouldn't she be afraid he's out there?

MAX

You've just been raped in here, the door's open, the guy has obviously gone. Outside means freedom.

SID

And if she tried to go out the front door he could see her leaving, shinny down and make it there first.

MAX

Yeah, finish her off with a knife or a club or something.

SID

He's an athlete.

MAX

Or just plain strong. No ladder up there. By the burn marks on the branch he hoisted her using his own body as counter-weight.

EXT. BACK YARD TREE -- NIGHT

Martin's black form drops off the tree branch, hoisting Kathy up, the rope around her neck. Her feet kick violently.

MAX (VO)

But that was only so he could get his jollies watching her choke to death right beside him.

BACK TO:

SID

Took a chance with the neighbors.

MAX

Thrill of discovery, sweetens the taste. What really worries me about this guy is he thinks on his feet. He plans, but he also likes to leave part of it open to chance. So many things could go wrong here. But he likes it, likes to gamble.

He looks at Sid.

MAX

That's why he's the worst kind of serial-killer...He's fearless.

EXT. KATHY'S HOUSE -- DAY

Max and Sid come from the house to the street where their cars are parked.

MAX

You haven't been assigned a car?

Sid shakes his head.

MAX

Where they got you?

SID

Haven't been assigned an office yet.

MAX

God, you're so new I can smell the vinyl!

They grin at each other.

MAX

When'd you graduate?

SID

Two weeks ago. Just finished my leave.

MAX

So this is your very first case?

SID

Yeah. Reported this morning and they sent me straight out. Sorry.

MAX

Hell, glad for the help.

SID

Well what should I do, Max?

MAX

Oh, look, you can save me a lot of time. Just draw up a list of interviews. Friends, neighbors, work buddies, anyone that knew her well and knew what was going on in her life. I'll file it and forget it.

SID

You're serious? You know you've got a serial-killer but you're...?

MAX

Look, you're new, okay. This is the way it goes. We're undermanned and it's an election year. So we play the averages. There's hard choices to be made in this job, kid. Ignoring tough cases is one of them. You want to know what a serial-killer's biggest failing is every time?

SID

What?

MAX

Ego. They get so full of their own power they get sloppy. Don't worry, he'll screw up. They always do.

He gets into his car.

Sid watches Max drive away.

EXT. SHRIMP TRAWLER -- NIGHT

A net is being hauled overhead. The net is released and the catch disgorges onto the deck. Among the shells and the weeds, a white, naked, headless male corpse is momentarily revealed. A FEMALE DECKHAND screams.

EXT. DOCKS -- DAWN

A car pulls up. Fred alights and steps aboard the trawler. UNIFORM COPS and the boat CREW are on board.

EXT. SHRIMP TRAWLER -- DAY

Part of the torso is visible as Fred approaches. He kneels down and looks up at a UNIFORM COP.

FRED

No hands, no head. I know, this is a reshoot of "The Invisible Man." Scene 1, the deck of a trawler, Cape Avarice looms through the mist-shrouded sea.

He looks at the others, who watch him quizzically.

FRED

I'm sensing there's no one I can share my dark side with today.

He notices a BLACK DECKHAND.

FRED

Except you of course. (to a Uniform Cop) Well get it...him, tagged and bagged. Might be one of the guys I'm after. Well, that's, partially right.

The Uniform Cop shakes his head at Fred's sick humor but looks round and nods to another Cop who comes forward with a body bag.

Fred lights a cigar. He looks around, exhaling blue smoke and spots the SKIPPER.

FRED

So where'd you haul him up?

SKIPPER

On the banks, just below the Cape.

Fred nods, and looks around, sucking on the cigar. He pats his chest as if braced by the fresh air.

FRED (cigar in mouth)

What a great way to start the day.  
What could possibly go wrong on a day like today.

He throws his voice to a hatch below decks.

HATCH VOICE (Spanish accent)

Hey, let me out, let me out!  
I am Cuban citizen! Let me out!

FRED

Hey...what the hell's going on?

The Skipper is shocked.

SKIPPER

Hey! Get that hatch open!



The confused Crew scramble to open the hatch. The opened hatch reveals no one. Fred is amused.

EXT. CENTRAL POLICE STATION -- DAY

A somber building.

INT. DETECTIVE'S OFFICES -- DAY

Camera trails an OFFICE BOY wearing a baseball cap. He is of similar build and coloring to Martin. He carries a wire basket and enters the main detective's room. He pauses and his face is revealed for the first time. He is looking at...

INT. DETECTIVE'S OFFICES. MAX'S OFFICE -- DAY

Max is writing at his desk. Fred, on the phone, is at his desk next door.

Office Boy moves about the main room, dropping envelopes onto various desks, but mainly keeping an eye on Max.

Eventually he comes to Max's door, but does not enter. He waits, watching Max. Max notices him and holds out his hand as he continues to write. Office Boy places the envelope in his hand. He lingers momentarily, but Max ignores him. Office Boy exits.

(NB. Look for opportunities to have Office Boy in background traffic in the office, staring at Max).

Max extracts a piece of paper from the envelope.

The paper in Max's hand is headed INTERNAL ASSIGNMENT NOTICE. It has a printed photo of Sid on it along with his departmental record.

Sid, carrying a file, hesitates outside, looking in.

SID

Oh, Max, got those interviews for you.

MAX (signaling him in)

Well, just reading about you.

He shows him the notice, then screws it up and throws it in the bin as he takes the file.

MAX

Anything?

SID

No, just like you said. She was a clean freak, everyone liked her. She was good at her job, efficient, ordered. Her last boyfriend was a guy called Peter Anderson. He was holidaying in Fiji. No one could think of anyone who would have reason to harm her. Neighbors heard zip.

Max is still looking through the file, checking carefully. Sid waits.

SID

Hey, Max.

MAX

(not looking up)

Yeah?

SID

How'd this guy know she lived alone?

MAX

(not looking up)

Stalked her, I guess.

SID

Well stalkers almost always use the phone, right?

MAX

(not looking up)

Sometimes.

SID

Well I think maybe I should check her phone records.

MAX

(not looking up)

Sure.

SID

Well, how do I do that? You know, who do I call?

Max looks up. He leans forward and flicks through his rolodex and jots down a number, which he hands to Sid.

MAX

Just give the phone company a call, quote your badge number. They'll fax the records.

SID

Thanks.

MAX

Well, you're thorough, that's good. Okay, I'll file this under 'To be continued'. Good job. Thanks.

Sid nods and begins to leave. In the background Fred hangs up the phone.

MAX

Oh, Sid, where they got you?

Sid comes back to the door.

SID

Fourth floor. Four O Two. Got me doing pawn shops looking for stolen DVDs. If you want me my beeper is 815Sidney.

Max jots it down.

MAX

Okay. Thanks.

SID

Hey, Max.

MAX

Yeah?

SID

I'm really enjoying doing this case with you.

MAX (a bit off-balance)

Well, ah, that's good. If you like your work you'll be good at it.

Sid guffaws youthfully and leaves.

Fred is watching. He looks at Max, who goes back to work.

On the far side of the main office outside, the Office Boy stares at Max.

INT. COFFEE MACHINE, HALL -- NIGHT

Max is with the Chief, getting coffee. Fred goes by.

FRED

Night night, boys. Don't work too hard.

He leaves.

MAX

Goes home early these days.

CHIEF

Well unlike certain people who have the talent, which he doesn't, but who lack drive, which he has, he's doing a degree at night school.

MAX

Huh, what'll that get him.

CHIEF

My job.

MAX

You know, I got a stone in my shoe. That guy in the press asked me...

CHIEF

What guy?

MAX

One of the TV people. Asked me what I was doing about the hang-man killer. Well those other killings had the same rape MO, but Kathy Butler, the last one, she was the only one hung. D'you tell the Commissioner's office the victim was actually hung?

CHIEF (shrugs)

Might have.

Max stares at him.

CHIEF

I forget...Maybe.

MAX (derogatory)

Mmmm.

CHIEF

Well, that's politics I guess.

Max walks away shaking his head. The Chief rolls his eyes, sighs, and shakes his head as he gets coffee.

INT. TELEPHONISTS ROOM -- NIGHT

The usual clamor of voices as the Surveyors make their calls.

INT. TELEPHONISTS ROOM -- NIGHT

Martin's hand places the notepad and pen used earlier onto the desk.

On the monitor there is a prompt: LOG ON:

Beside it Martin types in: Martin Lake.

Another prompt appears: CODE:

Martin types in his password which appears as: \*\*\*\*\*

He is taken to the main screen and the script and first phone number appears. He presses 'Enter' and the first number is fast-dialed.

Martin's fingers drum as he waits for the call to connect.

INTERCUT:

INT. SUPERVISOR'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Marsha is listening. She scrolls down through a list of names to 'Martin Lake'. She begins listening to the same phone call as Martin.

OLD MAN (VO tele fx)

Hello?

MARTIN

Good evening, sir. My name is Martin Lake and I am working for the Mako-Jefferies survey company. This evening I just wanted to ask you a few questions if I may...

OLD MAN (VO tele fx)

Who is it?

MARTIN

Martin Lake, Mako-Jefferies...

OLD MAN (VO tele fx)

Oh, Martin. Hey, Stella, it's Martin.

STELLA (VO tele fx distant)

Who?

OLD MAN (VO tele fx)

Martin! Sorry, Martin, she's a bit deaf. Hey, it's been a long time!

MARTIN

I'm sorry, sir, you may have me confused with someone else. I'm Martin Lake and I work for Mako-Jefferies...

OLD MAN (VO tele fx)

Yeah. How is old Jeffrey?

MARTIN

No, sir, I don't think you understand...

Marsha grins and types rapidly.

A message appears on Martin's screen: Discontinue, respondent not within survey parameters.

MARTIN

Yes, well thanks for your help, sir, and please do keep listening to WYKRP, where we play both types of music, country and western.

He hangs up.

Marsha smiles. She quickly types in a message.

It appears on Martin's screen: Coffee?

The back of Martin's head turns toward the Supervisor's booth.

PULL FOCUS to Marsha looking at him, grinning.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. UTILITY CLOSET -- NIGHT

HIGH ANGLE: Martin is having sex with Marsha. They're standing. He is giving her rough sex, and she is enjoying it.

INT. TELEPHONIST'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Marsha strolls down between the rows of Surveyors, looking quite flushed and pleased with herself.

INTERCUT WITH VOICE/SOUND OVER:

INT. TELEPHONIST'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Martin is in the middle of a call.

MARTIN

And although you do not have to answer this question would you mind identifying your age range, please. Are you 20 to 25, 26 to 30...?

SONJA'S VOICE (VO tele fx)

I'm 28.

MARTIN

Great, thank you. Are you married, single, divorced...?

SONJA'S VOICE (VO tele fx)

Rather not say.

MARTIN

I have de facto as a category.

SONJA'S VOICE (VO tele fx)

No, just leave it blank thanks.

MARTIN

Okay. And do you live alone or in shared accommodation?

SONJA'S VOICE (VO tele fx)

Both. I...Just both.

MARTIN

I'm sorry, I don't have a category for both.

SONJA'S VOICE (VO tele fx)  
 Alright. Put alone.

MARTIN  
 And is your gross annual income between 10 and  
 20 thousand dollars, 21 to 30 thousand  
 dollars...?

SONJA'S VOICE (VO tele fx)  
 I don't work.

MARTIN  
 Okay. And finally may I have your zip code,  
 please?

SONJA'S VOICE (VO tele fx)  
 Yeah, it's (zip code required). Cape Avarice.

Martin's hand quickly writes 'Cape Avarice' onto a notepad and the telephone number is already written above it. Above that he has also already written 'Sonja'.

MARTIN  
 Oh, lucky you, love that area. And your  
 surname should our manager wish to confirm  
 details of your interview?

SONJA'S VOICE (VO tele fx)  
 Stevens.

Martin's hand quickly jots down the name on the notepad.

MARTIN  
 Stevens, thank you.

Marsha strolls across the rows of Surveyors. Still glowing, she looks up toward Martin, seeing him from a mostly rear position. A frown flicks across her forehead as she sees him writing, and as he tears off the page and pockets it.

She walks toward Martin, watching him with jealous suspicion then suddenly heads back to her monitor's booth.

INT. TELEPHONIST'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Martin continues his interview. ECU on his mouth.



MARTIN

Moving to household products: Do you use a solid soap bar to shower with or a liquid form of soap gel to shower with?

SONJA'S VOICE (VO tele fx)

Liquid.

FANTASY SEQUENCE: Although continuing from the previous scene the quality of the background noise changes. INTERCUT with Marsha making her way back to the monitor's booth.

MARTIN

Are you aware that soap in the liquid form is usually twice the price of soap in the solid bar form?

SONJA (VO tele fx)

No.

MARTIN

And so do you like to rub the soap gel all over your breasts and then masturbate while strangers watch you?

INTERCUT:

INT. SONJA'S BEDROOM. FANTASY SEQUENCE -- NIGHT

SONJA is a beautiful woman sitting on a chair in an opulent, dimly lit bedroom. She is paused, hesitating. This is part of a fantasy sequence that could equally be taking place in either Martin's or Marsha's mind - all background noise fades quickly out. Martin's and Sonja's voices are slower, overly sexual. ECU's swap between Martin's and Sonja's lips.

SONJA

Oh, yes, I like doing that.

MARTIN

And do you like it hard? You like it real hard?

SONJA

Uh huh. The harder the better.

MARTIN

And what about guys who shave? Like that too?

SONJA

Oh God, that's my favorite.

MARTIN

And you like tattoos?

SONJA

A man's not a real man without a tattoo.

MARTIN

I was just banging my supervisor in the cleaner's room. But I've still got plenty more juice left for you. How'd you like me to come over there and bang you half to death?

SONJA

Oh, yeah. Hurry. Come quick.

Building to a climax, Marsha puts on her headphones, and scrolls down through the list of names before she locates 'Martin Lake', then stabs the 'Enter' key.

SMASH CUT TO:

WITH NORMAL BACKGROUND NOISE, voices immediately returning to business-like mode and pace:

MARTIN

And do you regard environmental issues as the primary reason you would vote for a senate candidate?

SONJA'S VOICE (tele fx)

No.

MARTIN

And that concludes our questions. On behalf of Mako-Jefferies I want to thank you for partaking in our survey...

Marsha drags off her headphones and is thoughtful. She looks toward Martin and frowns, troubled.

INT. TELEPHONISTS ROOM -- NIGHT

The telephonist area is in darkness, and only the monitor's booth is lit. Marsha is in there, looking down.

INT. MONITOR'S BOOTH -- NIGHT

With a pencil Marsha is shading the writing impression out of Martin's notepad, revealing:

Sonja Stevens  
3856321622  
Cape Avarice

Marsha looks up, hesitant.

EXT. A HEADLAND - NIGHT

Waves crash into the headland.

EXT. SONJA'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

An expensive mansion on a headland near the sea. There is a breeze rustling trees and the distant sound of breakers.

EXT. SONJA'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

There is a box mounted on a wall. A flashlight comes on, revealing a padlock on the box. Bolt cutters appear and the lock is removed by gloved hands. There is a sophisticated security system inside with flashing lights. Martin's finger traces down the lights and comes to a keypad. The finger taps thoughtfully. He decides against it, and shuts the box.

EXT. CAR -- NIGHT

The car door is opened, revealing the Kitten seen earlier at Martin's house. Martin's hand appears, picks up the Kitten, and shuts the car door.

INT. SONJA'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Sonja sleeps, wind blowing outside. She rolls over in bed, still asleep.

EXT. SWIMMING POOL AREA -- NIGHT

Martin's hand tethers the Kitten's collar to a piece of vine near a fence. He moves away. The Kitten realizes it is caught, and begins to cry.

INTERCUT:

Sonja sleeps. The faint sounds of the Kitten outside, crying, are just audible.

Close on the Kitten crying.

A frown comes to Sonja's face as she sleeps.

The Kitten cries, struggling to get free.

Sonja wakes and listens. There is no sound. She decides it is nothing and rolls over. The Kitten cries again. Sonja sits up. The cry comes again. Sonja reaches for her bedside lamp.

INT. STAIRWELL -- NIGHT

Sonja comes down the stairs, dressed in her nightie, pulling on a light gown.

INT. DOOR TO POOL -- NIGHT

Close on a security keypad. Sonja's hand punches in a code. She opens the door to the pool and goes outside.

EXT. POOL -- NIGHT

Low angle, Kitten in the foreground, Sonja comes to the poolside, looking around. The Kitten cries and Sonja looks toward it.

EXT. POOL -- NIGHT

Sonja picks the Kitten up.

SONJA

Oh, what's the matter, sweetie?  
You all tangled up?

She begins to disentangle it.

EXT. POOL -- NIGHT

Like a large spider, Martin descends noiselessly from some rafters and drops to the ground. He turns and checks Sonja behind him. She is bent over, helping the Kitten. Martin enters the house.

INT. KITCHEN -- NIGHT

A light comes on and Sonja enters, carrying the Kitten.

SONJA

Bet you must be hungry wandering out there all alone. Where's your mommy? Huh?

She gets the Kitten a saucer of milk.

The Kitten laps milk, purring.

Sonja spreads a sheet of newspaper next to the Kitten.

SONJA

Well, guess you can stay the night, seeing you've had such a terrible time.

She begins to leave, but remembers...

Oh, better turn off the infra-red.

She punches a code into a nearby security pad.

SONJA

Or we'll have the security man out here waving his big gun around.

She grins at the Kitten, and turns out the light.

INT. SONJA'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Sonja enters and takes off her gown. She is bending over the bed, fluffing a pillow, when she is struck from behind and knocked onto the bed. Martin handcuffs her hands behind her. Sonja's senses return.

SONJA

Just do it. You don't have to rape me.

Martin hesitates, watching her. He has a piece of tape stuck to his torso, ready to gag her. He peels it off, thinking. He flips her over on her back. Sonja gasps.

MARTIN (loud whisper, disguising his voice)  
Who did you think I was?

Sonja hesitates, staring at him, thinking.

SONJA

My stepfather.

Martin watches her. She looks down, sees the knife he has.

SONJA

You going to kill me after you've done it?

He doesn't answer.

SONJA

Good...Good.

MARTIN

Why?

SONJA

He's got my kid. He took her from me. Said he'd kill her if I ever left. He comes here sometimes. Does what he likes, then leaves.

She looks down at his pelvis. The serpent tattoo is exposed on Martin's hip and stomach.

SONJA

Well, come on...Do it...Then kill me. You'll be doing me a favor.

Martin watches her for a long moment. He leans forward slowly, and places the tape over her mouth. Suddenly he punches her, knocking her out.

FADE OUT.

INT. SONJA'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

FADE IN.

Sonja comes to with a start. The tape and handcuffs have been removed.

She looks around. No one is there.

INT. KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Sonja enters the kitchen cautiously. She looks at the newspaper on the floor and the kitten's bowl. The Kitten is gone. She sees an outside door is wide open. She approaches, suddenly closes it, and immediately rearms the alarm system. She slumps with relief.

INT. FORENSIC MORGUE -- DAY

Fred enters the room where the bodies are kept in refrigerated wall units. He is accompanied by TWO GRIEVING WOMEN, a mother and daughter-in-law.

FRED (ingenuine concern)

Okay, now like I said, the body has been in the water a long time, and there's no head, no hands. So, well, it's pretty decomposed and it's hard to identify anything. I know how hard this must be for you both, but if you can see anything at all that will give us a positive ID then it will help...Ready?

The Women nod, bracing themselves.

Fred slides open a drawer and there is a sheeted corpse inside. Without looking himself, he pulls the sheet back. The Women, horrified to this point, slowly give way to looks of confusion.

OLDER WOMAN

Thought you said he had no head?

Fred looks and does a double take. The corpse inside has a head. He sighs in embarrassment, and slides the drawer shut. As he moves to the next drawer he glances away to a door with a small window in it.

Two forensic detectives, JOHN and JACK, are in the hall, cracking up. Fred shakes his head to himself, not letting on to the women, and checks the contents of the next drawer before pulling it fully out.

FRED

Sorry about that...Ready?

The Women nod, now having to go through the full horror again. Fred pulls the sheet back. The Women stare, then begin to cry.

YOUNGER WOMAN

It's him.

FRED

You sure?

YOUNGER WOMAN

He had a third nipple right there.

Fred looks. He lowers the sheet. The Women are crying fully.

FRED

Okay, thank you.

INT. COFFEE ROOM -- DAY

John and Jack are having coffee. Fred pokes his head in the door.

FRED

Hey, not funny. That guy in there was a cop and that was his wife and mother.

JOHN

Oh, sorry, Fred. Guess we're even now for when you made us think we had a live cadaver in the 'fridge.

JACK

I looked in four bays before I caught on. What about you?

JOHN

Oh, I looked in them all.

They both look at Fred, outgunning him.

FRED

Yeah, well, mine was funny.

He leaves. John and Jack look at each other then suddenly snicker like naughty schoolboys.

INT. MONITOR'S BOOTH -- NIGHT

Marsha is in the booth alone. She holds the piece of paper she discovered with Sonja's details on it. She looks up.

HER POV: Martin's baseball cap is visible over one of the monitors in the telephonist's room.

Marsha looks to a nearby phone.

INT. SONJA'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Sonja gets some food from the 'fridge. A TV is on. The phone rings. She picks up a remote control and mutes the set. She answers the phone.



SONJA

Hello?

INTERCUT:

MARSHA

Miss Stevens?

SONJA

Yes.

MARSHA

This is Marsha Thomas at Mako-Jefferies, we're a tele-survey company.

SONJA

Oh, yeah, I got a call the other night.

MARSHA

Yes, that's what I'm calling about. Look, I don't want to alarm you but I found your number and location jotted on a piece of paper by one of our employees, something which is strictly forbidden. I'm going to fire the employee in question. I just wanted to alert you to the fact that he has your details just in case you have any trouble.

SONJA

Well...I was broken into the other night.

MARSHA

Oh, dear.

SONJA

It's alright, no harm done. Would you mind...Would you mind if I had the employee's name just in case I do find something missing?

Marsha thinks for a minute.

MARSHA

Alright.

Sonja is writing down Martin's name.

SONJA

That's right, I remember he said that now.  
Well, thank you very much, Marsha.

She hangs up, and is thoughtful. She looks at the name: Martin Lake.

BACK TO:

INT. SUPERVISOR'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Marsha stares toward Martin. She comes to a decision and sighs heavily. She selects Martin's name on her computer and types in a message.

INT. TELEPHONIST'S ROOM -- NIGHT

LOOKING OVER MARTIN'S SHOULDER: The message appears on his screen:  
Coffee?

MARTIN

And would you be more inclined to use  
margarine or butter?

BACK TO:

Marsha's POV: Martin's hat above the monitors. His hand appears and waves an acknowledgement.

Marsha sees it and becomes tense.

INT. UTILITY CLOSET -- NIGHT

HIGH ANGLE as before.

MARSHA

I'm sorry. Look, it doesn't mean we have to  
end things. Look...

She tries to come closer, touching him.

I still want to see you, I'll...I'll even pay.

Suddenly she is shoved violently against the wall.

Martin exits. Marsha is both physically and emotionally hurt.

EXT. CARPARK -- NIGHT

Marsha comes from the lift in the company of the other Monitor, Alice.

ALICE

And I said if I got such a fat ass, then why don't you get your skinny black ass outa my bed?

MARSHA

And what'd he say?

ALICE

He ain't going nowhere while I'm paying the bills, honey, and you can bet your skinny white ass on that.

MARSHA (laughs)

Goodnight, Alice.

ALICE

'Night, sugar.

Marsha walks toward her car. She becomes apprehensive and the mood changes. She approaches her car cautiously. With relief she gets inside and locks the door. As she starts up CAMERA is positioned to suggest someone could be concealed in the back seat.

Marsha drives out.

HER POV as she negotiates the carpark, almost as if a man will appear in front of her headlights at any second.

EXT. CITY STREETS -- NIGHT

Marsha drives. She looks up nervously at her rear vision mirror.

HER POV: A car is behind her, possibly tailing her.

Marsha turns a corner. She checks her rear vision mirror again.

HER POV: The suspicious car continues on, not making the turn.

Marsha is relieved.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET -- NIGHT

Marsha's car approaches and she pulls into the driveway of her house. The car lights go out.

INT. MARSHA'S HOUSE. SITTING ROOM -- NIGHT

Marsha enters. She turns on the light and takes off her coat. She drops her handbag and the mail and goes into her bedroom.

INT. MARSHA'S HOUSE. BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Using the light cast from the sitting room, Marsha dumps her coat on the bed and kicks off her shoes. She takes her shoes to the wardrobe and opens the door.

Martin's arm spears from the wardrobe, grabbing her throat.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. MARSHA'S HOUSE. BEDROOM -- DAY

FLASH: A photograph is taken of Marsha's dead face. She is bound with black rope and is face down in the fetal position on the bed. She is naked and has a ball gag in her mouth.

FORENSIC DETECTIVE 3 moves in front of her, looking for a new photographic angle.

There are numerous POLICE on the scene. Fred saunters into the room and looks at the body.

FRED

Oh, nice. Suicide?

FORENSIC DETECTIVE 3

This was somebody's mother.

FRED

And you are somebody's son. Both I find difficult to reconcile.

FORENSIC DETECTIVE 3

You got a mouth.

WOMAN'S VOICE (OS)

Boys, boys, play nice.

Fred looks at Marsha, then back at Forensic Detective 3.

FRED

You heard the lady.

Forensic Detective 3 shakes his head in disgust at Fred and moves away.

FRED

Hey, and in my opinion your shots lack contrast, form, and passion.

FORENSIC DETECTIVE 3

(still walking)

Fuck you.

Fred looks back at Marsha.

He gets like that sometimes. (snickers, rolls his eyes) Artists.

INT. MAX'S BEDROOM -- MORNING

Max gets ready to leave for work. As he combs his hair, puts on his jacket, there is the sound of a breathing apparatus in the background. Ready for work, he crosses to his wife, FLO, in bed, and wearing the breathing apparatus.

MAX

Anything I can get you before I go?

She shakes her head. He bends and kisses her forehead, strokes her hair lovingly.

MAX

The nurse should be here soon. I love you.

She squeezes his hand.

He leaves.

There is a photograph taken of them in younger days on the bedside table, with their two kids. They appear to be a loving family.

Close on the concertina of the breathing apparatus next to a gas cylinder as it force-feeds Flo air.

INT. DETECTIVE'S OFFICES. FRED'S OFFICE -- DAY

Fred cleans his fingernails with a knife, similar in size to the flick-knife Martin uses. He is on the phone, waiting. Max goes past, coming in to work.

FRED

Hey Max, how's the wife?

MAX

Not good. Not good at all.

FRED

Yeah, s'why I'll never marry again. How's the case coming?

MAX

Which case?

FRED

The hang-man killer.

His line is connected. He flicks the knife and it retracts instantly, as Martin's did.

FRED

Oh, ah, this is Detective Fred Winter of homicide, Ma'am. I wanted to ask you a few questions if I may.

Max continues on to his office.

INT. DETECTIVE'S OFFICES. MAX'S OFFICE -- DAY

Max hangs up his coat but becomes aware someone is behind him in the doorway. He turns sharply to find the Office Boy staring at him. For a moment he wonders what he wants, then the Office Boy hands him an envelope.

OFFICE BOY

There's mail.

MAX

Oh, thanks.

Absorbed with the letter, Max rounds his desk and sits. He notices the Office Boy lingering, staring at him. Max pauses.

MAX

Something else, young fella?

The Office Boy does not answer, just staring. He suddenly shakes his head and leaves. Max watches him go, considering him odd. He goes back to his letter.

INT. MAKO-JEFFERIES. MONITORS ROOM -- DAY

Alice is on the line.

FRED (VO tele fx)

But you're on the same shift with Marsha Thomas, right?

ALICE

Yeah, that's right.

INTERCUT:

INT. DETECTIVE'S OFFICES. FRED'S OFFICE -- DAY

FRED

And how would you describe your relationship? Close?

ALICE

Yeah, close, but we never saw each other outside work, socially, know what I mean.

FRED

She got a boyfriend?

ALICE

Not that she mentioned.

FRED

Ever talk about guys? You know, someone she was sweet on. Like someone there at work.

ALICE

No.

FRED

Never?

ALICE

No.

FRED

Y' sure?

ALICE

Sure I'm sure. Anyhow I'm a Baptist, I don't talk 'bout nothing like that no how.

FRED (rolling his eyes)

She fire anyone lately, you know like, is there a former employee, might be disgruntled?

ALICE

No. We haven't fired no one in over six months, and as I recall that was a lady.

Fred sighs ambiguously.

FRED

Well, I'd appreciate you giving me a list of all employees fired over the last five years.

ALICE

(shrugging)

Okay.

She jots down a phone number as she listens.

ALICE

Yeah...yeah. Got it.

FRED

Okay. Thanks for your help. Just fax that through and give me a call if you think of anything.

He hangs up and looks at Max, studying him momentarily. Max is on the phone, holding a piece of paper, irritated.

INT. MAX'S OFFICE -- DAY

Fred is in the background finishing up the case notes on Marsha's murder and getting ready to leave the office.

MAX

Yeah but look, when you quoted me palliative care it was for two thousand a month. What the hell is this five hundred traveling expenses? ...Look, I am not paying for the goddamned nurse to come out there, alright. Nobody pays



MAX (Cont'd)

me traveling... I don't care if she is  
privately contracted, that's your problem...

Fred pokes his head in the door, his hat on and coat over his arm.

MAX

Yeah, well maybe I just will try another  
service!

He hangs up, annoyed.

FRED (indicating his own desk)

You might like to check that rape-murder last  
night, looks a bit like your guy.

Max's head goes back in question.

FRED

Perp tied her up then ass-fucked her.

MAX

So? Lota guys do that with their girlfriends.

FRED

Yeah, but then they don't usually cut out her  
anus with a pen-knife.

Max flinches at the disgusting image and is dismissive.

MAX

(shaking his head)

My guy always 'cuffs 'em.

Fred shrugs. He leaves.

Agitated, Max considers momentarily, checks his rolodex and dials a  
number.

MAX

Yeah, Paul Green, please...Paul, Max  
Steele...fine, look I was wondering if I could  
come see you again about a small loan.

As he jots down the date and time, CAMERA notes the file on Fred's  
desk.

MAX (OS)

Yeah, no, that'll be fine...Thanks.

EXT. SONJA'S HOUSE -- DAY

STILLS CAMERA FX: The rear pool area of the house.

The back of Martin's head is recognizable via the baseball cap. He is on higher ground at some distance from the house, behind an outcrop of rocks, and taking shots with the camera.

CAMERA LENS FX: Sonja comes through the back doorway, wearing a gown. She drops the gown, naked beneath.

STILLS CAMERA FX: A shot is taken.

Sonja slips into the pool and swims out.

More pictures are taken in the same manner.

Martin lowers the camera and makes a small sound of desire.

INT. SONJA'S HOUSE. KITCHEN -- DAY

Sonja sits, sewing the hem of a dress. The TV is on as before. She listens to it idly as she works.

TV news report:

COMPERE

Police today released details of the brutal slaying that took place in a suburban house last night in Lockwood. The murdered woman was Marsha Thomas, an employee of the Mako-Jefferies telemarketing firm.

Sonja looks up at the TV. On it are pictures of Marsha's house, her car in the driveway.

COMPERE (VO)

So far police have no clues as to why Ms. Thomas was brutally tied up and raped before being murdered in her own home. Police can neither confirm nor deny it was the work of the hang-man serial-killer.

There is a photograph of Marsha on screen.

COMPERE (VO)

Ms. Thomas, a divorcee, was forty-eight years old and had two grown children not living with her. Police are continuing their investigations...And now here's Tom with a wrap up of today's sport.

Sonja is frozen in shock.

EXT. SONJA'S HOUSE -- DAY

Driving a convertible, Sonja pulls out through the electric gate and accelerates away.

EXT. CITY STREET -- DAY

HANDHELD: MARTIN'S POV: Sonja is walking. She turns into a building and enters.

Swing onto a sign: Olsen Burns and Monroe Attorneys At Law.

Swing back - Sonja disappears into the building.

INT. MONROE'S OFFICE -- DAY

Monroe is having sex with Sonja on his desk. In the process they knock over a photograph of Monroe's wife and kids.

INT. MONROE'S OFFICE -- DAY

Monroe and Sonja are getting dressed.

MONROE

Where'd you find those papers anyhow?

SONJA

In his desk. Picked the lock.

MONROE

Well, nasty stuff. Did you know you own the house you're in?

Sonja freezes, stunned. Monroe is surprised.

MONROE

It's got your signature on it.

SONJA

He told me he was just adding me to his will.

MONROE

No. In fact, you're a corporation. The house is part of it. You also own a small merchant bank in the Seychelles by the way.

SONJA

What?

MONROE

Yeah, Filter International, Pty. Ltd.. Love that name.

SONJA

What...why?

MONROE

Money laundering. For him and his overseas clients. For a fee. Mind you I can't prove that.

SONJA

I don't underst...

MONROE

You're the fall guy, hon. He gets found out then you're the one goes to jail and he's clean even though we all know he did it. Husbands do it to their wives all the time. He probably loves his wife, so he bought a second, disposable one.

Sonja's face hardens.

MONROE

Just be careful. He screws up, you go down for a ten to fifteen count and ignorance is not a plea. Also, be extra careful what you say. He finds out you know, your ass is grass.

SONJA

Why?

MONROE

You're the only shareholder. He's just a director. You know you can actually fire him if you want. So what do you think he and a dozen other corporations with millions of dollars at stake and lengthy jail terms in the balance might do if you decide to throw your weight around?

SONJA

Can't I just get out?

MONROE (chuckling)

Sure. I'm sure he'd be happy for you to dissolve the company out from under him.

Monroe laughs some more.

Sonja is scared.

INT. MARTIN'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Under a red light a photograph develops in a tray. Martin whistles quietly while he works. The Kitten rubs against his bare ankles.

The photograph in the tray is a picture taken of Sonja on her way to see the attorney. It is hung up on a string with others of her, by the pool, taking her robe off, getting dressed in her bedroom (shot from a distance)

Martin's vague shadow falls across photographs on the wall.

SLOW PAN: There are numerous GIRLS shown, in various poses of restraint. There is Kathy then Marsha. Finally there is a photograph of Max. Next to that photograph is a picture of Flo, Max's wife, in bed wearing her ventilator. The picture has been taken through her bedroom window.

EXT. CAR IN MOTION. ROAD JUNCTION -- NIGHT

A luxury car winds its way toward Cape Avarice.

The car approaches a turn off and makes the turn. A street sign reads, "CAPE AVARICE"

EXT. CAR INT IN MOTION -- NIGHT

PHILIP drives. He is late middle-aged, obviously affluent, conservative.

EXT. SONJA'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Philip's car approaches and turns into Sonja's drive. It waits as the gate opens.

EXT. SONJA'S HOUSE. DRIVEWAY -- NIGHT

HANDHELD: MARTIN'S POV: Philip gets out of his car. He opens the rear door and takes out a suit hung with dry cleaning plastic, then an attaché case. He crosses to the front door of the house.

EXT. SONJA'S HOUSE. FRONT DOOR -- NIGHT

MARTIN'S POV: Right behind him, getting closer and closer, Philip approaches the front door. He pauses and puts down his attaché case as he looks for the right key.

As he bends over Martin is revealed standing right behind him, wearing the balaclava.

Philip finds the right key, opens the door and enters without incident. Martin has disappeared.

EXT. SONJA'S HOUSE. MARTIN'S POSITION/POOL AREA -- NIGHT

Martin arrives back at his observation point, balaclava still on. He raises the camera.

CAMERA LENS FX: Focus in on Philip fixing a drink at the bar, a beer. Sonja comes in wearing a revealing gown. Philip turns and kisses her. He caresses her buttocks through the gown.

Martin watches. Suddenly he takes a photograph and the flash goes off. Martin immediately ducks down, not meaning to take the shot.

INT. SONJA'S HOUSE. SITTING ROOM/BAR -- NIGHT

Sonja is hugging Philip, looking over his shoulder.

SONJA

You see that?

PHILIP

What?

SONJA

There was a flash.

BACK TO:

Martin is down between the rocks, a pencil torch in his mouth, ensuring the flash is turned off.

BACK TO:

PHILIP

Probably lightning.

SONJA

No, like a camera flash.

PHILIP (dismissive)

It's just lightning down the coast.

BACK TO:

Martin raises the camera once more and focuses on the couple.

BACK TO:

PHILIP

(looking at her breasts/gown)

Well you must've missed me. Mind if I have a beer first?

SONJA

Sure. Bring it out by the pool. I'm thinking of taking a dip.

PHILIP

Mmm. I'd like to watch.

He hands her a glass (spirits) and she leads him outside.

EXT. SONJA'S HOUSE. MARTIN'S POSITION/POOL AREA -- NIGHT

CAMERA FX: Sonja pulls two cushions off a chair and throws them on the poolside carpet. She then spreads a wide towel in front of them.

EXT. SONJA'S HOUSE. POOL AREA -- NIGHT

PHILIP

What, we're having a picnic?

SONJA

Oh, don't be so stuffy.

She places him on the towel and takes off his shoes.

You must be tired. You jet-lagged?

PHILIP

Bit.

Sonja lies beside him.

PHILIP

Well, this is nice. You know, the way you were last time, I was beginning to think that perhaps we'd made a mistake, perhaps our long-term plans...

She puts a finger to his lips.

SONJA

You know there's more to us than that.

She kisses him.

SONJA

It's just hard on me, you know. I get lonely, jealous. I wonder if you'll ever really divorce Margaret.

PHILIP

Can we not do this again right now...

SONJA

I wasn't. I'm just explaining why...

PHILIP

Can we drop it.

She goes to speak again, but he holds up his hand.

PHILIP

In fact, we're not going to discuss this ever again. That understood?



Sonja's eyes harden.

EXT. SONJA'S HOUSE. MARTIN'S POSITION/POOL AREA -- NIGHT

Martin twirls a blade of grass, impatient, irritated. He is attracted by Sonja getting up and taking Philip's glass into the house. He notes that they hold hands until the last. He raises his camera and watches Sonja.

CAMERA FX: Sonja pours a beer into Philip's glass. She looks around, checking Philip. The angle tilts down to show Philip. He is not looking her way. She then picks up a vodka bottle and pours two nips into the beer. She takes the beer back outside.

Martin is thoughtful. He flicks a switch on his camera and there is a whirring sound.

CAMERA FX: Now using a much greater magnification. The camera is bought to bear on the bottle of vodka and the label: VODKA.

Martin lowers the camera, thoughtful.

TIME DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SONJA'S HOUSE. MARTIN'S POSITION/POOL AREA -- NIGHT

Later. Martin looks at his watch. He looks back down at Sonja and Philip.

EXT. POOL AREA -- NIGHT

Sonja lies with Philip. His words are slurred.

PHILIP

Picked up some good deals in Belgium. I'll take you down to the warehouse and show you... some... You know...More jet-lagged than I thought, that beer's gone straight to my... Huh, so drunk.

SONJA

I know. Hits you like that sometimes.

Philip sighs heavily and his head goes back.

PHILIP

Ho...The world's spinning...So tired.

Sonja kisses his forehead.

SONJA

Why don't you just lay back and rest. Just rest. I'm going to take a little dip, then when I get back I'll take you to bed, alright?

Philip makes a noise of acknowledgement but is already drifting off to sleep.

Sonja stands and takes off her robe, which she hangs over the back of a chair well away from where they are.

EXT. SONJA'S HOUSE. MARTIN'S POSITION/POOL AREA - NIGHT

CAMERA FX: Sonja slips into the pool.

STILLS CAMERA FX: Various shots are taken.

EXT. POOL AREA -- NIGHT

Sonja, her hair wet and slicked back, drifts over to the side of the pool. She looks at Philip.

SONJA (softly)

Philip...Philip.

He does not stir. Sonja dips down in the pool and hauls herself out. She crosses to Philip and stands over him, watching him carefully. She leans down and gently arranges his arms by his sides. He stirs, and she freezes, but he does not wake.

INTERCUT the following murder sequence with STILLS CAMERA FX taking pictures throughout.

Sonja removes herself to the end of the strip of outdoor carpet they are on. She lifts the end up and walks it in toward Philip.

SONJA

Just going to cover you up, sweetheart.

She lays it on him gently. She moves quickly round the other side of him and folds up a similar length of carpet which she also lays over him. In raising both ends of the carpet she has exposed three luggage straps beneath, equal distance apart. She lifts each one in turn, threads it, and tightens it, but not too tight. When all three have been tightened enough to encase Philip in a cocoon, she then tightens the middle strap with considerable pressure. Philip makes a slight

sound as he begins to wake. Hurrying now, Sonja tightens the top strap then the lower strap.

PHILIP (muffled)  
 What? What's happening?! Sonja! What's  
 happening?! (etc.)

Wasting no time, Sonja drags/rolls the carpet toward the pool edge. She heaves the bundle into the pool.

INTERCUT:

EXT. POOL -- NIGHT

Sonja's plan does not go perfectly. Trapped air sees the bundle containing Philip floating. His garbled screams go on and on. Sonja jumps into the pool and forces the bundle under.

INTERCUT:

EXT. POOL UNDERWATER -- NIGHT

Sonja follows the bundle down. She watches as Philip struggles. Eventually, though, air is released and the struggling stops.

Sonja surfaces, gasping for air.

EXT. POOL -- NIGHT

In the water and with the bundle at the surface, Sonja has released the luggage straps. She pulls on the end of the carpet and it unfurls, dumping as it does Philip's body into the water. Sonja begins to remove his clothes.

BACK TO:

EXT. SONJA'S HOUSE. MARTIN'S POSITION/POOL AREA -- NIGHT

Martin shakes his head, fascinated. He is rewinding his film with the power drive in the camera. He ejects it quickly, pops in a new roll and the film rolls on.

EXT. POOL AREA -- NIGHT

Sonja, now in her gown, pulls the carpet out of the water. She throws the straps, pillow and towel that were caught up with Philip to one side where his clothes are piled in a laundry basket.

She replaces the carpet in the spot where it was taken from and moves some garden furniture onto it. She then grabs all the wet clothes, etc., and takes them inside.

Now on the other side of the glass doors, she takes a moment to look at Philip.

His naked body floats face down in the water.

Sonja puts down the basket, locks the door, turns on the alarm, turns off the lights, and exits, taking the basket, etc., with her.

INT. SONJA'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Sonja takes off her makeup in front of a mirror. She stops and looks at herself, not liking what she sees.

EXT. SONJA'S HOUSE. MARTIN'S POV -- NIGHT

CAMERA FX: Sonja through thin curtains, sits in her bedroom, taking off her makeup.

Martin lowers the camera. He begins humming and tapping his hands together as he thinks.

Presently Sonja reaches out and the light in her bedroom goes out.

There is now no light from the house. Martin is still humming.

EXT. SONJA'S HOUSE -- MORNING

ESTABLISHING.

INT. SONJA'S BEDROOM -- MORNING

Sonja gets dressed.

INT. STAIRWELL -- MORNING

Dressed, Sonja comes briskly down the stairs.

INT. LAUNDRY -- MORNING

Sonja takes the clothes etc., from the dryer and puts them in the laundry basket.

INT. SITTING ROOM/BAR -- MORNING

CU: Sonja punches in the code to turn off the alarm.

It beeps electronically, and she crosses to the rear door of the house leading to the pool. She opens it and exits, carrying the laundry basket.

EXT. POOL SIDE -- MORNING

Sonja comes out to the pool. She stops dead and gasps in fright, dropping the laundry basket.

There is no body in the pool.

Sonja is frozen in shock.

EXT. SONJA'S HOUSE -- MORNING

Sonja comes from the house and checks the drive. She is horrified to see Philip's car is gone.

INT. DETECTIVE'S OFFICES. MAX'S OFFICE -- DAY

The Chief approaches Max. He carries a photograph and file. He stops before Max's desk. Max works on.

MAX

Don't even think about it.

CHIEF

You know I'm going to be glad when you retire. Think you've forgotten who's boss 'round here.

MAX

Well that's the beauty of retiring, Larry.

He finally looks up.

MAX

You don't have to kiss ass no more. Especially big hairy ones like yours.

CHIEF

Still leaves your wife.

He suddenly realizes what he has said.

CHIEF

Oh Jesus, I'm sorry, I was just joking. I didn't think.

Max nods, understanding.

CHIEF

How is Flo? She going to have the operation?

MAX

Huh. You're not rich in this country, you just roll over and die.

The Chief puts the photograph and file before Max.

CHIEF

Recognize the M.O.?

Max looks at the photograph. Philip is hanging from a tree, naked. Max frowns.

MAX

Where's this?

CHIEF

Central park.

Max registers significant surprise.

MAX

I'll see what I can do.

The Chief leaves. Max frowns, trying to remember:

MAX (to himself)

Oh, got his beeper.

He finds Sid's number and picks up the phone.

INTERCUT:

EXT. COFFEE SHOP -- DAY

Sid buys coffee and doughnuts from a SHOP ASSISTANT. His beeper goes off. He looks at it.

Max's phone rings. Sid is on the coffee shop's phone.

SID

Yeah, Max, it's Sid.

MAX

Where you at, kid?

SID

Just getting coffee and doughnuts for the guys.

MAX

Spare a couple of hours? Our man's on the move again.

SID

You bet, I been in enough pawn shops to last a lifetime.

MAX

Meet you in the carpark in ten.

He hangs up.

INT. POLICE CARPARK -- DAY

Max is already sitting in the car in the front passenger seat, reading the file.

The driver's door opens and Sid hands in coffee.

SID

Am I driving?

MAX

You'll make detective yet.

Indicating the coffee.

MAX

What about the guys?

SID

They can put out an APB.

Sid grins and starts the car.

EXT. PHILIP'S HOUSE -- DAY

Max and Sid walk from their car to the gate.

SID

Well just 'cause the guy was hung naked doesn't mean it was our man. Could have been just a copy-cat.

MAX

Black nylon rope. I don't recall that detail being released to the public.

SID

But we're after a murder-rapist. Was this guy raped?

MAX

Only one reason you hang a naked man from a tree in Central Park.

Sid presses the buzzer and looks at Max for the answer.

To make a statement.

The gate swings open.

EXT/INT. PHILIP'S HOUSE -- DAY

The front door is opened by MRS RUDCLIFFE, revealing Sid and Max standing on the stoop. Sid shows his badge.

SID

Mrs. Rudcliffe?

She nods.

I'm detective Travolta, this is senior detective-sergeant Steele. We'd like to ask you a few questions about your husband's death if it's okay.

She nods, visibly upset, and steps back, allowing them entrance.

INT. SITTING ROOM -- DAY

A wealthy house. Max and Mrs. Rudcliffe sit while Sid stands.

MAX

I know this is not a good time, ma'am, but if you know of anyone that has threatened your husband in the past it would be of great use to us.



MRS. RUDCLIFFE

No. You see, detective, my husband and I lived separate lives. He's an importer. Rugs. He was always overseas. It just destroyed our marriage. He didn't talk about work to me hardly at all. Not anymore.

SID

Any threatening phone calls? Was he worried about anything?

MRS. RUDCLIFFE

No. No, we live quietly. He just came back from overseas two days ago and already he was driving down to see clients out of town. To tell the truth I never knew where he went or if he was going where he said he was. We barely talked. You know, despite everything, I did love him. This is...a great shock.

MAX

Ma'am, this is a murder investigation. You don't have to but I would appreciate your allowing us a look through your husband's private papers. It'll save...

MRS. RUDCLIFFE

Yes, yes, of course.

INT. OFFICE/DEN -- DAY

Inside the dark office. Mrs. Rudcliffe opens the door, turns on the light, and ushers them in.

MRS. RUDCLIFFE

Can I get you gentlemen coffee or something?

MAX

Oh, we just had some in the car, ma'am. We'll call if we need you.

She nods and begins to leave.

MAX

Oh, um, where's the best place to start? There a safe or something?

MRS. RUDCLIFFE

Huh, I haven't been allowed in this office for over twenty years, detective, and Philip always seemed to know if I'd been snooping. Once he flew into a terrible rage about it so I just never set foot in here again.

MAX

I understand, ma'am. Thank you.

She grins sadly and leaves.

MAX

(taking off his coat)

That's yours. I'll start here.

SID

Roger that.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. OFFICE/DEN -- DAY

Later. Sid now has his jacket off, his tie loosened and his sleeves rolled up. Max is seated at the desk, which is strewn with files. Sid looks through the filing cabinet.

MAX

This guy's loaded. I mean, loaded.

SID

Black money?

MAX

Well he's got twenty-five mill in overseas accounts. Suspicious but not necessarily illegal. Seems he imported rugs for at least seven major chains throughout the world. He also owns houses, condos, warehouses. He was a hell of a businessman.

SID

I know it's a cliché, but...bingo. A secret international corporation?

MAX

Oh, let's see what his wife stood to make from his death.

SID  
(handing him the document)  
How do you know she's involved?

MAX  
Usually are. Sometimes without them even  
knowing it.

He reads and Sid goes back to the filing cabinet. Max turns a page  
and pauses.

MAX  
Hmm. Interesting. Philip Edward Rudcliffe is  
only the company director. Filter  
International is actually owned by one Sonja  
Gloria Stevens, who happens to be only twenty-  
eight years old. And...

He checks through the papers on the desk before him.

MAX  
...Under her company she owns a Cape Avarice  
property worth two point five million dollars.

He looks significantly at Sid and raises his eyebrows.

INT. MAX'S CAR. CAR IN MOTION -- DAY

SID  
You know what I don't understand, Max.

MAX  
What?

SID  
Is how a guy can rape a girl. I mean, you  
know, once me and my girlfriend, Sally, we  
were wrestling on the bed, you know...

MAX  
I remember the concept.

SID  
And I said, why don't I, you know, try to rape  
you, and why don't you, you know, try to  
resist.

MAX

Should we be having this conversation just yet?

SID

No, you know, I just wanted to see if I could overpower her and show her what it would be like, not kinky or anything, just so's she'd be aware and take some self-defense course or something.

MAX

And?

SID

Well, I overpowered her alright, but you know, getting her panties off and getting her legs apart was okay, but then it was the getting it up part that was the problem. I mean, it was as though once my mind was in wrestling mode then it just wasn't in sexual mode, know what I mean?

MAX

Yeah, well I'm sure you covered this at the academy, but rape is not a sexual crime so much as a crime of subjugation and humiliation. The guy gets his jollies from the other person's fear and that's somehow mixed up with sex. Think any man can learn it. You can't tell me all the raping that goes on in war is done by serial rapists.

SID

Yeah, well I don't think normal men can get it up when they try to rape someone first time.

MAX

Son, we not only have Viagra, Cialis, Levitra these days but we also have Alprostadil. You stick a needle in your dick and anyone can be Attila the Hun...Tried it with the wife once.

SID

Yeah? She like it?

MAX

Oh, she liked it. But I'm not sticking a needle in my dick again.

They laugh.

MAX

I'll keep trying the old fashioned way.

SID

So, you're saying this guy might not be a head job, might have just learnt it?

MAX

Oh, who knows? You only have to look at the way video games screw up kid's minds before they start popping off their class mates. We live in an audio-visual era that no previous generations have ever experienced. Rape is everywhere. TV, film, dvds. Who knows what's insanity or dysfunctional learning anymore?

SID

You mean that?

MAX

I don't know.

SID

Sound disillusioned.

MAX

Oh, just another old man, wondering what the world is coming to, powerless to stop it.

Max indicates a turn up ahead.

EXT. ROAD JUNCTION -- DAY

Max's car comes to the turn and takes it. Stay on the street sign which reads, "CAPE AVARICE"

EXT. SONJA'S HOUSE -- DAY

Sid and Max are at the front gate. There is a call box with a video camera arrangement. Sid presses the buzzer.

SID

Two point five still buys a lot.

MAX

She's well out of town, I expect.

SONJA - CALL BOX

Hello?

Sid holds his badge before the video camera.

SID

Detectives Travolta and Steele to see Sonja Stevens.

INT. SONJA'S HOUSE -- DAY

Sonja studies a small video screen mounted on the wall. She is apprehensive.

EXT/INT. SONJA'S HOUSE. FRONT DOOR -- DAY

Sonja opens the door to reveal Sid and Max.

SONJA

Your names sound phony.

Sid hands her his ID.

SID

We used to use Cagney and Lacey, but that really didn't work.

Sonja grins and allows them entrance.

SONJA

Mind if we go through? I just made coffee.

SID

Sure.

She walks ahead, and Sid shakes his hand at Max, suggesting she is hot stuff. Max gives a look of mild reproof but Sid has gone.

INT. HOUSE HALLWAY OR SIMILAR -- DAY

On the way to Sonja's kitchen, Max glances out and sees the swimming pool. (Note for later FLASHBACK)

INT. SONJA'S KITCHEN -- DAY

They enter.

SID

Wow. This is a hell of a place.

SONJA

It's not mine. Belongs to my boyfriend.

Max and Sid exchange a look.

MAX

Would that be a man by the name Philip Rudcliffe?

SONJA

Yeah. How'd you know?

MAX

Sorry to bring you bad news, but Mr. Rudcliffe was murdered yesterday.

Sonja freezes in shock. She sits down slowly.

SONJA

He was supposed to be here yesterday. I thought he was just overdue.

MAX

Miss Stevens, what exactly is your relationship with Mr. Rudcliffe?

SONJA

He's, he's my...(freezes) I know who did it.

MAX

Beg yours?

SONJA

I know who did it.

She looks at them, thinking hard.

SONJA

Martin Lake did it.

SID

Who?

SONJA

Martin Lake. Martin Lake killed Philip because he thought he was my stepfather.

Sid and Max exchange a look of confusion. Max sits down.

MAX

Maybe you better start from the beginning.

EXT. SONJA'S HOUSE -- DAY

Sid and Max cross to their car.

MAX

What'd you think?

SID

Think she would've been more upset if the kitten was killed.

MAX

What about her story?

SID

Time for my confession.

He reaches into his coat pocket and pulls out a fax, handing it to Max.

SID

Remember I said I was going to the phone company to get Kathy Butler's records? There it is, a call the night before her murder from the Mako-Jefferies Survey Company. Just didn't think it was a lead.

Max snorts ironically as he looks at the fax. They get into the car.

EXT. MAX'S CAR, CAR INT IN MOTION -- DAY

Max is using the car's mobile phone. His call is answered.

MAX

Yeah, hi, this is Detective Max Steele of homicide. I'm investigating the murder of one of your employees, a Marsha Thomas ...Yeah...Look, I'll need the contact details for another employee, a Mr. Martin Lake



MAX (Cont'd)

...Oh come on now, honey, don't be like that... (sighs) Yeah, yeah, yeah, okay, what's the address?

He cancels, hangs up the phone, puts on his seatbelt.

MAX (Cont'd)

...Privacy laws. Gotta go there, lower East side.

Sid nods.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING -- DAY

Sid and Max alight from the car and enter the building. Camera tilts up to reveal a higher floor.

INT. HALL TO RECEPTION, OFFICE BUILDING -- DAY

Alice emerges from a lift. She moves up the hall to the lady's room, but hesitates at the door.

She sees Max and Sid at the receptionist's desk. What has also caught her eye is that Max is showing his badge to the RECEPTIONIST.

Alice studies the two men for a long moment, particularly Sid. Eventually she enters the ladies room.

Max is handed the information on a slip of paper by the Receptionist and he and Sid come back down the hall to the lift. As the lift leaves, Alice comes from the ladies room. She checks the lift then crosses to the Receptionist and speaks with her.

EXT. MARTIN'S HOUSE -- DAY

Max and Sid get out of their car. They move to the front door of the poor dwelling.

EXT. MARTIN'S HOUSE. PORCH -- DAY

Sid takes out his gun.

MAX

What are you doing?

SID

I just thought...

MAX (grouchy)

I only got two weeks to retirement. Let me tell you something, the fastest way to get your head blown off is to pull out a stupid gun. Most criminals have stupid guns, because most criminals are stupid. So if you pull out your stupid gun they will pull out their stupid gun, and because they're stupid, they will fire their stupid gun first. Got it?

SID (putting away his gun)

Could you just go over that stupid part again?

Max knocks. There is no answer. He knocks again. He talks without looking at Sid or looking around.

MAX

Do us a favor, check if any neighbors are watching.

SID (looking)

Not that I can see.

MAX

Okay. This is what not to do.

He inserts a skeleton key, opens the front door, and enters. Sid looks around and follows.

INT. MARTIN'S HOUSE -- DAY

Max and Sid hesitate inside the door. The house is dark.

SID (loud whisper)

I'd feel a lot better if you'd let me take out my stupid gun.

MAX (loud whisper)

Sure, knock yourself out...  
(full voice) Hello?!

Sid gets such a fright he drops his gun. He scrambles for it. Max moves further inside.

MAX

Hello?!

Sid enters the main sitting room. It is pitch black. Max, behind him, throws on a light. Sid whips round.

MAX

Don't point the stupid thing at me.

Sid points the gun away.

The desk seen earlier - the computer and fax machine are missing. The photo development trays are still there but the photo printer is gone. All the photographs seen on the wall are now missing. Max goes further into the house, checking the 'fridge, cupboards, etc.. Sid remains in the living room. He is nervous. Suddenly he hears a sound and sweeps around, raising the gun.

The Kitten walks out from behind some books on a shelf.

Sid breathes a sigh of relief.

SID

Hey, I found the kitten he used.

MAX

(coming past on his way out)

If he makes any sudden moves, blast him.

Sid puts away his gun. He follows Max, pretending to blast the Kitten with his finger as he goes, and turning off the light.

EXT. MARTIN'S HOUSE -- DAY

Sid and Max cross to their car.

SID

So what do we do now? Bring in surveillance?

MAX

Huh. No, we come back later and knock on his door again. This is the real world, remember.

EXT. CAR INT - OUTSIDE MARTIN'S HOUSE -- DAY

They shut their respective doors.

MAX

Ah, I'm beat. I really am getting old. Take me home, James.

SID

Want me to drop you somewhere?

MAX

No. No, I got paperwork still at the office.  
Let's go.

Sid starts the car.

INT. DETECTIVE'S OFFICE. MAX'S OFFICE. LATE DAY

Max works at his desk. The phone rings, he answers it.

MAX

Max Steele...Oh, yes, Paul...What? Well, why?  
...Well that's not good enough. I've paid back  
two loans without any problems so far...I  
explained that, my pay was late and that's why  
I missed those payments, but...Paul, listen to  
me, I need that loan and I have been with your  
bank for over thirty-five years. Now Flo could  
die if she doesn't get the kind of help she  
needs...

He wrings his forehead as he listens.

MAX

...Paul...Paul! You're boss is a guy, you're a  
guy, but I'm not a guy! I'm an old mean cop  
who's personally pissed off with you!...You  
work it out, then work it out with your boss,  
then get back to me!

He slams down the phone and glares at it.

MAX

Bankers.

INT. MAX'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Max, in his under-shirt, sits next to the window watching speeding cars on a nearby freeway. The lights are out. Flo, his wife, is in bed. The mechanical wheeze of her breathing apparatus is audible. Max gets up and sits beside her on the bed. She looks at him and grins weakly. They hold hands.

MAX

Just remembering. When I finally turned twenty-one. God, thought I'd never get there. Then the years went by a bit faster. I turned thirty. Y'know what surprised me? Nothing happened. Just got up the next day and went on same as before. Then forty. Everyone told me life began at forty. I didn't find that. Just started to think about life ending, when I'd never really considered it before. Now here I am, due to retire. It's like the end of a century, you know? Everyone tells you it's really going to happen, and you know it's the truth, but somehow just doesn't seem possible. Then one day, there it is. The calendar ticks over and a whole new century lies right in front of you. But the next day is just like any other. Be like that when I retire. Everyone'll get up and go to work just like any other day. Only difference is, old Max won't be there. And what have we got to show for that? All those hard years. You're dying, and I get a gold watch and a tiny pension. Always thought I was a good cop...always thought I'd make a difference. The world is worse than when I started. Nothing but an old fool, and I've let you down.

Flo squeezes his hand, shaking her head. Tears are in Max's eyes.

MAX

C'mon Flo, I can't even afford a common operation that will save my wife's life. After an entire lifetime of work. I've let you down, and I apologize. I am so sorry.

Flo is now crying. Max pulls down her respirator mask. He kisses her, replaces the mask, and sits up and wipes his tears.

INT. DETECTIVE'S OFFICE. MAX'S OFFICE -- DAY

Max has coffee and is reading a file. He frowns, and picks up the phone.

INTERCUT:

INT. FORENSIC MORGUE -- DAY

Forensic detective, Jack, is eating a thick sandwich while he stands next to a corpse that John is cutting with a buzz saw. The phone rings on the wall and Jack picks up. Buzz saw continuous.

JACK

Yeah?

MAX

Who's that, John or Jack?

JACK

Jack.

MAX

It's Max. Listen, you know that guy that was hung naked from a tree in central park?

JACK

Yeah.

MAX

Well says here he was drowned first.

JACK

That's right. Whoever wanted that fucker dead wanted him fucking dead.

MAX

You're sure about that?

JACK

Yeah, I'm a forensic fucking detective. It was fresh water, taken from a chlorinated pool.

MAX

Okay. Thanks, John.

He hangs up.

JACK

It's Jack!

BACK TO:

INT. DETECTIVE'S OFFICE. MAX'S DESK -- DAY

Max dials a number. It is answered.

MRS. RUDCLIFFE (tele fx)  
Hello?

INTERCUT:

INT. MRS. RUDCLIFFE'S SITTING ROOM -- DAY

MAX  
Mrs. Rudcliffe, this is Max Steele of  
homicide. We met the other day.

MRS. RUDCLIFFE  
Oh, yes.

MAX  
Sorry to call so early. I know this'll sound  
strange, but do you have a swimming pool at  
your house?

MRS. RUDCLIFFE  
Why, no we don't.

MAX  
Did you husband ever frequent a club that had  
a swimming pool?

MRS. RUDCLIFFE  
No, my husband can't swim, detective.

Max is thinking.

FLASHBACK: On the way to Sonja's kitchen, Max glances out and sees  
the swimming pool.

The Office Boy enters and drops an interoffice envelope on Max's  
desk. He departs.

MAX  
Um, please forgive me for not explaining why I  
had to ask, ma'am. You've been a great help.  
Thank you.

MRS. RUDCLIFFE  
Alright.

Max hangs up. He has already opened the envelope and extracts the note it contains. He looks up suddenly.

MAX

Hey, you!!

INT. DETECTIVE'S OFFICES -- DAY

The Office Boy, about to leave the outer office, stops. He turns.

Max comes from his office aggressively, holding the note. This takes place next to the Chief's office.

MAX

Where'd you get this?

OFFICE BOY

Dispatch.

MAX

(indicating the envelope)

Then why isn't the sender's office filled out?

OFFICE BOY

Um, I don't know.

MAX

You don't know...Where the hell's your clearance ID?

OFFICE BOY

Oh, I left it on my desk.

MAX

You're new aren't you?

OFFICE BOY

Sure, I've been....

MAX

Assume the position.

OFFICE BOY

What?

Max spins him round roughly, frisking him.



MAX

Turn round! You know you're not allowed round this building without ID.

Max is handcuffing the Office Boy when the Chief comes to his door.

CHIEF

Max, what the hell are you doing?!

MAX

Making sure of this guy.

CHIEF

Max, let him go.

Max slams the Office Boy against the wall.

MAX

I'm not letting anyone go 'til I see who this punk is.

CHIEF

Max! I said let him go! Now!

The Chief steps in and spins the Office Boy round again, and takes off his cuffs. To Max:

CHIEF

What the hell's wrong with you?!

MAX

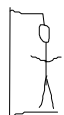
This.

The Chief takes the note from him. The note is hand printed:

Hi Max,

Checked on Flo lately?

Love,



MAX

How'd you come by that note?

The Chief looks at the Office Boy.

OFFICE BOY (shrugging)  
Was just in the out basket down at dispatch.

MAX  
I been watching you. Everytime I turn round  
you're standing there eyeballing me. Why is  
that?

OFFICE BOY (embarrassed)  
My dad said you were the best detective on the  
force and that I should watch and learn from  
you.

Max is momentarily stumped.

OFFICE BOY  
I'm doing a criminology degree.

CHIEF (to Office Boy)  
Alright, you can go.

MAX  
Hey, wait a minute!

CHIEF  
I said he can go! (To Office Boy) Go!

Shaken, the Office Boy departs.

CHIEF  
That's Mickey Beringer. Ray Beringer's son. He  
works here during his college breaks.

MAX  
(going back to his office)  
Yeah, well where's his stupid ID?

CHIEF  
Where's your stupid ID?

MAX  
I got a badge!

CHIEF  
So have I but we are supposed to wear our  
stupid ID's none-the-less!

MAX

That kid's supposed to check the sender's office box on each envelope!

As he goes Max slaps a jar of pens off a detective's desk.

CHIEF

Oh yeah, right, four hundred envelopes an hour and he should check each one!

But Max is back in his office. The Chief looks at the DETECTIVES in the room, all are frozen, watching. The Chief waves them back to work and goes back into his office.

INT. DETECTIVES OFFICES. MAX'S OFFICE -- DAY

Fred enters, having just arrived at work. He leans against the door. Max is staring at the phone, thinking.

FRED

Staring at the phone doesn't make it ring, Maxy.

Max looks at him deadpan. Fred indicates a message on Max's desk.

FRED

Broad rang last night looking for you. Left a message.

Max picks it up.

MAX

Where she's from?

FRED

That survey company. You know, Mako something, like the shark.

MAX (referring to the handwriting)  
That's supposed to be Mako-Jefferies?

FRED

(going into his own office)  
Hey, take your own fucking messages.

Max is dialing the number.

MAX

Why don't you try printing?

FRED

Why don't you try sucking my dick?

MAX

Oh, yes, could I speak to an (reading) Alan,  
no, Alisha...

FRED (yelling next door)

Alice!

MAX

Oh, Alice, um Thromingham?

FRED (yelling next door)

Thorndike! God!

INTERCUT:

INT. SUPERVISOR'S ROOM -- DAY

Alice is taking the call.

ALICE

Yeah, that's me. Hey, you the detective in  
here yesterday?

MAX

At Mako-Jefferies? Yeah.

ALICE

Well I went and asked the receptionist what  
you wanted and she told me you were chasing  
Martin Lake's home address.

MAX

That's right.

ALICE

What you want that for?

MAX

I want to interview him regarding Marsha  
Thomas' murder. Why?

ALICE

Well honey, you're either the dumbest cop in the world, or you're having your chain jerked like no one else in history.

Can you get to the point, ma'am.

ALICE

Well 'less I'm seeing things, that was Martin Lake standing right beside you.

MAX

You mean the other detective?

ALICE

He's a detective? Then why the hell's he been working here?

MAX

Ma'am, you are absolutely sure that was Martin Lake?

ALICE

Sure as there's a God in Heaven and I love chocolate. He's been working here a year. And he didn't show up for work last night, so now I'm gonna sack his sorry ass.

MAX (stunned)

Thanks.

Max hangs up. After a moment he gets up and pokes his head round the corner into Fred's office.

INT. DETECTIVES OFFICES. FRED'S OFFICE -- DAY

MAX

You know the woman murdered at Mako-Jefferies?

FRED

The lady with the spare asshole? Yes I do.

MAX

Get a lab report on any rope fibers?

FRED

Yeah.

MAX

What color were they?

FRED

Well if you bothered to read my report, black nylon. Why?

Max thinks. He catches sight of the Chief coming from his office, about to water some plants. Max heads toward him.

INT. DETECTIVES OFFICES, MAIN OFFICE -- DAY

The Chief waters plants with a small watering can.

MAX

Say, ah, been meaning to thank you for that young fella, Sid Travolta.

CHIEF

Who?

MAX

Travolta.

The Chief looks blankly at him.

FRED (OS)

What do you know about Sidney Travolta?

Max turns, surprised Fred is at his office door and surprised by the seriousness of his look.

MAX

Why?

FRED

He's a cop from the fourth precinct. Fished him out of the bay. Why, what d'you know?

Max is captivated by racing thoughts.

MAX

'Scuse me.

He suddenly leaves the room.

Fred and the Chief exchange a look of confusion.

EXT. SONJA'S HOUSE. POOL AREA -- DAY

Sid, now Martin, sits in a deck chair, waiting, smoking a cigar. He is against the wall of the house.

Sonja comes from the house, wearing her gown. She crosses to the pool, ready for a swim. She has the gown half down her back when...

MARTIN

I like this bit.

Sonja gasps and covers up.

MARTIN

Please...(he indicates she should continue).

SONJA

Detective...

MARTIN

Travolta. Most people remember my name.

SONJA

What...What are you doing here?

MARTIN

Well, thanks to you, I got no home to go to now.

SONJA

What do you mean?

MARTIN

Hey, got one for you. If you're having trouble getting the lid off a jar, just fill your sink with a little hot water, stand the jar on its head for about five seconds, and then the lid will come off easy. Bet you didn't know that.

Sonja watches him cautiously.

MARTIN

And I got another one, 'cause after all I owe you two. If you get a flat battery in your car, try giving it a headache powder. Seriously. Pour it right in the acid. You'll find your car will start. Really works.

SONJA

What is this?

MARTIN

Handy hints. I owed you two because of the two you showed me. First, you can't taste vodka in beer, and second, how to commit the perfect murder. No signs of a struggle, his body full of alcohol. The guy got drunk, went for a swim and drowned. First I thought you made a mistake, that there'd be fibers in his lungs, but no, it's plastic grass. And the murder weapon is right there, right there under your feet. Pure genius.

SONJA

You better get out of here or I'll...

MARTIN

Call a cop?

SONJA

You can't prove anything.

He holds up photographs.

She crosses cautiously and takes them, looking through them. She looks up at him and throws them into the pool. Martin stands and flicks his cigar into the pool.

MARTIN

See, it was genius...except...for one tiny thing. That night...

CUT TO FLASHBACK:

REPEAT FOOTAGE: Philip's naked body floats face down in the water.

Sonja puts down the basket, locks the door, turns on the alarm, turns off the lights, and exits, taking the basket, etc., further into the house.

MARTIN (VO)

...just after you drowned dear old Philip you made a mistake. After you left him floating bare-assed in the pool, you locked up. Remember? Then you set the alarm.



A frown flicks across Sonja's brow.

MARTIN

Now if your story was going to be that you went to bed, and good old Philip had a few too many and decided to go skinny-dipping on his own...then why did you lock up the house and set the alarm knowing he was still outside?

Sonja suddenly realizes he is right.

MARTIN

See, that alarm is hard-wired to the security company, and their log will show exactly what you did, and when you did it.

Sonja closes her eyes as the impact of her oversight hits home.

MARTIN

So I did you a favor, took care of the body.

SONJA

I'm not looking for a partner. You show those photographs and you're an accomplice to murder.

MARTIN

Correct. So I guess that means we have to trust each other.

SONJA

Like I said, I'm not...

He takes her hand.

MARTIN

I know this sounds like a lie, and I know this is absolutely the wrong time to say it...But I've wanted you from the first moment I saw you. You're just like me...See, even scorpions have to mate.

He kisses her tenderly. They separate, but he remains close, looking into her eyes.

MARTIN

I know what you're thinking. But see, anything happens to me, and those photographs end up in the hands of the law. It's in my will.

SONJA

How would they know a scumbag like you was dead?

MARTIN

Have to call my lawyer once a month. I don't call, photographs get sent... C'mon.

He leads her into the house.

INT. SONJA'S BEDROOM -- DAY

Martin indicates the bed to Sonja.

MARTIN

Slide in, get comfy.

He enters the ensuite and shuts the door.

Sonja crosses to the window and looks out, thinking. She draws the blinds.

INT. ENSUITE -- DAY

ECU: Two colored contact lenses drop onto a towel.

Martin admires his face in the mirror, his eyes now their real color. He takes off his jacket and hangs it on the back of the door.

Martin unzips in front of the toilet. Instead of having a pee, though, he takes a syringe from his jacket pocket. He takes the cap off and is about to inject his penis (as related to him by Max earlier). Martin mouths, "Ow".

INT. SONJA'S BEDROOM -- DAY

To the sound of the toilet flushing. Sonja lies in bed, naked beneath the sheets. Martin enters, wearing only his briefs and shirt. He notes the darkened room.

MARTIN

Shy?

Sonja merely stares. Martin undoes the buttons to his shirt.

MARTIN

Well, don't sweat it. I'm good. But better than that, I'm young. Be a nice change, huh.

He takes off his shirt.

Sonja's eyes register contained shock when she sees the tattoo running up from his groin, having seen it before when he tried to rape her. CAMERA moves up his body to reveal him, studying her.

Martin sits on the side of the bed as he removes his briefs and rolls in beside her. He moves over her and kisses her.

Sonja is uncomfortable but tries not to show it.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ROOF - POLICE BUILDING -- DAY

Max is sitting alone on the very bland rooftop, feeding his lunch to pigeons, mulling things over.

BACK TO:

INT. SONJA'S BEDROOM -- DAY

Panting, covered in sweat, Martin rolls off Sonja. She is also panting. As she speaks, Sonja runs her finger over his tattoo.

SONJA

You were right...Nice to have someone young, someone...competent...You?

MARTIN

The truth?...Something was missing.

SONJA

Don't worry, I'll let you choke me and stub out your cigarette on my butt next time.

Martin considers the comment momentarily, looking interested. Sonja is unnerved.

SONJA

I was joking.

MARTIN

So was I...You think I'm so crazy I don't know the difference?

SONJA

You'll get tired of me one day... then kill me.

Martin is pleased - Implied in her statement is her agreement to partner.

MARTIN

No. don't think I would. Think maybe I could love you. I feel things for you. New things.

SONJA

You mean that?

MARTIN

Yeah...Yeah.

SONJA

Who gets the photographs if you decide to turn me in?

MARTIN

Max.

SONJA

Why him?

MARTIN

I like the old guy. He knows people. Showed me some things about myself.

SONJA

Such as?

MARTIN

That I'm not as smart as I like to think I am.

SONJA

But you could kill me, and I've got nothing on you. I'm a scorpion without a sting.

MARTIN

I know you know who I am.

Sonja withdraws slightly, tensing.

MARTIN

Don't be afraid. See, old Max also taught me I may not be a sicko after all...So...you want a signed confession?

Sonja's look is contained surprise.

MARTIN

Gonna take a shower.

He gets up and crosses to the ensuite. Sonja is thoughtful. She looks at her bedside phone.

INT. DETECTIVE'S ROOMS. MAX'S OFFICE -- DAY

Max sits at his desk, staring out the window. The phone rings. He looks at it, and after a while, answers it.

MAX

Max Steele...Yes, I want to speak to you too...Fine. Let me know.

He hangs up.

INT. SONJA'S BEDROOM -- DAY

Sonja hangs up. The shower is on in the ensuite. Presently it is turned off and Martin comes out, drying himself.

MARTIN (grinning)

Seconds out, round two.

Sonja grins back.

SONJA

Can I expect this all the time?

MARTIN

We live in the world of modern science, and I am reconditioning myself to see sex differently. I'm a reformed man. 'Reform Man'. I like that, s'got a ring.

Martin moves in to kiss her but stops short.

... Did I hear you on the phone?

SONJA (nodding, casual)  
Rang the local real estate. Going to sell this house so we can get out of here.

MARTIN  
(kissing her)

Good.

She evades him, laughing as she gets up.

SONJA  
And if I don't have a pee my bladder'll burst!

She enters the ensuite and shuts the door.

The smile dries on Martin's lips as he looks at the ensuite door. His attention comes round to the phone. He picks it up and presses re-dial. As he watches the ensuite door the phone rings twice before it is answered.

REAL ESTATE LADY (tele fx)  
Cape Avarice real estate.

Martin hangs up and lies back, pleased.

INT. SONJA'S KITCHEN -- DAY

CLOSE ON Martin's hand as he writes a confession. Martin signs it, folds it, and slides it across to Sonja's hand.

MARTIN  
One signed, and dated, confession.

Sonja reads.

MARTIN  
What are you going to do with it?

SONJA  
Thought I might change my will, arrange to call my lawyer once a month.

He grins. Sonja grins back. Martin gets up.

MARTIN  
Where's your car keys? I'll take a run into town, get some supplies. Your old guy's gear doesn't fit too well.

Sonja gets up and takes some keys from her purse.

MARTIN

Oh, ah, I need cash. Can't touch my bank anymore.

Sonja takes some greenbacks from her purse. She hands them to him along with her car keys.

SONJA

Take it easy on that. Remember I don't have an allowance anymore. Another reason to sell up quick.

MARTIN

What'd you put on it?

SONJA

One point five. I want a quick sale.

MARTIN

A nice round figure.

He kisses her. As he gets to the kitchen door, he pauses.

MARTIN

Oh, and if old Max comes poking 'round for any reason, leave the driveway gate open so I'll know.

SONJA

That's a bit obvious.

MARTIN

Which is why he'd never suspect.

He winks and leaves.

Sonja grins, and sips her coffee.

EXT. CAR IN MOTION. ROAD JUNCTION -- DAY

Martin, wearing new casual clothes, drives the sports car. On the seat beside him is a grocery bag filled with food and shopping. He seems content.

Martin's car approaches the junction.

The car comes to the turn off and makes the turn. Stay on the street sign which reads, "CAPE AVARICE"

EXT. SONJA'S HOUSE -- DAY

Martin's car approaches.

Martin checks the gate. It is closed. He sees something else.

A REAL ESTATE LADY is parked in front of the house, the rear door of her station wagon is up and she is struggling a little with a large FOR SALE sign that she carries toward the front fence.

EXT. SONJA'S HOUSE -- DAY

Martin pulls into the driveway and presses the remote to open the gate.

The Real Estate Lady is tapping ineffectively at the sign with a hammer.

REAL ESTATE LADY

Hi.

MARTIN

(crossing to her)

Hang on, I'll give you a hand.

REAL ESTATE LADY

Oh, thanks.

He takes the hammer and bangs in the sign.

MARTIN

There you go.

REAL ESTATE LADY

Oh, thanks so much, and good luck with your sale. Should sell well at that price.

MARTIN

You're welcome. (driving in) Lovely sign by the way.

REAL ESTATE LADY

Thank you!



INT. SONJA'S HOUSE. FOYER -- DAY

Martin enters, shutting the front door.

MARTIN

Honey, I'm home!...Sonja?!

SONJA (OS)

Here!

Martin grins and moves toward the kitchen.

MARTIN (to himself)

(tossing the keys)

Ah, the sounds of the little woman.

INT. SONJA'S KITCHEN -- DAY

Martin enters and stops. The smile drifts from his face.

Max sits at the kitchen table, Martin's confession in his hand. His other hand cannot be seen because of his coat hanging down. Sonja is at the other end of the table.

MARTIN

Max.

MAX

Martin.

MARTIN

Actually it's Rafe, which means that confession is worthless.

MAX

See, that's the trouble with computers 'n all these days. Can't get paid without a social security number. No, you're Martin. Martin Lake. You did a stint at the Police Academy. That how you knew about the Assignment Notice?

Martin shrugs/nods.

MAX

Should have picked it. The forensic knowledge, the handcuffs. You got high grades. Why'd they kick you out?

MARTIN

Failed the psyche. (Mystified) What...do they want?

MAX

Sanity. You made me look pretty stupid, kid.

MARTIN

Nothing personal, Max. So what brings you out our way? This a social call?

SONJA

He's come to take you away.

MARTIN

You'd go to prison rather than take a chance on me?

She registers inner surprise at his sincerity.

MARTIN

Hey, Max. Got something for you.

MAX

Yeah?

MARTIN

Yeah, in the bag.

MAX

What is it, kid?

MARTIN

It's a ventilator mask...The kind your wife wears.

Max's eyes narrow.

MARTIN

Oh, don't worry. I left her one, just took the spare so's I could prove a point in case you showed up here. Tell you what. You let me and Sonja go, and I'll call you in six hours, tell you where the missus is at...What d'you say?...C'mon Max, six hours, not much in return for your wife.

MAX

Show me the mask.

MARTIN (disappointed)

Sure.

He puts his hand inside the bag. He looks at Max, and drops the bag. He has a gun. A shot rings out.

Martin from behind, Max at the table - which one has been shot? - Slowly Martin falls.

He has been shot through the forehead.

As he hits the floor, the gun spills from his hand and slides to Max.

Max's coat is smoking from a bullet hole. He removes his previously concealed hand, holding a revolver.

MAX

Fearless.

He looks at Sonja. Her hand is to her mouth in shock.

SONJA

How'd you know he was bluffing?

MAX

My wife doesn't have a second ventilator mask, and besides...he wanted me to let you both go, even though you betrayed him.

Sonja is saddened as she stares at Martin.

Martin's eyes stare vacantly at her.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MAX'S CAR - SUBURBAN ROAD -- DAY

Max is driving.

## RADIO NEWS VO

The bizarre death of prominent local businessman Philip Rudcliffe found hanging naked from a Central Park tree last week has been positively linked to other murders by slain serial-killer, Martin Lake. The Coroner is at a loss to explain why Martin Lake killed Mister Rudcliffe while to date his confirmed victims were always female. The detective who shot Martin Lake, senior detective-sergeant Max Steele, has postulated that Mr. Rudcliffe may have just been a victim of bad timing. By foiling Martin Lake's attempt on the life of Ms. Sonja Stevens, a tenant in a house owned by Mr. Rudcliffe, he may well have attracted the killer's wrath.

Detective Steele, due to retire, has been awarded the silver star. The Commissioner also took the opportunity to announce his candidacy again for election. Turning to...

Max pulls up and turns off the ignition and thereby the radio. He looks toward a house. It is Martin's house.

EXT. MARTIN'S HOUSE -- DAY

Max walks toward the house. He enters.

INT. MARTIN'S HOUSE -- DAY

Following Max through the house he eventually stops, seeming to look at someone.

MAX

Well, that all went pretty much to plan...  
Time to get out of here.

He waits expectantly.

CU: Max's hand picks up the Kitten. He cradles and strokes it.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MAX'S HOUSE - BEDROOM -- DAY

CU: The Kitten is now older, half grown. Max is dressed for work. He sits on a chair in the corner stroking the cat indulgently. He looks up.

His wife, Flo, is packing a suitcase, open on the bed. Other suitcases are already packed beside the bed. Max gets up, puts the cat down, collects his hat and goes to Flo.

MAX

Going now. If you need to rest just...

FLO

I'll be alright. The kids will be over soon.

MAX

I guess...I just want to hear it from you, that I'm doing the right thing.

FLO

If you're not, then I know you'll find a way to make it right.

He places his hand on her arm. His look tells her how much he loves her.

MAX

Be home soon.

FLO

Max. It's your last day. Enjoy it.

He grins, holding her eyes.

DISSOLVE TO:

MONTAGE -- DAY

VOICE OVER a series of DISSOLVES:

A) In the Detective's Offices, Max is being presented with a gold watch and congratulated by the Chief, Fred, and other Detectives. They are pouring drinks and Max is taking handshakes all round.

B) The Real Estate Lady pastes a 'SOLD' banner across the FOR SALE sign in front of the house.

C) The Real Estate Lady sits at the kitchen table as Sonja, seated at the other end of the table looks on. Real Estate lady finishes writing a check. She tears two checks from the book. The first she hands to Sonja. She then turns to someone standing. CAMERA reveals it is Max. She hands him the check and smiles. Max grins ambiguously then looks at Sonja. Sonja looks back, meeting his eyes, mirroring his expression.

D) In the driveway of her house, Max helps Sonja put her suitcases into the back of his car.

E) They drive in silence.

F) In LS they walk together through a busy airport terminal.

SONJA (VO)

So what lies ahead for you, Max?

MAX (VO)

Oh, first thing, my wife, Flo, can have the operation. Then we're going to find a nice quiet place to retire to, somewhere where the world isn't too rotted out yet, somewhere where there's some humanity left.

SONJA (VO)

Somewhere without people like me?

MAX (VO)

You could say that.

SONJA (VO)

That's okay. I don't want to be like me anymore either. Any idea where you might end up?

MAX (VO)

Oh, I want to go somewhere where the winters are warm and the summers are cool.

EXT/INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL, BOARDING GATE

They come to a halt and face each other. Sonja has a flight ticket in her hand.

SONJA

Is there someplace on Earth like that?

MAX

If I find it, I won't be telling you.

Sonja half-grins, not offended.

MAX

What about you?

SONJA

I don't know. Think maybe I'll travel for a while. Might even go back to college.

MAX

You were too lazy to get a job in the first place. You'll get greedy again.

SONJA

But, Max, you're on my side of the fence now.

MAX

Don't ever come back here.

SONJA

Have a nice life, Max.

Max watches her leave.

Max leaves the terminal.

CROSSFADE TO:

INT. BUNGALO KITCHEN -- DAY

The cat is now full grown. The phone is ringing out of shot. Max's legs, wearing shorts, appear. He answers the phone.

MAX

Hello?

INTERCUT:

INT. CHIEF'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

The Chief is at his desk.

CHIEF

Yeah, Max, it's me, Larry. How's it going?

MAX

Must be late there.

CHIEF

Yeah, working back, what's new. Listen, just got a call from this Interpol guy. Said to tell you 'the Filter International marker was activated'. That make sense to you?

MAX

Yeah...Yeah, it does. Thanks, Larry.

CHIEF

Hey, how's the weather down there?

MAX

A balmy seventy degrees most of the time.

CHIEF (chuckling)

You bastard.

Max chuckles, hanging up. He places two tomato juices on a tray already loaded with fresh fruit and takes it outside.

EXT. BUNGALO VERANDAH -- DAY

Flo, wearing a colorful sarong and looking well, sits on a lie-low as Max comes out and places their breakfast on a table. She gets up, and grabs his hand.

FLO

Come on, let's go work up an appetite.

MAX

Okay.

FLO

Who was that on the phone?

MAX

Oh, just the world, telling me it hasn't changed.

He smiles at her.



INT. AIRLINE CUSTOMS -- DAY

Sonja is watching tensely as a CUSTOMS OFFICIAL opens a luggage bag in front of her. He reveals a great deal of cash money. TWO GENDARMES step into frame behind Sonja. She has been caught red-handed.

BACK TO:

Max and Flo continue along the beach, holding hands as the sun rises over an azure sea.

CRANE UP.

FADE OUT.

ROLL CREDITS.