

CHIVALRY

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EXT. MILITARY POLICE/ARMY HEADQUARTERS, DA NANG, SUNNY
SUMMER '74--DAY

SERGEANT THURMOND GOODE, mid 20's, black, average height, slim and convinced, walks up to the drab and tan barracks. CORPORAL HURT, 20's, stands at attention at the entrance.

SGT. THURMOND GOODE
Sergeant Goode to see Colonel Drummond.

CORPORAL HURT
I'll let him know that you're here.

INT. ARMY HEADQUARTERS OFFICES OF COLONEL DRUMMOND
Sergeant Goode walks into typical Army decorated room and salutes. COLONEL DRUMMOND, white, 50ish man with a crew cut is sitting at his desk. He returns the salute.

COLONEL DRUMMOND
At ease Sergeant. (pause) If you're here to ask for slack or a deal you're in the wrong place. You should be talking with your attorney, not me... Do any of your soldiers have any relatives that are senators or congressmen?

SGT. THURMOND GOODE
Not that I know of sir.

COLONEL DRUMMOND
Of course not. If they did they wouldn't be here. Or if they were here they'd be commissioned officers sitting behind some safe desk. Politicians... The taxpayer foots the bill for their vulgarity and the poor fight the wars they start to promote capitalism.

The Colonel tries to smile. Thurmond remains unmoved.

COLONEL DRUMMOND
Sergeant, I, like most of your platoon am from New York state. Do you realize that this situation is painful for me as well?

SGT. THURMOND GOODE
Yes sir.

COLONEL DRUMMOND
Military police platoons as yours are here to protect civilians, not kill them. Are you sticking to your story Sergeant?

SGT. THURMOND GOODE
Yes sir.

COLONEL DRUMMOND
Do you like Kansas Sergeant?

SGT. THURMOND GOODE
Kansas sir?

COLONEL DRUMMOND
That's right Kansas as in Leavenworth Prison, Kansas.

SGT. THURMOND GOODE
Never been there sir.

COLONEL DRUMMOND
Well that's where you and your whole platoon will be going for a long, long time if you don't change your story Sergeant... It didn't go well for us here. To Jane Fonda and her band of morons we're the war criminals not the God damn Vietcong! Your platoon killed two women!

SGT. THURMOND GOODE
We thought that they were throwing grenades, Sir.

COLONEL DRUMMOND
Save it for the Judge. One of your men is testifying against all of you.

SGT. THURMOND GOODE
He was always an outsider, sir.

COLONEL DRUMMOND
It doesn't matter to the court.

SGT. THURMOND GOODE
And if we change our story?

COLONEL DRUMMOND
If you admit to murdering the civilians and throw yourself at the mercy of the court they may be more lenient. But you'll still go away.

Colonel Drummond takes a deep breath.

COLONEL DRUMMOND
I can't help you. I'm sorry.

SGT. THURMOND GOODE
(Quietly) Yes sir.

COLONEL DRUMMOND
They'll fry you Goode. They'll fry all of you. And the Army can't help you. It's a shame that the politicians that decided to make this war aren't held accountable for the carnal slaughter... But every war's the same.

SGT. THURMOND GOODE
Yes Sir.

Corporal Hurt knocks.

COLONEL DRUMMOND
What is it?

CORPORAL HURT
Sir, Captain Ginsel is here.

COLONEL DRUMMOND
Show him in.

*Sgt. Thurmond Goode salutes. Drummond hesitates and salutes. Goode walks out.
Captain Ginsel walks in.*

COLONEL DRUMMOND
Captain. Your client, that other captain asshole was selling our boys' supplies to the Vietcong.

CAPTAIN GINSEL
Sir, let's get this straight. He was allocating product to civilians.

Colonel Drummond stands and slams his hand on the desk.

COLONEL DRUMMOND
Captain let's get this straight. You and your client are scum. God damn it! Who do you think they were selling it to! Our boys went into their first aid kits and found paper instead of bandages!

CAPTAIN GINSEL
Sir, with all respect, my job as attorney is to defend... You don't have the proof... And...

COLONEL DRUMMOND
And he is the nephew of Senator Feinvine. Why don't you have the balls to just say it.

CAPTAIN GINSEL

Sir, I don't like these political interferences anymore than you... We'll take an undesirable discharge without mention of the case.

Colonel Drummond looks down at his desk. He nods his head and slowly looks up...

COLONEL DRUMMOND

Captain, that man who just left and his whole squadron are going away for a very long time. They got spooked, and they killed two Vietnamese women. They didn't mean to. They were scared. Your client intentionally short changed our soldiers and sold US Army supplies to the enemy.

CAPTAIN GINSEL

Sir you can't prove that...

COLONEL DRUMMOND

I don't need to. I know it. You know it. The whole God dam army knows it. But it's not about guilt, is it? It's about political contacts... Today's presidents are yesterday's tyrants...No they're worse. They're wolves in a democratic sheepskin. They're hypocrites like you and that client of yours. Get out of here captain.

CAPTAIN GINSEL

Yes sir.

Captain Ginsel salutes. The Colonel hesitates and disgustedly waves him away.

TAN BARRACKS BLENDING INTO THE SKY

INT. BARRACKS

Fifteen uniformed men are sitting in the barracks. CORPORAL KENNEDY, a blonde haired corporal with a US flag tattooed on his right fore arm, is standing in the middle of them.

CORPORAL KENNEDY

We're all going away! That pussy Stanger is going to rat on us all!

A short black soldier with glasses, CORPORAL HARMS, stands up.

CORPORAL HARMS

But we're innocent. We thought that those women were ready to toss grenades. We thought that they were armed or booby-trapped.

CORPORAL KENNEDY

Do you see what I mean you geek? Which is it, armed, booby trapped or grenades?

A tall, thin, black soldier with a slight moustache, CORPORAL HOLT, stands.

CORPORAL HOLT

Lay off the brother man. It ain't gonna do us no good to fight amongst ourselves.

CORPORAL KENNEDY

It ain't gonna do us any good to fight anything. That's my point. We got to run. The war's over. The only thing waiting for us back in the good ole U-S-A is J-A-I-L. And when are you gonna shave that silly French moustache? You look like a God damn faggot.

A short bald man with a hooked nose, CORPORAL GALLO, stands.

CORPORAL GALLO

Hey man, I'm going back to Brooklyn.

A stubby short guy with red hair, CORPORAL CLARK, aims his cigar and flicks it into the sink 10 yards away.

CIGAR LANDING DEAD CENTER IN SINK

CORPORAL CLARK

Before any of us get back to New York we'll spend a minimum of fifteen years in a military prison.

CORPORAL KENNEDY

Like the fat lady... when he sings, the game's over.

CORPORAL HARMS

But we thought they were armed! They could have been! It's not our fault! They butchered hundreds of us like that! The courts have to know that already, right?

CORPORAL KENNEDY

Whose with me?

Sergeant Goode walks in. An Arab soldier, CORPORAL HASSAN KAMAR stands.

CORPORAL KAMAR

Isa. What did Drummond say? Will he help us? Isa.

CORPORAL KENNEDY

Damn you Arab stop calling him Isa. His name's Goode, Thurmond Goode.

CORPORAL KAMAR

He saved my Arab ass twenty times. He's Isa to me.

CORPORAL KENNEDY

That's sacrilegious man. Isa's Jesus in Arabic! God damn you! I told you a thousand times!

CORPORAL KAMAR

Jesus is my guy too. He's number two after Muhammad.

CORPORAL KENNEDY

Well he's number one to me!

CORPORAL CLARK

Leave it alone Kennedy.

Kennedy reluctantly listens to his friend.

CORPORAL KAMAR

Isa. Will they cut us a deal? Will the Army back us?

Sgt. Thurmond Goode stares at Kamar and then looks down.

CORPORAL KENNEDY

Jesus, I fucking told you! The Army's gonna turn their backs on us and watch them hang us out to dry.

CORPORAL KAMAR

Isa?

SGT. THURMOND GOODE

If we admit to murdering those women, they might go easy on us.

CORPORAL KENNEDY

No, fuck that!

CORPORAL HARMS

Well wait, what's easy?

Thurmond finds it hard to respond.

CORPORAL CLARK

Easy means having to fight every day. Except you won't be fighting the gooks.

CORPORAL KENNEDY

Yeah, fighting to keep American dick out of your ass in prison.

CORPORAL GALLO

Seems like we're already doing that right here in Vietnam. Except for you Harms, you're

not fighting it too hard, are you?

Harms charges Gallo. A table is knocked over, an ashtray falls to the ground and cracks. Clark blocks Harms and pushes him back.

CORPORAL HARMS

Fuck you Gallo! This is your fucking fault!

Gallo stands for confrontation.

CORPORAL HARMS

You fired the first fucking shot! I saw you, you fucking prick!

Gallo charges at Harms. Harms comes forward again and Clark pushes him harder, Harms falls. Kennedy grabs Gallo and holds him back.

CORPORAL HOLT

We were all fucking there! We all did it! It doesn't matter who fired first, they're not going to fucking care. (quieter) Nobody cares.

Corporal Holt sits down in a trance. Kennedy and Clark are forcing Harms and Gallo to calm down.

CORPORAL KAMAR

We didn't all do it. Stanger didn't fire a shot.

Heavy breathing and thinking fill the silent room.

SGT. THURMOND GOODE

We have to change our situation.

EXT. DA NANG MILITARY POLICE BARRACKS-DARK SUMMER '74'

PROTECTIVE CUSTODY

A man's shadow is approaching the barracks with a gun in his hand. He approaches the soldier guarding the entrance.

SHADOW

Soldier put that rifle down. I'm not here for you...

The soldier puts the rifle down. The shadow takes cuffs out. He cuffs the soldier to an iron pole. He takes tape from his pocket and puts it across the soldier's mouth.

SHADOW

Stay cool and stay alive.

The soldier nods. The shadow quietly opens the door and tip toes in. There's a glaring cigarette in the room. There's some noise and the cigarette rises with the shadow of the man whose smoking it.

SHADOW
Corporal Stanger?

Stanger's shadow flicks the cigarette away and moves onto the ground. Goode's shadow moves in his direction. Head lights from a passing vehicle reveal the shadow holding the man face down by the hair...

THE FACE OF SGT. THURMOND GOODE

SGT. THURMOND GOODE (SHADOW)
You will die so that others can live. Make your peace and prepare to meet your maker.

Two shots are heard. The head of Stanger clumps on the floor. A passing vehicle shows flowing blood.

FADE TO:

INT. OFFICES OF GENT MEDIA, AMERICA, PRESENT--FRIDAY EVENING
THE SIGN 'GENT MEDIA' IN A STEEL AND GLASS RECEPTION AREA
*An office party is going on. People are standing with drinks in their hands, talking and laughing. Waiters with white vests and gloves are holding appetizer trays.
A BLONDE MAN IN HIS 30'S, BOB HERMAN, QUIETLY SITTING ALONE
MARK KOSS, a 55 year old man with bushy moustache, and bifocals lowers a pipe from his mouth.*

MARK KOSS
I own this place and I say when it's time...

From behind Koss a 50ish burly, gray haired TED BASLE arrives and whispers in Koss' ear. Koss listens intently, then appears surprised. Koss whispers something into Ted's ear. Ted nods and moves away.

BOB HERMAN WATCHING THE KOSS-TED COMMUNICATION.

Koss regains his composure.

MARK KOSS
Yes... And when I say it's time to eat.

Koss glares at the guests. One by one they begin to laugh. When the majority are laughing Koss speaks.

MARK KOSS
It's time to eat!

Everyone laughs again. The group files into two glass doors.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM OF GENT MEDIA - SHORTLY AFTER
About 50 PEOPLE are seated at conference table and scattered smaller tables. WAITERS are serving club sandwiches. An attractive older red-headed woman, CLOE, and pretty younger blond woman, JENNIFER, are conversing. Bob Herman, is to the left of the red head.

JENNIFER
(laughing)
Cloe, you're crazy.

CLOE
He almost faints with all that blood rushing to fill that thing! It's a pleasure that I'll never get the privilege to experience...that's what's crazy.

Jennifer notices Bob next to Cloe, eavesdropping.

JENNIFER
Hi Bob.

Cloe turns her head into Bob Herman's gaze. She leans in closer to him and whispers...

CLOE
Gay men. They're hung, you know? (whispered) Penis enlargers.

BOB HERMAN
Yes... No! I mean I don't know. Not personally. I've never...I don't know...

CLOE
Oh? Well if you decide to broaden your horizons, let me know. I like to watch.

Cloe winks at Bob. Bob looks away, embarrassed. Cloe looks to a not-amused Jennifer and laughs. The laugh trails off to a truly disappointed expression on Cloe.

CLOE
Men, they've become such stumbling wusses.

Mark Koss has heard their conversation from across the table and stands.

MARK KOSS
Cloe leave that young rooster be. He's turned corporate sales around. A toast to Bob.

Everyone looks at Bob and raises their glasses.

BOB HERMAN

No...No sir. That's Bob Phillips... I'm Bob Herman. I'm special projects manager.

MARK KOSS

Yes, of course you are.

Everyone tentatively drinks to an uncomfortable silence.

MARK KOSS

Well eat and drink up, this party's costing me a fortune.

Everyone laughs on cue. Bob tightly grins and sips his drink. The party billows out around Bob until he is no longer in sight.

INT. EMPTY BUS - LATER THAT EVENING

Bob drops change into the change box and heads back. VAGRANT-TYPES pepper the seats.

A brown bag wrapped with rubber bands sits in an empty seat. It's torn open at the top from wear. Papers can be seen inside.

Bob sits and watches the world outside the window.

HOMELESS MAN

Do you want to help a brother?

BOB HERMAN

What?

HOMELESS MAN

Do you want to help a brother?

BOB HERMAN

Uh, I don't know... I mean...what do you mean?

HOMELESS MAN

What do you mean what do I mean, man? Do you want to help a brother or not.

BOB HERMAN

I'm not sure what...do you mean money?

HOMELESS MAN

Oh man... You got a quarter?

BOB HERMAN

Yes, but I...

The two look at each other in silence. Bob averts his eyes first.

HOMELESS MAN

You mean yes you got a quarter but no you don't want to help a brother... Man you wishy-washy.

Bob looks at his feet as the bus stops. When he looks up, the man is getting off the bus. Bob glances over at the brown package.

He loosens his tie and faces the brown bag. He looks away. He looks back. He looks to the DRIVER who is oblivious to him. He looks out the window again.

Pause.

Back at the bag.

INT. BOB'S STUDIO APARTMENT - SHORTLY AFTER

His jacket, tie and shirt create a trail from the front door to the bedroom.

BEDROOM

Tiny, cluttered. The unmade bed takes up almost all of the available space.

Bob's on the bed, a cat on his bare chest. The brown bag is open on the bed side table revealing pages of a manuscript. He's reading.

The cat licks his face.

His eyes turn from wonderment to frustration. He tosses the pages on the floor and pushes the rest of the manuscript off the bed, frightening the cat away. He shuts off the light and turns on his side.

BOB HERMAN

God damn good writers.

INT. OFFICES OF GENT MEDIA - NEXT DAY

Bob's office is tiny and neat.

He's at his desk nibbling on a carrot, staring sideways at a floppy disk entitled: BOB'S STORIES.

People are filing out of the office. A graying 45 year old man pops his head into Bob's office.

LOU MELL

Lunch Bobby?...Bob, Herman, earth to Bob...Herman!

BOB HERMAN

(startled)

Sorry... What?

LOU MELL

Come on Bob, why don't you come to lunch anymore?.

BOB HERMAN

No thanks, I'm good.

LOU MELL

Bob, I want to ask you a question, buddy.

BOB HERMAN

Sure, Lou.

LOU MELL

You're not jealous because I got picked for editing are you?

Pause.

BOB HERMAN

No, no of course not, Lou. You deserved it more than me.

He forces a smile.

LOU MELL

Good to hear, good to hear... and you're right. Well, enjoy your carrot.

Lou turns to leave then stops.

LOU MELL

How's your writing going? Got anything for the new editor to edit yet?

BOB HERMAN

I'm working on it.

LOU MELL

Good to hear, good to hear. What's it about?

Lou perches himself on Bob's desk, towering over him.

BOB HERMAN

Oh, well...you know the usual...stuff.

LOU MELL

Must be good. Can I see some of it?

Bob proceeds with a series of jumbled excuses.

LOU MELL

Listen Bob, you win some, you lose some. I'm sure Koss will give you another chance at being published. Dicken's tried a hundred times before someone published him. I mean, you've been working on stuff for years. You must have something worth reading.

BOB HERMAN

Yeah.

LOU MELL

Alright, have a good lunch, buddy. And don't worry... I saw Koss read your last story. He threw it in the trash after less than a minute. Can't go anywhere but up, right?

BOB HERMAN

Right, thanks. Have a good lunch.

Bob gives the finger to Lou's back. The phone rings, Bob answers it.

BOB HERMAN

Bob Herman, Projects Manager.

Out of the corner of Bob's eye he notices Ted Basle slipping into another colleagues's office.

INT. CROWED BUS - A FEW EVENINGS LATER

Bob is reading the manuscript.

BOB HERMAN

This should be published.

LUCIA is standing behind him: petite, mulatto, beautiful.

LUCIA

A writer huh?

Bob jerks. The pages fall to the ground. Together they gather the pieces. Lucia starts to read a line from the manuscript.

LUCIA

We can never be truly happy until we've been truly sad.

They look up at each other and smile.

LUCIA

Sounds like a gold mine.

BOB HERMAN
Yeah, no kidding.

LUCIA
Oh, modest, huh?

BOB HERMAN
I didn't mean - it's not really-

LUCIA
I like confidence in a man. Hungry?

BOB HERMAN
Um, yes. Yes, I'm hungry.

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT
Bob and Lucia are standing to leave a semi-crowded small restaurant.

BOB HERMAN
Can I walk you home.

LUCIA
Sure.

Pause.

LUCIA
I don't usually pick men up on the bus like this.

BOB HERMAN
Is that what you did? Pick me up?

LUCIA
Sort of, I guess.

BOB HERMAN
How is it that someone like you is not...

LUCIA
Not occupied? Well, my mother is Italian. My parents adore each other. I'm looking for someone special but there aren't a lot of 'death do us part' guys around anymore.

BOB HERMAN
I see.

LUCIA

My only guy was Italian too... But it ended sadly. Tony. He said he'd take care of me. What a laugh.

BOB HERMAN

Oh. I'm sorry.

LUCIA

Don't be. He's the boxer, Tony Russo?

Bob shakes his head.

LUCIA

I hate boxing. You're not a boxer are you?

BOB HERMAN

No. No. Too pretty for that.

LUCIA

Yes, you are.

Pause.

BOB HERMAN

Thanks for dinner.

LUCIA

It was the least I could do after that mess I made on the bus.

BOB HERMAN

It's OK. I enjoyed the mess. Anyway, next time dinner's on me. You choose the place.

LUCIA

So, Gent Media? That's a pretty big publishing company.

BOB HERMAN

You know your stuff.

LUCIA

I hear things here and there. I'd love to read your book.

BOB HERMAN

Why?

She moves in closer.

LUCIA

I don't know, I guess something about you makes me think it would be good.

Bob looks at her and hesitates.

BOB HERMAN

You can't... It's not done... It's not good.

LUCIA

Oh, come on. A big company like that wouldn't hire a bad writer.

BOB HERMAN

Actually...

LUCIA

Is this your only copy?

Bob nods his head.

LUCIA

Well...why don't you give me your number. I'll call you and maybe I can read it at your place.

BOB HERMAN

My place?

Lucia takes out a pen and paper.

BOB HERMAN

Uh, you want my number?

LUCIA

That will suffice for now.

She hands it to him and he writes down his number in small, meek digits.

They walk past a bookstore.

Bob stops and stares at a sign:

**BOB IS WITH LUCIA ON A BILLBOARD 'FAMOUS AUTHOR BOB HERMAN
ACCOMPANIED BY HIS BEAUTIFUL WIFE WILL AUTOGRAPH HIS BEST SELLER
TODAY'**

Lucia walks ahead.

LUCIA

Bob?

BOB HERMAN

Coming.

Bob smirks, shakes his head and looks back at the poster that is actually an add for a series of self-help books. TIRED OF GOING NOWHERE?

INT. BUS-LATER THAT NIGHT

Bob's on the left of a sleeping drunk. The bus is empty. He clears his throat.

BOB HERMAN

(low)

Excuse me...Excuse me.

Bob touches drunk's shoulder who slightly opens his eyes. Bob doesn't notice and looks away, turns back and is startled.

DRUNK

What do you want?

BOB HERMAN

I found a brown paper bag with a manuscript in it. Is it yours?

DRUNK

Mine?...Yes son it's mine.

BOB HERMAN

Oh, wonderful... It's a wonderful piece. I was wondering...if you would like to - Uh, my name's Bob, I work at a publishing company. I think that with some - just a few changes, this could go places. We could publish it together. You could coauthor.

DRUNK

Coauthor?

BOB HERMAN

Author...Well that's not important now. The important thing is that I've found you. Are you interested in being partners, a writing team?

DRUNK

Sure. I think that it would be fun.

BOB HERMAN

Do you need a place to stay?

DRUNK

Truthfully. I do. Do you have 50 for a room?

BOB HERMAN

Sure.

Bob reaches into his pocket. He hands the drunk a business card and 3 twenties. Bob looks out the window.

BOB HERMAN

Ahh damn, my stop's coming. Take this. Call me first thing in the morning.

Bob smiles, turns and turns back.

BOB HERMAN

What's your name?

DRUNK

Name?

BOB HERMAN

Yes what is your name?

The drunk shrugs.

DRUNK

Why it's Ernest.

BOB HERMAN

Good Ernest...Ernest what?

DRUNK

Hemingway.

The drunk cracks up in laughter. Bob struggles to stand up for himself. His stop comes. The drunk leaves the bus, and Bob frozen in humiliation.

INT. BUS - LATER THAT NIGHT

The bus is at a stop light. Bob is the only passenger.

BUS DRIVER

Hey, I like the company, but you're better off going home. I don't get much traffic on the bus at this hour. Tell you what, I'll have lost and found give you a ring tomorrow. If someone's looking for it they'll tell you. If not after 60 days, it's rightfully yours. Got a card?

BOB'S EYES

He watches the stop light turn to green.

INT. OFFICES OF GENT MEDIA

Lou is sitting on Bob's desk, laughing. His umbrella is dripping on the floor.

LOU MELL

Boy oh boy, I just had to tell someone about her. Who'd have thought that a little ole editor could score something like that on a whim?

BOB HERMAN

Seriously Lou. I need to make the right choice.

LOU MELL

Calm down, calm down. Give them to me again, I'll focus.

BOB HERMAN

Candidate number one has 15 years in CBS Corporate Headquarters.

LOU MELL

Mm Hm. Okay. Then...

BOB HERMAN

Candidate number 2 has a masters in communication and has published.

Lou nods his head approvingly.

BOB HERMAN

Candidate number 3 has great references, she'll work for 20% less than the other 2.

LOU MELL

Who'd you say this was for?

BOB HERMAN

Marketing, Dan and Scott.

LOU MELL

Well that's easy then.

Bob smiles.

LOU MELL

Pick the one with the biggest tits.

Jennifer interrupts them.

JENNIFER

Bob, got the bus company on line 4.

BOB HERMAN

The bus company? Oh. Thanks Lou.

Lou winks.

LOU MELL

Anytime. Bus company? You know Bob, the bus doesn't give frequent rider miles.

Jennifer lingers.

BOB HERMAN

I got it, Jennifer. Thanks...Thanks, Lou.

Jennifer leaves. Lou watches Jennifer as she leaves.

LOU MELL

Have you ever poked Jennifer? You know she wants you.

BOB HERMAN

Let me get this.

LOU MELL

The bus company can wait. Have you done her or not?

BOB HERMAN

(impatiently)

No.

LOU MELL

Why the hell not? I'd do her.

BOB HERMAN

That's the difference between you and me. For you they just have to breathe. I have to be attracted.

Lou shakes his head.

LOU MELL

When the fruit's ripe...

Lou walks away. Bob hesitates, then presses line 4.

BOB HERMAN
Bob Herman.

He turns and speaks into the phone more quietly.

BOB HERMAN
Yes, it was a brown paper bag with papers of some kind in it...No one asked for it?

Jennifer walks back to his desk.

BOB HERMAN
(quickly)OK, thanks, bye.

Hangs up.

JENNIFER
Bob... Some of us are going for a drink this evening after work... Would you like to join me - us?

BOB HERMAN
Tonight?... No, got plans tonight.

Bob rushes out and forgets the manuscript on his desk.

FADE TO:
INT. AIRPORT DA NANG US MILITARY HANGAR - SUMMER '74
Corporals Kenedy, Clark, Harms, Holt and Kamar are standing in the half lit hangar.

CORPORAL HOLT
If we get caught, we're history. This whole story will blow up in our faces. Aiding a murderer could carry hard time. They'll figure out that we were all in on it when Isa iced Stanger. Then we're history.

CORPORAL KAMAR
If it wasn't for Isa...

CORPORAL KENEDY
Isa! You dam A-rab Isa is Jesus.

CORPORAL HARMS
Yeah Isa. Think about it Kenedy... Jesus gave his for the sins of others so that they may live...

CORPORAL HOLT
Then on the third day he was resurrected...

CORPORAL KAMAR
He did it for us. I'd die for him.

CORPORAL CLARK
You may have to.

CORPORAL KENEDY
Isa.

CORPORAL CLARK
That's who he is from now on... We'll get him home.

CORPORAL HARMS
He should be here any minute...

THE HANGAR FLOOR IS FILLED WITH BLACK BODY BAGS

CORPORAL CLARK
Empty that body bag. We'll ditch the body. That's Isa's seat home.

CORPORAL HOLT
How do we know they'll put him on the plane and not to freeze to death in the hold?

CORPORAL CLARK
The decomposed go in the hold. These are the fresh arrivals.

Kenedy and Gallo unload body from a bag. The body is mangled. Kamar, Clark, Harms and Holt are with Isa.

CORPORAL HOLT
Stay cool brother.

They all hug.

CORPORAL CLARK
Remember Gallo's cousin at JFK. Don't budge until you hear 'And on the third day he arose according to the scriptures'.

Isa gets into the body bag.

CORPORAL CLARK
And Isa... When it's our turn, we'll not let you down.

ISA
I know.

Harms is openly crying.

CORPORAL HARMS
Good bye brother...

Harms hands Isa a water bottle and k-ration.

CORPORAL HARMS
Don't forget to drink brother.

Isa nods.

ISA
Good bye.

Clark zips up the body bag.

FADE TO:

INT. MARCO'S RESTAURANT MANHATTAN - PRESENT

Bob is sitting at a booth in the exclusive restaurant rolling a spoon in his hand. He glances to the left and right. He gets up and walks to the host. The host is looking at his reservation pad. He glances at Bob looks down and then calmly looks up.

HOST
Yes sir may I help you.

BOB HERMAN
Yes. Are you sure... I mean my date was supposed to be here an hour ago.

Bob fidgets.

HOST
Sir. I assure you that there is no way to get by me. Your name is Herman isn't it?

BOB HERMAN
Yes. Yes it is.

HOST
Well Mr. Herman, just relax. As soon as she arrives I'll seat her.

Bob turns to leave, as he does he spots Lucia.
LUCIA NONCHALANTLY ENTERING RESTAURANT

BOB HERMAN

You're late. You look beautiful.

LUCIA

I know. I'm sorry. I got tied up. I was shooting some pictures for my portfolio.

BOB HERMAN

Your portfolio?

LUCIA

Yes. I met a guy who says that I'm a natural to be a model.

BOB HERMAN

Oh... Good... Let's sit down.

They sit. Bob feels out of place in the fancy restaurant.

BOB HERMAN

So you've been here before?

LUCIA

Here? No. It just looks so beautiful, I've always wanted to come. I guess I just had to wait for the right person to bring me.

BOB HERMAN

I'm glad you waited. So...modeling? I thought you said that you worked as a secretary. Two jobs?

LUCIA

I have to look out for myself. I mean, who else will? Who else ever has?

BOB HERMAN

Well, there's me.

A huge beautiful smile from Lucia.

BOB HERMAN

Although I think that you'd make a beautiful model. You'd make a beautiful anything.

They open the menu. There are no prices listed. Bob is obviously nervous about that.

LUCIA

I'm going to call you Bobby from now on. Would that be all right? Bobby?

Bob swoons.

LUCIA
Jesus, I'm starved.

EXT. RESTAURANT
They're leaving the restaurant. Lucia over hears the waiter and the host commenting.

WAITER
Don't do me any favors. He had the table the whole night and left me 3 dollars.

HOST
Last of the big spenders.

Lucia and Bob continue to walk.

LUCIA
Got any wine at home? I think now would be a good time to take a look at your book.

BOB HERMAN
Uh, no. But...

LUCIA
What is it? Don't you want to have me over.

BOB HERMAN
Yes, it's just that...I don't know.

LUCIA
I know what this is. I'm on to you. You're going through a confidence crisis. But you're a writer. I read it in your eyes the first time that I saw you... You see Bobby, men never catch women that don't want to be caught. I want to be caught by a writer, a blonde, handsome writer...Is that you Bobby?

She moves in closer.

BOB HERMAN
Yes it is...I mean yes I am.

LUCIA
Yes you are...Now, let's go back to your place.

She kisses Bob's cheek.

EXT. BUS STOP
They stand in silence waiting for a late bus.

LUCIA

I'd figure a guy on the brink of being published by such a big company would at least have a car, Bobby.

BOB HERMAN

A car? I'm planning on getting one soon. All or nothing, that's me. I wait till I can have the best of something - no compromising.

LUCIA

My kind of man.

The bus pulls up, they get in.

EXT. BOB'S APARTMENT

Lucia is already unimpressed. Bob opens the door, lets Lucia in first, then runs to pick up the clothes and mess. Lucia doesn't look happy. She sits on the couch.

LUCIA

So, is this just your writing studio or...

BOB HERMAN

This? No, I mean, I like to live modestly.

LUCIA

I guess.

Bob goes into the kitchen.

BOB HERMAN

So, I don't have any wine, but I've got some apple juice.
The cat tries to rub on Lucia's leg. She grimaces and pushes him away.

Her cell phone rings.

LUCIA

Hello?...Hey...um, no. False alarm. (she turns from Bob, whispers) Yeah, yeah, I know.
When she hangs up, Bob hands her an apple juice. He awkwardly leans in to kiss her.

LUCIA

Bob. Don't.

BOB HERMAN

I'm sorry. What's wrong?

He takes her hand.

LUCIA
Don't do that. Bob, don't do that.

She pulls her hand back.

BOB HERMAN
Lucia.

She takes a deep breath.

LUCIA
Bob, that was Tony.

BOB HERMAN
Tony? Your X?

LUCIA
Yeah...

BOB HERMAN
Oh?...I thought - What did you tell him?

LUCIA
You heard. I didn't tell him anything.

BOB HERMAN
I thought that it was a closed chapter?

LUCIA
A lost life is more like it.
I gave him everything. He was my first, my only...In the end he beat me and cheated and...I'm just - I don't want to be a fool again. What if you're not what you seem? It's possible, you know. I thought he was a good man and he was -

BOB HERMAN
I am what you think! I am!

LUCIA
I'm just - I know this doesn't make any sense to you...it doesn't make any sense to me...maybe I'm feeling a little emotional and confused right now, I think I should just go home.

She gets up and goes to the door.

BOB HERMAN

Wait...

LUCIA

I'm sorry, I should just go.

BOB HERMAN

Why? What's wrong?

LUCIA

I'll call you...

BOB HERMAN

I love you--

The door closes on his words.

INT. OFFICES OF GENT MEDIA - MORNING

Bob sledges through the hallway to his office with his head hung.

BOB'S OFFICE

A small crowd is at Bob's desk. Koss has pages in his hand. He quietly passes one to Cloe.

MARK KOSS

Humph. I knew that this Phillips had something.

CLOE

This is Herman. Phillip's is the head of corporate sales.

MARK KOSS

Technicalities.

Bob clears his throat. The group looks.

BOB HERMAN

Why are you all in my office?

MARK KOSS

Herman. This is good Herman.

Bob gently takes the papers from Mark.

BOB HERMAN

It's nothing really.

MARK KOSS

I like it. I like how it flows. Lou said you were piddling with the writing again, but I had no idea how far you've come. Still needs a little work, though. The voice isn't quite you. A bit forced. Needs more... honesty. Have an edited copy on my desk by next Monday. You got one week, Herman. Don't let me down.

Koss leaves. The rest follow. Cloe stops.

CLOE

Hmm. You of all people. Who would have thought? Don't let us down, Bobby.

She brushes her chest against his as she leaves.

JENNIFER

I'm sorry Bob, I didn't mean to snoop, but I saw it and was curious, then Cloe came and one thing led to another...

Bob is speechless.

JENNIFER

It's really good Bob. I'm happy for you.

She kisses him on the cheek.

BLACK OUT

MONTAGE

BOB'S APARTMENT

Bob trying to call Lucia - no answer.

Bob going to her apartment and knocking - no answer.

The manuscript on one side of the room, Bob on the other.

Bob standing over the manuscript.

Staring blankly at the manuscript.

Looks at cat.

BOB HERMAN

What should I do?

The cat blinks and stares at him.

BOB HERMAN

I know, I need to find her.

Picks up manuscript.

Bob at the computer.

Frustrated.

Happy.
Exhausted.

SWIPE TO:

INT. MARK KOSS'S OFFICE

*Bob is standing at Mark's desk. Mark is sitting; on his desk is a manuscript:
STANDARD DEVIATIONS by: BOB HERMAN. He gets up and walks around to the
front of his desk.*

MARK KOSS

Well son I gave you a week and here it is. I like that... Bobby, it's gold.

Bob smiles and nods. Koss kisses Bob on the cheek.

MARK KOSS

You've always been like a son to me. I knew from the moment that I hired you.

BOB HERMAN

Cloe hired me sir.

MARK KOSS

Technicalities.

Koss smiles.

MARK KOSS

Sit down I'll get Arnie Schuman on the phone. He's the best agent in the country, he'll take care of you.

Bob sits. Koss takes the phone into his hands.

MARK KOSS

Arnie, Mark Koss. I got one. I'll sponsor...How many best sellers did Selton write this year?... This kid will double that...Herman. Robert Herman -

BOB HERMAN

- Bobby. I'd like to go by "Bobby."

MARK KOSS

Bobby Herman. He's one of mine.

Koss sets the phone down and winks at Bob.

MARK KOSS

You've arrived. You'll become a pillar around here. A piece of this place will belong to

you someday... I can feel it.

Bob stares.

MARK KOSS

Don't you have anything to say Bobby? Anything to ask.

Ted Basle passes the doorway.

BOB HERMAN

Does he-? Who is that man?

Mark smiles, takes Bob by the shoulder.

MARK KOSS

Do you like baseball Bob?

BOB HERMAN

Baseball?

Pause.

BOB HERMAN

Well kind of..

MARK KOSS

Well in the old days teams didn't have ghezzillions to buy 40 players for a roster. Each team had a guy that could do it all. He got the job done... When the center fielder was having a bad day or the catcher or the short stop... They called in the utility man. And somehow, somehow, smoothly, not so smoothly, ethically, unethically he got the job done. Ted Basle is Gent's utility man... He gets the job done... Sometimes we all need utility men Bob... The president of the United States has a whole department of them...

BOB HERMAN

Never heard of them.

MARK KOSS

Sure you have... They're called the CIA.

Koss winks.

MARK KOSS

Don't worry Bobby we take care of our own here, and if you ever need a utility man, it's carte blanche.

He reaches into his drawer and gives Bob Ted's business card.

BOB HERMAN

Utility man.

MARK KOSS

That's right. All right Bobby, get back to work. And start your next big baby. You're not a famous writer...yet.

INT. OFFICES OF GENT MEDIA - LATER EVENING

Bob is whistling and collecting his things to go home. Jennifer arrives.

JENNIFER

Bob... How did it go with Koss?

BOB HERMAN

He's going to publish it.

JENNIFER

I'm so happy for you! Do you need someone to celebrate with?

BOB HERMAN

No... Thanks Jen. I have plans.

JENNIFER

(quietly)

You're a busy guy.

Bob leaves.

INT. BUS - LATER

Bob is riding. He stares at his name on the manuscript with a far gone grin. As people walk on the bus, Bob hides the manuscript, especially from anyone looking homeless. His stop comes and goes, he continues on towards China Town.

EXT. LUCIA'S APARTMENT

Bob excitedly rings her buzzer. No answer. He rings and rings and rings.

LUCIA

Bob?

Bob turns to see Lucia approaching her door with groceries.

BOB HERMAN

Lucia! Why haven't you returned my calls?

She seems harder than she was before.

LUCIA

What are you doing here?

BOB HERMAN

I've missed you so much, you look beautiful. Where have you-

Lucia looks around and pulls him in the door.

INT. LUCIA'S STUDIO APARTMENT

A tiny gypsy-like space full of trinkets: beads hanging from the ceiling separating the living space. The bed is a mattress on the floor surrounded by white hanging beads.

BOB TAKES SOME STRANDS OF BEADS IN HIS HANDS.

BOB HERMAN

These aren't plastic... They're stones.

LUCIA

Of course they're not plastic. Won't find anything plastic here except for maybe the liner bag of the garbage.

BOB HERMAN

They're some kind of mineral stone.

LUCIA

That's right Bobby. They're Brazilian.

BOB HERMAN

Wow.

Lucia is unpacking her groceries.

Bob walks to a shelf on the right side of the bed. There are jade pieces of a Buddha and elephants. There's a piece of paper next to them.

CHRISTIES AUCTION CERTIFICATE OF AUTHENTICITY

Bob looks to the right and notices cocaine dust and a cutter on a small mirror.

Lucia is putting away groceries at a leisurely pace. It seems as if she's done this speech a thousand times:

LUCIA

Bob, you don't know me. You don't know what I've done.

BOB HERMAN

Stop it. Stop it. Dam... I don't care. I know you. I don't care. Can't we start fresh?

LUCIA
A fresh start for a coke fiend?

Bob hesitates.

BOB HERMAN
Yes.

LUCIA
A fresh start from murder? From murdering a baby?

BOB HERMAN
What? What baby?

LUCIA
Tony's...and mine.

BOB HERMAN
What!

LUCIA
I was 7 months pregnant...Too late for an abortion. Tony took me to the gym locker room. His doctor was waiting. They sedated me. They forced the baby to be born and they left it to die. Die there in the locker room! I woke and there it was. Red and tiny and blue and beautiful. It was still faintly breathing. I was alone. I tried to take it and run to a hospital. Tony's doctor blocked me. The baby fell. It moved. The doctor injected a syringe into it's chest. The baby jerked...

BOB HERMAN
And what did they do with it?

LUCIA
Him! Him! It was a beautiful boy!
They took him into the bathroom. I heard the toilet flush, once and twice and again and...Leave me alone Bobby. I ruin everything I touch.

She takes his face in her hands, walks him towards the door.

LUCIA
Oh Bobby, I want to be with you, I just wish he were dead! I know that's awful, but sometimes I think it's the only way...Leave me alone. Don't call me. Don't think about me. It's for your own good...Do you understand! He won't let us and I don't want to ruin you...Do you want to be ruined! Maybe call me some time down the road, Bobby.

She shuts the door leaving him standing in the hallway. He knocks on the door. Nothing.

BOB
(meekly)
Lucia?

LUCIA ON THE INSIDE TAKES THE JADE PIECE LOVINGLY IN HER HANDS. SHE SITS IT BESIDES SEVERAL OTHER JADE PIECES

BOB
(whispered)
But Lucia...

With palms flat Bob gently bumps his forehead against the door. He hesitates, turns and slowly walks away.

EXT. STREET

Bob walks down the street back to the bus stop. A black man in his 50's, ISA, is watching him. A squad car is parked up the street. The driver, a white, stubby 50ish male with red hair, smoking a cigar, CLARK, and passenger a 50ish white male, KENEDY, are watching both Isa and Bob.

DETECTIVE KENEDY
Anything to worry about?

DETECTIVE CLARK
I hope not. If Isa's ever discovered we're all as good as gone. The whole cover-up will be on our laps.

DETECTIVE KENEDY
Well do a check on this guy just to be safe... And if there's a problem remember Isa's command. He iced Stanger so all of us to live. If they get onto Isa there's closure.

DETECTIVE CLARK
You mean we ice Isa.

*Clark flicks his cigar out the window at a street sign.
CIGAR HITS SIGN DEAD CENTER*

DETECTIVE CLARK
I still got it.

Squad car heads in Bob's direction.

INT. BOB HERMAN'S APARTMENT - THAT EVENING

Bob is pacing disheveled, looking at the phone. He sits on the edge of the bed with Ted Basle's card in hand. He picks it up and dials.

SPLIT SCENE Bob in his bed, Ted in a robe in his den.

TED BASLE
Hey ya Bobby!

BOB HERMAN
Uh-uh, I'm sorry, wrong number,

He hangs up. The phone rings.

BOB HERMAN
H-Hello?...Oh hi Dad...good, good...I had called to tell you that I'm finally going to be published...yep...Dad, I know that I owe you lots...as soon as the royalty check comes, I'll get it to you... Yes, I'm definitely getting published...a lot, I don't remember the exact amount...well, because I have an agent that takes care of those details...no, I won't gamble it...well, because I didn't want to jinx it...I haven't gambled for a while now...do you want a copy?...sort of, a few hundred pages, I guess...yeah I could give you a summary...what about Mom?...uh-huh...uh-huh...yah Okay...bye.

Dial tone, Bob's father has hung up.

BOB HERMAN
--love you.

FADE TO:

MONTAGE: raves of "Standard Deviations", the book is everywhere, in everyone's hands.

INT. FOUR SEASONS - WEEKS LATER

SIGN: ROBERT HERMAN'S AUTOGRAPHING PARTY

Bob's seated in front of a stack of books. The line of people waiting for an autograph does not seem to be cheering him up.

BOB'S PICTURE ON THE BACK COVER

A 60ish man with white kinky hair, ARNIE SCHUMAN, walks from behind and rests his hand on Bob's shoulder.

ARNIE SCHUMAN
The Times says that you're the find of the century.

*Bob grooms his hair back, smiles, turns and opens a book, pen in hand.
Mark Koss approaches, smacking him on the back.*

MARK KOSS
Hi Bobby my boy. I'm waiting for your second jewel. Is it coming?

Bob smiles.

BOB HERMAN

Yes sir. Just polishing it up.

MARK KOSS

Looking forward to it kid.

BOB'S HAND SIGNING HIS NAME

PULL OUT TO REVEAL BOB SIGNING HIS NAME ON A CHECK

INT. BOB'S APARTMENT

BOB HERMAN

And that takes care of that.

Cat hops on desk. The computer is on, screen is blank.

BOB HERMAN

No more credit collector calls. Nothing but blue skies ahead. All I have to do is write another amazing book.

He stares at blank screen, hesitates and writes a few lines.

He takes a deep breath.

BOB HERMAN

It's okay. I have plenty of time. Anyway, I think I deserve a little celebration.

INT. RACE TRACK

Bob's standing with two white guys his age. In the background the announcer is calling the race.

Announcer

And it's Blue Bonnet from behind... all Blue Bonnet... hold your tickets for the final.

Bob looks down at his tickets.

CHUCK

You may have published a best seller but your luck hasn't changed here...

BO

You must have lost 20 grand.

BOB HERMAN

I wish it was only 20...

FADE TO:

INT. MARK KOSS' OFFICE - WEEKS LATER

Koss is on the phone.

MARK KOSS

Yeah Arnie, I'll talk to him...

Mark Koss firmly hits the intercom.

MARK KOSS

Jennifer did you tell Bob Herman that I wanted him?

JENNIFER

Yes sir.

MARK KOSS

Well go and get him. Now!

INT. MARK KOSS' OFFICE - SHORTLY AFTER

Mark is seated. Bob is sitting on the desk.

BOB HERMAN

Well, you see, writing books is not like printing newspapers. I've started, like, 5 more.

MARK KOSS

Bob, you hit the iron when it's hot. Tomorrow the schleps that bought your first book will forget your name. Do you know what it cost me to get you on the New York Best Seller's list?... bring me what you got.

BOB HERMAN

But...

MARK KOSS

Bob, this firm stuck it's neck out to help you... Every Gent shareholder is counting on you. It means a lot to the bottom line... Do you like being a writer Bobby?

BOB HERMAN

Yes... Yes I do.

MARK KOSS

Bring me what you got.

Bob nods.

MARK KOSS

Good boy, Bobby.

Bob gets up and leaves.

INT. BUS - LATER THAT EVENING

Bob looks up and down the aisle. He notices a stack of newspapers. He shuffles through them.

INT. BOB'S APARTMENT

Bob sitting with his back to us runs his fingers through his hair. He punches letter tab with his finger. He punches it harder and harder. Finally he shuts the computer off. Suddenly he stands. An idea. He goes to file cabinet and pulls out an old manuscript.

INT. MARK KOSS' OFFICE - NEXT DAY

Koss is on the phone, holding the old manuscript.

MARK KOSS

Arnie. I can't figure it out. It's all garbage. Just garbage. I mean it's infantile... Yes it came from Herman!

INT. OFFICES OF GENT MEDIA - FRIDAY AFTERNOON

Cloe and Jennifer are by the espresso machine.

CLOE

I think Herman bought Standard Deviations.

JENNIFER

What? Uh-uh, Bob wouldn't buy a manuscript. It's not possible.

CLOE

Not possible? Where have you been? They all buy scripts. It's the author that sells the book not the content. Besides, I've seen other things that he's written. He doesn't have it.

JENNIFER

That's loathsome...

Bob's entering. Cloe's leaving still looking at Jennifer.

CLOE

Anyway, he'd better buy or find or write something soon if he wants to stay in this office. Koss didn't like him from the start...

Cloe impudently looks at Bob and walks out. Bob pours a cup of coffee. There's a moment of silence.

JENNIFER

Bob did you write Standard Deviations?

BOB HERMAN

What kind of a question is that?

JENNIFER

There are rumors... Are you the author?

BOB HERMAN

Jennifer. I've written another one that will convince them all. Koss is reading it right now.

Jennifer smiles.

JENNIFER

Good Bob.

Bob pours some of the scalding cup of liquid into his mouth. He stands there with his mouth half open sucking air in.

Koss comes in.

JENNIFER

Excuse us Jennifer.

She leaves.

MARK KOSS

Bobby, what are you trying to pull? First you give me a piece of gold and then you give me a piece of shit. Look, I understand that the second novel is harder than the first, but you've got to rise to your potential man. Do you understand me?

Bob nods.

MARK KOSS

We want you to do well. You want you to do well. Do it.

Mark leaves Bob who uncomfortably swallows the hot brew.

EXT. STREET - LATER THAT EVENING, DARK AND DRIZZLY

Bob is walking. A bus is passing.

LUCIA'S ON THE BUS

BOB HERMAN

Lucia! Lucia!

Bob runs after the bus. He tires. ISA walks out of the shadow behind Bob. Isa looks at Lucia. She looks back. He looks at Bob who wipes his mouth and crouches down to catch

his breath.

BOB HERMAN
Do you want something?

Isa smiles.

ISA
We all want something.

Bob looks around, the street is empty.

BOB HERMAN
Where did you come from?

ISA
Come from?

BOB HERMAN
Yes. Where did you come from?

ISA
Well my people were from Atlanta. I grew up here. My great, great grandfather had the distinction of being the only black Confederate officer decorated in the American Civil War.

BOB HERMAN
Oh...

ISA
The politicians believe that changing flags on building tops will ease the pain of the past. They should leave them be to remind us of the truth. Only when we reside with truth can we understand when we are living a lie.

BOB HERMAN
OK, have a good night.

Bob starts to walk away.

ISA
What do you want with the girl on the bus?

Bob stops, his eyes quiz Isa.

ISA
Do you like women of color?

BOB HERMAN
Don't all women have color?

Isa smiles.

ISA
Good point.

BOB HERMAN
Look... I don't know you nor do I...

ISA
Yes... But some day I'll ask you to do something for me.

*Isa turns to leave. He crosses the street.
A BROWN BAG WITH RUBBER BANDS AROUND IT IN ISA'S ARM
A car passes blocking the street.*

BOB HERMAN
Wait! Wait!

Isa's gone. Bob runs down the street and into a dead ended alley.

BOB HERMAN
No! Where did you go? Please!

He catches his breath. Newspapers move and two homeless people rise from the rubble.

HOMELESS MAN
Hey, I'm right here. How's about helping me out with some change.

HOMELESS MAN 2
I'm right here, help me out too.

Bob backs out of the alleyway and quickly turns the corner nervously looking back. Two men approach him from behind. Bob ducks into a bar.

INT. BINO'S
Bob enters the small, dimly lit bar.

*HANGING AUTOGRAPHED PHOTOS OF FIGHTERS
The last one is signed Tony Russo.
Bob looks closely at the photo, then around. A few guys sit at the end. They do not look*

like Tony.

Bob steps to the bar and orders.

BOB HERMAN

Double shot of Chevas.

The bartender silently serves him.

BOB HERMAN

Another please.

BARTENDER

What are you in a race?

Bob tightly smiles.

BOB HERMAN

Please just pour me another.

LATER

Bob is heading back from the bathroom. He's unsteady.

BARTENDER

Hey Tony what's up my guy!

Bob focuses.

THE PICTURE OF TONY RUSSO, TONY'S FACE

Bob moves back to his spot as the bartender approaches.

BARTENDER

Refill?

Bob looks over at Tony.

BARTENDER

Refill?

BOB HERMAN

Yeah. Yeah man refill.

The bartender pours drink. Bob downs it. The bartender begins to walk away.

BOB HERMAN

Wait. Is that Tony Russo?

The bartender stares.

BARTENDER

Why?... He go with your girl or something?...If he did I don't want no trouble here. I'll lose my license.

BOB HERMAN

Another please.

BARTENDER

Hey, it's your stomach.

The bartender pours a drink.

Bob downs it, nervously pushes his hand into his pocket and walks towards Tony.

BARTENDER

Hey Tony, this guy -

Tony looks at bartender then Bob.

BOB'S HAND IN HIS POCKET SHAKING AND POINTED TOWARDS TONY

TONY

Madonna!

Tony raises his hands.

TONY

Whatever you got I don't want any of it. I ain't bothering nobody.

Bob seems momentarily confused, looks from side to side and nervously pushes his hand further into his pocket.

TONY

Please. Please. If Mikey 'O' sent you I can fix everything. I swear.

Bob jerks his head to grab composure. He hesitates.

BOB HERMAN

I'm a friend of Lucia.

TONY

Oh, yeah Lucia.

BOB HERMAN

Leave her in peace. Got it?

TONY

In peace. I got it.

BOB HERMAN

If you don't, I'll be back to straighten things out.

TONY

Sure. Sure in peace, don't worry.

Bob glances down at his jacket pocket and pushes his hand in the towards Tony's gut.

BOB HERMAN

You better get it... Or you'll really get it.

Bob lowers his arm and walks out of the bar.

BARTENDER

Who was that guy Tony?

TONY

I don't know but he had me spooked.

EXT. BINO'S

Bob trots outside and down the street. He stops, gasping for breath, glances back defiantly at Bino's. No one is outside.

HAND COMES OUT OF POCKET REVEALING CELL PHONE

Walks steadily to bus stop and catches a bus just in time.

INT. BUS

Seated, Bob relaxes, smiles then chuckles out loud.

INT. LUCIA'S APARTMENT - LATER

An elderly well groomed man heads out of Lucia's apartment. Tony passes him. The man looks away.

TONY

I thought you said you dropped that dirt bag.

LUCIA

Which one?

TONY

I'm not the one you play with, Lucia. Some blond young yuppie looking blonde guy.

LUCIA

Oh, I'm sorry baby. You mean the wannabe writer. I did drop him.

TONY

Well he just came into Bino's and threatened me with a gun.

LUCIA

(amused) What!

Lucia laughs.

TONY

Oh is that funny?

LUCIA

He wouldn't hurt a fly, couldn't hurt a fly.(sort of disappointed)

TONY

Why's he still sniffing around here if he ain't paying no bills here?

LUCIA

Probably the same reason you are.

He presses her up against the wall. He reaches his hand down to her crotch.

TONY

This is why I'm here. And I'm the only one who gets it for free. You know the rules. If you can't get nothing from them, you dump 'em. And don't get me angry or...

LUCIA

(choking) He just don't understand.

TONY

Do you want me to explain it to him?

LUCIA

(recovering)No Tony... He thinks that I'm a nice girl.

TONY

You are a nice girl baby. You're my nice girl. You ain't goin sweet on him are you?

Lucia is still looking away.

TONY

Not going soft are you?

Tony sees:

PICTURE OF BOB'S PHOTO ON HIS BOOK ON HER DESK

TONY

I thought you said he didn't have nothin? You're not falling for this fag, are you?

LUCIA

I was trying to tell you, that book is a bestseller.

TONY

I don't believe it. That guy?

LUCIA

I know. Did you bring my candy?

Tony kisses her hard then picks her up against the wall wrapping her legs around himself.

TONY

We're a team baby, don't forget it.

CAMERA FOCUSES ON A PICTURE OF THE BLESSED MOTHER CRYING

Noise and grunting as they begin to make love.

FADE TO:

BOB'S SLEEPING FACE

INT. BOB'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

Bob's sleeping face up, holding the book. There's a knock. Someone's at the door. Bob jerks, looks at the digital clock.

4:03

Bob fumbles to put his glasses on and walks to the door. Another loud knock. He looks in peep hole, it's covered.

Bob open's the door leaving the chain latched.

BOB HERMAN

Cloe?

CLOE

I want to talk.

BOB HERMAN

At four AM?

CLOE

I do some of my best talking in the morning. Let me in.

BOB HERMAN

Are you on something?

CLOE

If so, all the better for you.

BOB HERMAN

I'm not interested Cloe.

He closes the door. She stops it with her hand.

CLOE

Is this the way you treat your partner?

BOB HERMAN

Partner?

CLOE

I know you didn't write Standard Deviations ... you don't even know what Standard Deviations means.

He tries to close the door, she stops it.

CLOE

You've produced only crap since you plagiarized the book, I take it that you have trouble.

BOB HERMAN

How are you so sure?

CLOE

Call it women's intuition. Point is, I can help you.

Cloe gestures to the chain on the door.

Bob opens, Cloe walks in and closes door. Bob cleans his glasses with a tissue.

BOB HERMAN

Make it fast.

Cloe lights a cigarette.

BOB HERMAN

Don't smoke...Please don't smoke.

Cloe blows a cloud of smoke in his face.

CLOE

It's all too much for you Bobby. Your life needs a woman's touch. Without it you'll spiral down and crash. I'm here to catch you. I knew from the beginning that you didn't write that book. I'll help you...And you'll help me.

BOB HERMAN

How will you help me?

CLOE

I'll be your manager.

BOB HERMAN

Koss got me a manager, Schuman.

CLOE

Schuman's a literary manager. You need a situations manager, someone to hold you on top. And you'll pay support. It will be the best move you ever made.

Bob gets an ash tray and places it on a chair for Cloe.

CLOE

That's it Bobby... Koss will be happy about the arrangement. I know the ropes. He knows that he can always count on me to bring home the victory. After all. We all want the same thing... Your success.

BOB HERMAN

Get real Cloe.

CLOE

Oh I'm for real, Bobby.

Cloe gently grabs his shoulder and reaches her right hand down to her purse. She pulls out a small pistol.

BOB HERMAN

Jesus! Is that real!

CLOE

Yes. Get into the bedroom Bobby. If we're going to be partners, you've got to get used to taking orders.

Bob looks at the gun.

BOB HERMAN

Are you crazy?

CLOE

No, but I'm very, very resourceful. You'll come to appreciate that part of me... Move.

Bob turns and goes into the bedroom. Cloe follows him.

FADE TO:

DIGITAL CLOCK 5:30

Grunting coming from the bedroom. Cloe rolls off of Bob.

CLOE

To be honest, I didn't expect you to deliver.

BOB HERMAN

Me neither.

They laugh.

CLOE

So what is it? You paid some guy for his book. Pay him for another.

Bob hesitates.

CLOE

Spill it.

BOB HERMAN

It goes like this...

FADE TO:

INT. HALL OUTSIDE OF BOB'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT MORNING

Cloe closes the door behind her, turns and is face to face with Lucia. Lucia is noticeably stunned.

CLOE

Don't expect a lot. He's probably a little tired.

Cloe opens the door for Lucia revealing Bob half dressed.

BOB HERMAN

Cloe you forgot your...

Bob's eyes meet Lucia's. Lucia runs down the hall stairs.

BOB HERMAN
Lucia!

Bob's holding a silver lighter in his hand. Cloe grabs it.

CLOE
It really wasn't important. I only smoke before I fornicate. She's cute partner, real cute...
Don't make mama jealous.

Bob runs down the stairs and out into the street, just missing Lucia driving off in a cab.

BOB HERMAN
Shit.

Cloe exits in the background.

INT. CAB
The driver is a middle aged black man.

CAB DRIVER
You look distressed, can I do anything for you?

LUCIA
Yes, keep your eyes on the road.

CAB DRIVER
That guy who came out after you... Is that your man?

Lucia stares out the window.

LUCIA
I don't know what he is... I don't know who I am. I don't know what I want... I don't
know why I went there.

CAB DRIVER
Seems to me you want him...

CAB PULLS IN FRONT OF HER PLACE
Lucia rummages through her purse, it's full of money.

LUCIA
I forgot my wallet. How much is it?

CAB DRIVER
It's \$19.50.

Lucia smiles.

LUCIA

I'll run up to the apartment, Or would you like to have me in your debt?
The cab driver smiles.

CAB DRIVER

Mmmm. Mmm. I'd love to have you in my debt.

The cab driver reaches to the seat and hands a card to Lucy.

CAB DRIVER

This is my number. I'll be your personal chauffeur.

Lucia takes the card and smiles.

LUCIA

Oh I like that idea. I'll call.

Lucia exits and walks up to her building. The cab pulls away.

INT. OFFICES OF GENT MEDIA - MONDAY MORNING

Bob is on the phone listening to Lucia's answering machine.

BOB HERMAN

Lucia, I'm so sorry. I don't know how many times I need to tell your answering machine. Please, I have to talk to you. I know I wasn't good enough for you before...I saw it in your eyes when I brought you to my apartment...please, I can explain...I'm a published author now...I'm good enough now, you'll see...please, call me...I'll Do anything. I love you.

Bob hangs up, frustrated he rises and walks by Lou's desk.

LOU MELL

Asshole.

Koss passes, pats Bob on the back. Bob glances back confused.

MARK KOSS

That's my boy, Bobby.

Bob turns into coffee room, Cloe is stirring an espresso.

BOB HERMAN

What's going on here?

CLOE

Koss knows that you're my project now.

BOB HERMAN

What's Lou's problem?

CLOE

He knows too.

BOB HERMAN

So?

CLOE

Bobby. I get my bell rung once, twice a week? Now that you're my project Lou's afraid that he won't be ringing it anymore... You know when Lou and I leave for our work outs?

BOB HERMAN

Yeah.

CLOE

We worked out.

Bob leaves. Jennifer walks by and Cloe winks at her.

CLOE

He's been allocated to me honey... I honestly don't know what you see in him... He's about as manly as a pink dress... But when pushed, he can perform. I'll give him that.

Jennifer leaves.

EXT. STREET

MONTAGE:

Isa walking down the street.

In a car nearby, Ted Basel watches him.

Isa walking somewhere else. Ted takes pictures from his car.

Isa approaching a soup kitchen. Ted parked watching.

Isa enters.

INT. SQUAD CAR - SAME TIME

Detective Kenedy is in the passenger seat. Detective Clark is in the driver seat scratching his bare arm.

FADED TATOO OF US FLAG

They are watching Ted Basel.

DETECTIVE KENEDY

Shit. Now who's this asshole?

DETECTIVE CLARK

We've got a problem.

INT. OFFICES OF GENT MEDIA

Cloe's office - Cloe is working on the computer and filing her nails.

Google home page. Cloe hits search.

Ted comes in and dumps pictures of Isa on Cloe's desk.

CLOE

Got him?

TED BASLE

Got him. I still need a name.

CLOE

How hard can it be to identify a street person?

Cloe studies the pictures. Is that recognition in her eyes?

TED BASLE

Thousands of them die every year without ever being identified. He may be joining them.

Ugly, huh?

CLOE

I don't pay you for your opinions.

She continues to look at the photo.

TED BASLE

Sorry...

Ted squints.

...I think you're hiding something from me.

CLOE

You know what I think? I think that you're too smart for your own good.

Cloe reaches in her purse. She takes out a stack of 100 dollar bills. She counts 10 of them.

CLOE

I won't give you another dime without his name.

TED BASLE

Why are you so tough with me?

CLOE

There can only be one king of the forest.

TED BASLE

Men... We don't stand a chance.

INT. BUS - NIGHT

Bob is standing, staring blankly out the window.

VOICE

Don't turn around. Get off at the next stop.

Bob goes to turn.

VOICE

Don't. Get off and go into the coffee shop at the next stop.

Bob gets off and straightens up his collar. Isa follows him into a coffee shop.

INT. COFFEE SHOP

They sit in a corner booth.

BOB HERMAN

You're the writer of Standard Deviations, aren't you?

ISA

I arranged the words into their form, but we are all the writer of Standard Deviations. There are things you don't understand.

BOB HERMAN

Boy, don't I know it. It's great to finally meet you, sir. Thank you, I can't tell you how import...

Bob extends his hand, Isa doesn't accept. Bob clears his throat.

BOB HERMAN

I wanted to find you. I looked everywhere, then people read your book and one thing led to another...it all happened so fast...I meant no disrespect.

Isa remains silent.

BOB HERMAN

I saw you carried another manuscript the other night. I-I'd like to buy it.

ISA

My words are precious to me... But sell words? No.

BOB HERMAN

But you can get off of the streets. You can live in a nice house and...

ISA

No.

BOB HERMAN

What's your name?

ISA

My name is not your concern.

BOB HERMAN

This means everything to me!

ISA

Silly things often occupy a lot of space in small lives.

Bob smooths his hair back.

BOB HERMAN

I'm begging you. You don't understand.

ISA

Don't I? I've been observing you...

BOB HERMAN

What do you mean?

ISA

You and the people you've hired must stop looking for me.

BOB HERMAN

So you've watched me struggle all along knowing that all you had to do to help me was show your face?

ISA

You've made a big mistake.

BOB HERMAN

Coauthor the book with me. You can be rich.

ISA

You must stop looking for me.

Isa rises.

BOB HERMAN

Give me another book and I will.

ISA

There's something you must do.

BOB HERMAN

Anything.

ISA

You must start being a man of honor.

BOB HERMAN

But...

ISA

Do not follow me.

He leaves.

BOB HERMAN

Honor?

Bob takes out his cell phone and dials.

BOB HERMAN

Cloe, Bob. I found him, but the weirdo won't have any part of it.

INT. TED BASLE'S CAR

Cloe is in the passenger seat. Both her and Ted are watching Isa leave the coffee shop. Cloe speaks into the phone.

CLOE

Don't sweat it sweetheart.

She nods at Ted, then hangs up the phone.

INT. COFFEE SHOP

BOB HERMAN

Cloe? Cloe?

Frustrated, he hangs up and sits, staring at the wall.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP

Cloe gets out of the car. Ted drives off to follow Isa.

INT. COFFEE SHOP

Cloe sits down next to Bob.

CLOE

So that was our literate?

BOB HERMAN

Where the hell did you come from?

CLOE

We'll get him. He's got a tail.

BOB HERMAN

A tail? Jesus, maybe you should just let me handle this, Cloe.

CLOE

Like you have up until now? Time's money... You don't get it do you?

BOB HERMAN

I can't convince him how will you?

Cloe smiles.

BOB HERMAN

He's not that easy.

CLOE

Neither am I... Besides blacks are overrated. Give me a young Italian any day.

Cloe gets up and leaves. She turns.

CLOE

You've turned over our saviour. Take the day off Bobby. You've earned your 12 gold

pieces.

INT. BOB'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT EVENING

Bob is on the phone. Lucia's answering machine picks up again.

BOB HERMAN

I have to stop calling you but I can't. Why won't you just call me back? We have something, damn it! I'm sorry, I didn't mean to yell...just, I need to find you. I need you...

He trails off and hangs up. Next to the phone is Ted's card. He dials the phone, then hangs up. After a moment, he dials again.

INT. TOAD'S

Bob and Ted are sitting with coffee in front of them.

TED BASLE

You read my mind, Bobby.

BOB HERMAN

What do you mean, I read your mind?

TED BASLE

Well Bobby... Let me put it this way. Mark Koss is on top of the wall if you know what I mean.

BOB HERMAN

What, like Humpty Dumpty?

TED BASLE

Precisely. And I'm the guy that makes sure that Humpty Dumpty doesn't take a fall cause all d' kings horses and d' the kings men couldn't put Humpty together again... And because I occupy this position you could say that I'm the most important man in Gent. I was going to call you because you've become an important resource. Gent stock is counting on you. I'm a large shareholder so I am counting on you... Now how can I be of service?

Bob clears his throat.

BOB HERMAN

Ted, a writer's emotional stability is everything. If I lack confidence or stability then it's transferred to my work. I've fallen for this girl but something's not right. She's got wild stories and expensive clothes and I just don't want to be taken for a ride....You know what I mean.

TED BASLE

Bobby, this is Ted you're talking to. Your no writer, everyone knows that now. But that doesn't mean that I don't want to keep our man happy. What is it? A girl?

BOB HERMAN

Lucia.

TED BASLE

Sure Bobby. What kind of information? Medical? Criminal? Scholastic?

BOB HERMAN

Yes... yes, all of it.

Bobby looks humbly at Ted.

TED BASLE

You got it Bobby. I'll get you info on her lawyer and doctor and lawsuits and credit cards and x's. You'll have it all.

BOB HERMAN

Thanks Ted.

Bob reaches to shake Ted's hand. Ted smiles, squeezes Bob's hand tightly.

TED BASLE

I'm your friend Bob. At Gent we're all one big happy family. The most important part of Gent is the bottom line. You see Bob, I guard the bottom line. Someone messes with you, they mess with the bottom line...they're messing with me.

Bobby tries to move his hand from Ted's grip. Ted holds tight.

BOB STARES AT TED

TED BASLE

(Sternly) Anyone who messes with the bottom line is messing with me... anyone. Got that?

BOB HERMAN

Yes. Thanks, Ted. I really appreciate it. Listen, don't tell anyone about this, okay?

TED BASLE

You just go home Bobby. Leave it up to me.

Ted leave Bob alone and uncomfortable.

INT. BOB'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT EVENING

Bob's at his laptop with a pencil in his ear looking industrious. There's a knock. He jots something down. He makes a frustrated face and walks towards the door.

BOB HERMAN

Who is it?

VOICE

Police.

Bob clears the page on his laptop and opens the door.

BOB HERMAN

What can I do for you?

POLICEMAN

Are you Robert Herman?

BOB HERMAN

Yes.

POLICEMAN

Can you please come to the station with us Mr. Herman?

BOB HERMAN

Why?

POLICEMAN

Sir, please get your jacket. I'll explain on the way.

INT. POLICE STATION

Detectives Harms and Clark are talking near file cabinets. In the background Bob Herman is sitting at a desk.

DETECTIVE HARMS

We've got to hold this guy. He's onto Isa.

DETECTIVE CLARK

I told you to avoid using his name.

DETECTIVE HARMS

If this thing blows up it will be front page news. We'll all go away for a very long time. Isa shot Stanger for us all and we were all a part of it...

Harms stares at Clark. Clark drags long on cigar. A woman in uniform passes.

POLICE WOMAN

Hey Clark put that out. No smoking in the building. You men think that you're above the law.

The woman turns the corner.

DETECTIVE CLARK

(under his breath) Yeah and two women officers got shot with their own guns this week. cunt.

DETECTIVE HARMS

You've got to book Herman.

DETECTIVE CLARK

If I booked everyone that had reason to kill Russo we'd be filling out paper for a month.

Harms looks towards Bob who is oblivious to what's going on.

DETECTIVE CLARK

We either need to get him to confess to assaulting Russo, or to lie about knowing him, then we can book him.

INT. POLICE STATION

Bob's sitting in front of Detective Clark. Another detective is in the corner of the room.

DETECTIVE CLARK

Standard Deviations isn't it, Mr. Herman? I loved it.

BOB HERMAN

Thank you. Will you please tell me why I'm here.

DETECTIVE CLARK

You don't know?

BOB HERMAN

(unconvincing)

I'm not one to be trifled with.

DETECTIVE CLARK

Of course Mr. Herman. I'm sure you're not.

BOB HERMAN

I still don't know why I'm here... Now what is this about! I want to call my attorney!

DETECTIVE CLARK
Do you own a gun Mr. Herman?

BOB HERMAN
A gun? No of course not.

DETECTIVE CLARK
Will you give us permission to search your apartment?

BOB HERMAN
My apartment? Why? I want to call my attorney.

DETECTIVE CLARK
If you'd like. I think we could settle this quickly though, if you'd just cooperate.

BOB HERMAN
No, no... I want my phone call.

INT. POLICE STATION-INTERROGATION ROOM
Arnie Schuman and Ted Basle are standing behind Bob. Clark is sitting and Kenedy is standing behind Clark.

DETECTIVE CLARK
Do you know why anyone would want to kill Tony Russo?

BOB HERMAN
(surprised at the news)
Tony Russo? I-I don't even know him.

DETECTIVE CLARK
Book him.

Detective Clark stands up. Kenedy approaches Bob.

ARNIE SCHURMAN
Wait just a...

Bob interrupts.

BOB HERMAN
Wait. Arnie. Wait. I met him once.

DETECTIVE CLARK
Did you point a gun at Russo in Bino's Bar?

BOB HERMAN

No. I told you, I don't own a gun. He's a scum bag. He was messing with a girl I know. I walked over to ask him to leave her alone... I had my hand in my pocket. He may have thought it was a gun.

DETECTIVE CLARK

Did you tell him it wasn't a gun?

BOB HERMAN

I was surrounded by 5 of his friends. Would you have told him it wasn't a gun? He's really dead?

DETECTIVE KENEDY

Should I book him?

DETECTIVE CLARK

Not yet. Would you like some water, coffee?

ARNIE SCHUMAN

What kind of game are we playing here Detective?

Ted Basle eyeing Clark and Kenedy. Clark looks at Ted.

DETECTIVE CLARK

May I ask who you are sir?

ARNIE SCHUMAN

He is my assistant.

Looking at Ted.

DETECTIVE CLARK

Are you an attorney?

ARNIE SCHUMAN

No.

DETECTIVE CLARK

A paralegal?

ARNIE SCHUMAN

No.

DETECTIVE CLARK

A friend, relative?

ARNIE SCHUMAN

Detective who are you interrogating here? It is late. If you're going to book my client I wish that you would. Otherwise I'm going to have to insist that you release him.

INT. POLICE STATION - DARK

Bob is walking out with Arnie and Ted.

Clark and Kenedy are in the background.

EXT. CEMETERY - NEXT DAY

Tony Russo's casket is being lowered into the ground. Many old Italian women in black howl and cry.

Bob approaches the cemetery and stops to watch the funeral from a distance. He spots Lucia. She watches the casket lower with little expression on her face.

A hooded man walks up to him. It is Isa.

ISA

I thought you'd show up here. I have what you want.

Isa shoves the book into his stomach.

ISA

If you're an honorable man you and your people will leave me alone. If not you'll risk the world finding out who the real author is and more... Too much more for you to understand.

BOB HERMAN

I will, I will. Thank you. Wait, let me give you something.

Bob reaches into his pocket for money.

ISA

These are the clothes of a free man. You will not enslave me with your money or fame. I am free!

Isa leaves.

Bob walks away from the funeral and takes out his phone.

BOB HERMAN

Cloe. I have the second book...He was at the funeral...a friend-well, a friend of a friend, it doesn't matter...I don't know...I know!... But Cloe, he said that if we don't stop following him he'd let the world know who the real author was.

Bob puts phone in pocket and happily walks through the cemetery towards Lucia. He encounters the Bino's bartender.

BARTENDER

Hey. I wouldn't go up there.

BOB HERMAN

Oh?

BARTENDER

Were you his friend?

BOB HERMAN

No.

BARTENDER

A little respect then.

The teary eyed bartender looks away and then back to Bob.

BARTENDER

He was a jagoff. But he was our jagoff... OK?

Bob gently nods and moves by the parked cars on the road.

Ted Basle watches him from a car.

Bob indiscriminately opens the package and reads.

PAGE 26 THE GENERAL REPLIED. "BECAUSE THE GULF WAR WAS ABOUT DEMOCRACY AS MUCH AS THE INVASION OF IRAQ WAS ABOUT TERRORISM AS MUCH AS VIETNAM WAS ABOUT FIGHTING COMMUNISM AS MUCH AS THE CIVIL WAR WAS ABOUT ENDING SLAVERY".

I DEVOTE THIS BOOK TO ALL OF THE HOPELESS ROMANTICS WHO BATTLE FOUGHT IN CONFLICTS CREATED BY POLITICAL INVENTION.

Bob pages through the manuscript. He pictures Vietnam vividly in his head. Time passes. He looks up, he's alone.

INT. BOB'S APARTMENT - EARLY EVENING

Bob's asleep, pages in hand, phone rings. He fumbles to answer.

BOB HERMAN

Hello...Jennifer... What time is it?... I over slept...what's wrong?...You want to come here? Do you know where I live?...Alright, if it's really important.

Bob stands up, walks into the bathroom and turns on water.

INT. OFFICES OF GENT MEDIA, JENNIFER'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

Cloe walks in. Jennifer is sitting at her desk. She hangs the phone up and looks guiltily to the side.

CLOE
Should I know who that was?

Jennifer looks strangely.

JENNIFER
Koss may allow you to run everything in this company. But you don't run my personal life.

CLOE
Not yet... Lover Boy's done with book 2.

JENNIFER
Oh? So soon?

CLOE
Genius... Is that what you most adore about him?

JENNIFER
No, the thing that attracts me to him is that he's nothing like you... Get your ride Cloe and leave him alone.

CLOE
I'm going to keep riding him until he's out of gas. You might try yourself... oh, that's right, you offered but he doesn't want you on his pony.

JENNIFER
He doesn't know me and he'd have nothing to do with you if he wasn't force into it.

CLOE
Don't bet on it. A trapped manhood can be very cooperative...and virile.

JENNIFER
Well leave him out of your trap.

CLOE
Oh... And if I don't?...

Jennifer stands.

JENNIFER
Cloe. Look into my eyes.

Cloe remains immobile.

JENNIFER
What do you see?

CLOE
I see a half-witted little love struck maiden.

JENNIFER
Half-witted love struck maidens giggle into the eyes of peril.

Jennifer walks defiantly past.

CLOE
Not if the eyes they look into are those of the big bad wolf.
INT. BOB'S APARTMENT
Jennifer and Bob are having coffee.

JENNIFER
But why would you sleep with someone that you don't love?

BOB HERMAN
Jennifer... I'm a man... Sometimes a scared man but all the same a man. You may not have noticed but men aren't always real particular.

JENNIFER
In the end you're just putty in Koss and Cloe's hands. Bob, you need to find someone else to publish your work.

BOB HERMAN
I can't.

JENNIFER
Of course you can. Standard Deviations made it to the top ten. You're one of the top authors in the country.

BOB HERMAN
It's not that simple.

Bob looks away.

JENNIFER
Bob, I'm going to ask you this again. Did you write that book?

Jennifer stares into his eyes. Bob looks away. He turns back.

BOB HERMAN

Jennifer. Have you ever been in love?

JENNIFER

Love? Yes.

BOB HERMAN

I'm in love. Love makes people do stupid things.

Jennifer stands.

BOB HERMAN

Where are you going?

JENNIFER

Back to work. We're all not authors. I just came to tell you to watch your back around Cloe and Koss. And as far as love's concerned... If it finds you worthy it will guide it's own course.

She leaves.

INT. OFFICES OF GENT MEDIA FOLLOWING DAY - LATE EVENING

MANUSCRIPT ON BOB'S DESK

Bob's sitting with a desk lamp on. He rises and exits. The offices are empty. He heads to the elevator.

INT. LOBBY GENT MEDIA BUILDING

Bob's walking out.

GUARD

Good night Mr. Herman.

BOB HERMAN

Good night Donny.

Bob goes through the revolving door.

The guard Donny is on his cell.

GUARD

He just left...no, ma'am. He's by himself.

INT. RESTAURANT - NEXT DAY

Cloe is sitting at a table.

TED BASLE
Hey Cloe.

CLOE
Sit down and lower your voice. I pay you for discretion.

Ted sits down and taps an unlit cigar on the table.

CLOE
Well?
Ted takes out another picture.

TED BASLE
He's called Isa.

Cloe stares at the picture.

CLOE
Is he?

TED BASLE
That's all I got. There's nothing on him anywhere. He sleeps at a soup kitchen run by a nun...

*Detective Clark is in the background sipping coffee at the restaurant bar.
He gets on his cell phone.*

DETECTIVE CLARK
Meeting, 30. I've got Isa's tail.

INT. DETECTIVE KENEDY'S HOME BASEMENT - SHORTLY AFTER
Detectives Harms, Holt, Kenedy and Clark are together.

DETECTIVE CLARK
The tail is professional - sort of professional.

DETECTIVE HOLT
What happened to the author?

DETECTIVE CLARK
He's nothing to worry about. Isa would never tell him anything. Do you remember a guy on the force in the 80's named Basle?

DETECTIVE HARMS
Ted Basle... He was on the take for drugs... Never went away but was booted off the

force.

DETECTIVE CLARK
He's a PI now. He's Isa's tail.

DETECTIVE HARMS
For who?

DETECTIVE CLARK
Hard to tell. A woman, Cloe Forme, works for Gent Media. He does some work for Gent. She's got her own story.

He chuckles. The men listen on the edge of their seats.

DETECTIVE CLARK
It seems that Isa and Cloe may have a shared past... and something that links them to the future.

INT. FOUR SEASONS
The lobby is packed.
BILLBOARD 'ROBERT HERMAN BOOK SIGNING'
Bob is unenthusiastically signing books. Koss, Arnie and Cloe are standing behind him. Arnie whispers to Koss.

ARNIE SCHUMAN
(whispered) 'Square Peg's Circle' will sell twice as many copies as Standard Deviations.

MARK KOSS
How nice.

Bob looks up, his eyes focused.
LUCIA'S IN THE LINE WITH A BOOK IN HER HAND
Bob stands, ignores those ahead of Lucia, and approaches her.

BOB HERMAN
Lucia.

LUCIA
Hello Bobby.

BOB HERMAN
I've been...I miss you so much.

Lucia embraces him dramatically.

LUCIA

I miss you too, Bobby. I miss you too. Can we go somewhere to be alone?

BOB HERMAN

Sure, sure, of course. Um...

He glances, Koss and Schuman, speaking to people.

BOB HERMAN

Oh, forget it. They'll understand.

They leave, arm in arm.

INT. RESTAURANT, CANDLE LIGHT

Bob and Lucia are sitting across from each other.

LUCIA

...and then Tony was killed, and I had no one to turn to.

BOB HERMAN

How could you have ever been drawn to him?

LUCIA

I was desperate for security. I still desperately need security.

BOB HERMAN

Lucia, I love you, I have since the day we met, but I don't want to just be a replacement for Tony.

LUCIA

Bob, Tony never existed...

BOB HERMAN

My life's been filled with disappointment. I've mostly disappointed, myself, everyone around me. We'll start over Lucia. We'll be an unstoppable team.

They kiss.

INT. OFFICES OF GENT MEDIA

Koss is staring out the window. Cloe is in front of him.

MARK KOSS

That ungrateful punk. I never did like him. He ran off to the Bahamas with his book advance. I'll never get the three books he's on contract for. If I could get what I've invested I'd flip him to someone in a heartbeat...

Koss slams his fist on the desk.

MARK KOSS

If he doesn't produce this firm is in jeopardy. I'm fucked.

CLOE

What if we get a hold of the books and cut out the middle man?

MARK KOSS

Cut out Bobby?

CLOE

All he is to us at this point is a name. We could pay him, and go straight to the source for the books.

MARK KOSS

Cut out Bobby, huh? You don't think it's too soon?

CLOE

Never.

MARK KOSS

And he'd let us?

CLOE

Definitely.

MARK KOSS

Really.

INT. RECEPTION HALL - A WEEK LATER

Bob and Lucia are kissing at their wedding reception. They stop and Lucia feeds cake to Bob. Mark Koss stands up.

MARK KOSS

I took this boy under my wing. He is now a man. I wish him and his bride a long and happy life. And many, many more best sellers!

LUCIA

Here, here.

Mark raises the glass. The banquet of 80 people toasts.

INT. RECEPTION HALL - SHORTLY AFTER

Cloe walks to Lucia.

CLOE
All my best, Mrs. Herman.

Lucia stares.

LUCIA
The name's Lucia.

CLOE
Come now honey. I only stole him from you for a little while. A real lady doesn't hold a grudge.

Lucia steps on Cloe's foot as she walks away from her.

CLOE
Ah! Bitch.

INT. GENT OFFICES - WEEKS LATER
Bob's sloppily dressed, sitting at his desk. Lou Mell passes.

LOU MELL
Must be nice to do nothing and get paid for it.

Bob runs his hand over his head. He looks towards the computer. He turns it on. He stands up and walks out. The camera follows him to Jennifer's desk.

BOB HERMAN
Jennifer, get me a copy of 'Standard Deviations'.

JENNIFER
Standard Deviations?

BOB HERMAN
You heard me, a copy of 'Standard Deviations'. Maybe if I study, really study it. Something will come to me.

JENNIFER
Like what?

BOB HERMAN
Get me Standard Deviations!

Jennifer stands.

JENNIFER

They're in the back.

Mark Koss enters.

MARK KOSS

How's the third one coming, Bobby?

INT. BOB AND LUCIA'S CONDO

BOB HERMAN

Let's not talk about money. What's for dinner?

LUCIA

I didn't marry you to cook. We're eating out.

Bob walks into the room holding a stack of receipts.

BOB HERMAN

These are yours, all yours! You're spending money faster than the mint can make it!
We're broke!

LUCIA

Cool it. Get an advance.

BOB HERMAN

I already got my advance... And an advance on my advance.

LUCIA

Go to your parents.

BOB HERMAN

I was supposed to pay them out of the advance... The advance that paid for our wedding and our trips and your clothes and... They don't have a dime left to give me.

LUCIA

Well you better think of something.

BOB HERMAN

I'm tired of thinking! My head hurts from thinking. Why don't you just go to your parents! They didn't come to the wedding, the least they could do is send us a gift!

LUCIA

I can't ask them to send us money.

BOB HERMAN

Why?

LUCIA

You promised to take care of me! I should have known better! Well believe me I will take care of me if you don't!

BOB HERMAN

What does that mean! What does that mean!

Lucia smirks. Bobby glares, runs his hand through his hair and walks out.

EXT. STREET ON THE WAY TO THE SOUP KITCHEN

Isa's walking, holding a bag.

EXT. DARK BUS STATION

Isa walks in, goes to locker 117, puts coins in slot, places bag in locker and exits the bus station. Outside waiting in a car are Ted and Cloe.

CLOE

Old man Koss has no idea what he'd be without me.

TED BASLE

Maybe you should start working for yourself.

CLOE

Hm.

Isa comes in sight.

CLOE

There he is. Go and get him.

Ted opens the door and takes his gun from his holster. He rushes behind Isa.

TED BASLE

Just a moment fellow. NYPD.

Isa continues to walk.

Holt and Harms are in an unmarked squad car.

DETECTIVE HARMS

Shit. What do we do?

DETECTIVE HOLT
Just hold on brother... Call Clark.

Cloe opens the car door.

CLOE
Shit.

Cloe quietly comes behind Ted and Isa.

TED BASLE
Turn around or I'll shoot.

Isa continues to walk. The manuscript falls out of his hands. He stops to pick it up.

ISA

Shoot.

Isa picks the manuscript up. As he stands he glances at Cloe.

FADE OUT.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - LATER
Bob is sloppily groomed and sitting with Ted Basle.

BOB HERMAN
Look Ted. I'll give you anything if you find this guy...

Ted looks to the side and smirks.

TED BASLE
All you've told me is that he's a black street person that gave you some manuscripts and that he hangs around China Town.

BOB HERMAN
His great, great grandfather was decorated by the south in the civil war.

Bob grabs Ted by the collar. Bob wipes his mouth.

BOB HERMAN
I'll give you anything... Anything.

TED BASLE
Yeah, you will until I ask for it.

BOB HERMAN
Try me.

TED BASLE
All right.

Ted grins. Ted takes the pen from Bob and writes on a napkin.

TED BASLE
He lives at this soup kitchen. They call him Isa. Sounds like a girl's name to me.

BOB HERMAN
You knew?

TED BASLE
It's my business to know and I'll collect when the time comes.

INT. KOSS' OFFICE
Cloe is standing in front of Mark's desk, he's seated.

MARK KOSS
I don't get you.

CLOE
You don't need to. I'm here to take Herman off your hands. You said that all you wanted was your investment back.

MARK KOSS
It would take the profit on his next 3 books to do that.

CLOE
That's what I figured. I'll match What Gent has at stake and you'll release Herman to me?

MARK KOSS
You got to let a guy make a little profit Cloe.

CLOE
I will... Do we have a deal?

MARK KOSS
You come and ask me that again in a week.

INT. SISTER BRENDA'S SOUP KITCHEN BASEMENT - NIGHT
The scene is black. Fire from the water heater gives little light to room. Someone is fumbling with a flashlight.
THE LIGHT GOES ONTO A STACK OF BOUND PAPERS
The person picks up 3 of the bound stacks and leaves.

INT. KOSS' OFFICE

Koss is seated. Bob Herman is standing in front of him.

MARK KOSS

Bobby I really love you and that wife of yours. I'd hate to lose you but if you don't produce in a hurry Cloe and someone that she's dealing with will take you over.

BOB HERMAN

Don't do it... Give me some time. Please Mr. Koss just a little time.

MARK KOSS

I'm sorry, we just don't have any more of that.

FADE OUT.

INT. SISTER BRENDA'S SOUP KITCHEN

*Bob walks in and looks around. He sees Isa sitting at a table, reading.
Bob sits.*

ISA

How did you find me?

BOB HERMAN

I've got my ways.

ISA

I'll burn the rest of the books before I give them to you.

BOB HERMAN

Rest? How many are there?

Isa starts to get up.

BOB HERMAN

Wait, wait, please. I'll be ruined...my wife...

ISA

Money or a lack of it can not destroy what's not already ruined. If you crash you'll be a better man for it. For you and your girlfriend.

BOB HERMAN

Isa. Please. She's my wife.

Isa stares.

ISA

Your wife?... Face the truth and make your bread another way.

BOB HERMAN

It's all I know how to do.

Isa takes Bob's hand.

ISA

Until now all you've done is plagiarize. I'm sure that you're capable of something else, something honorable.

BOB HERMAN

What are you some kind of prophet? Honorable! You're no different than the rest of us. Ruin me Isa and I'll ruin you!

ISA

Get out.

BOB HERMAN

I'm sorry. Please. Just one more book and I'll leave you alone forever.

ISA

Get out!

Bob storms away.

SISTER BRENDA WATCHING FROM THE KITCHEN

Sister Brenda stops Bob at the door.

SISTER BRENDA

Come with me to my office, sir.

BOB HERMAN

I'm sorry, sister. I'm leaving.

SISTER BRENDA

I'd like to help you.

INT. SISTER BRENDA'S OFFICE

SISTER BRENDA

We're all fond of Isa. He does maintenance here. He's been a huge help, he doesn't seem to know the word no.

BOB HERMAN

Yes Sister. I'm sure that he's wonderful.

SISTER BRENDA

I heard your talk. I know who you are. And I know what you've done.

BOB HERMAN

What are you talking about?

SISTER BRENDA

The bible isn't the only book I've read, Mr. Herman.

She pulls out a stack of manuscripts and dumps them on her desk.

Bob reaches for them but Sister Brenda drives a ruler hard onto the stack.

SISTER BRENDA

This soup kitchen is running out of money. We can't build, we can't fix, we can't nothing.

BOB HERMAN

How much do you want for them?

INT. DETECTIVE KENEDY'S HOME BASEMENT

Harms, Clark and Kenedy are at a foldable card table. Laundry is stacked on the floor next to them.

DETECTIVE KENEDY

Why would Gent publishing care about Isa?

DETECTIVE CLARK

Herman, Cloe Forme. They both work for Gent. It must have something to do with the company. But what do they want?

DETECTIVE KENEDY

I guess anything's possible.

DETECTIVE HARMS

Who owns Gent?

DETECTIVE KENEDY

A guy named Mark Koss.

DETECTIVE HARMS

How old is he?

DETECTIVE KENEDY
55, 60.

DETECTIVE HARMS
What do we know about him?

DETECTIVE KENEDY
He was an officer in Nam.

DETECTIVE CLARK
Are you sure?

DETECTIVE KENEDY
Yeah, it's verified. He's a member of the Oakton, VFW.

DETECTIVE CLARK
Have you talked to them yet?

DETECTIVE KENEDY
Wanted to meet with you guys first.

DETECTIVE HARMS
Maybe that's the connection.

DETECTIVE CLARK
I don't like it... It's too risky. If they discover that Isa walked out of a body bag we're all done. The investigation of those two girls shot will explode again. The politicians in Nam will demand justice and the politicians here at the end of 'big industries strings' will give them our heads on silver platters... We sell a lot of Coca Cola, Microsoft software, Levi's Jeans and Mc Donalds in the land that just 30 years ago massacred American boys.

DETECTIVE KENEDY
The only thing that can save this country from the rich is a revolution.

DETECTIVE HOLT
We can do that later brother. For now there are more pressing things.

The three get up and walk out. The basement door is opened into another scene.

INT. JFK AIRPORT HANGAR SUMMER '74' NIGHT
The door to the hangar opens. An Italian looking man (GALLO'S COUSIN) with a bag in his hand enters and closes the door. There are body bags lying all over the floor of the hangar. He walks to the center. He cups his hands together.

GALLO'S COUSIN

And on the third day he arose again according to the scriptures.

Noise is heard. Gallo's cousin looks to the left.

A BODY BAG IS SITTING UP

Gallo's cousin runs, opens it. Isa's head comes out. He's all bloody.

GALLO'S COUSIN

Oh my God. Are you hurt?

ISA

No.

GALLO'S COUSIN

Why are you all bloody?

ISA

This was the bag of someone else before it was mine.

GALLO'S COUSIN

Here, let me help you up. There's a bathroom by the wall. I have an airport maintenance uniform for you. Clean up, then you'll be free.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. SISTER BRENDA'S SOUP KITCHEN

Sister Brenda is sitting at her desk.

CRUCIFIX ABOVE HER DESK

A large young black, Larry comes to the door.

LARRY

Sister. Mr. Herman is here.

SISTER BRENDA

Show him in.

INT. SISTER BRENDA'S OFFICE - SHORTLY AFTER

Bob is still standing in front of Sister Brenda. She's examining something on her desk.

SISTER BRENDA

I had expected more.

BOB HERMAN

More? I can't afford this.

SISTER BRENDA

Mr. Herman we have a deal. I've upheld my part. Do I have to remind you that we are the rightful heirs of Isa's property? He was a non-paying tenant. You see Mr. Herman, those manuscripts are rightfully our property.

BOB HERMAN

Don't even think about it sister. It wouldn't be in your best interest.

SISTER BRENDA

I'll decide what's in the best interest of this center.

BOB HERMAN

Sister. I'll double the check. But I need the next two books.

SISTER BRENDA

It may not be the best strategy, to piece meal these books. I was thinking about selling them in a block. I have another interested bid.

BOB HERMAN

These books are worthless without my name on them. They're just manuscripts. Don't out smart yourself sister.

Sister Brenda pushes the check back at him.

SISTER BRENDA

Regardless, you'll have to do better than this.

TED'S CAR

Cloe is smoking a cigarette.

CLOE

If we get the books Bob works for us. We'll be in the chips.

TED BASLE

I like it. I like it.

Ted puts the car into gear and pulls away.

CLOE

Where are we going?

TED BASLE

To see the lady who holds the key.

EXT. SOUP KITCHEN

Ted and Cloe walking down stairs to Ted's car.

TED BASLE

Can't argue with her logic. The manuscripts aren't books without Herman's name on them.

CLOE

(sternly) I control him.

Cloe reaches for the door as Ted enters the car. Isa walks from soup kitchen with a package. Cloe stares at him.

TED BASLE

There's our author again.

Cloe looks and moves in Isa's direction.

TED BASLE

Where are you going?

CLOE

To deal with him.

TED BASLE

To deal with a shit bumb?

Cloe runs, Ted follows and passes her. Cloe runs to catch up.

TED BASLE

Turn around or I'll really shoot this time.

The manuscript slips as Isa turns at building's end, he pauses to secure it, looks up to meet Ted's pistol and Cloe.

CLOE STARING AT ISA.

CLOE

Put your gun down Ted. Sir we'd like to buy your manuscript.

Cloe squints as she looks at Isa.

ISA

It's not for sale.

CLOE
Everything has a price.

ISA STARING AT CLOE

CLOE
Ted, leave us alone. I'll handle this.

Ted looks in disbelief.

TED BASLE
Are you nuts! I won't leave you alone with this scum?

CLOE
Leave... dam it just leave!

Ted turns to leave then looks at Cloe.

TED BASLE
Do you want my gun?

CLOE
(calmly)How many do you think I need?

Ted leaves, Cloe removes pistol from purse. Isa stares.

CLOE
Where are you going with that book?

ISA
To a place where they can be safe.

CLOE
They'll be safe with me.

ISA
I will not sell my books.

CLOE
A pity... locker 117 should be pretty full. I could shoot you now.

ISA
Oh.

CLOE
I always wondered if there would be justice for a man who ran off on his pregnant girl

friend.

ISA
I didn't know.

CLOE
You didn't care.

ISA
It's a long story.

CLOE
Aren't they all? You were so proud... The grandson of the only decorated black southern officer in the Civil War.

ISA
You should know something.

CLOE
Nothing that you could tell me could change anything.

ISA
I'm not so sure.

CLOE
Oh Thurmond, you always liked to dramatize.

ISA
We'll see... Lucia is our daughter.

Cloe holds her head for a moment. She looks aside. When she looks back tears are running down her face.

CLOE
The orphanage said she was adopted by people out west. Are you sure?

Isa nods gently.

ISA
I want you to know that I could not contact you... It was a question of honor. If I was found many would have suffered. I recently found out about Lucia and have been coping...

CLOE
And that is honorable? You're a coward!

ISA

Cloe! A man died. I...

CLOE

And what about me? Did you care that you killed my soul died? What kind of honorable man abandons a daughter? Man of honor... So you murdered someone in Viet Nam and have been hiding ever since... Why hide? Soldiers are nothing but henchmen for the governments that are owned by industry. You're all murderers.

ISA

I did not say...

CLOE

You don't have to. Why else would you live like a dog in the shadows?
How Chivalrous.

ISA

Chivalry ended when the kings stopped riding to war with their troops.

CLOE

I don't need to hear about it.

Cloe is openly crying.

ISA

If you speak about this I will be dead before I make it to trial.

CLOE

What do I care you coward!

Cloe rubs her forehead then points gun in Isa's face.

ISA

Life is filled with tough choices. If you shoot I only ask that you will take care of our daughter.

Cloe falls down to the ground crying.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - NIGHT

Wind ruffling newspapers, light from a lamp's partially covering Isa as he sleeps. A shadow moves over him and pulls out a large knife. The knife raises. A voice is heard in the distance. The shadow stabs Isa in the chest. Isa grunts.

DETECTIVE CLARK

Isa! Isa!

Isa blocks second thrust, shadow turns and sees Clark who fires a shot. The shadow turns and runs away.

Clark arrives.

DETECTIVE CLARK

Isa. Oh my God are you alright?

ISA

Yes, but I'm cut on my chest.

Clark helps him up.

INT. DETECTIVE KENEDY'S HOME, BASEMENT

Isa is laid on a mattress in a dim lit room. The three detectives are over him.

DETECTIVE HARMS

This is getting crazy, crazy.

DETECTIVE CLARK

I couldn't make him out.

DETECTIVE KENEDY

Lucky, but why were you there?

DETECTIVE CLARK

I followed him from the center this afternoon. I went to check on him.

ISA

It's time for closure.

DETECTIVE HARMS

No way.

ISA

It's time for closure.

DETECTIVE HARMS

Fuck you Isa.

DETECTIVE KENEDY

Isa's right Harms... We all knew that this day could come.

Clark frowns at Harms who takes his gun out of it's holster.

DETECTIVE HARMS

If anyone touches him I'll blow them to pieces. There's not enough evidence for closure!

ISA

Jeff. I will not be the cause of 10 men falling. There are families to consider. Duty calls for closure.

DETECTIVE HARMS

Tommy, Jack, I'm sorry about this. Give me your guns. Isa's coming with me.

DETECTIVE KENEDY

Nobody likes this! Are you willing to risk my life, my family, yours?

DETECTIVE HARMS

I'm willing to blow your head off if you try to stop me. Give me your guns both of you.

Clark looks at Kenedy and nods. They give their guns to Harms who unloads them and gives them back to them.

DETECTIVE HARMS

Now help Isa up and lay him down in the back seat of my car.

They reach down for Isa. Clark reaches into an open tool box next to Isa simultaneously. He pulls out a utility knife. They lift Isa up and walk out to the car.

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND KENEDY'S HOME

Kenedy and Clark lie Isa gently down in the back seat. The whole time Harms is covering them from behind. Harms jumps into the front seat and speeds away.

CLARK AND KENEDY WATCHING THE CAR SPEED OFF

INT. DETECTIVE HARMS'S HOME, GARAGE

The automatic garage door is closing.

DETECTIVE HARMS

We're home Isa. We're home. I'll take care of you. I'll take care of you like you took care of us.

The garage door closes. Harms switches map light on, turns and kneels facing Isa.

DETECTIVE HARMS

Isa. Isa!

OPEN GASH ON ISA'S NECK AND THE BLOOD STAINED SEAT

DETECTIVE HARMS
Oh Isa!

Harms opens the back car door and hugs Isa's head.

DETECTIVE HARMS
(crying) Oh Isa!

The side door of the garage opens. Light enters the car. Harms grabs his gun.

VOICE
Drop it.

Silence.

VOICE
Drop it!

Harms turns with the gun in his hand. He points at to the shadow. The shadow is pointing the gun at him.

Pause.

The shadow begins to slowly lower it's gun.

HARMS ARM REMAINS TIGHT AND STRAIGHT

Harms moves forward, gun in hand. The shadow's arm is at a 30 degree angle to the ground. Harms has the gun up against the shadow's forehead. Another figure comes into the doorway behind the shadow.

DETECTIVE HARMS
It-Was-Not-Call-For-Closure!

SHADOW
It was Isa's order!

DETECTIVE HARMS
It-Was-Not-Call-For-Closure!

Harms cocks the trigger, hesitates then drops the gun to his side and fires.

DETECTIVE HARMS
(crying)It was not call for closure.

His body falls into that of the shadow's. They hug.

DETECTIVE HARMS
(crying)It was not call for closure.

DETECTIVE CLARK

Jack open the garage door. I'll get rid of the body.

The garage door begins to open.

DETECTIVE KENEDY

(feebly) Wait, wait.

Kenedy leans into the car, snaps dog tags off of Isa's neck.

INT. HOTEL ROOM DARK

Grunting and moaning are coming from the room. A figure gets up and turns the light on in the bathroom.

LUCIA'S FACE

She's bare chested in underwear. She bends to snort a line of coke.

LUCIA

This is all a lot of kicks but I want to stop. I mean it.

VOICE

Come back into bed. I think that I can change your mind.

LUCIA

It better be something really convincing.

VOICE

Turn the light on. I'll show you.

Lucia turns the light on.

MARK KOSS OPENS A BOX WITH A DIAMOND NECKLACE IN IT

She slides next to him. He reaches down, takes a puff from pipe, puts it in the ash tray and fastens the necklace around Lucia's neck.

MARK KOSS

Is this convincing enough?

SHORTLY AFTER

Koss and Lucia are dressed. Mark's sitting with his head in his hands. Lucia is glaring at him.

LUCIA

Men. You all like to eat sugar but you don't like cavities.

MARK KOSS

This is blackmail. Please Lucia. I just gave you 25,000 worth of jewelry.

LUCIA

I want you to sign over my husbands books to me.

MARK KOSS

I can't! I won't! Gent would blow sky high.

LUCIA

Then I'll tell Mrs. Koss.

MARK KOSS

But you can't. She's just itching for a reason to take half of everything I own.

Lucia walks to him and takes him by the collar.

LUCIA

Listen to me! You'll do as your told!

MARK KOSS

Please Lucia, listen, I'm working on a deal. I haven't told anyone.

Lucia looks on with curiosity.

LUCIA

What will it do for me?

MARK KOSS

There may be a big movie deal coming our way. Bobby moving could foul things up.

LUCIA

What will it do for me!

MARK KOSS

Lots and lots of money... Without my cooperation there's no deal... the books are fine but the big money's in the movies.

FADE OUT.

EXT. OUTSIDE HERMAN'S CONDO

Ted's on the phone in the car.

TED BASLE

You think that the mother is Cloe Forme and that the father is a black man named Thurman Goode? (sarcastically) This is good.

Lucia opens door and enters.

LUCIA

God. I can't stand him anymore. Why did I marry him?

TED BASLE

Say the word and he'll end up like Tony. You'll have to cry real tears though. Convincing... That shouldn't be hard for you.

LUCIA

Where are we going?

Ted turns the vehicle into traffic.

TED BASLE

The usual.

LUCIA

Ted give me the coke.

TED BASLE

Wait a minute honey.

LUCIA

Ted give me the coke. There's no money anywhere. I hocked some jewelry last week. Give me the coke. Talk later.

TED BASLE

You know, if your husband was out of the picture things would be smoother. His books would pop up, they'd be best sellers. Then maybe a movie deal. It would have to be done carefully of course.

LUCIA

Give me the coke!

TED BASLE

Stop being so anxious... and don't ever snort his insurance payments.

Ted laughs and tugs at her head.

TED BASLE

Show me some of what you learned in that Catholic orphanage.

Lucia's head goes down on his lap. She sniffles.

INT. KOSS' OFFICE

Bob is standing in front of Koss.

MARK KOSS

No literary relationship is easy Bobby... but I'm onto a movie deal. Don't abandon me now. It will make us both richer than you could imagine. We're in this together. Right?... Don't do anything stupid. OK? All you got to do is write 3 more books.
Koss reaches for Bob's hand. Bob shakes Mark's hand.

FADE OUT.

INT. ROOM IN BED - LATER

Lucia is standing. A man's figure is on the bed.

VOICE

You're fucked up!

LUCIA

You're fucked up!

VOICE

Where did you scam that name Lucia from?

LUCIA

It was no scam!

Lucia throws her shoe.

LUCIA

My name was Lucy. The orphanage sent me to live with an Italian family in Bensonhurst when I was 9. It was the best 4 years of my life.

She wipes tears from her eyes.

LUCIA

All I wanted was someone to love me. The Russo's loved me. Then they took me away!

VOICE

That's when you started with Tony. When you were 9!

LUCIA

(sniffing)Yes. No. I was 11 or 12!

Lucia throws other shoe.

LUCIA

But I loved him. I always loved him!

VOICE

Did he ever love you?

LUCIA

He said that to a hundred girls.

VOICE

Is that why he died?

Lucia looks up.

BOB HERMAN

Look. Our money problems are over. Koss is making a deal. We'll have more money than we know what to do with. We'll have a new start. I'll take care of you.

Lucia looks at Bobby.

LUCIA

Bobby... I stopped believing! I already sold the house. You'll never forgive me once you know who I was and what I do to get by.

BOB HERMAN

I want this to work.

LUCIA

Work? Do you know what I do for work? The only job I've ever been good at?

BOB HERMAN

You trying to tell me something?

LUCIA

You'll hate me.

BOB HERMAN

Oh my God! Why tell me? Why would you ever be honest?

LUCIA

You'll hate me. You'll hate me forever.

BOB HERMAN

You mean your clients? Nothing would surprise me!

Silence.

LUCIA
(Quietly)Koss, Basle.

*Tears well in Bob's eyes.
He gets up, goes into the closet and comes out with a suitcase.*

LUCIA
I told you you'd hate me! You're like everyone else you're running out!

BOB HERMAN
You're sick! But you won't get anything else from me.

LUCIA
Bobby, you wouldn't. I'm sorry Bobby. I'm sorry.

Bob moves to leave.

BOB HERMAN
Yeah you're sorry alright because you don't have a choice. Honesty's the best policy when all else fails.

LUCIA
Oh really? Is that what you tell the fans of your books?

Bob winces and leaves.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREET - SUMMER '74'
Isa is standing on the side of the Airport Maintenance truck. Gallo's cousin is on the inside.

GALLO'S COUSIN
My cousin told me to tell you that you won't be alone for long. Soon most of them will be back in the big Apple.

ISA
Give them my best wishes and warmest goodbye.

Isa walks away from the truck.

ISA
(singing)Oh it's good to be a free man.

INT. OFFICES OF GENT MEDIA, CONFERENCE ROOM - FOLLOWING DAY
The conference room is immaculate. Jennifer walks in with bottled water. Lou walks in.

JENNIFER
Has Bob arrived?

LOU MELL
Bob the puss head?

Jennifer looks at Lou. Bob walks in. Lou walks out.

INT. OFFICES OF GENT MEDIA, HALLWAY - LATER
Jennifer quietly closes the conference room door behind her. She walks. Lou confronts her.

LOU MELL
How's it going in there?

JENNIFER
Gent stock's looking higher.

LOU MELL
I'd never have believed it... the phony pulled it off. Movies... Are you still in love with that jerk?

JENNIFER
(low voice)The man I was in love with is not a jerk... Maybe he never existed at all.

Lou watches Jennifer walk away.

INT. HERMAN'S CONDO - SHORTLY AFTER
Bob is sitting with Cloe.

BOB HERMAN
This thing is out of control.

CLOE
Bob I don't know what's so important that it couldn't wait for tomorrow morning.

There's a knock at the door.

BOB HERMAN
(confidently)He's here.

CLOE
Whose here?

Bob stands and opens the door. Ted walks in. Bob socks him. Ted rubs his jaw and grabs for his gun.

BOB HERMAN
I know Ted.

TED BASLE
Know what?

BOB HERMAN
Know about you and Lucia.

TED BASLE
I deserved that... But deserve it or not, the next time you swing at me I'm gonna take you down.

BOB HERMAN
I hate both of you but you're the only people in the world that can help me. Koss has a movie deal. I need the books. After that I'm out of this town and you're all out of my life.

Ted glances at Cloe.

BOB HERMAN
A nun has them and she wants to sell them to me... But her price is far higher than I can reach.

TED BASLE
How do you know it's more than you can afford?

BOB HERMAN
Because before she raised her price the offer was a 2,000,000 dollar donation. I couldn't afford that.

TED BASLE
Why is this important to me?

BOB HERMAN
It's important because Koss is making a deal that will make us all rich. Gent stock will double, triple...

CLOE
Where's the author of the material?

BOB HERMAN

(irritated)I'm not sure. He may be dead for all I know...and that's how you will be Ted if you ever touch my wife again.

CLOE

He's not dead.

BOB HERMAN

Well, we'll see.

INT. DETECTIVE KENEDY'S HOME BASEMENT - SAME TIME

Harm's, Kenedy and Clark are together.

DETECTIVE KENEDY

It's finally all over.

DETECTIVE HARMS

In the end Isa got his way. We're all still free...

DETECTIVE KENEDY

Is there anything that we have to know or do to clean things up?

DETECTIVE CLARK

No. Everything's been taken care of.

DETECTIVE HARMS

Where's his body.

DETECTIVE CLARK

It's best if you don't know.

DETECTIVE KENEDY

Say, this doesn't mean that we won't see each other or anything... Isa died not our friendship.

INT. HERMAN'S CONDO - LATER THAT EVENING

Bob, Cloe and Ted are sitting together in the apartment.

BOB HERMAN

I went. I spoke to the good sister. She promises that Isa's dead.

TED BASLE

And her proof.

Bob tosses the dog tag at Ted. Ted looks at it.

TED BASLE
Sgt. Thurmond Goode.

CLOE
Let me see that.

TED BASLE
I got something to do.

Ted exits. Cloe stares at the floor.

CLOE
(in trance)Thurmond wrote 'Standard Deviations' and 'Circle's Square Peg' and 'Gracious Ignorance'. He gave you the books because of Lucia... Oh my God. Lucia.

BOB HERMAN
How do you know?

CLOE
(in a trance)I know. And I also know that he's not dead.

BOB HERMAN
(anxious) How do you know that? Damn it Cloe! How do you know it?

CLOE
He moved books from the bus terminal last night.

BOB HERMAN
Could it have been anyone else?

CLOE
How far do you trust Ted?

BOB HERMAN
About as far as I could throw this building.

INT. TED'S HOME - THAT NIGHT

DARK BUT FOR COMPUTER SCREEN

Ted has his back to the camera and is working on AOL.

STONEWALL BRIGADE COLONEL THURMOND GOODE ONLY SOUTHERN BLACK OFFICER DECORATED BY THE STATE OF GEORGIA IN THE CIVIL WAR

Ted copies the page. From behind someone with rubber gloved hands wraps a rope around his neck. Ted convulses.

VOICE

Sorry Teddy. Time to go.

Ted's body slumps and two silenced shots are heard.

INT. TED'S HOME THAT NIGHT SHORTLY AFTER

A pair of hands with tissue in them erases the screen and erases the address. He logs out.

COMPUTER

Goodbye.

INT. POLICE STATION - NEXT DAY

Bob is standing in a line-up on the other side of a one way glass plate. On the inside of the plate Detectives Harms and Clark are with an elderly woman.

DETECTIVE CLARK

Number 3 ma'am.

ELDERLY WOMAN

I don't know.

Detective speaks into a microphone.

DETECTIVE

Number 3 please turn to the side.

Bob turns to the side.

DETECTIVE CLARK

Is that him ma'am?

ELDERLY WOMAN

I'm...I'm not sure.

ELDERLY WOMAN

Will he know that I picked him?

DETECTIVE CLARK

If that's him, you won't have to worry. He'll be locked away for life.

The woman looks kindly at Kenedy and then Clark.

ELDERLY WOMAN

Yes, that's the man that I saw entering Mr. Basel's apartment last night.

DETECTIVE KENEDY
Are you 100% sure?

ELDERLY WOMAN
Yes I am.

DETECTIVE KENEDY
Book him.

INT. LOCK UP - NEXT DAY

LOCK-UP GUARD
Herman out!

A black turn-key walks over and opens the cell door. Bob Herman walks out.

INT. HOLDING ROOM - MINUTES LATER
Cloe, Arnold Schuman and another white male (ATTORNEY SHELBY WARREN) are waiting for Bob. He enters and breaks down crying on the table.

BOB HERMAN
I didn't do it. I didn't do it. I didn't do it.

ARNIE SCHUMAN
We know that you didn't do it. Calm yourself. In an hour you'll be out of here. You remember Shelby Warren. I've hired him to help you. This is an obstacle that will iron itself out. I hope.

INT. POLICE STATION - SHORTLY AFTER
Lucia is seated in front of DETECTIVE HOLT.

DETECTIVE HOLT
Ma'am, just a few more questions.

LUCIA
Yes of course.

DETECTIVE HOLT
Did you know that Ted Basel worked for your husband?

LUCIA
No. I read in the paper about Basel. I can't believe that my husband would have anything to do with someone like him.

DETECTIVE HOLT

I see...

The officer jots on a piece of paper.

DETECTIVE HOLT

So you've never personally met Mr. Basel?

LUCIA

No of course not.

LUCIA'S SWEET FACE

INT. ARNIE SCHUMAN OFFICES - LATER THAT DAY

Bob is sitting. Arnie is standing.

ARNIE SCHUMAN

Warren Shelby got you bailed. You need to find money. We need to give him at least a 20,000 retainer fee... Call your parents... your wife's parents?... Everything's at risk here, everything.

INT. CLOE FORME'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT EVENING

Cloe is at the stove. There's a knock at the door. Cloe walks to the door.

CLOE

Who is it?

VOICE

Police.

Cloe opens the door. Detective Kenedy walks in.

CLOE

Yes?

DETECTIVE KENEDY

Ma'am I'd like to have a word with you. May I?

CLOE

Who are you?

Kenedy pulls out his badge.

DETECTIVE KENEDY
Detective Jack Kenedy.

CLOE
I assume that this is official police business.

DETECTIVE KENEDY
I'm glad that you asked because actually it's not. I have something for sale that you may want to buy.

CLOE
Oh, I doubt that.

DETECTIVE KENEDY
Don't. I have the contents of locker 117. I'll be waiting for you by the bird house in Central Park in one hour.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - ONE HOUR LATER
Cloe is sitting on a bench. Detective Kenedy walks up.

DETECTIVE KENEDY
I like sunny days. Everything's so clear.

CLOE
Oh?

DETECTIVE KENEDY
Did you bring your check book?

CLOE
No.

DETECTIVE KENEDY
Oh... then why did you come?

CLOE
(laughing) You're so confident. May I ask why?

DETECTIVE KENEDY
Let's just say I'm confident that you'd help a close relative.

CLOE
I don't have a close relative.

DETECTIVE KENEDY
Don't you?

CLOE
You don't know me.

DETECTIVE KENEDY
Cloe I know things about you that you think no one knows. Things that you'd like to forget yourself.

CLOE
I like the park detective but you're not so convincing. In fact I find you a bit confused.

DETECTIVE KENEDY
I'm sure that you'll be convinced to do whatever you can to help your daughter.

CLOE
Oh, you know my daughter? I didn't know I had one.

DETECTIVE KENEDY
Not legally maybe. But Lucia Herman is the child that you brought to St. Anthony's Orphanage 30 years ago. She's in trouble. Her husband needs the books that I have.

CLOE
I don't know what you're talking about.

DETECTIVE KENEDY
Miss Forme, Isa's name was Thurmond Goode. He's now deceased. But Lucia, who the orphanage called Lucy Stokes who then became Mrs. Robert Herman is your daughter. Yours and Isa's that is. Interracial children were not the rage in the 70's... Your daughter had a deal with the good Sister Brenda, who double crossed her like she double crossed your son-in-law. You see the good sister and your daughter knew each other from the orphanage years ago. She's a dilly your daughter. Besides being a whore and a liar she has a nasty coke addiction.

CLOE'S STARE

DETECTIVE KENEDY
Can we talk now Cloe? I'm almost certain that you killed Ted trying to protect Lucia from him. You buy the books from me and I'll give you a bonus...I'll keep my mouth shut.

INT. HERMAN'S CONDO - LATER THAT EVENING
Cloe is standing Bob is sitting.

CLOE
You can't give up. She's your wife.

BOB HERMAN

She's a sad joke. And since when does any of that matter to you?

CLOE

Bob, for once in your life stand up. Stand up for the both of you.

Bob stands.

BOB HERMAN

OK, I'm standing. I should have left the damn book on the bus.

CLOE

We all should have done a lot of things differently... But it's too late for that. You have to do what you can to better your lives now.

BOB HERMAN

Lucia can't get any better at what she does. She plays men like they were musical instruments... And she's had more flutes in her mouth than the flutist at the Philharmonic...

Bob laughs, he breaks down.

BOB HERMAN

Do the humane thing Cloe... Give me your gun. Let me finish myself... Without the books I'm dead anyway.

CLOE

You'll have the books and you'll put your life back together... With Lucia.

BOB HERMAN

You're nuts... Isa would never give up his books. I know him! You don't know him!

CLOE

I have three books and I'll be getting the rest.

BOB HERMAN

You're crazy!

Cloe opens her purse. She takes out a letter.

CLOE

I know Isa.

Bob takes the letter.

BOB HERMAN

This sounds like Isa's writing, who was Isa writing love letters to?

CLOE

To me...

Bob turns the page over.

LOVE, THURMOND

Bob looks down. He shakes his head. Cloe grabs him.

CLOE

Take control of your life. Reach inside for your pride, your honor.

Bob looks at Cloe. Tears are welling in his eyes.

BOB HERMAN

If you get me the books I can begin to get them ready for Koss.

CLOE

And Lucia?

BOB HERMAN

What about her?

CLOE

I want Lucia to own 50% of the books and the rights.

The closet door opens. Lucia walks out. She's holding a gun.

LUCIA

That won't do. I want 100%. Right now Mark Koss is picking the books up from Sister Brenda.

BOB HERMAN

Lucia.

LUCIA

Shut up Bob. The books are rightfully mine. My deceased father wrote them...I got all my brains from you mother. And it's working out better than I planned. First I thought that I'd have to kill Bob here to get the rights. Then I thought it better to kill Isa. Now I have the best of both worlds. I tried to kill Isa in the park. My partner finished the job.

Detective Kenedy is my partner Mommy. Now if you could just tie each other up for me. Detective Kenedy will be here shortly.

CLOE
(Crying) Lucy, oh Lucy what have they done to you?

LUCIA
It's too late. You don't care anyway. Your tears are as phony as your boobs. You were more sincere when I met you leaving Bob's apartment and my wedding.

Lucia's eyes are tearing.

CLOE
But I had no idea that you were my...

LUCIA
Don't say it or I swear I'll shoot.

Bob walks in front of Cloe.

BOB HERMAN
If you're going to shoot, shoot me. This whole travesty is my doing.

Bob inches closer to Lucia.

LUCIA
Don't push your luck.

Bob continues towards Lucia. Lucia cocks the trigger.

LUCIA
I mean it!

Lucia shoots and hits Bob in the left arm.

BOB HERMAN
Give me the gun...

Tears are falling from Lucia's eyes.

LUCIA
Get back. I swear.

Bob grabs Lucia. She falls into his arms and drops the gun.

LUCIA
No one will take care of me. No one loves me.

CLOE

It's not true honey. Lucia. I'll make it all better. Your mother will...

Lucia grabs the gun and points it towards Cloe.

LUCIA

Don't ever say that again. Get away from me or I'll shoot!

EXT. EMPTY STREET IN FRONT OF WAREHOUSE

Detective Clark is standing next to his car. Another car pulls up. Detective Kenedy gets out of the car.

DETECTIVE KENEDY

What's wrong?

DETECTIVE CLARK

My car's on the blitz. While I'm waiting I thought that we'd pass some time together.

DETECTIVE KENEDY

While we're waiting?

Kenedy reaches into his car and grabs the microphone.

DETECTIVE KENEDY

This is Kenedy! Get someone down here on Staley and Webb in front of the old Getz factory now!

DETECTIVE CLARK

You're too predictable Jack, like the break in at Isa's center... Greed was always your down fall. It's closure Jack.

Kenedy turns around, he goes for his gun. Clark shoots twice. Kenedy falls, gun in hand. Detective Clark drops his tape covered pistol and drives away.

INT. DETECTIVE HOLT'S CAR SHORTLY AFTER

Detective Holt's car turns onto an empty street. He parks and turns around and takes off Koss' cuffs.

MARK KOSS

You've made the mistake of your career. Do you know what are you doing? I know the mayor personally and...

DETECTIVE HOLT

You're being undesirably discharged twice.

MARK KOSS

What are you talking about?

DETECTIVE HOLT

In Nam our boys found paper in their first aid cannisters because you sold the bandages to the civilians. They sold them to the Viet Cong. You had a lot of nerve joining the Oakton VFW. But I guess a large donation gets you into most any place...But it can't buy you honor.

MARK KOSS

You're insane and I'll have your badge. Do you know who I am?

DETECTIVE HOLT

I told you who you were. Captain Ginsel plea bargained and got you off the hook with an Undesirable discharge. Would you like to at least apologize before you die?

MARK KOSS

Apologize? Before I die!

DETECTIVE HOLT

Mr. Koss those are defective cuffs. That's how you got them off. Take this 22 that you had between your legs. It's yours, I took it from your office. It's the one that you killed Scumbag Basle with.

MARK KOSS

Wait...Wait....

DETECTIVE HOLT

Take the gun!

Koss grabs the gun.

DETECTIVE HOLT

Mr. Koss, what would you rather do spend the rest of your life in prison or die?

TEARS RUNNING DOWN KOSS' FACE

DETECTIVE HOLT

I know what I'd rather do.

Koss turns the gun on Holt and pulls the trigger.

MARK KOSS

It's not loaded!

Holt shoots him twice.

DETECTIVE HOLT

I didn't know that.

Holt picks up Koss' head. Koss' eyes open slightly. Detective Holt winks.

DETECTIVE HOLT

Your second undesirable discharge came from a 38 special... It was for all our boys in Nam.

INT. HERMAN'S CONDO

There's a knock. Lucia opens door. Her back's turned, she's shakily holding the gun on Cloe. Bob is unconscious.

DETECTIVE CLARK

Give me the gun.

INT. CLOE FORME'S APARTMENT - SOME DAYS LATER

Lucia, Bob, Isa and Cloe are seated eating.

ISA

Every man lives his life for something... Even Ted Basle... If it wasn't for his PI work and greed we'd never be here... Life is filled with necessary evils.

LUCIA

No. Isa...Dad.

Isa looks across the table at Cloe.

ISA

Take care of our daughter.

CLOE

Of course.

BOB HERMAN

And I'll keep studying.

Isa stands, he puts his hands on Bob's shoulders.

ISA

You'll be fine son... Remember, writing and life are long roads. Experience is our teacher and if we live and write from our hearts we can't miss, no matter how little we have in our pockets... Even if it's nothing, no matter who reads us... Even if it's nobody.

BOB HERMAN

Isa, when I first met you, you told me that there was something that I must do for you.
What was it?

Isa looks at Lucia.

ISA

Take care of my daughter... by being a man of honor... IF we are truly men of honor we
will take care of the ones we love.

Bob hugs Isa. Clark, Holt, Gallo and Harms are waiting at the door.

ISA

My brothers are calling.

Lucia runs.

LUCIA

But Dad where will you go?

He hugs her.

ISA

I'll never be all that far away.

LUCIA

I love you.

ISA

Let me go honey... And remember. There is no one poorer than someone who cannot
afford to hope.

Lucia falls to the floor crying. Cloe walks to her and comforts her.

ISA

She'll be better. And someday her regrets will be replaced by dreams. She'll learn as we
all eventually do, that when man no longer guides his life with honor he forfeits it. Honor
is the thread of society and without it the fabric eventually unravels.

Isa rises and moves towards the detectives at the door.

ISA

Men take care of my family like you've always taken care of me. I'm going to go to the
land of my forefathers. The weather there should be a little gentler on my bones.

*The screen freezes. The smiling friends becomes a picture of their platoon.
The word Chivalry covers the picture.
FADE TO BLACK.*