

WALTZ IN MARATHON

by

Rex McGee

Based on the Novel by

Charles Dickinson

"WALTZ IN MARATHON"

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAY

It is autumn on the small town square of Marathon, Wisconsin (Pop. 10,003), and there is a mid-morning buzz of activity in and out of an old diner and gas station. Several storefronts on the square are empty, however, and the ancient Esquire movie theater has been boarded up, suggesting serious economic decline. A famous cannon from World War I stands in the center green, where a banner heralds the forthcoming FOUNDER'S DAY, October 15, but the words are struck through with CANCELLED.

CAMERA PANS over the town square to...

EXT. HARRY WALTZ'S HOUSE - DAY

The best house in Marathon, and home of its richest man. Fortress-strong, with a porch running around three sides, it sits atop a hill, overlooking the square. Sitting in front of the house, like hard-shelled candies, are a dozen repossessed vehicles, surrounded by likewise recaptured washers, dryers, refrigerators, freezers and other large appliances.

A steady stream of MOURNERS go in and out, some carrying covered dishes, others bringing flowers. A HEARSE is parked near the front steps.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

START ON a VERY OLD MAN, dead, lying in a casket. Someone places the binaurals of an ancient stethoscope around his neck, slips the diaphragm in his breast pocket.

SAM'S VOICE

What are you doing?

WALTZ'S VOICE

He'd hate to be without it.

Now we find HARRY WALTZ, late-sixties, of shaggy hair and lithe, impertinent face, dressed in an old blue suit, standing near the casket at one end of the dining room, drinking beer out of a bottle. He is talking to his friend SAM BOGGINS, the local barber.

WALTZ

Mama gave it to him when he graduated medical school in 1933. Who knows? He may need it.

Waltz moves to get a good look at his father's face. He looks a long time.

WALTZ

We never had six words to say to each other our whole lives.

SAM

Fathers and sons. That's the way it is.

WALTZ

He loved his grandsons, but he never gave a damn about me. Maybe it was because of my profession.

MAN'S VOICE

Harry --

Waltz looks up. An older, slender man, JAKE BRADLEY, has walked up.

JAKE

I'm real sorry. My daddy said he was the best doctor this town ever had.

WALTZ

(smiles)

Thanks, Jake. I appreciate you coming over.

He starts to shake hands, but instead Bradley hands Waltz a thick white envelope.

JAKE

It's a couple days early. Figured as long as I was here...

Waltz looks in the envelope. It's full of cash.

JAKE

(proudly)

Double payment. I got lucky at the craps table.

Waltz taps his shoulder, puts the envelope in his coat pocket.

WALTZ

I'm glad.

EXT. WALTZ'S HOUSE - DAY

A big, black Cadillac Coupe De Ville glides up the steep driveway, parks near the hearse. The DRIVER, a large, muscular man in a suit, gets out first, surveys the area like a Secret Serviceman looking for assassins. Then the passenger gets out.

PAUL VERMILLION, a very smooth, handsome, dark-haired man in his forties, wearing an expensive suit, motions for his driver to wait and he starts up the steps to the house.

INT. ENTRANCE FOYER - DAY

The foyer is crowded with MOURNERS, eating heavy funeral food off plastic plates.

Vermillion enters, looking decidedly different than the others, and people recognize him, hurry to get out of his way. He walks through, leaving a staring, whispered BUZZ in his wake.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

START ON the screen of a small TV set, where a SOAP OPERA is in progress. Waltz is watching it intently, finishing off his beer.

FEMALE VOICE

Waltz -- ?

Waltz looks up. A handsome woman in her fifties, RUTH MORGAN, enters, carrying dirty dishes.

RUTH

Are you okay?

WALTZ

(keeping an eye on the TV
SOAP)

Yeah. Big things happening on my story today.

RUTH

Still want me to come this Thursday?

WALTZ

Why should this Thursday be any different than the others?

She puts the dirty dishes in the sink, looks at him tenderly.

RUTH

See you then...

She gives him a kiss on the cheek, starts off.

WALTZ
(barely notices)
Thank you.

INT. HALLWAY LEADING TO KITCHEN - DAY

Paul Vermillion squeezes past more mourners, heading for the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

A birdlike woman, ELAINE SCHOOLCRAFT, is slipping Waltz one of those fat payment envelopes. Vermillion enters.

VERMILLION
Harry --

Elaine walks away, and Waltz turns to see Vermillion approaching.

VERMILLION
Very sorry about your father.

They shake. Waltz strains to be polite.

WALTZ
Thank you.

VERMILLION
He was a legend -- like you.

EXT. BACK YARD - DAY

Working on a new bottle of beer now, Waltz leads Vermillion out of the house. They walk across the grass, ambling toward a large white gazebo in back.

VERMILLION
You've been in the news, Harry. Your name is on the wind. Everywhere I go, I hear about Harry Waltz, the friendly loan shark, the one-man Red Cross.

WALTZ
You must go to some boring places. I thought your territory was in La Crosse.

VERMILLION

How old are you now, Harry? Sixty?
Sixty-five?

WALTZ

Why do you want to know how old I am?

VERMILLION

I hear your business is not so good.

WALTZ

Where did you hear that?

VERMILLION

It was all over the casino -- and I
said it was a lie -- that you were
carrying some deadbeats who refused to
pay.

WALTZ

A temporary problem.

VERMILLION

Then it's true?

WALTZ

A few men are behind. I don't lend to
deadbeats.

VERMILLION

You want me to talk to them?

WALTZ

I'll take care of it.

VERMILLION

You know best. But those guys will
eat you alive. Once they get a taste
of getting off, it's like a cancer --
it'll go right through your whole
list.

WALTZ

(coolly)

Thanks for your concern.

Waltz and Vermillion enter the gazebo.

VERMILLION

Have you talked to your son lately?

WALTZ

(shakes his head)

Eugene and I -- we don't talk much.

VERMILLION

He's out of control, Harry. He's beating up everybody, and he's hurting business. He's making everybody afraid to borrow. You've got to talk to him.

WALTZ

Eugene isn't interested in what I have to say.

VERMILLION

In all the years you've been in business, you've never had to lay a hand on anybody. You can talk to people, persuade them.

WALTZ

Eugene is a grown man. I stopped giving him advice a long time ago.

VERMILLION

Why is it, Harry?

WALTZ

What?

VERMILLION

Why are you such a gentleman, and your son such a thug?

EXT. WALTZ'S HOUSE - DUSK

The mourners are gone, the house is quiet. The setting sun casts a bright orange reflection on the Western windows, suggesting a blazing fire inside.

INT. WALTZ'S STUDY - NIGHT

Waltz enters, his suit coat sagging. He turns on a lamp, then goes to his desk, an old rolltop. He starts pulling those fat envelopes out of his pockets -- all of his pockets -- until he unloads maybe twenty envelopes onto his desktop. We notice a small framed photo of Waltz, a WOMAN, and TWO YOUNG SONS...

Then Waltz turns to a small bookcase stereo, picks up a cassette.

INSERT - CASSETTE

It is labelled simply: MONROE.

WALTZ

starts playing the cassette. The MUSIC is SOLO PIANO, the mood bluesy, forlorn. Waltz takes off his suit coat, hangs it over the back of his chair and sits down at the desk. With a thin gold knife, he slits open an envelope, and currency of all kind spills out -- FIFTIES, TWENTIES, TENS and COINS taped to index cards. He stacks it carefully, then pulls out a large ledger, opens it.

INSERT - LEDGER

Waltz flips through the many pages of his enormous client list and comes finally to the name he's looking for. Then, in meticulous hand, he records the cash payment.

WALTZ

takes his life's work very seriously.

EXT. POOR NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Waltz's Ford Explorer drives down a block of delapidated homes and pulls in the driveway of a shabby, peeling two-bedroom house. The yard is shaggy and littered with crap, and an old car, tireless, is sitting up on blocks. Waltz gets out, starts for the door.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Waltz pushes the bell, knocks on the door. A few moments later, it opens -- accompanied by a BLAST of NOISE from a TV GAME SHOW. A tired man of forty, LOU BASIL, holding a crying BABY, smiles at Waltz.

LOU

Harry! I was just gonna call you.
(to the baby)
Shhh! Shut up!

WALTZ

Got a cup of coffee?

LOU

Sure.

He opens the screen to let Waltz in.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

It's a mess. Newspaper want-ads lay scattered around a ripped recliner chair, a mound of laundry is piled on an old sofa. A broken bassinet is next to the chair.

Waltz enters. The game show blares on. The baby continues to cry.

LOU

Ever since Nell got that cashier's job, I take care of the house.

WALTZ

When you're not playing the slots --

LOU

(to the baby)

Shhh! Little Lou!

(to Waltz)

I can't get him to stop bawlin'.

WALTZ

Maybe if you turned down the TV...

The baby SCREAMS. Waltz holds out his arms.

WALTZ

Let me try. You go fix the coffee.
Decaf. Regular gives me gas.

Lou hands him the baby, exits. Waltz pats him on the back, and the infant begins to quiet.

WALTZ

There, there...

Baby gurgling in his arms, Waltz goes to the TV, flips it off. Finally, it is quiet. Waltz then goes to the bassinet, tosses away clutter from inside -- a tiny football, a Spiderman doll -- and he lays the child down.

LITTLE LOU

is blinking his eyes, and Harry's large hand gently rubs his belly. Little Lou's little eyes finally close.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Waltz comes down a short corridor, glancing in the other messy rooms as he passes.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Waltz enters as Lou is taking out two coffee cups from the cabinet.

WALTZ

Baby's asleep.

LOU

That's a goddam miracle. You oughta hire out.

WALTZ

I've already got a business, Lou. That's why I'm here. You're late this month.

LOU

Don't worry, Harry -- I got it --

He unscrews a porcelain cookie jar and extracts a handful of bills. He smiles at Waltz, sighs.

LOU

I just wanted some company.

EXT. STATE HIGHWAY - DAY

Waltz's Ford Explorer heads up woodsy, picturesque Route 15 toward Vassar, and turns onto a dirt road.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Waltz drives deeper into the woods.

EXT. COTTAGE - DAY

The Explorer pulls up next to a small cottage sitting on the bank of the river, and Waltz gets out, goes to the front door. He knocks. No answer. He leans over, looks in the window. Knocks again. A thin, nervous man named EARL RIVERS opens the door, looks surprised.

EARL

Mr. Waltz. I didn't know you made house calls.

WALTZ

Got a cup of decaf?

Earl opens the door, and Waltz goes inside.

INT. EARL'S COTTAGE - DAY

Earl holds out three TEN-DOLLAR BILLS.

EARL
I've got thirty.

WALTZ
You owe me four-fifty.

EARL
I lost my ass at roulette.

WALTZ
That's not my problem. Thirty does me
no good.

EARL
I heard you take a little at a time.

WALTZ
The four-fifty is a little, compared
to the total. Now you want to pay a
little on a little?

Earl gets shaky now, like he expects Waltz to backhand him across
the room.

EARL
So what happens now?

WALTZ
You tell me.

EARL
I get paid in a week. I can pay you
then.

WALTZ
How will you eat? How will you buy
gas to get to work?

Earl shrugs.

WALTZ
I'll have to take the Sony.

EARL
My TV?

WALTZ

You leave me no choice. Go get it.

Earl exits hastily. Waltz walks behind a small partition, to the kitchen area. He takes a cup, pours a coffee from a pot on the stove. He looks out the window.

HIS POV - TOWARD THE RIVER

A silver boat is tying up at Earl's dock, and a tall, attractive woman in canvas pants and red-checked shirt yanks the outboard motor out of the water. MARY HALE, 42, springs onto the dock and starts walking toward the cottage.

WALTZ

frowns slightly at this unexpected arrival. A moment later, the back door opens and Mary enters. Her long salt-and-pepper hair is tied in a ponytail behind her. Her face is warm, sly, bemused. Waltz turns to her, but she looks past him.

MARY

Where's Earl?

WALTZ

In the back.

MARY

You the loan shark?

WALTZ

I'm Harry Waltz. Who are you?

MARY

The fool's sister. How much does he owe you?

WALTZ

Today, four hundred fifty dollars.

MARY

Does he have it?

WALTZ

He has thirty.

Mary laughs, goes to the stove, lights a cigarette from the burner.

MARY

What interest do you charge?

WALTZ
Do you need a loan?

MARY
I might. How much over prime?

WALTZ
What are you, a lawyer?

MARY
(smiles)
I am, as matter of fact. Mary Hale.

Waltz nods.

MARY
Why you?

WALTZ
Beg your pardon?

MARY
Why doesn't he just go to a bank?

Waltz smiles wryly.

WALTZ
I'm better than a bank. I'm flexible.
I'm unofficial. I take a little off
the going rate. I don't ask what the
money's for. I have a heart.

MARY
How sweet. What happens to Earl if he
can't pay? You beat him up? Break
his thumbs?

Suddenly, Earl appears, struggling to carry a large television set
into the room.

EARL
Here it is.
(sees Mary)
Oh, hi, Mare.
(to Waltz)
Are we even now?

WALTZ
For this week.

EARL

Hell, at this rate, you could strip me clean.

WALTZ

Other people would break your thumbs.

He glances at Mary, but she's looking out the window, seemingly disinterested. Waltz looks back at Earl, but the following is more for Mary:

WALTZ

You're a new client, so you may not understand how I work. The whole idea is to help honest, decent people who've had some bad breaks and need money. Times are tough and banks are tougher. I don't care about that. If I decide you're worth the risk -- no matter what the banks or the credit reports say -- I'll loan you the money. People need money, but they also need to prove they can pay it back.

Mary turns to look at him skeptically.

WALTZ

But Earl, if you make a deal with me, you have to honor it. On time. Not because I need the money, but because there are others out there waiting to borrow, too. I like to keep the money circulating, see?

Earl nods, feeling his panic subside.

WALTZ

Believe me, I want to see you pay me off. I can't wait to tear up that note you signed. I loaned you money, Earl, because I trust you. Trust is the whole foundation of my work. I count on the honor of decent men and women to stay in business.

(pauses)

I don't threaten, and I don't hurt people, but one way or another, you've got to pay me what you owe. It's for your own good.

Mary looks at Waltz disbelievingly, but impressed by his performance. Earl looks at Waltz, embarrassed.

EARL

I'm sorry.

WALTZ

You want to hold on to your TV?

EARL

What do I have to do?

Waltz pulls a pen and paper from his pocket, starts writing.

WALTZ

I'll lend you money to cover what you owe today. I'll have to raise your rate a bit, but you won't have to miss any of your shows.

He hands Earl the pen and paper.

WALTZ

Sign this.

As Earl reads and signs, Mary exits the back door, starts back toward the dock. Earl hands the paper back.

EARL

Thanks.

Waltz blows the ink dry, looks out the window at Mary, intrigued, attracted.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

In the Explorer again, Waltz turns down a small lane leading through thin pines to the river.

EXT. RIVERBANK - DAY

Full of coffee by now, Waltz gets out, steps onto a fallen tree, unzips his pants and starts to pee. He looks off.

HIS POV - THE RIVER

Mary Hale is just passing by in her silver boat. Her eyes are calm and fixed on Waltz, pissing.

WALTZ

looks her straight in the eyes as she passes.

MARY

does not avert her look.

WALTZ

finishes peeing, shakes himself, zips up. They are still looking at each other.

MARY

suddenly blows Waltz a big kiss. Then disappears down river.

WALTZ

smiles.

INT. WALTZ'S STUDY - DAY

Waltz thumbs quickly, intently through the area telephone book, until finally he comes to...

INSERT - TELEPHONE BOOK

There she is, in black and white: HALE, MARY, Attorney at Law, 655 N. Main, Saginaw...645-6848.

WALTZ

just stares at it.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING (SAGINAW) - DAY

An old two-story structure in downtown Saginaw. It is late in the day, and people are getting off work.

ACROSS THE STREET

Waltz sits in his Explorer, parked, watching, smoking.

HIS POV - THE OFFICE BUILDING

The front door opens and Mary Hale comes down the steps, dressed for business and carrying a briefcase. A MAN IN A SUIT walks with her.

WALTZ
sits up, puts out his cigarette.

HIS POV - MARY

extends her hand to the man, but he suddenly grabs her and kisses her. She pushes him away roughly. He looks at her beseechingly, but she turns and heads for her car, a Honda Accord, and gets in.

WALTZ

watches the rejected suitor walk away, then we hear Mary's CAR START UP. Waltz starts his car, too.

EXT. ROAD - LATE AFTERNOON

Waltz follows Mary's Honda, keeping a discreet distance.

EXT. MARY'S HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

Perched on a gentle rise, with Saginaw Lake spread blue-gray behind it, the house is built of cream brick and weathered wood, with a wide porch in back and a small walkway going out to a beach of dark sand. Mary's Honda pulls into the driveway. Her THREE CATS and TWO DOGS come running to greet her.

She gets out, carrying her briefcase and a small bag of groceries, and starts toward the house. She stops briefly to pick up the mail, then unlocks the door and goes inside.

ACROSS THE ROAD

in front of Mary's house, Waltz sits on the hood of his Explorer, his legs dangling off the edge like a kid, watching her. He lights another cigarette.

HIS POV - THE HOUSE

Gradually, every light in the house comes on as Mary moves from room to room. In the den, she makes herself a drink, starts looking at her mail.

WALTZ

watches in fascination.

INT. BARBER SHOP - DAY

START ON a chessboard, somebody making a move. PULL BACK TO REVEAL Sam Boggins cutting Waltz's hair. They play chess during the following:

WALTZ

Sam -- remember in high school -- the girls -- those hot summer nights?

SAM

Shit, I could reach around and unhook a brassiere with two fingers.

WALTZ

I was always a klutz with those things.

SAM

I hear they open from the front now.

WALTZ

No kidding.

SAM

So how long has Louise been gone?

Waltz takes a deep breath.

WALTZ

Sixteen years.

SAM

I don't believe it.

WALTZ

Feels like I've been a virgin twice.

EXT. WALTZ'S HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

A chilly autumn wind is kicking up the leaves. A woman on a bicycle rides up the hill toward Waltz's house, and gradually we recognize Ruth Morgan, the handsome, fifty-ish woman from the wake. At the house, and breathing heavily now, she parks her bike and starts up the steps. She takes out her own house key, opens the door, goes in.

INT. ENTRANCE FOYER - EARLY MORNING

She enters. All is quiet, still. She heads for the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - EARLY MORNING

A pile of dirty dishes awaits Ruth in the sink, so she starts stacking them, turns on the water faucet, squirts in some detergent. Then she opens a cabinet, begins pulling out various cleaners.

WALTZ'S VOICE

Good morning --

Ruth turns to see Waltz standing disheveled in the doorway, still in his bathrobe.

RUTH

Hi.

WALTZ

Must be Thursday.

She smiles. He looks at the dirty dishes.

WALTZ

Can those wait until later?

INT. WALTZ'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Waltz and Ruth finish their joyless lovemaking. Waltz rolls over on his back, stares at the ceiling. Ruth watches him.

RUTH

Waltz. What is it?

He is far away, doesn't respond.

RUTH

What's wrong? Is it something I did?

He finally looks at her.

WALTZ

No, honey. It's me. You were fine.

RUTH

Are you sure?

WALTZ

Positive.

He kisses her lightly, looks at her soberly.

WALTZ

Do you want to end this?

Tears come quickly to Ruth's eyes.

RUTH

No.

WALTZ

It can't be very satisfying for you.
One, maybe two days a week. A weekend
here and there. Don't you want more
than that?

She kisses him.

RUTH

I like things just the way they are.

HOLD ON Waltz's face. Disquieted. Dissatisfied.

EXT. HIGHWAY INTO LA CROSSE - NIGHT

Waltz's Explorer whips past a city limit sign -- LA CROSSE, Pop.
55,000.

INT. WALTZ'S FORD EXPLORER (MOVING) - NIGHT

Waltz drives, drinking a beer. The reflection of very bright lights
suddenly spread over his entire windshield. He looks off.

EXT. ISLE OF PARADISE CASINO & HOTEL - NIGHT

A mammoth hotel/casino, ablaze in neon, sits on the banks of the
Mississippi, promising riches (and cheap meals) for all -- a breath
of Vegas in the arid heartland. The parking areas are packed with
buses, and the stream of patrons in and out of the casino is
endless.

INT. WALTZ'S EXPLORER (MOVING) - NIGHT

Waltz's distaste for the place is evident. He drives on.

EXT. EUGENE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

An overpriced Singles' complex. Waltz pulls up and parks in front.
He gets out, starts for the front door.

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE APARTMENT - NIGHT

Waltz comes down the hall to Eugene's apartment. Knocks on the
door. A moment later, EUGENE WALTZ, early 30's, with dark, intense
eyes, opens the door. He looks surprised.

EUGENE

What are you doing here?

WALTZ

(lying)

I was in the neighborhood.

He looks back into his apartment, then back at Waltz. It's obvious someone else is with him.

EUGENE

The place is a pig sty. I'll invite you in next time.

WALTZ

Who's in there?

Eugene steps out into the hallway, closes the door behind him.

EUGENE

What do you want?

WALTZ

Your grandfather died.

EUGENE

I know. I was there.

WALTZ

(surprised)

Where?

EUGENE

At the cemetery. I know I'm not welcome in your house.

WALTZ

(ignores that)

Do you know a man named Paul Vermillion?

EUGENE

A real asshole. He resents my competitive edge.

WALTZ

He says nobody will borrow from you anymore because you're so violent.

He says you're hurting everybody's business.

EUGENE

They don't pay. What am I going to do?

WALTZ

Take their collateral. Repossess.

Refinance. Talk to them.

EUGENE

Talk is bullshit. A smack in the mouth -- a broken nose -- it works every time.

WALTZ

I do business here in La Crosse, too. They're good people. Like anywhere. You talk sense to them. You make them understand they have to pay. Then they pay.

EUGENE

(laughs)

When are you going to wake up, Daddy? This is the fucking twenty-first century. You're out of touch with the times.

WALTZ

Who wants to be in touch with these times?

EUGENE

If you drove all the way over here for the lecture, I've heard it all before. I gotta go. I got business.

A long silence as father and son regard each other.

WALTZ

Goodbye, Eugene.

He leaves. Resentfully, Eugene watches him go.

EXT. EUGENE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Waltz comes out glumly, heads down the street for his Explorer.

Before he gets to his truck, however, Eugene and a SECOND MAN come barrelling out of the apartment building and down the steps, dressed in black, in one hell of a hurry. Waltz quickly melts into the shadows and watches as they jump into a Corvette and peel out, Eugene behind the wheel.

Waltz hurries for his Explorer.

EXT. DARK NARROW STREET - NIGHT

Eugene's Corvette pulls up in front of a small, clapboard house. The HORN BLOWS ONCE. A moment later, A THIRD MAN comes out of the house and gets in the Corvette. They take off. Waltz follows discreetly in his Explorer.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT

The Corvette parks at the curb, and Eugene and the men get out. They hurry up the street to an old Chevy also parked at the curb. Eugene breaks into the Chevy. They get in and drive off.

INT. WALTZ'S EXPLORER (PARKED) - NIGHT

Waltz watches in disbelief.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The Chevy takes the city streets fast and recklessly, taking corners on two wheels and darting through red lights. Not a police car in sight.

EXT./INT. WALTZ'S EXPLORER - NIGHT

Waltz whips the steering wheel left and right, trying to keep up with them. He looks ahead, but the Chevy has disappeared. He slows down, glancing left and right, ahead and back, but there's no sign of Eugene. He stops at a red light.

Suddenly, the Chevy pulls up right beside him. Waltz looks over, and maybe two feet away, and sees his son Eugene pull a mask resembling GEORGE W. BUSH over his head. Waltz puts up a hand to hide his face.

The light turns green, the Chevy peels out. Waltz drops his hand, looks after it.

EXT. BANK - NIGHT

The Farmers & Merchants Bank of La Crosse. A clock reads 2:00 a.m.

The Chevy pulls into the shadows of the parking lot, the lights go out, the MOTOR SHUTS OFF. They wait.

ACROSS THE STREET

Waltz watches from his parked car, with fascination, dread.

A SECOND CAR

pulls into the bank lot. A MAN in a PIZZA HUT uniform emerges from the car carrying a heavy black satchel, and he walks briskly toward the Night Deposit slot.

Suddenly -- a man in a GEORGE W. BUSH mask (Eugene) -- steps up beside him and puts a gun to his head! The light of a street lamp freezes the image.

Then, with the gun to his head, Eugene shoves the man around the corner of the bank, into the shadows.

INT. WALTZ'S EXPLORER - NIGHT

Having witnessed it all, Waltz's eyes are liquid with anger and bitter disappointment.

EXT. STATE HIGHWAY - DAY

Waltz's Explorer heads up Route 15.

EXT. EARL RIVERS'S COTTAGE - DAY

Waltz parks in front of the place where he met Mary Hale. He gets out of the Explorer, goes to the side of the house, looks off.

HIS POV - DOCK BEHIND THE HOUSE

Mary's silver boat is not there.

WALTZ

looks disappointed. He goes to the front door, knocks. A moment later, Earl Rivers opens the door, frowning.

WALTZ

Got a cup of --- ?

RIVERS

Just a minute.

He closes the door in Waltz's face. Seconds later, it opens and Rivers hands Waltz a handful of fresh bills.

RIVERS

There it is. Four-fifty. Goodbye.
(starts to close the door)

WALTZ

Where did you get this? Your sister?

RIVERS

None of your goddamned business.
I paid you what I owe you. Now leave.

WALTZ

No decaf?

RIVERS

No. Beat it! Get the hell out of
here!

He slams the door in Waltz's face.

EXT. RIVERBANK - DAY

On foot, Waltz comes to the bank of the Cass River, where before Mary, going by on her silver boat, had seen him peeing.

Waltz steps up onto that same fallen tree. He looks down river.

HIS POV - DOWN RIVER, NORTH

The river is calm, placid. No sign of Mary.

WALTZ

looks in the opposite direction.

HIS POV - DOWN RIVER, SOUTH

Nobody there either.

WALTZ

looks disappointed. Then an idea comes to him...He starts unbuttoning his shirt...

EXT. MARY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Her Honda is in the driveway, and all the lights are on inside the house.

ACROSS THE ROAD

Waltz sits on the roof of the Explorer this time, his legs on the windshield, drinking a beer, smoking, and staring fixedly at Mary's house.

HIS POV - A LIGHTED WINDOW

In the den, Mary is talking to a pale-looking man in green slacks and a beige sport coat.

INT. MARY'S DEN - NIGHT

The man in the beige sport coat is DICK FISK, a private detective, and he is reading to Mary from a small note pad.

FISK

Harry Eugene Waltz -- born in 1939 -- been loanin' money all his life -- keeps to himself, pretty much -- his wife Louise died sixteen years ago from a heart attack -- they had two sons -- one's dead, the other's a shylock over in La Crosse. Real bad reputation.

Mary hands him a fifty-dollar bill, nods toward the window.

MARY

What's he want? Do you think he wants to hurt me?

FISK

Harry Waltz wouldn't hurt a flea.

MARY

So why does he sit out there like that -- night after night? Why doesn't he come to my door? Why won't he say something to me?

Fisk pockets the fifty, puts on his hat.

FISK

Maybe he's shy.

Mary goes to the window, looks out, shakes her head.

INT. SAM'S BARBER SHOP - DAY

Harry is back in the barber chair, playing chess, drinking beer.

SAM

She's just a broad, Harry. Like any other broad. She won't bite. What's the matter with you?

WALTZ

I've come to this point, and I can't imagine anything else.

SAM

You can't imagine talking to her? Walking through town? Taking her for a ride?

WALTZ

She's a lawyer, I'm a loan shark. It's a bad mix.

SAM

Just knock on her door. Say hello.

WALTZ

I can't.

SAM

What do you mean, you can't? You're a grown man -- an old fart -- you've been married, for Christ's sake! You've had children!

WALTZ

I'm sorry, Sam. I just can't.

INT. POLICE STATION - PHOTO ROOM - DAY

A sudden blinding flash freezes the profile of Eugene Waltz in a police mug shot. Prisoner 655321.

SOUR VOICE

Turn this way.

Eugene turns directly into camera, looking very angry.

SOUR VOICE

Smile, beautiful.

His surly expression doesn't change. The flash goes off again.

INT. PRISONERS' ANTEROOM - DAY

A GUARD leads Eugene to a counter of phones where other PRISONERS are making their calls. Eugene picks up a receiver, starts dialing.

GUARD

Three minutes.

INT. WALTZ'S STUDY - DAY

PIANO MUSIC in the background, Waltz is counting cash, doing his books, his fingers dancing over the adding machine with amazing speed. The phone RINGS.

WALTZ
(answers it)
Harry Waltz.

INT. PRISONERS' ANTEROOM - DAY

Eugene holds his hand over his ear so he can hear above the noise.

EUGENE
(into phone)
Daddy, it's Eugene -- I need some money -- the cops got me on some bullshit charge -- no way can they make it stick ---

INT. WALTZ'S STUDY - DAY

Without a word, Waltz just hangs up the phone.

EXT. MARATHON CEMETERY - DAY

A cold, windy day. START ON the gravestone of MONROE WALTZ, Adored Son, and PULL BACK TO REVEAL Harry, with rake and hoe, methodically and reverently building up the mound of earth atop his late son's grave.

Next to Monroe's headstone is a larger, wider one, carved with LOUISE WALTZ, Beloved Wife, 1935-1983. Next to her name is HARRY WALTZ, 1939 -

EXT. MARY'S HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

Mary's Honda pulls into the driveway, parks. She gets out, carrying her briefcase, starts toward the house. She looks over her shoulder, frowns.

ACROSS THE ROAD

Waltz is sitting on the hood of his Explorer, as usual, drinking a beer and watching Mary.

MARY

goes into the house, angrily SLAMS the door.

EXT. MARY'S HOUSE - SUN PORCH - LATER

Wearing a long yellow turtleneck sweater, Mary waters plants on her porch that faces Saginaw Lake. She pauses, looks off.

HER POV - THE BEACH

A hundred yards away, a familiar lonely figure with gray hair flying in the wind is skipping stones across the water. Waltz's throws are awkward and stiff, and when he bends down to pick up another stone, he always sneaks a glance at Mary's house.

MARY

finally smiles.

EXT. BEACH - LATE AFTERNOON

Waltz throws another stone across the water -- three skips -- then he turns his eyes, regular as a lighthouse, toward her house. He picks up another stone, starts to throw it.

MARY'S VOICE

(brightly)

Why, it's Mr. Nice Loan Shark!

Waltz freezes in mid-throw, gripped with fear, and turns to see Mary behind him, wearing a sweater now, and carrying a piece of driftwood. Waltz gives her a flustered smile.

MARY

What brings you out here?
Delinquents?

Waltz throws the stone into a shallow wave.

WALTZ

I've been spying on you.

MARY

No kidding. You aren't very secretive about it.

WALTZ

Like I wanted to get caught?

MARY

Why don't you just come to my door?

Waltz picks up another stone, throws it. Three skips.

WALTZ

I was afraid you thought I was a criminal. Besides, my daddy told me a long time ago that there are certain women who learn they don't need men. And then there is no getting through to them. You struck me as that sort of woman.

Now Mary picks up a stone, skims it across the water -- four skips. They laugh.

MARY

You might be right.

WALTZ

So why should I try to break through at this late date?

MARY

That's why you couldn't just say hello?

WALTZ

I'm shy. I'll tell you about it sometime.

Mary flings another stone, looks back at Waltz.

MARY

Why don't you tell me now?

EXT. MARY'S SUN PORCH - SUNSET

Fire suddenly flames up from the charcoals in a small barbeque. Waltz jumps back, holding a container of charcoal lighter.

WALTZ

Shit!

Mary laughs and hands him a plate with two large raw hamburger patties on it. Waltz puts them on the grill.

MARY

I hired a man to look into you. A detective.

WALTZ

Oh? What did he come up with?

MARY

Nothing very scandalous. You're a widower -- you had a son who died and a son who just got arrested -- you're sixty-four years old.

WALTZ

Pretty good. How old are you?

MARY

Forty-two. Married once. To a prick. Divorced thirteen years. No children. I love my work.

WALTZ

What kind of law do you practice?

MARY

Cheap, tawdry and lucrative. Bankruptcies. Especially after the casino opened. And divorces. Lots of divorces.

WALTZ

Nobody knows how to stay married anymore.

MARY

So how did you get to be a loan shark?

INT. MARY'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Waltz and Mary are eating their enormous hamburgers at the kitchen table. Juice runs heavily down the side of Waltz's mouth, and Mary smiles as he wipes it away, takes a drink of his beer.

WALTZ

I was fourteen. I lent a dollar to a man in town, and the next day, he paid me back a dollar and a dime. I asked him what the dime was for, and he explained interest to me. I've been hooked ever since. It's simple, elegant, straight-forward, honorable.

MARY

Honorable?

WALTZ

The way I do it.

MARY
(drily)
With heart, you mean.

WALTZ
I'm a student of human needs.

MARY
And people -- especially gamblers --
always need money. You got a nice set-
up here.

WALTZ
But people also need to prove they can
pay it back. I want my clients to
experience the warm satisfaction of
paying their debts on time.

Mary gives him a skeptical look.

MARY
Hah. Harry Waltz, public servant.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Mary is washing dishes, and Waltz dries them, puts them away.

MARY
Tell me about your son.

WALTZ
(immediately)
Monroe was special -- gentle,
sensitive, a wonderful musician -- a
real artist.

Mary lets the moment fade, then, delicately...

MARY
Actually, I meant your other son.

Why is he in jail?

WALTZ
What did your detective tell you?

MARY
A little.

WALTZ
Then why ask?

MARY

I'm circling.

WALTZ

And he didn't tell you why Eugene is in jail?

MARY

Armed robbery.

WALTZ

(irritated)

What is this crap? What are you doing?

MARY

I'm sorry. It's the lawyer in me. Men are always telling me I hold back something -- one vital bit of myself - - as if I expect to use it later to win some mysterious case. If I know more about you than you know about me, then I'm ahead. Do you see?

WALTZ

My son is a crook, Mary. He put a gun to a man's head and robbed him. He's better off in jail.

MARY

Better off?

WALTZ

Trust me.

He walks out of the room, abruptly cutting off the conversation.

INT. MARY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Brandy. Eyes closed, Mary goes back and forth in a rocking chair, afghan on her lap, while Waltz sits cross-legged on the floor, back against the sofa.

WALTZ

...When Monroe was twelve, he used his allowance to rent an old upright piano. The keys were all yellow and it was stained with whorehouse booze, but he loved it. If he hadn't had to go to school, he would have been banging on that thing twenty-four hours a day.

(MORE)

WALTZ (cont'd)

Drove us crazy at first -- the most godawful noise you ever heard -- his brother wanted to kill him. Then one day all the noise suddenly turned to music.

Waltz smiles warmly in remembrance. Mary opens her eyes, looks over at him.

WALTZ

Monroe was as surprised as we were. It was like this big beautiful bird had flown into the house.

(sips his brandy)

The next day I went out and got him a baby grand -- all shiny black lacquer - - I repossessed it from some guy behind in his payments.

(wistfully)

Monroe had the ear, and he had the hands. I've got a tape of him playing.

Mary is touched.

MARY

What happened, Waltz? How did he die?

Waltz is silent.

MARY

Waltz?

WALTZ

(emotionless)

Car wreck. Eugene was driving.

A long silence. Waltz finishes his brandy. Mary gets up from the rocker, sits beside Waltz.

WALTZ

So...what do women want to hear these days?

MARY

What women?

WALTZ

Any women. Modern women.

MARY

Nothing mysterious. Just the old-fashioned stuff. Honesty. Respect.

Kindness. Passion.

WALTZ

Jesus! All that?

MARY

Shmuck.

WALTZ

Remember when we first met -- at your brother's place?

MARY

Yes.

WALTZ

When you saw me by the river?

MARY

Peeing. Yes. Not easy to forget.

WALTZ

I went back, hoping I'd run into you again. But you weren't there. So I went back to that spot on the river -- got on top of that same tree trunk -- and took off all my clothes.

MARY

What??

WALTZ

In the hope...as a way of calling you back.

Mary looks at him in disbelief.

MARY

And this is the man too shy to come to my front door and say hello?

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

An old clock CHIMES 2:00 a.m. Only glowing embers in the fireplace now, the light nearly gone. Waltz is sleeping like a baby on the sofa. In his clothes, under a blanket.

EXT. SUN PORCH - NIGHT

Sleepless, and still dressed, Mary sips a brandy and looks thoughtfully out at the moonlit bay. She is emotionally off-balance, vulnerable, and mostly it irritates her. She finishes the brandy, turns away from the bay, looks toward the house...

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mary enters the dark room, tiptoes over to Waltz, who is snoring lightly. For a long moment, she watches his slow, rhythmic breathing.

MARY

Waltz?

(no reply)

Waltz...

Waltz sleeps on. Mary slips off her sandals, begins taking off her sundress. Finally down to bra and panties, she lifts the blanket and slides in alongside Waltz.

MARY

(a whisper)

Waltz...

She kisses him softly on the forehead, and Waltz's eyes pop open in surprise. Mary begins kissing his face all over, gently, tenderly.

WALTZ

(softly)

Why?

MARY

You would have taken forever.

WALTZ

Probably.

MARY

Kiss me.

He does, long and deep and passionately. He reaches around her back, fumbling to unfasten her bra.

MARY

What's the matter?

WALTZ

The hooks...

MARY

In the front.

Mary raises himself to Waltz, and he smiles as he unfastens her bra.

INT. MARY'S LIVING ROOM - NEXT MORNING

A soft roll of THUNDER. A light, early morning rain falls against the windowpanes. Still on the sofa, Waltz awakens, looks at Mary sleeping beside him. He smiles. She rolls closer to him, as if she'd sensed his pleasure, and puts her head on his chest.

WALTZ

(softly)

I can't believe it.

MARY

(eyes closed)

What?

WALTZ

Nothing.

MARY

Can't believe what?

WALTZ

(grinning)

I scored on the first date.

Mary's eyes pop open.

MARY

Scored?

WALTZ

It never happened before.

MARY

And it may never happen again. What are you, in high school?

WALTZ

Sorry.

He kisses her on the forehead.

WALTZ

It's amazing.

MARY

What?

WALTZ

Last night I kept waiting for you to get on my nerves, but it never happened.

Mary just looks at him.

MARY

Tell me -- do you always say stupid things in the morning.

Waltz grins sheepishly.

WALTZ

Can I come visit you again?

MARY

Depends. Will you come to my door or just sit on your car out by the road?

Waltz laughs.

MARY

Why don't I make us some breakfast?

WALTZ

No.

MARY

No?

He lifts her face to his...

WALTZ

Not yet...

...and kisses her passionately...

INT. PRISON - VISITORS' AREA - DAY

A uniformed PRISON GUARD leads Eugene Waltz, now dressed in inmate fatigues, to a long counter divided into semi-private booths.

GUARD

Thirty min ---

EUGENE
(cutting him off)
I know, I know.

The guard leaves. Eugene sits down to face Paul Vermillion across the counter.

VERMILLION
(friendly)
Eugene! How's it going?

EUGENE
(unfriendly)
What are you doing here?

VERMILLION
Just wanted to see if I could help.

EUGENE
Help me? Why?

VERMILLION
Easy, easy. I've had my eye on you for a long time.

EUGENE
You know how you can help me? Find out who tipped off the cops.

VERMILLION
About the Pizza Hut score?

EUGENE
(nods)
When I get out of here, I'm gonna kill the son of a bitch!

VERMILLION
What's your bail?

EUGENE
Fifty.

VERMILLION
(offers a pack)
Cigarette?

Eugene takes one, Vermillion lights it.

VERMILLION
Want to go to work for me?

EUGENE

Doing what?

VERMILLION

I'm expanding my territory, and I'm going to need a few good men. Like the Marines.

EUGENE

What's the job?

VERMILLION

Bill collector.

Eugene laughs.

VERMILLION

It's a good first job. Do well and we'll move you up --

EUGENE

Gosh, Paulie -- you mean one day I might make Chairman of the Board?

VERMILLION

(pointedly)

At least our family takes care of its own.

His reference to Waltz is not lost on Eugene.

VERMILLION

We've got to start thinking about your future.

EUGENE

(sarcastically)

Paulie, I'm touched.

VERMILLION

Mull it over.

EUGENE

When I get out. If I get out.

FEMALE VOICE

Eugene Waltz?

Eugene and Vermillion look up. Mary Hale, dressed in a dark blue suit, and carrying a briefcase, stands behind Vermillion. Very attractive.

EUGENE

Who the hell are you?

MARY

(unflinching)

My name is Mary Hale. I'm an attorney.

(pauses)

I hear you're an asshole.

Vermillion whistles, winks at Eugene.

VERMILLION

I'll be back.

He gets up, looking Mary over, and leaves. Mary takes his seat.

EUGENE

Who sent you?

MARY

Nobody sent me. I heard you needed a lawyer and thought I might be able to help.

EUGENE

I can't afford a lawyer.

MARY

Pro bono. Free.

EUGENE

I know what it means. Why?

MARY

Let's just say I'm an interested party.

He leers at her.

EUGENE

I'm beginning to get interested myself.

MARY

Do me a favor. Knock off the macho bullshit, and let me see what I can do, all right?

They try to stare each other down for a moment. Finally, Eugene cracks a smile.

MARY

Good.

EXT. RUN-DOWN HOUSE - DAY

In a slum neighborhood, an Hispanic man named FRANK HESPERIA, 26, stands in his driveway beside his pickup, aiming a shotgun INTO CAMERA.

HESPERIA

(screaming)

Get outta here! You ain't gettin' my fuckin' truck!!

In the line of fire stands Waltz, calm, firm, unafraid, standing by his Ford Explorer.

WALTZ

You're six months behind in your payments, Frank. The truck is mine now. Give me the keys.

HESPERIA

I'm gonna get a job any day now.

WALTZ

What? As a dealer at the casino? How long have you been saying that?

HESPERIA

Don't matter. You ain't gettin' my truck!

WALTZ

Give me the keys, Frank.

HESPERIA

Don't you understand English? No!

WALTZ

Can you drive?

HESPERIA

'Course I can drive!

WALTZ

I'll pay you ten dollars to drive my car back to my house.

HESPERIA

What the hell are you talkin' about?

WALTZ

I can't drive two cars at once. I'm just trying to help you out.

HESPERIA

Ten bucks? You call that help?

WALTZ

That's not my problem, Frank. You signed the note, you were six months late on your payments. Anybody else would have taken the truck the instant you were late. They definitely would not have tried to line you up a little work. Come on, Frank, the keys...

Hesperia begins to weaken. He lowers the shotgun.

HESPERIA

...I'm sorry, Mr. Waltz.

WALTZ

Do you want to drive my car home or not?

HESPERIA

How 'bout I leave it on the square?

WALTZ

My house is only a little farther.

HESPERIA

(defiantly)

The square or nothing.

WALTZ

Okay. Give me the keys.

Hesperia digs into his pocket, pulls out a ring of keys, looks at them. Then he looks at Waltz.

HESPERIA

The clutch is stickin'. It needs gas.

WALTZ

No problem.

Hesperia hands the keys to Waltz.

WALTZ
(sighs)
Thank you.

EXT. SUBURBAN HOME - DAY

Driving the pickup truck now, Waltz pulls into the driveway of a modest, well-kept house. He gets out, goes to the front door, and as he reaches to press the bell, the door suddenly swings open. Wearing jeans and a man's dress shirt, Elaine Schoolcraft, the birdlike woman we met earlier at the wake, sneers at her visitor.

ELAINE
Uh, oh. The dreaded Harry Waltz.

INT. ELAINE'S KITCHEN - DAY

The refrigerator has been emptied, and food is spread all over the kitchen, dripping as it defrosts. Waltz looks at Elaine.

WALTZ
I'm sorry I have to do this, Elaine.

She is strangely indifferent.

ELAINE
Don't worry about it. My fault. I should have paid.

Elaine watches impatiently as Waltz takes out a tape measure and measures the width of the refrigerator. Then he measures the width of the doorway.

ELAINE
Hurry up. The guys from Sears will be here any minute.

WALTZ
Sears?

ELAINE
They're bringing my new fridge.

WALTZ
If you can't pay me, how can you pay Sears?

ELAINE
None of your business.

WALTZ

If you miss a payment with them,
you're in trouble -- it'll go on your
credit report. With me...

ELAINE

I'm not borrowing from Sears.

WALTZ

Then who -- ?

ELAINE

(cutting him off)
Come on, Harry. Get that thing out of
here.

EXT. ELAINE'S HOUSE - DAY

With great strain and difficulty, Waltz backs out of the house, pulling the enormous refrigerator on a hand dolly. He manages to get it down the three steps to the pavement, then he stops to catch his breath. At his age, this is not easy, and Elaine, watching at the front door, offers no assistance.

Waltz gathers his strength, starts pushing the refrigerator toward the back of the pickup truck. Then he sees a problem: how is he going to lift the heavy appliance onto the bed of the truck? He rests the dolly a moment.

ELAINE

What's the matter?

Waltz looks off, then goes to the side of the garage, picks up a long plank of several that are lying there. He looks at Elaine.

WALTZ

Can I borrow a couple of these planks?

ELAINE

What for?

WALTZ

So I can make a ramp up to the truck.

ELAINE

No.

WALTZ

No?

ELAINE

But I'll rent them to you. Ten dollars per plank per hour. Two hour minimum. In advance.

Waltz frowns. The Sears delivery truck arrives, bringing the new fridge.

ELAINE

Take it or leave it.

Waltz hesitates, then starts taking out his wallet.

EXT. MARATHON TOWN SQUARE - DAY

BAM! BAM! Frank Hesperia fires two shotgun blasts into the window of Waltz's Ford Explorer, shattering it into a thousand pieces!

Sam Boggins comes running out of his barber shop, along with several other BUSINESSMEN on the square, and he goes up to Hesperia, who is reloading.

SAM

What the hell are you doing, Frank?

HESPERIA

Paying back Harry Waltz.

Hesperia aims and fires into the front grill. The grill explodes and radiator fluid spews like a geyser.

SAM

I'm calling the cops.

Sam hurries off, but it doesn't faze Hesperia, who takes aim at the Explorer once again. Another of Waltz's clients, Lou Basil (the man with the baby we met earlier), comes up to Hesperia.

LOU

Hey, wait a minute -- !

Hesperia stops firing, looks at him.

LOU

That's Harry Waltz's truck!

HESPERIA

Yeah, what about it?

LOU

Let me have a shot.

Hesperia smiles, hands the shotgun to Lou Basil...

EXT. MARATHON CITY LIMITS - DAY

Waltz drives into town in Hesperia's repossessed pickup, hauling Elaine Schoolcraft's repossessed refrigerator. Suddenly, a local police car flies past, SIREN WAILING.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAY

By now a crowd has formed around Waltz's truck, and more clients have joined gleefully in its destruction. Lou Basil is now slamming a sledgehammer into the driver's door, another MAN is slicing open the tires, and a THIRD MAN is beating in the headlights with a crowbar. The glass is all shot away, part of the steering wheel is gone, and there is a basketball-sized hole in the seat back. Hesperia aims the shotgun again, yells at the men:

HESPERIA

Get back!

The men move away from the truck, and Hesperia fires, blowing away the hood. The crowd CHEERS.

A police car WAILS to a stop, and Marathon Sheriff HOMER BARNES, 50, skinny as a rail, jumps out and begins pushing through the crowd.

SHERIFF

All right, all right -- break it up --
go on about your business -- who's
doin' that goddam shootin'??

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE SQUARE

not far away, Waltz parks Hesperia's truck, gets out, cranes his neck to see what all the fuss is about. Sam Boggins hurries up to him.

SAM

Better go home, Harry.

WALTZ

Why? What's the matter?

Sam looks off toward the truck, and Waltz looks, too.

AT THE TRUCK

Sheriff Barnes is putting handcuffs on Frank Hesperia when Waltz and Sam walk up. Waltz looks at the mess that used to be his Explorer, then looks at the Sheriff and motions toward Hesperia's handcuffs.

WALTZ
Are those necessary?

SHERIFF
He used a gun, Harry. He shot up your truck.
(grins at Hesperia)
This is one dangerous individual.

The crowd LAUGHS. Lou Basil leans in.

LOU
Yeah, Sheriff, you better string him up!

Feeling mocked, Waltz looks hard at the Sheriff, then he turns abruptly to leave.

SHERIFF
Hey, what about your truck?

WALTZ
Use it as evidence.

SHERIFF
You can't just leave it here. It's dangerous. Get it towed.

WALTZ
Tow it yourself.

Waltz walks off.

INT. WALTZ'S HOUSE - ENTRANCE FOYER - DAY

Waltz enters, ignores the pile of payment envelopes under the mail slot, goes directly to a telephone, and quickly dials a number.

WALTZ
(into phone)
Mary Hale, please...Harry Waltz.
(a pause)
Hello, Mare? I need a good lawyer.

EXT. WALTZ'S BACKYARD - THE GAZEBO - DUSK

Waltz and Mary are in the gazebo.

INT. GAZEBO - DUSK

They are kissing passionately. Then, without a word, Mary rises, unzips her skirt, and lets it slide down her long, slim legs. She stands before Waltz, nude from the waist down. He glances around anxiously, wary someone might be watching. Mary kisses him.

MARY

We're all alone.

She sits astride him, and he moves to accommodate her, she stills him with a hand and does everything herself. He raises his hips slightly, and she pulls his pants down. She repositions herself, Waltz inside her now, their mouths together. He closes his eyes. They begin.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - NIGHT

It's late and the place is all but deserted. A couple of TRUCK DRIVERS are in the all-night cafe, tanking up on coffee, but that's it.

Waltz and Mary walk down the empty street, holding hands. They come upon Waltz's demolished Ford Explorer, still sitting in front of Sam's Barber Shop, like a piece of junk sculpture.

WALTZ

Well, here it is -- the little valentine from my clients.

MARY

I didn't know you were this beloved.

WALTZ

First they need me. Then they owe me. Then they hate me. I accept it. It's the nature of the business.

MARY

(looking over the wreck)
Looks like a lot of warm satisfaction was experienced here.

WALTZ

I'm used to it. I don't get invited to a lot of parties.

She puts an arm around his shoulder, and they walk on. After a moment...

MARY

I went to see Eugene.

WALTZ

Why?

MARY

The evidence is soft. I think I can get him out.

WALTZ

Don't do me any favors.

MARY

I mean it, I can. I know people. People who owe me.

WALTZ

Forget it.

MARY

Let me get him out.

WALTZ

No.

MARY

Let me at least look into it.

WALTZ

No!

MARY

Why are you being such a prick about this?

WALTZ

You didn't see him put a gun to a man's head. I did.

MARY

What are you talking about?

WALTZ

I followed him that night. I saw him do it.

MARY

Does Eugene know this?

WALTZ

No.

(a pause)

Look, if you get him out, he'll go right back to lending money and beating up people and committing crimes. He's stubborn. He's mean. He'll never change.

MARY

Waltz --

WALTZ

Let him stay in jail. It's easier on everybody. Trust me.

Mary just stares at him in shock.

MARY

What kind of a father are you?

WALTZ

Give it up, Mary. Please.

MARY

I need to know...

WALTZ

Why?

Mary takes a deep breath...

MARY

(lightly)

What do you get when you cross a loan shark with a lady lawyer...?

Finally, it begins to dawn on Waltz what she's saying...

EXT. MARATHON CAFE - NIGHT

Sitting in a window booth over coffee, Waltz stares numbly at Mary Hale.

MARY

I had a feeling. Signs. I've been throwing up a lot. But it was too unbelievable. So I went to my doctor.

WALTZ

And it's a fact?

MARY

It's a fact.

WALTZ

And it's mine?

MARY

No question. You really did score on our first date. Bullseye.

Waltz shakes his head, takes a long drag off his cigarette. Mary reaches for one, too, but Waltz pulls the pack away.

WALTZ

No. It's bad for the kid.

Mary sighs, takes a sip of her coffee.

WALTZ

How can they know so fast? It's only been a couple weeks.

MARY

It's 2003, Waltz. It's been

thirty years since you did this. When a woman conceives, her body starts producing a hormone called HCG.

WALTZ

And you're producing it?

MARY

By the gallons.

WALTZ

How could this happen?

MARY

You want me to explain it?

WALTZ

(loudly)

But I've got sixty-four-year-old sperm!!

The two truck drivers at the counter turn to look at Waltz. He smiles at them awkwardly.

MARY

You and Clint Eastwood.

WALTZ

Mary, we're too old for this. What if it's retarded or deformed??

MARY

(looking around)

Shhh!

WALTZ

What would we do then?

MARY

Waltz, lower your voice!

WALTZ

And what about us?

MARY

Good question.

WALTZ

Do we get married? Do we move in together? What?

MARY

Hold it. We barely know each other. I have a life of my own. I like my life.

Waltz gets quiet, takes a slow sip of his coffee. Then he looks at Mary. Her eyes are full of tears.

WALTZ

What do you want from me?

MARY

(loudly)

I want a little response! I'd like to know how you feel! Is that so much to ask?

WALTZ

You want to stay where you are. I want to stay where I am. That's that.

MARY

Wait a minute. Everything is negotiable. I hoped you might have something to offer.

WALTZ

Okay. Here is what I feel. I want to stay in Marathon. I'm afraid the baby will be Mongoloid. I think we should get married.

MARY

What about Eugene?

Waltz's face hardens into stone.

WALTZ

Eugene? He's not part of this.

MARY

Yes, he is.

WALTZ

No, he's not. He has nothing to do with this baby.

MARY

I want to know if you quit on your kids when things get tough.

WALTZ

That's not fair and you know it.

MARY

Maybe not, but it's part of who you are. I have to take that into account when I decide if I'm going to have this child.

WALTZ

You mean you might not?

MARY

It's an option.

WALTZ

You'd have an abortion?

MARY

I don't know.

She grabs the pack of cigarettes and lights one. Waltz reaches to stop her, but she glares at him.

MARY

One won't hurt.

Mary takes a long drag off the cigarette.

EXT. MARATHON CAFE - NIGHT

Waltz and Mary come out of the restaurant. A cold, mean wind has blown in, and Mary shivers.

MARY

I hate these northers.

Waltz takes off his jacket, drapes it over Mary's shoulders. She puts an arm through his, and they head out of the square, leaving behind the battered, still-leaking remains of Waltz's Ford Explorer.

EXT. WALTZ'S HOUSE - BOTTOM OF HILL - NIGHT

They start up the steep gravel driveway toward Waltz's house, and Mary promptly slips and falls.

WALTZ

Goddamned hill. Be careful, for Christ's sake!

He helps her up, and they start again. Mary falls once more, crying out this time:

WALTZ

Mary!

MARY

It's steeper than I thought.

This time, Waltz picks her up, starts carrying her.

MARY

What are you doing??

WALTZ

I'm not taking any more chances.

MARY

Put me down! You're not Clint Eastwood -- you'll have a heart attack!

WALTZ

If I can haul a refrigerator, I can haul you.

MARY
 How romantic.
 (he stumbles)
 Waltz!

Waltz plants his feet, secures his hold on Mary, takes a deep breath, and starts up the hill.

EXT. WALTZ'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Waltz staggers and gasps past the many repossessed cars and appliances in the front yard. Mary closely watches him wheezing.

MARY
 Waltz?

No response from Sir Galahad. He just stares ahead, gasping, transfixed on his goal, the front door.

MARY
 Are you all right? Waltz!

He starts up the steps to the front door.

MARY
 I can walk now. Put me down!

WALTZ
 No! It's slippery.

Finally, they come to the front door. It's locked. Waltz looks at Mary, exhausted. He lets her down, then he goes to the porch railing to catch his breath.

MARY
 Keys?

Waltz takes the house keys out of his pocket, hands them to her. Mary unlocks the front door, looks back at Waltz, still hanging onto the railing, but coming back from the dead now.

Mary goes over, takes him by the arm, leads him gently into the house. The front door slams shut.

INT. WALTZ'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Waltz is frantically making breakfast. He cracks a couple of eggs into a bowl, starts whipping them. Then he reaches over, pushes two pieces of bread into a toaster, turns back to the eggs and pours them into a hot skillet.

The teakettle starts to WHISTLE, so with his free hand, Waltz turns off the burner and pours boiling water into a Melitta coffee pot. With an eye on the cooking eggs, he prepares a breakfast tray, placing napkin, silverware, orange juice, salt and pepper, and apricot preserves.

Then the eggs are ready, so Waltz spoons them onto a floral plate. He looks impatiently at the toaster. The toast pops up.

INT. STAIRS - MORNING

Waltz hurries up the stairs, carrying the food tray, which now also holds a small red rose in a bud vase. At the top of the stairs, he starts down the hallway.

INT. WALTZ'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Waltz enters with the breakfast tray.

WALTZ
(brightly)
Good morning!

But the ruffled bed is empty. Waltz looks around.

WALTZ
Mary?

Then we hear SOUNDS from behind the closed bathroom door. COUGHING. VOMITING. Waltz goes to the door, knocks.

WALTZ
Are you all right?

MARY
Great! Go away!

She starts VOMITING again, and Waltz just stands there, awkwardly, with her waiting meal. The TOILET FLUSHES. Then the door opens, and a very pale, perspiring Mary Hale is staring at the breakfast tray. Her face goes ashen.

MARY
Excuse me...

She ducks back into the bathroom, slams the door. She VOMITS yet again. Waltz goes over, sits on the bed to wait, still holding the tray. Mary FLUSHES again. She emerges from the bathroom, looks at Waltz.

MARY
Don't go in there.

WALTZ
(offering tray)
Here -- put something in your stomach.

MARY
Why?

WALTZ
You're eating for two now. Sit.

Mary sits heavily on the bed next to Waltz, looks at the food.

MARY
Pretty impressive.
(tries the toast)
Let me just ease into this...
(sips orange juice)
Dr. Terrell says I'll stop vomiting --

WALTZ
-- thank God --

MARY
-- in about six weeks. What day is it
today...?

Suddenly, a SOFT KNOCK at the bedroom door, and Ruth Morgan sticks her head in, smiling. When she sees Mary, however, her smile disappears. Waltz looks at Mary.

WALTZ
Thursday.

EXT. WALTZ'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - DAY

Waltz and Ruth come out of the house, pause for a moment on the porch. Ruth puts her hand on Waltz's arm.

RUTH
Do you love her?

It takes him a second.

WALTZ
I don't know.

Ruth kisses him lightly on the cheek.

RUTH
Goodbye, Waltz.

She starts down the steps.

He watches her get on her bicycle and ride slowly away, disappearing into the streets of Marathon.

EXT. SAM'S BARBER SHOP - DAY

Dressed in a warm overcoat, Waltz stands in front of the CLOSED sign, gray hair flying in the wind, knocking on the door. Finally, Sam Boggins opens the door.

SAM
I'm not open yet, Harry.

WALTZ
I know what time it is.

Sam ushers Waltz inside.

INT. SAM'S BARBER SHOP - DAY

Waltz enters.

WALTZ
It turned winter overnight.

He takes off his overcoat, pulls two bottles of Budweiser and an opener from his pockets.

WALTZ
Want a beer?

SAM
It's eight o'clock in the morning.

Waltz uncaps both beers, sets Sam's on the counter, takes a big drink of his. He sits down in the barber chair.

WALTZ
Cut my hair, Sam.

SAM
I just cut it.

WALTZ
A trim, that's all.

SAM
You don't need a trim.

WALTZ
A little off the top?

SAM
It looks fine, Harry. All you gotta
do is comb it.

Waltz glares at him.

WALTZ
Sam! Give me a frigging haircut!

SAM
All right, all right!

Sam snaps a pinstriped sheet into the air and drapes it across his
distressed friend. Waltz looks up at him, very irritated.

WALTZ
This is all your fault.

INT. COUNTY JAIL - INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Mary and Eugene sit at a table in the soundproofed visitors' room.
Mary is shuffling through papers in her briefcase, while Eugene
smokes, admires her legs.

EUGENE
So, how long have you known my old
man?
(no reply)
You on the string like everybody else?

MARY
(smiles)
I guess you could say that.

Mary holds out a two-page document to him.

MARY
Stop looking at my legs and read this
over. Tell me if it's correct.

Eugene laughs, puts out his cigarette, and takes the papers,
glancing once more at her legs.

MARY

We might just pull this off. If your father will cooperate.

Eugene looks up sharply.

EUGENE

What's he got to do with it?

MARY

You'll have to live with him for awhile.

EUGENE

(angrily)

You didn't say anything about that!

He loses his temper, throws the papers back at Mary.

EUGENE

Forget it! If getting out of here depends on him -- screw it! -- I'd rather do the time!

MARY

Wait a minute --

EUGENE

You think I want to go back to that funeral home he lives in? With that goddamned piano, and him playing Monroe's tape around the clock?? Forget it! No, thank you. My little brother is dead and buried, and I want to keep it that way. It wasn't my fault.

MARY

I'm sure he doesn't blame you.

EUGENE

The hell he doesn't! Every time he looks at me, I know what he's thinking: if it weren't for you, if you hadn't been driving that night, I'd still have my precious Monroe. Instead, I'm stuck with you, the asshole.

(loudly)

I'm tired of being the asshole!

Mary leans forward sympathetically.

EUGENE

It was twelve years ago, goddamnit!
We were coming home from La Crosse.
All of a sudden, this big fucking
Oldsmobile cuts out right in front of
us! There was no way I could have
seen it coming!

Eugene's eyes are liquid now.

EUGENE

It was an accident, Mary. A stupid,
goddamned accident.

MARY

Of course it was.

EUGENE

But I've been paying for it ever
since. He's made me pay.
(pauses)
This is one debt my old man will never
retire. The interest on it alone...

HOLD ON Mary's face, filled with sympathy and compassion for
Eugene...

EXT. EARL RIVERS'S COTTAGE - DAY

Paul Vermillion's long black Cadillac is parked out front. His
driver-bodyguard leans against the car, smoking, waiting for his
boss.

INT. COTTAGE - DAY

A shaky Earl Rivers looks up at Vermillion, standing over him.

EARL

So what is it I do, again?

VERMILLION

Borrow from me at the new rate, and I
pay off your debt to Harry Waltz.
From then on, you only deal with me.

EARL

I don't know. It sounds good.

VERMILLION

It is, Earl. With a deal like this, you'll never have a problem meeting your obligation. You'll pay off the principal much faster.

EARL

Does Harry know about this?

VERMILLION

Don't worry about him. He won't make any trouble. He's retiring.

After a long pause...

EARL

Okay.

VERMILLION

Congratulations, Earl. You're a free man.

EARL

Shouldn't I sign something?

VERMILLION

Please. We're gentlemen. I trust you.

Vermillion offers his hand. They shake.

INT. WALTZ'S STUDY - DAY

Waltz is doing his books, slitting open cash envelopes, counting the money, marking the payments. The tape of Monroe's PIANO PLAYS, as usual. The adding machine is humming.

Then he turns a ledger page and sees something that disturbs him. He picks up the phone, dials.

WALTZ

Jake, this is Harry Waltz. I haven't gotten your money this month. I wondered if there was a problem.

(listens)

Just because you make a double payment doesn't mean a free ride this month.

(listens)

We made a deal, Jake. You signed your name. You have to pay what you owe.

(MORE)

WALTZ (cont'd)

Get that money in the mail tonight --
tomorrow at the latest -- and I'll
forget you were late.

He hangs up before Jake can make more excuses. He closes his ledger, gets up, goes to the portable stereo. He waits patiently for the song to end, then he shuts it off. But the PIANO can still be heard, far off, ghostly. Waltz frowns, looks off anxiously. The PLAYING CONTINUES...

INT. STAIRS - DAY

PIANO MUSIC OVER, getting louder and more distinct now, Waltz hurries down the stairs, upset.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Dressed in one of Waltz's red flannel shirts, Mary sits at the black lacquered baby grand, picking out "Heart and Soul." Waltz enters, calls out sharply:

WALTZ

Stop that!

Mary looks up, smiles, continues to play.

MARY

Am I that bad?

WALTZ

You heard me. Stop playing!

MARY

(stops)

Okay, okay.

WALTZ

I don't want anybody touching that.

MARY

It is meant to be played, you know.

WALTZ

I don't care. Close it.

MARY

It's a piano, not a shrine.

WALTZ

What's that supposed to mean?

MARY

He's dead, Waltz. Let him go. Stop trying to bring him back. Worry about the live one...

WALTZ

I don't want to talk about this!

MARY

We have to talk about it.

Waltz is silent. A long pause.

MARY

Why don't you say something?

WALTZ

Nothing to say.

MARY

Then take me home.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Waltz drives Mary home in a repossessed 1992 Buick LeSabre. A light frost is on the road.

INT. BUICK (MOVING) - NIGHT

Still irritated, Mary looks over at Waltz, who's brooding, concentrating on the ice pavement ahead.

WALTZ

(without looking at Mary)

So...where do we stand with each other today?

MARY

You tell me.

Waltz sighs.

WALTZ

Maybe I'd do it right this time.

MARY

What?

WALTZ

The father thing.

MARY

You'll have to do better than that.
I'm not having this baby because you
feel guilty.

Waltz looks at her. Now she sighs.

MARY

Oh, Waltz, I don't know. At my age
it's so risky -- there's so much that
can go wrong -- Down's Syndrome,
hemophilia, cystic fibrosis, cerebral
palsy...

Waltz gives her a look.

WALTZ

You left out Muscular Dystrophy.
Jesus, will you stop reading all those
books.

MARY

I want to be informed, Waltz.

WALTZ

Informed is one thing, terrified is
another.

MARY

I'm not terrified. I'm concerned. It
is my body.

WALTZ

We can have tests done. They have a
test for everything these days.

MARY

How about one for love?

WALTZ

Love?

MARY

I hear it helps when you start a
family.

A pause...

MARY

Do you love me?

Waltz doesn't answer.

MARY

Come on, Waltz -- it's not a trick question -- just a simple yes or no.

Still no reply. Mary begins to look pale.

MARY

Do you think you might love me?

Waltz remains silent. Mary suddenly looks very sick.

MARY

Pull over.

WALTZ

What's the matter?

MARY

Pull over!

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Waltz slows and eases the Buick onto the shoulder, puts on his emergency flashers. Mary is out of the car like a shot and runs to a grassy patch just off the road. She starts vomiting.

Waltz gets out, runs to help her.

MARY

Get away! I'm not finished!

Waltz halts, and she goes into it again, a particularly bad attack. Waltz goes over anyway. Mary grunts angrily.

MARY

No!

Without a word, Waltz pulls her long hair away from her face, holds it back, standing there beside her.

WALTZ

Go ahead.

Mary puts her head down, finishes. Bright headlights are suddenly upon them as a car pulls up behind them. A bank of multicolored lights atop the car comes to life, twirling lances of red, white and blue across the tableau.

A uniformed STATE TROOPER gets out of his police car, approaches them.

STATE TROOPER
What's the matter, folks? Too much to drink?

WALTZ
Just a little morning sickness.

STATE TROOPER
(looks at Mary)
She's pregnant?

Mary comes up, yanks a handkerchief out of Waltz's back pocket, wipes her mouth.

MARY
That's right, officer.

The trooper looks skeptically at Waltz.

STATE TROOPER
And you're the -- ?

WALTZ
(sarcastically)
She's the mommy, I'm the daddy.

The trooper looks back at Mary, amused.

STATE TROOPER
Do you need an ambulance?

MARY
No, thanks, I live on Saginaw Lake.
Once I get home, I'll be fine.

The trooper looks back at Waltz.

STATE TROOPER
You're sure you're the father?

WALTZ
(irritated)
Yes! Do you mind if we just ---

STATE TROOPER
(interrupting)
Stay on my tail. I'll get you there in a hurry.

Mary and Waltz exchange a surprised look as the trooper hurries for his patrol car. Waltz helps Mary back into the Buick, locking her in safely. A SIREN starts up, and the trooper pulls onto the highway, leading Waltz...

EXT. HIGHWAY INTO SAGINAW - NIGHT

Lights flashing, SIREN HOWLING, the patrol car zips past other cars, forcing them off to the side of the road, leading Waltz's Buick right by them.

EXT. DOWNTOWN SAGINAW - NIGHT

The state trooper leads them at high speed through the business district, past Mary's law office. Several curious PEDESTRIANS stop to watch them pass.

EXT. MARY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The patrol car stops in front of Mary's house, shuts off the SIREN as Waltz pulls into the driveway, parks. As he and Mary get out, the trooper BEEPS his HORN, and they wave their thanks. The patrol car makes a U-turn and heads back into town. Mary's cats and dogs come running from different directions, nuzzling her affectionately.

MARY

Hi, babies! Mother's home.

INT. MARY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Mary and Waltz enter through the back door. She switches on the light.

MARY

Think he believed I'm pregnant?

WALTZ

It shows in your face.

MARY

Yes. When I vomit, I look radiant.

Waltz glances toward the back door.

WALTZ

Well, I guess I'll get going.

MARY

Whatever.

An awkward pause...

MARY

It'll be nice to be back at the office. Nice and normal. Know what I mean?

WALTZ

Don't forget to rest. No cigarettes. No booze. Eat small meals. Take naps.

MARY

(salutes)

Yes, sir.

WALTZ

This is Monday. How about I come back Thursday night?

MARY

Okay.

WALTZ

Thursday afternoon? Spend the weekend?

MARY

(shrugs)

Whenever.

WALTZ

Do you think I'm skipping out on you?

MARY

No. You're too nice to make one clean cut. First I don't see you for four days. Next time it'll be ten. Then it'll be a month.

WALTZ

What a thing to say.

MARY

Forget it. See you Thursday. Can I make one request?

WALTZ

You got it.

MARY

Will you visit Eugene with me?

Waltz frowns.

MARY

For me? Couldn't you just do it
because I asked you?

Waltz kisses Mary, puts his hand on her stomach.

WALTZ

Take care of the kid.

And he's out the door. Mary sighs in frustration.

EXT. WALTZ'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Waltz drives up the steep, icy driveway to the house, and the car continually slides back down. Winter is coming fast, the repossessed cars and appliances are gone, and the place is rapidly taking on a look of desolation. Finally, Waltz gets up the hill.

INT. ENTRANCE FOYER - NIGHT

Waltz enters, flips on the lights, bends down to pick up the ever-present pile of payment envelopes on the floor under the mail slot.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Waltz throws a couple of ice cubes in a glass, pours some Old Bushmills.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Empty. Very quiet. Waltz enters with his drink, wanders to the piano, sits down. He opens the cover, hits a single note, closes the cover. He drinks his whiskey.

EXT. MARATHON CEMETERY - DAY

A cold, wintry day. Waltz morosely approaches his family plot, coming finally to the headstones of Louise and Monroe. The mounds of earth on the graves have been flattened by wind and rain.

Waltz stares at the headstones a long moment, then he reaches down, pulls a weed from Monroe's grave.

EXT. WALTZ'S HOUSE - DAY

Waltz lies on his back on an exercise board, bench-pressing a heavy barbell.

INT. WALTZ'S STUDY - DAY

In an armchair, sipping a drink, Waltz is watching a TV SOAP OPERA, but the look on his face is far, far away...

INT. MARY'S HOUSE - DEN - NIGHT

At her desk, a cup of hot tea beside her, Mary works quietly on a notebook computer. She stops, yawns, stands up. She arches her back, groans, then wanders to a window, looks out.

HER POV

On the spot across the road where Waltz used to park and watch her. Nobody there.

MARY

smiles wistfully, disappointed.

INT. HALLWAY IN MARY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Ready for bed now, Mary passes a full length mirror. Suddenly she stops, stands before it. She lifts her pajama top, exposing her stomach, which has begun to protrude slightly. She stares at it a long time -- thoughtfully, but without visible emotion -- it's not yet real to her.

INT. MARY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Her face lighted only by a bedside lamp, Mary lies in bed alone, looking absently at the ceiling. MUSIC is playing from a tape in a portable stereo: Tony Bennett singing "It's Like Reaching for the Moon." She reaches over, turns out the lamp. The room goes dark, the SONG KEEPS PLAYING...

INT. WALTZ'S STUDY - NIGHT

Waltz finally finds comfort in the familiar task of doing his books, marking the payments in his ledger. He turns to the page marked LOU BASIL, where there is a gap in the list of payments. Waltz takes a piece of paper out of an envelope paper-clipped to the page, looks at it.

INSERT - CONTRACT

It's a loan for \$10,000, dated and signed by Lou Basil.

WALTZ
picks up the phone, dials a number.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. LOU BASIL'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The place is still a mess. The television is blaring "JEOPARDY," and Little Lou is BAWLING. Lou answers the phone.

LOU
Yeah? Who's this?

WALTZ
Harry Waltz.

Lou looks over at Paul Vermillion sitting on the couch.

LOU
(into phone)
Harry Waltz?

WALTZ
I've haven't gotten your money this month, Lou. Is there a problem?

LOU
(nervously, after a pause)
Look, Harry, I'm a little slack this time around. Okay? I'm sorry. You know I'm good for it. You'll get your money. You and me been doin' business a long time.

WALTZ
Lou, you gave up the right to be a little slack when you signed the note. Put that money in the mail tonight, and we'll overlook this.

LOU
I don't have it, Harry. Just be patient. You'll get it as soon as I do.

WALTZ
That's not good enough. You signed the note, you've got to pay. Forget the mail. I want that money by tomorrow morning!

Lou hangs up on him. Waltz puts the receiver down, disturbed.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - WAITING ROOM - DAY

The waiting room is crowded with YOUNG PREGNANT WOMEN, all of whom sneak curious glances at the older couple by the door. Waltz and Mary smile awkwardly, trying to ignore the strange looks they're getting.

WALTZ

...then he hung up on me. That makes five guys late this week. Five. Nothing I said to them seemed to matter.

MARY

Maybe they're having a rough time.

WALTZ

Everybody's having a rough time. You still have to pay your bills. I couldn't believe how arrogant they were.

A NURSE appears from the examing rooms, holding a chart.

NURSE

Mary Hale?

Mary and Waltz get up, start following the nurse.

NURSE

Hello.

MARY

Hi.

NURSE

(to Waltz)

How are you, Mr. Hale?

INT. ULTRASOUND EXAMINATION ROOM - DAY

Mary lies on a table, her abdomen exposed, while a TECHNICIAN moves the probe inside Mary's uterus. Waltz watches a small VIDEO SCREEN, where a vague, watery-looking image appears.

TECHNICIAN

There we are.

Now Mary looks at the screen.

WALTZ
Looks like chicken soup.

TECHNICIAN
(pointing at the screen)
There's the head, the spinal column,
the legs -- very normal development...

Mary and Waltz smile at each other, relieved.

WALTZ
Great.

TECHNICIAN
I'll make you a picture.

INSERT - VIDEO SCREEN

It does look like chicken soup. We hear a BUTTON PRESSED, a MACHINE WHIRR, and a small photo is ejected from the top of the video monitor.

THE TECHNICIAN

hands the photo to an astonished Waltz. Reality is beginning to set in.

WALTZ
Jesus, it's a real baby.

MARY
And you were expecting...?

The technician smiles.

TECHNICIAN
Would you like to know the sex?

INT. MARY'S HONDA (MOVING) - DAY

Mary drives. Waltz stares at the fetal photograph. Finally...

WALTZ
I've got it...

WALTZ (CONT'D)
(looks at Mary)
Josephine.

MARY
(groans)
Josephine??

WALTZ
Daphne?

She gives him a horrified look.

MARY
Waltz!

EXT. COUNTY JAIL - PARKING LOT - DAY

Mary pulls her Honda into the huge parking lot, finds a space.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Waltz and Mary get out, start walking through the parked cars toward the entrance.

MARY
Eugene is getting out today.

Waltz stops in his tracks.

WALTZ
Out? I thought we were coming for a visit.

MARY
I lied. He's getting out.

WALTZ
How is he managing that?

MARY
I got him a good lawyer. Me.

WALTZ
Why did you wait until now to tell me?

MARY
There's a catch. I told the judge that Eugene would be living and working with his father when he got out.

She smiles, trying to diffuse the tension. It doesn't work.

WALTZ

This is a shitty thing to do, Mary.
Springing it on me like this.

MARY

There was no other way.

WALTZ

What if I won't take him?

MARY

In all my plotting, that is something
I hoped wouldn't happen.

WALTZ

And if it does?

MARY

Simple. If you don't sign his
release, Eugene will stay in jail.

WALTZ

Answer me something. Why the hell are
you so interested in Eugene? What's
going on between you two?

MARY

(incensed)

What's that supposed to mean?

WALTZ

You tell me. You're so obsessed with
him. You've obviously been spending
time together. The two of you...

MARY

The two of us what?

WALTZ

I can understand -- he's young,
athletic -- better in the sack...

MARY

I don't believe this! Do you actually
think that ---

WALTZ

I don't know what to think.

MARY

Well, I do. I think I made a mistake about you. And I think it's time I corrected it. There's still time.

WALTZ

You wouldn't do that.

MARY

I would. Right now, all being pregnant means to me is throwing up.

Waltz looks at her a long moment, then starts back toward the car.

WALTZ

I'm going home.

MARY

Hey!

He ignores her, keeps walking.

MARY

Hey! Monroe's death was an accident! When are you going to let Eugene off the hook?

Waltz keeps walking, silent.

MARY

He's suffering, Waltz! It's not fair!

Suddenly, Waltz whirls on her angrily.

WALTZ

Don't talk to me about fair! My beautiful, brilliant son was crushed to death -- mangled, disfigured -- I couldn't even recognize him! Eugene just walked away -- he didn't have a mark on him!

Mary walks toward Waltz.

MARY

So what do you do? You kill him, too.

WALTZ

What the hell are you saying?

MARY

At least Monroe went quick. You're torturing Eugene to death. You shut him out, write him off, blame the whole thing on him. How easy for you -
- the coward's way out!

It gets very quiet now.

MARY

(softly)

Give him another chance. He's your son, Waltz.

She pulls out an official form with the seal of the Michigan Department of Corrections in one corner. She lays it across the hood of the car between them and points to an empty line marked with an 'x'.

MARY

Sign this, Waltz.

WALTZ

I can't.

MARY

Why not?

WALTZ

Because I'm the one who had him arrested.

Mary's jaw drops a foot.

MARY

What?

WALTZ

It was me that tipped off the cops!

Now Mary blows, slamming her file on the hood of the car.

MARY

Jesus Christ! You put away your own flesh and blood! What does that tell me about this baby you want me to have?!

WALTZ

Eugene was in trouble. Something bad was going to happen to him. I didn't want him to get killed!

MARY

Is this what I have to look forward to? Twenty years from now, when our daughter is a woman, with troubles of her own?

WALTZ

Our daughter will be perfect.

MARY

Maybe for the first two breaths. Then she'll start collecting flaws like the rest of us. Then what? "Sorry, honey, you've been a bad girl, Daddy has to send you to the slammer"?!

Mary thrusts Eugene's release form at him.

MARY

Sign it!

Waltz just looks at it.

MARY

Who the hell made a loan shark the guardian of everybody's morals? Sign it!

Suddenly, Waltz smiles.

MARY

Are you laughing at me?

WALTZ

Sorry. I just figured it out.

MARY

Figured what out?

WALTZ

You love me.

MARY

(angrily)
Shit, yes, I love you! What do you think this is all about?!

WALTZ

Got a pen?

Mary takes a deep breath, recomposes, then hands Waltz a pen. He signs the release. Then he looks up at Mary, innocently.

WALTZ

You shouldn't get so excited.

INT. MARY'S HONDA (MOVING) - DAY

Waltz looks at Mary, driving quietly beside him. She smiles. Waltz looks in the back seat.

EUGENE

is staring out the window, like an impatient child who can't wait to get there.

MARY

tries to be cheerful.

MARY

How about something to eat, guys?

EUGENE

Not for me.

Waltz looks at Mary, shrugs.

EXT. WALTZ'S HOUSE - EVENING

A light snow begins to fall as Waltz parks by the front steps. They all get out, without a word spoken, and go inside. Waltz looks at Eugene, then at Mary, shrugs.

INT. ENTRANCE FOYER - EVENING

They enter, and Eugene goes immediately up the stairs. Waltz looks at Mary.

WALTZ

He's said exactly fourteen words.

MARY

What do you expect? You sent him to jail.

WALTZ

He doesn't know that.

MARY

But he knows how you feel. He knows you don't want him.

WALTZ

He's right.

MARY

Stop it.

WALTZ

What did you expect? That we'd rush into each other's arms? Sure, you can negotiate a trade with me, but that doesn't change my feelings.

MARY

Just give him a chance. That's all I ask. I know he's a stranger, but so are you. Good night.

She kisses him, heads for the door. Waltz panics.

WALTZ

Where are you going?

MARY

Home.

WALTZ

Stay the night. Please. I need to talk.

MARY

Talk to your son.

WALTZ

He doesn't want to talk to me.

MARY

So you start the conversation.

WALTZ

What'll we talk about?

MARY

Wing it.

WALTZ

Please don't go.

MARY

Get comfortable with him. If I were here, I'd just be a buffer of pleasantries between you two. Besides, I've got work to do.

Suddenly she is smiling.

WALTZ

Don't act so smug.

MARY

(innocently)

Who, me?

(kisses Waltz)

Bye, bye.

She leaves. Waltz throws the bolt lock, looks anxiously up the stairs.

INT. WALTZ'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Waltz is sitting up in bed, in T-shirt and boxers, smoking, wondering what to do, how to approach his son.

INT. EUGENE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Eugene lies on top of the covers, in jockey shorts alone, staring wide-eyed at the ceiling.

WALTZ'S VOICE

Hey there --

Eugene looks up to find Waltz standing in the doorway, holding two bottles of Budweiser.

WALTZ

Want a beer?

Eugene hesitates.

EUGENE

Okay.

As Waltz enters, Eugene starts getting out of bed.

WALTZ

Stay there. I'll pull up a chair.

He hands Eugene the beer, pulls a chair to the foot of the bed, sits down. Eugene lights a cigarette.

WALTZ

Something wrong?

EUGENE

Too quiet. I can't sleep. In jail, I was getting used to three hundred guys snoring and yelling and farting in the dark, and now I need the noise to get to sleep.

In nervous unison, they each take a sip of their beer.

WALTZ

Did Mary tell you?

EUGENE

Tell me what?

WALTZ

(awkwardly)

I'm going to be a ...that is, we're going to have a...it was sort of unexpected...real unexpected...

EUGENE

What are you talking about?

WALTZ

Well, it looks like you're going to have a little sister.

Eugene is wide-eyed with shock.

EUGENE

You and Mary...?

WALTZ

(nods sheepishly)

Knocked up.

A smile comes to Eugene's face -- maybe the first one we've seen.

EUGENE

Congratulations.

WALTZ

I guess.

Eugene shakes his head in amazement.

EUGENE

What is it about you?

WALTZ

What do you mean?

EUGENE

When I hear Mary talking about you, I can see all of your good qualities, then when we're together...it makes me wonder what you're holding back from me. What I'm holding back from you.

Waltz doesn't know how to handle this sudden candor.

WALTZ

Who the hell can talk to their father?

Another nervous sip of beer.

EUGENE

You know something? This may sound crazy, but I'm glad I got caught when I did. I was a fucking jerk. On a bad roll. Sooner or later, somebody would have put a bullet in my back. Now I can start over -- fresh -- square one.

WALTZ

Just like that? You're a new person?

EUGENE

Got to start somewhere, don't I?

WALTZ

I'm glad you're out, Eugene.

EUGENE

(smiles)

I know you don't mean that, but maybe someday you will. In the meantime, I'm here to work. Whatever you want me to do.

WALTZ

I don't really have anything right now.

EUGENE

I could take some cars to La Crosse.

WALTZ

Winter is a slow time. I've already got a guy.

EUGENE

I could collect for you.

WALTZ

(shakes his head)

It all comes in the mail.

EUGENE

What's with all these deadbeats I heard about?

WALTZ

First it was three men. Now it's twelve.

EUGENE

Twelve??

WALTZ

Good clients. Conscientious people. I don't get it.

EUGENE

You've talked to them?

WALTZ

They all say the same thing, like somebody wrote a speech for them. Times are hard. They'll pay me when they can.

EUGENE

That's it?

WALTZ

(nods)

It's like they all went bad at once.

EUGENE

Let me look into it. That can be my first assignment for you.

WALTZ

I can't let you do that.

EUGENE

No rough stuff, I promise. You'll know that, and I'll know that, but these bums won't know it.

WALTZ

That's what I mean. You have a reputation.

EUGENE

Exactly. As a violent asshole. Who's to know I've changed?

WALTZ

But it's no different. I've never intimidated my clients into paying, and that's what I'd be doing -- indirectly -- if I sent you. These are all decent men. They'll pay.

EUGENE

Just let me go talk to them. I'll introduce myself as ---

WALTZ

(interrupting)

It's my business, Eugene. I've got to handle it my way.

EUGENE

Okay, okay.

WALTZ

I've got to keep believing in the person's respect for his or her own good name. The basic honor on decent people.

Eugene shakes his head in frustration, gets out of bed.

EUGENE

Right.

He finishes off his beer.

EUGENE

I'm going to La Crosse and get laid.

EXT. WALTZ'S HOUSE - DAY

Paul Vermillion's black Cadillac glides up Waltz's driveway, parks in front. Vermillion, wearing leather gloves and looking sleek in an Armani overcoat, gets out, goes to the door, RINGS the BELL.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Waltz pours a cup of coffee for Vermillion, who sits, gloves off, overcoat on, at the modest kitchen table. Waltz drinks his coffee, standing.

VERMILLION

I hear Eugene is out of jail.

WALTZ

That's right.

VERMILLION

And you're acting as his temporary guardian.

WALTZ

It's a condition of his release. He's staying here. I'm trying to find him some work.

VERMILLION

What kind of work?

WALTZ

(irritated)

Why so many questions?

VERMILLION

Does Eugene know that you ratted on him?

Bombshell. Waltz is stunned into silence.

INT. ENTRANCE FOYER - DAY

Waltz escorts Vermillion to the front door. Paul is sliding into his gloves.

VERMILLION

Thanks for the coffee.

Suddenly...

WALTZ
Do you know Lou Basil?

VERMILLION
Lou Basil? No. Who's he?

WALTZ
How about Elaine Schoolcraft?

VERMILLION
Never heard of her.

WALTZ
Jake Bradley? Frank Hesperia? Earl
Rivers?

VERMILLION
No, Harry. Why do you ask?

Waltz opens the door. Vermillion steps out onto the porch, offers his gloved hand.

VERMILLION
Take care.

WALTZ
(ignores the hand)
Paul?

VERMILLION
Yes, Harry?

Waltz becomes cold steel.

WALTZ
Stay away from my son.

He slams the door on Vermillion. HOLD ON Waltz's face. A piece of the puzzle just fell into place...

EXT. THE HIGHWAY TO LA CROSSE - DAY

Waltz's Buick heads into town.

EXT. ISLE OF PARADISE CASINO & HOTEL - DAY

Day or night, the place is always bursting with customers. Waltz parks, heads for the entrance.

INT. CASINO - DAY

Waltz enters and walks quickly, knowing exactly where he's headed -- the roulette table -- where he finds Earl Rivers betting his last dollar.

HARRY
Earl --

EARL
(not looking at him)
Not now!

He bets, the wheel spins, he loses. Now he notices the man beside him.

EARL
(apprehensively)
Harry!

WALTZ
Let's get a cup of coffee, Earl.

He drags Earl away from the roulette table.

INT. CASINO COFFEE SHOP - DAY

A WAITRESS serves them coffee.

WALTZ
Is that decaf?

WAITRESS
Just made a fresh pot.

She leaves.

EARL
I thought we were square, Harry.

WALTZ
Square? How the hell could we be square?

EARL
What are you going to do to me?

WALTZ
Relax, Earl. I'm not carrying a gun. I only want to talk to you.

EARL

You're putting me in a real bind here.

WALTZ

You put yourself in a bind. Did you think you could just stop paying me and never have to answer for it?

EARL

I thought since you and my sister were so thick...

WALTZ

Your sister has got nothing to do with this. What did Paul Vermillion offer you to ignore your debt to me?

EARL

A better deal. A lower rate. He's talkin' to a lot of people, Harry, not just me. Paulie said he'd pay you off. We shook on it.

WALTZ

Don't be stupid. He doesn't intend to pay me off. Now you owe two people, me and Vermillion.

EARL

He said you were over the hill. You wouldn't make trouble.

WALTZ

So you know I won't break your kneecaps. For that, you go against your word, your good name? What do you think will happen if you're late with Vermillion? You think he'll listen, give you a little extra time? He does carry a gun. He will break your kneecaps.

Earl slides out of the booth, suddenly defiant.

EARL

I'll take that chance.

Waltz gets up, too, stands facing him.

WALTZ

You're not through with me, Earl. You signed the note. You still have to pay.

Rivers suddenly laughs.

EARL

Harry...your pants are unzipped.

Waltz looks down. Sure enough...

EXT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT NEAR CASINO - DAY

The snow has stopped, but the wind still blows like a sonofabitch. Picking his teeth, Paul Vermillion comes out of the restaurant with his driver and THREE WISEGUYS. They part company, and Vermillion goes on his way, alone.

He rounds a corner, and suddenly Eugene is all over him. He grabs Vermillion's expensive Armani lapels and slams him against the side of the building. Eugene is nose-to-nose with Vermillion.

EUGENE

Hello, scumbag.

VERMILLION

(smiles)

Welcome back. Ready to work?

EUGENE

Stay the fuck out of my father's business! Leave his clients alone!

VERMILLION

Too late. Now they're my clients.

EUGENE

You stole them!

VERMILLION

I made them a better deal. It's called free enterprise. Survival of the fittest.

EUGENE

Bullshit! Cancel the deals!

VERMILLION

Very noble of you, Eugene, trying to save the old man.

(MORE)

VERMILLION (cont'd)

Also out of character. So when do you want to start?

Eugene slams him against the wall again.

VERMILLION

I need a guy like you.

Eugene knees him hard in the balls, and Vermillion doubles over in pain.

VERMILLION

(gasping)

You're terrific.

Eugene picks him up, slams him once more against the wall.

EUGENE

I mean it, asshole! Leave his clients alone!

VERMILLION

Don't waste your time! Your old man's not worth it. Not after what he did to you...

EUGENE

What are you talking about?

VERMILLION

Any man who'd do that to his own son...

Eugene gets in his face, screaming:

EUGENE

What the hell are you talking about?

Human garbage that he is, Vermillion smiles...

INT. WALTZ'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mary is propped up by every pillow on Waltz's bed, her protruding belly exposed, while Waltz rubs oil all over it. Monroe's PIANO MUSIC plays softly in the background. Waltz presses his ear to Mary's stomach, holds it there for a long time, listening. Finally, she rolls her eyes.

MARY

Waltz?

WALTZ

Shhh! I hear something.

MARY

Indigestion.

She suppresses a tiny belch.

MARY

Where's Eugene?

WALTZ

La Crosse. Probably forming a gang.

MARY

You know...

WALTZ

What?

MARY

Just when I start to think you're a nice guy...

WALTZ

That's my whole problem. Too nice.

Vermillion thinks because I don't get violent, that I'm weak. A pushover. Mother Teresa.

MARY

Maybe it's time for Mother Teresa to put on her boxing gloves.

Waltz sighs. The door opens, and Eugene walks in, flushed with rage.

MARY

Eugene! What's the matter?

He glares at Waltz.

EUGENE

Paul Vermillion says you're the one who called the cops on me. Is it true?

Waltz and Mary look at each other.

WALTZ

Yes.

EUGENE

(explodes)

Son of a bitch! I just didn't want to believe it!

MARY

He did it out of concern, Eugene, out of love.

EUGENE

Bullshit! What kind of love is that?

MARY

He didn't want to see you get killed. It's true! That gangster was ---

WALTZ

(cuts in, to Eugene)

You're a punk. A cheap crook.

Eugene points his finger at Waltz threateningly.

EUGENE

Shut up!

MARY

Eugene! He cares about you!

EUGENE

Bullshit! Grandpa Waltz was the only one who ever gave a damn about me! There's nobody left!

Abruptly, it is silent in the room, except for the tape of Monroe's PIANO PLAYING. Eugene looks over at the cassette player.

EUGENE

Him! It's always him!

He looks at Waltz.

EUGENE

You think you're the only one who felt bad. Fuck you. Even my grief couldn't measure up to your standards! Fuck you!!

Eugene yanks the tape out of the stereo and SMASHES it, turning the tape to spaghetti.

EUGENE

It wasn't my fault!

Waltz becomes as a rock, quietly malevolent.

WALTZ

Get out.

EUGENE

You bet your ass I will. As far away as I can haul my ass!

WALTZ

I thought maybe there was some hope for you, but you'll never change. You're a cruel boy, Eugene. You always have been.

EUGENE

What did you expect? I learned from the master -- the king of cruelty!

MARY

Waltz! Eugene! Stop this! Or I'm leaving!

WALTZ

(calmly)

Stay where you are, Mary. This is between him and me. You tried to help things, and it didn't work. Now you know why.

EUGENE

Go to hell!

Waltz finally raises his voice. It's scary.

WALTZ

Leave! Don't come back! Go to your low-life friends and stay there!

EUGENE

(mocking him)

Oh, shit! I think the old man's mad. Could it be that he has actual human emotions!?

MARY

Eugene!

EUGENE

Come on, old man, show me what you've got!

Waltz begins to advance on Eugene.

EUGENE

Give me you best shot! Here --
 (thrusts out his chin)
 -- right on the chin! Knock me across
 the fucking house!

Waltz keeps advancing.

EUGENE

Come on, you coward, bash my brains
 in! Get even with me for Monroe! You
 know how bad you want to do it! Come
 on, you fucking coward!!

Waltz puts his hand on Eugene's chest, starts pushing him out of the room. His eyes full of tears now, Eugene keeps trying to taunt his father into violence.

EUGENE

Hit me!!

He shoves Waltz's hand aside, but Waltz just puts it back, continues pushing him.

EUGENE

No wonder everybody's laughing at you!
 (screams)
 HIT ME!!

MARY

Eugene, stop!

Waltz finally pushes him into the hallway. Eugene's anger melts -- his face is suddenly full of agony -- and on that tortured expression, Waltz slams the door on him.

HOLD ON Waltz's face. Emotionless. Behind the door, a MUFFLED CRY...

EUGENE'S VOICE

Daddy...

Waltz closes his eyes.

EXT. MARY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Mary's Honda pulls into the driveway, parks. She gets out, starts unloading her suitcases, hanging clothes, overnight bag -- she's moving home.

Moments later, Waltz arrives in his Buick, parks behind her. He gets out, hurries for Mary.

WALTZ

Mary, wait -- !

MARY

Leave me alone! I'm fed up with both of you!

WALTZ

Don't do this.

MARY

I don't know why I didn't think of it sooner -- keep the baby and dump the men!

WALTZ

Please. Come back.

MARY

You think I want to raise a child in all that bullshit?!

WALTZ

Come back.

MARY

No! Forget it!

She starts up the back steps, puts her key in the back door.

WALTZ

Vermillion can have my whole bloody business. I don't care about the money. I've got plenty of money.

MARY

What about Eugene?

WALTZ

(blows)

Eugene is a monster!

MARY
 (screams)
 If Eugene is a monster, then you
 created him! Now get out of here! I
 mean it! Go! Fuck off!

She goes in the house, slams the door. Waltz is all alone.

EXT. EARL RIVERS'S COTTAGE - DAY

Mary's brother Earl Rivers is hurriedly loading his car. He goes back inside for another armful.

INT. COTTAGE - DAY

Earl is frantically packing his bags -- and everything else he owns -
 - throwing it all into old suitcases, cardboard boxes.

A KNOCK at the door. Earl freezes, doesn't even breathe. Another KNOCK. Earl tiptoes to the door.

EARL
 Who is it?

MALE VOICE
 (muffled)
 Waltz.

Earl breathes a sigh of relief. He starts unbolting the multiple locks. Eugene Waltz bursts into the apartment in a rage, knocking Earl back. Eugene grabs him, slams him against the wall, screams in his face:

EUGENE
 Where's the fucking money? Where's
 Paulie's money??

EARL
 What money? Who are you?

Eugene knocks him down.

EUGENE
 I work for Paulie. Give me the
 fucking money!

Earl's eye starts to bleed.

EARL
 I got it! I swear to God I got it!

Eugene looks around, sees the suitcases.

EUGENE

Where do you think you're going?

Frozen with fear, Earl can't find words. Eugene picks him off the floor, slugs him again. Earl goes down.

EARL

(begging)

Please! Don't!

But Eugene is out of control. As Earl struggles to his feet, Eugene kicks him in the face.

EUGENE

Where's the goddamned money?!

EARL

Tomorrow! I'll have it tomorrow!

He curls up to diffuse Eugene's next attack, to no avail.

EARL

Please! Stop!!

Eugene then grabs Earl by the shirt, starts dragging him toward the door.

EUGENE

Come on!

EARL

No! Please let me go!

Eugene drags him violently out of the apartment.

EXT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT IN LA CROSSE - DAY

Vermillion's place.

INT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT - DAY

Paul Vermillion sits at a back table, sipping a capuccino. He frowns at its bitterness.

VERMILLION

More sprinkles.

He hands it to one of his BODYGUARDS sitting with him, who sprinkles more chocolate over the steamed milk. Except for these guys, the restaurant is empty.

The front door flies open, and Eugene drags Earl Rivers into the restaurant, pushes him roughly toward Vermillion's back table. Earl's face is now bleeding from a half dozen wounds.

EUGENE

Move it!

Eugene kicks him in the ass. Finally, Earl comes before Vermillion.

EUGENE

I caught him trying to skip town.

EARL

No, Paulie, I swear...!

EUGENE

Shut up!

Vermillion sips his coffee.

VERMILLION

I'm very disappointed in you, Earl.

I thought you were a man of your word.

EARL

I am, Paulie. I just had some bad luck.

Vermillion's bodyguard laughs knowingly. Earl's bad luck is only just beginning.

VERMILLION

I operate on the honor system, Earl.

You pay what you owe, or Mr. Waltz here will break your spine.

EARL

Waltz? As in Harry?

Eugene backhands him across the face.

VERMILLION

Lay off!

EARL

You won't have any more problems with me, Paulie, I swear to God. I'll pay on time. Fifteenth of the month, by noon, until it's all paid off.

Vermillion sips his coffee, considers this.

VERMILLION

Very commendable, Earl, but it's a little late.

EARL

Late?

VERMILLION

You're too far behind. Now, I'm going to need it all.

EARL

All? What do you mean?

VERMILLION

All. The entire amount. In five days.

Earl begins to weep.

EARL

Paulie, please. That's nearly twenty-five grand. Where am I gonna get that in five days??

VERMILLION

That's your problem, Mr. Rivers. Isn't it, Eugene?

Eugene smiles at him.

EARL

You can't do this, Paulie -- it's against our contract.

VERMILLION

Contract? What contract?

EARL

We shook on it.

Vermillion's face suddenly twists in rage.

VERMILLION
Get out of here.

EARL
(begging)
Paulie, you can't do this!

Vermillion rises from his seat, very threatening. For the first time in the film, he screams:

VERMILLION
Get the fuck out of here!!

Earl runs for the exit. Vermillion sits back down, composes himself, looks at Eugene.

VERMILLION
He's got to go.

EXT. WALTZ'S HOUSE - DAY

A large van, from Jones' PIANO MOVERS, is parked in front.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Waltz pours himself a drink, plops down in a big arm chair, looks off wistfully.

THREE PIANO MOVERS are dismantling Monroe's baby grand and carrying it off in sections.

Waltz drinks.

EXT. SAM'S BARBER SHOP - LATE AFTERNOON

In a hat and heavy coat, Waltz walks against the cold wind, approaches the barber shop, looks in the window. The sign says OPEN, but the shop is deserted.

INT. BARBER SHOP - LATE AFTERNOON

Waltz enters. A moment later, Sam Boggins appears from the back room. He jumps in surprise.

SAM
Jesus!

Waltz takes off his hat, so Sam can see his face.

WALTZ
It's me.

SAM

I almost went for my gun.

WALTZ

Gun?

Sam pulls a large, mean-looking pistol from a drawer.

WALTZ

What are you doing with that?

SAM

The Western Auto got held up Tuesday, and yesterday two men tied up old lady Pentwater and stole twelve hundred dollars.

WALTZ

You're kidding. Is she okay?

SAM

(nods)

It's what the world's come to, Harry. I'm not taking any chances.

WALTZ

What are you going to do -- get in a showdown -- meet them in the street at high noon?

SAM

(pats his gun)

I'll make this baby come in their ugly faces is what I'll do.

WALTZ

If they take your money, you can earn it back. It's not worth dying over.

SAM

Easy for you to say. You're rich. I'm just barely scraping by.

As Sam pulls the gun away, Waltz pulls two bottles of beer out of his bulky overcoat.

WALTZ

How about a beer?

SAM
(curtly)
No, thanks.

WALTZ
What's the matter?

The door to the shop opens, and TWO MEN, regular customers, come in. Waltz recognizes them.

WALTZ
Hi, Tom. Richard.

The two men do not return the greeting. Richard looks at Sam.

RICHARD
We'll come back.

They leave. Waltz looks at Sam, mystified.

WALTZ
What was that all about?

SAM
Did you want a haircut?

WALTZ
(insistent)
Sam. What the hell was that?

SAM
People in town -- they've heard what you did to Eugene -- that you turned him in to the cops.

WALTZ
He committed armed robbery, Sam. What would you have done?

SAM
(after a pause)
Not that.

Waltz puts the beers back in his coat, starts for the door.

SAM
Aw, Harry...

WALTZ
I wouldn't want you to lose any more customers.

He leaves on a gust of wind from the open door.

INT. WALTZ'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Waltz lies in bed, alone, arms folded behind his head, staring at the ceiling, listening to the HOWLING WIND outside. The DOORBELL RINGS. Waltz looks at the clock -- it's 1:00 a.m.

It RINGS AGAIN. Urgently. Waltz gets up, reaches for his robe.

INT. ENTRANCE FOYER - NIGHT

DOORBELL RINGING, Waltz comes down the stairs, flipping on the lights. The KNOCKING becomes FRANTIC.

WALTZ
(loudly)
All right, all right!

He unlocks the door, opens it. Outside is Earl Rivers, drunk, scared, and wearing dark glasses.

WALTZ
Mr. Rivers.

EARL
Harry! I've gotta borrow twenty-five grand.

WALTZ
You don't say.

EARL
You're my last hope.

WALTZ
Now that's really unfortunate. Why don't you get it from your sister?

EARL
My sister wouldn't give me shit. I've only got five days. Or Vermillion is going to kill me.

WALTZ
That's your problem.

EARL
Please, Harry, have a heart...

Earl takes off his dark glasses. His face is a bruised, swollen mess, his eyes nearly swollen shut. Even Waltz reacts.

WALTZ

Jesus. Did Vermillion do this?

EARL

(shakes his head)

Your son.

Waltz turns red with anger.

EXT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT IN LA CROSSE - DAY

Waltz parks his Buick in front of Vermillion's place, gets out, makes for the entrance.

INT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT - DAY

Waltz marches in, and gets stopped immediately by two of Vermillion's bodyguards.

BODYGUARD

Where do you think you're goin'?

WALTZ

I want to see Vermillion.

BODYGUARD

Who the hell are you?

WALTZ

Harry Waltz.

VERMILLION'S TABLE

at the back of the room, where Paul is holding court to THREE WISEGUYS. The bodyguard walks up.

BODYGUARD

Boss, some old guy to see you. Harry Waltz.

VERMILLION

(nodding to him)

This ought to be good.

At that moment, Eugene appears from the back, wiping his hands on a paper towel. Then Harry appears.

VERMILLION

Well, Harry, how nice to see you.
Eugene?

Eugene nods, goes over to his father, frisks him. Their eyes connect for an instant, and Eugene looks away. The moment passes. Eugene nods at Vermillion.

VERMILLION

(to the bodyguard)
Bring him a capuccino.

WALTZ

I thought I told you to stay away from my son.

VERMILLION

Your son came to me, Harry. It was so touching, him trying to save you. So I just had to set him straight. Now he's mine.

WALTZ

You think I don't know what's going on, what you're doing? Maybe you think I've got Alzheimer's. You want my business? My clients? You can have them. Except for one.

VERMILLION

Who?

WALTZ

Earl Rivers.

The bodyguard sets a cappuccino in front of Waltz.

VERMILLION

Earl Rivers?

WALTZ

As of right now, I'm assuming his debt to you. He doesn't owe you a nickel. You want your money, your twenty-five grand, you come to me.

VERMILLION

Whatever you say, Harry.

WALTZ
 (with a look at Eugene)
 Send your fucking enforcer. Thanks
 for the coffee.

Waltz picks up the steaming cup of cappucino and throws it in Vermillion's face! The wiseguys gasp. Waltz turns and starts walking out of the restaurant.

Vermillion pulls a gun, aims it directly at Waltz's back.

VERMILLION
 Waltz!

Waltz keeps on walking.

VERMILLION
 Look at me! I want you to see this
 coming!

Waltz walks on. Vermillion cocks the gun, screams:

VERMILLION
 Turn around, you motherfucker -- !!

Waltz walks out the door. Vermillion slowly lowers his gun, humiliated in front of his men.

HOLD ON Eugene's surprised look...

EXT. STATE HIGHWAY - DAY

Mary Hale's Honda turns off Route 15 onto the road to her brother's cottage.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

The car goes deeper into the woods.

EXT. EARL RIVERS'S COTTAGE - DAY

Mary parks, gets out, and heads purposefully for the front door. She knocks loudly.

MARY
 Earl! It's Mary!

We hear MULTIPLE LOCKS being UNLOCKED from the inside, then the door opens. His face still cut and bruised, Earl smiles out at his sister.

EARL

Mare.

She holds up a fat envelope.

MARY

(angrily)

I got it.

She pushes past him into the house.

INT. COTTAGE - DAY

Mary slams the envelope into Earl's hand.

MARY

Don't ever ask me for another penny
the rest of your life.

EARL

Mary...

MARY

From now on, you're on your own. I
don't care how much trouble you're in.
You and I are through.

He hands the envelope back to her.

EARL

I don't need it. Thanks.

MARY

You don't need it??

EARL

It's all taken care of.

MARY

How? Who?

EARL

Your boyfriend...

Mary stares at him, dumbfounded.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DUSK

Paul Vermillion's Cadillac heads for Marathon.

INT. VERMILLION'S CADILLAC (MOVING) - DUSK

Vermillion driving, Eugene sits beside him, loading a .38 pistol, attaching a silencer. Vermillion's face is bandaged from the coffee burn.

VERMILLION
Get the money, Eugene.
(searches Eugene's face)
Can you do what's necessary?

EUGENE
(steely)
Yes.

VERMILLION
Will you do it?

EUGENE
Fuck yes, I'll do it!

Vermillion smiles.

VERMILLION
That's my boy.

EXT. MARATHON CITY LIMITS - DUSK

Vermillion's Cadillac enters Marathon.

EXT. WALTZ'S HOUSE - DUSK

The porch lights come on.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

START ON a huge pile of OLD PHOTOGRAPHS, spread out all over the coffee table, then PULL BACK TO REVEAL Waltz sitting before them, staring off blankly, filled with thoughts of long ago.

The trance suddenly breaks. He looks down, picks up a thin strip of four successive photos, the kind taken in carnival picture booths. He regards it gravely.

The DOORBELL RINGS. He gets up to answer it.

INT. ENTRANCE FOYER - NIGHT

Waltz comes to the front door, opens it. Outside is Eugene, alone, looking very intense. Waltz's manner, in contrast, is subdued.

WALTZ
Hello, Eugene.

His son nods.

WALTZ
Come in.

Eugene enters silently.

WALTZ
You're in luck. I just put on a big
steak.

EUGENE
I'm here on business.

WALTZ
Come on, I can't eat it all. You love
steak. Give me your coat.

Waltz reaches to help him out of it, but Eugene moves away.

WALTZ
One last meal. That's standard, isn't
it?

Their eyes connect with his meaning.

WALTZ
I'd better not frisk you, huh? How
about a beer?

Before Eugene can decline, Waltz disappears into the kitchen.
Eugene wanders into the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Eugene enters, sees all the old pictures on the coffee table. He goes over, picks up the thin strip of photos Waltz was just examining.

INSERT - STRIP OF PHOTOGRAPHS

Waltz is some thirty years younger, with a wide-brimmed hat tilted back on his head, and he's holding five-year-old Eugene (whose front teeth are missing) on his lap. It's a happy picture.

EUGENE

turns away, disturbed by it, looks around the room. Waltz enters with two beers.

EUGENE
Where's the piano?

WALTZ
Got rid of it. Look at how much room
I've got in here now.

He sets the beer down in front of Eugene. Their eyes meet again.

WALTZ
Remember the first time you had beer?
At the old Ranch Cafe? "Daddy, just
one more sip," you used to say. Your
mother chewed my ass for a week for
giving it to you.

Waltz lifts his bottle in a toast.

WALTZ
To your mother, God rest her soul.
(realizes)
I better check the steak.

EUGENE
Wait --

But Waltz is already gone. Eugene looks down at his watch impatiently.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Waltz pulls an enormous steak out of the broiler as Eugene enters.

EUGENE
I don't have time for this.

WALTZ
(points at the steak)
Look -- burned -- just like you like
it.

Eugene stares at the singed meat.

EXT. WALTZ'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Vermillion's car is parked in the shadows at the bottom of the hill, lights off, motor running.

INT. VERMILLION'S CAR - NIGHT

Increasingly angry and impatient, Vermillion looks up at Waltz's house, then at his watch.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Waltz cuts the steak in half, puts a piece on a plate in front of Eugene, who is now standing, coat still on, beside the dining table. There's salad, baked potato, too.

WALTZ

Still like ketchup on your steak?

Eugene's trying hard to stay tough. Waltz puts ketchup on the table, then he starts opening a bottle of red wine.

WALTZ

Remember that Thanksgiving when your Mother and Monroe were still alive, and we ---

EUGENE

(cuts him off)

We've got to talk business.

WALTZ

(sighs)

I've been talking business all my life.

EUGENE

You owe me.

WALTZ

So Mary tells me. In more ways than one.

EUGENE

Twenty-four thousand, five hundred and seventy-eight dollars.

WALTZ

Sit down. Eat your steak.

EUGENE

I don't want your fucking steak!

WALTZ

Come on -- it'll get cold.

EUGENE

I've got to have that money tonight.

Waltz looks at him directly as he sits, starts cutting into his steak. He is firm and incontrovertible.

WALTZ

(as he eats)

No.

EUGENE

Jesus Christ. Twenty-five G's is nothing to you -- you probably got that much stashed in the cookie jar.

WALTZ

No.

EUGENE

It's just money.

WALTZ

No.

EUGENE

Why are you doing this?? Why don't you give me the fucking money and let me get out of here!

WALTZ

I can't.

EUGENE

What do you mean, you can't? I know you've got it.

WALTZ

That's not the point.

EUGENE

Screw the point. Give me the money!

WALTZ

No.

Eugene explodes.

EUGENE

Goddamned fucking son of a bitch!

WALTZ

That's quite a vocabulary.

Eugene walks away in frustration. Waltz looks after him a moment, then calmly takes another bite of his steak.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Eugene is pacing ferociously, taking in the old familiar surroundings -- the paintings, the pictures, the momentos -- they haven't changed in his lifetime. Suddenly, he turns, starts screaming:

EUGENE

I hate this place! I hate it! The whole fucking house and everything in it!!

Then, in a rage, he sweeps his hand across the mantel, crashing his mother's glass and porcelain to the floor. He pushes furniture, knocks over lamps, rips paintings off the wall -- Eugene is completely out of control.

WALTZ

stands in the doorway, watching, doing nothing, letting Eugene vent his anger.

EUGENE

now turns over the coffee table, scattering pictures everywhere. He looks down, laughs, picks one up.

EUGENE

(angrily)

This one is perfect -- the old man in tears -- a once in a lifetime event, caught on film!

He throws the photo at Waltz, who bends down to pick it up.

INSERT - PHOTOGRAPH

Thirty-five years ago. Waltz is in a hospital. An enormous cigar is stuck in his mouth. Tears are running down his cheek.

EUGENE

sneers at his father.

EUGENE

When the fuck was that taken?

Utter silence in the room.

WALTZ

The day you were born.

The color drains from Eugene's face, and he is at once a child again -- vulnerable, exposed. It doesn't last long; he hardens once more.

EUGENE

You were crying because you knew how I was going to turn out.

WALTZ

That was one of the happiest days in my life.

EUGENE

(growls)

Save it.

WALTZ

Your mother had been in labor for eighteen hours -- it was awful -- I nearly passed out. That was a great day.

EUGENE

What'd you do when Monroe was born? Set off fireworks?

WALTZ

I wasn't there. I was away on business. It wasn't the same.

Fighting back his emotions, Eugene looks down, sees another picture. He picks it up.

INSERT - PHOTOGRAPH

A shot of Eugene and Monroe, age ten and six, with their arms around each other, holding bat and glove, brothers-in-baseball.

EUGENE

is weakening rapidly.

WALTZ

takes a step toward him. Eugene looks up from the picture, his eyes liquid.

EUGENE

I loved him, too.

WALTZ

What?

EUGENE

I loved the little bastard as much as you did.

It's as if someone slapped Waltz across the face.

WALTZ

Eugene --

EUGENE

How do you think I've felt all these years -- ??

WALTZ

I had no idea...

EUGENE

That's because you never asked me. You never fucking asked me!

His anger returning, Eugene suddenly steels himself, looks at Waltz coldly.

EUGENE

Give me the goddamned money! The twenty-five grand! Now! If I don't get it...

Eugene pulls out his .38 pistol. Now Waltz turns cold.

WALTZ

Do what you have to do. You're getting nothing from me.

EUGENE

Paulie's really pissed -- after what you did to him -- he can't let it pass.

WALTZ

That's his problem.

EUGENE

Jesus Christ, Daddy!

WALTZ

I mean it. I don't care anymore. Mary's gone -- my friends have turned against me -- there's nothing left. Put me out of my misery. You'd be doing me a favor.

Eugene looks at his gun.

WALTZ

Go ahead, Eugene, pull the trigger -- kill your old man -- I don't want you to look bad to Paulie.

EUGENE

Just give me the money.

WALTZ

Mary said I created you -- out of my own pain and selfishness. She's right.

EUGENE

Shut up!

WALTZ

I never saw it until now. I really made a mess of things.

Eugene points the gun at Waltz.

EUGENE

(emotionally)

Shut up! Just shut up!

Waltz looks at the gun, then at Eugene. Dead calm.

WALTZ

Go ahead, Eugene -- squeeze the trigger -- if you don't do it, Vermillion will. Let's keep it in the family.

EUGENE

(begging)

Please give me the money, Daddy!

WALTZ

I want you to do it.

EUGENE

Stop it!

WALTZ

Don't you see? It's perfect that way -
- it's what I deserve.

EUGENE

(shaky)

Daddy, stop it!

WALTZ

Go on -- pull the trigger, Eugene...

Eugene starts to crack wide open, so he hardens himself, cocks the pistol...

EUGENE

Don't make me do this!

WALTZ

Get it over with...

EUGENE

Goddamnit, don't make me kill you!

Amazingly tranquil, Waltz looks at him tenderly.

WALTZ

Eugene, forgive me.

The gun in Eugene's hand begins to shake. He's wanted to hear that all his life. Waltz starts toward him. Eugene tries to steady the gun. Waltz holds his arms out, offering himself up, and for a moment, we think Eugene is going to shoot...

EUGENE

Daddy...

Then, the VOICE of PAUL VERMILLION...

VERMILLION'S VOICE

What the fuck is going on in here?

Eugene and Waltz turn to find the gangster standing in the doorway.

VERMILLION

(to Eugene)

What are you waiting for? Do it!

Eugene hesitates. Vermillion screams:

VERMILLION

Do it!!

Eugene looks at his father, hesitates again. Vermillion pulls out his gun.

VERMILLION

If you won't, I will --

Eugene suddenly turns his gun on Vermillion and FIRES. The gangster goes down. It's all over in a split second.

Eugene looks at Waltz, stunned, then over at Vermillion's body, where blood is beginning to pool from underneath. Waltz goes directly to the telephone, dials a number.

WALTZ

(into phone)

Sheriff? Harry Waltz. Better get a squad car over here. I just shot a burglar.

(pauses)

Yeah, me, Harry Waltz.

He hangs up, looks over at Eugene, still frozen on the spot. HOLD ON the tender look between father and son. It is like a long embrace.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MARY'S HOUSE - NEXT MORNING

The sun has not been up long. Her Honda is in the driveway.

INT. MARY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Mary sits on the edge of the bed, rubbing cream on her bare pregnant belly.

Then pulls her nightgown over her stomach and reaches for the TV/VCR remote control. She points it and presses a button.

On TV, a videotape begins: A WORKOUT TAPE FOR PREGNANT WOMEN. In it, a classful of PREGGOS are lined up to exercise. VOICE OF INSTRUCTOR OVER, Mary drags herself out of bed and over to a spot in front of the television. She watches the eager exercisers for a moment, looks increasingly revolted.

MARY

The hell with it.

She turns off the TV, reaches for half-empty box of chocolate doughnuts on her nightstand. She grabs one, takes a big bite.

Then she gets up, wanders to a window, looks out. She freezes, the doughnut still in her mouth.

HER POV - ACROSS THE ROAD

Waltz's Buick LeSabre is just pulling up to its old parking spot off the road. Waltz gets out, goes to the hood, opens it, and takes off the radiator cap. A moment later, Eugene gets out of the passenger side, bringing Waltz a can of anti-freeze.

MARY

squeezes her eyes shut, unable to believe what she sees. She opens them again.

HER POV - CLOSER

Eugene pours anti-freeze into the radiator, and Waltz recaps it, closes the hood. He and Eugene talk for a moment, and it's obvious from their body language that something has changed between them. Finally, they nod farewell, and Eugene gets back into the car alone, taking the wheel.

Waltz waves to Eugene as the Buick makes a U-turn, heads back toward town. Now Waltz walks toward Mary's back door.

MARY'S VOICE

Hey!

Waltz stops, looks up to see

MARY

leaning out her second-story bedroom window.

MARY
Where do you think you're going?

WALTZ
Inside?

MARY
Oh yeah?

WALTZ
It's freezing out here!

MARY
That's your problem.

WALTZ
Have you got some decaf?

MARY
Maybe.

WALTZ
Regular coffee gives me gas.

MARY
(didn't hear)
What?

WALTZ
(shouting)
Regular gives me gas!

Mary rolls her eyes.

EXT. MARY'S HOUSE - MORNING

Mary opens the back door. Waltz trudges to the steps, stops, looks at Mary.

WALTZ
Are you sure you want me back?

Mary sighs.

MARY
Get your ass in here.

Waltz enters. The door closes behind them. MUSIC SNEAKS IN: Tony Bennett singing "It's Like Reaching for the Moon"...

FADE

MUSIC OVER, ROLL END CREDITS over the old photograph of Harry Waltz on the day Eugene was born, cigar in his mouth, tears in his eyes, thrilled to be a father.

THE END