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SIMPLE SIMON

by

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INT/EXT. DELI NEW YORK CITY - DAY

On a busy street in downtown Newark two Mexican workers unload boxes from a delivery truck and slide them down a ramp into the basement below.

As the owner, BRODY, serves customers at the deli counter the loading work continues, fast - too fast - and as a crashing noise explodes from the basement, Brody runs out of his store and calls down the ramp.

BRODY

Yo, Simon? You dead or alive?

INT. BRODY DELI, BASEMENT - DAY

SIMON, 25, gentle, obedient and slightly vacant, emerges from behind the boxes with tomato ketchup all over his clothes.

As Brody and the two workers laugh at Simon, a sexy young Latino woman, MARISOL - Brody's daughter - arrives for work.

As Marisol passes Simon downstairs he becomes self-conscious while upstairs the two workers try to conceal their desire for her.

BRODY

What are you two degenerates looking at? Back to work.

INT. DELI, BASEMENT - DAY

As the boxes begin to slide down the ramp again Simon works fast but then he catches a glimpse of Marisol changing into her work clothes.

Marisol glances at Simon and, though she keeps her back to him, a tiny smile flashes across her face as she allows herself to enjoy being adored by him.

Everything slows down as Simon focuses in on the small butterfly tattoo on Marisol's naked back.

A barely audible beeping sound begins softly then increases in persistent volume until Simon realizes that Marisol is watching him staring at her.

Everything kicks back into real time as Simon grabs at his pocket and pulls out a small beeping Tamagotchi toy.

As he pushes the button to stop the beeping, Simon looks up, sees the rapidly approaching boxes sliding down the ramp, and realizes he is not going to be able to stop them.

Marisol laughs as the boxes crash down onto Simon.

INT. BRODY DELI - DAY

As Simon puts a pack of glass sweets on the counter Brody counts out ten one dollar notes.

BRODY
Seven hours, twenty one dollars,
minus the three bottles you
broke; ten Dollars.

Simon sneaks a a few of the deli's business cards into his pocket but Brody looks at him disapprovingly.

BRODY
What did I tell you about those?

Simon slides the cards back out of his pocket and puts them back onto the counter.

Simon takes six dollars off the counter, leaves the other four on the counter, and looks at the packs of Lucky Strike cigarettes behind Brody.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Simon smokes as he walks and, as he looks at an African American homeless guy, the Tamagotchi signals it is happy.

HOMELESS GUY
Hey nigga, got me a smoke?

Simon takes a couple out of his new pack of Lucky Strike cigarettes and hands them to the appreciative homeless guy.

HOMELESS GUY
My nigga.

As Simon continues walking he becomes increasingly sensitive to the sounds around him, picking up on random:

- speech
- laughter
- shouting

Just as a slow rise of panic begins to take hold of him a massive truck speeds by and its powerful wailing horn snaps Simon back to reality as he jumps back onto the sidewalk.

EXT. PSYCHIATRIC HOME - DAY

At the entrance to the hospital a group of people talk and smoke as one of them, Fred, 40, troubled, impish, innocent, looks anxiously down the street then responds with a rush of excitement as he sees Simon approaching.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC HOME, DR. LAHIRI'S OFFICE - DAY

DOCTOR LAHIRI, a well groomed intellectual Indian woman in her 50's and Simon's mother, MAURA, 50's, conservative, protective and naive, walk out of Lahiri's office and, as they make their way down the hallway, they watch Simon in the distance.

DR. LAHIRI

According to his file his medications are becoming less effective and I'm not convinced that larger, more costly doses, are what he needs.

MAURA

You're recommending it?

DR. LAHIRI

We know so much more about how to control it now, so, apart from the issue of memory loss, the results are almost entirely positive so, yes, I would be an advocate of the procedure.

MAURA

But you're saying it's permanent?

DR. LAHIRI

If it's done over a consistent time frame, yes, but, it's mostly the short term memory that is effected.

MAURA

Would it hurt?

DR. LAHIRI

At the time, yes, but, that's the point. Simon will have no memory of it.

MAURA

But your predecessor said they're not even sure if they can give a precise long term diagnosis of his condition.

DR. LAHIRI

Which is honest of him and actually true. Simon is often moderate and rather than one easily compartmentalized condition, like many of the residents here, he has a multitude of them but rather than continue his long term medications this is just another approach.

MAURA

What would you do if you were me?

DR. LAHIRI

Conjecture is not my strength but I will say, when it comes to the choice between non-medicinal, permanent peace of mind, or the sustained prescribing of costly medicines, with all their attendant side effects, I would query if memory is really such a vital issue?

As they continue walking towards Simon Maura stops Doctor Lahiri.

MAURA

Do you have children?

DR. LAHIRI

No.

MAURA

I understand you're new here doctor and I also understand there are budget considerations to your new methods but one thing you won't read in that file of yours is that I'd deny a body in the back garden for my son. And, as for Simon's needs, I know his needs better than anyone and the last thing he needs is E.C.T.

Doctor Lahiri gently smiles at Maura.

DR. LAHIRI

He's very lucky to have you Maura. Do you mind if I call you Maura?

Maura shakes her head, no.

DR. LAHIRI
But why not ask him?

Before Maura can react Doctor Lahiri approaches Simon.

DR. LAHIRI
What do you think Simon?

SIMON
Of what?

DR. LAHIRI
Don't pretend you weren't
listening. Electroconvulsive
Therapy.

Simon turns to his mother.

SIMON
Can we go now?

Simon's mother smiles a thin smile of victory at Doctor Lahiri and moves towards Simon.

DR. LAHIRI
Don't want to talk about it?

Simon shakes his head, no.

DR. LAHIRI
Coney Island?

Simon brightens up and nods his head, yes.

MAURA
This year we're staying over.

DR. LAHIRI
It's a wonderful idea. As long as
he maintains his medication.

MAURA
He will. Won't you Simon?

Simon grins boyishly and nods, yes.

MAURA
You're sure?

Maura tickles Simon under the arm and he squeals with delighted childish laughter.

SIMON
Stop.

She tickles him some more and, as he runs down the corridor laughing, Maura and Doctor Lahiri affectionately watch him.

We follow Simon and, as he turns the corner his laughter is abruptly cut short, when a male orderly, CURTIS, 30's, manipulative two-faced bully, passes him.

Simon stands against the wall, then carefully peers around it and watches as Curtis walks up the corridor and greets Maura and Doctor Lahiri with smiles and handshakes.

As they speak, Simon can't hear their conversation, but as the three of them smile back down the corridor at him he doesn't smile back.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC HOME, SIMON'S ROOM - DAY

With a large pile of different business cards in the corner and four completed Jigsaw puzzles mounted on the wall, Simon's room is in need of cleaning.

Maura packs a bag for Simon as he takes a small pile of business cards out of his pocket and puts them with the other vast pile of business cards into a box.

MAURA

Toothbrush?

INT/EXT. NEW JERSEY TURNPIKE AND STREETS - DAY

As Maura drives, Simon slides his favorite audio tape into the car stereo and as Bod Dylan's 'Man Gave Names to the Animals' kicks in; and as the opening credits roll, we observe the Newark skyline, the landscapes, bridges, street signs, and underpasses.

The packet of glass sweets lies on the dashboard and as they approach the Holland Tunnel in Manhattan Maura points to the birthday present in the back seat and Simon rips the packaging open to reveal a fifteen hundred piece jigsaw of the New York skyline.

Simon pulls open the box and the fifteen hundred jigsaw pieces fly all over the car.

Simon hesitates, guiltily looks at his mother, expecting disapproval, but when she smiles, he smiles back then as Maura unwraps one of the glass sweets and slips it into Simon's mouth their smiles break into laughter.

I/E. MANHATTAN, MIDTOWN, MAURA'S CAR - DAY

As Maura negotiates her way through the Manhattan traffic Simon peers through the window at the busy street life as :

- a driver argues with a cop
- a woman sashays in a revealing outfit

- a man holding a handwritten 'YARD SALE' sign
- a man dressed as a nun blesses himself
- a transsexual blows a kiss at a truck driver
- a child blankly stares back at Simon

INT. HOTEL EXCELSIOR, LOBBY - DAY

Simon pockets several of the hotel's business cards as the concierge slides two electronic door keys across the desk to him and Maura.

Simon reaches for one of the keys but Maura slides it back to the concierge.

MAURA

One is fine.

INT. EXCELSIOR, ROOM 636 - DAY

Simon blankly stares out the window at the midtown skyline and as he buttons his jacket he momentarily looks to the wall when he hears a television click on in the room next door.

Finishing her unpacking, Maura neatly lays out six containers of Simon's medicine on the bathroom shelf: We slowly track towards the wall into the bathroom of the room next door to reveal, in profile, KAREN, 43, formerly beautiful, troubled, with a sharp tongue and natural power.

As Karen's television plays in the background she too lays out several containers of sleeping pills then glances at a document from an airline company addressed to Karen Preston and she reads words on the document like :

- reshuffle...
- redundancy...
- training opportunities in our Nebraska branch...
- Please tick appropriate box for YES or NO.

We slowly track back to the other room where Maura looks at herself in her mirror - each woman entirely unaware of the other - and we end opening credits.

INT. BAYRIDGE, ITALIAN RESTAURANT - DAY

In the near empty neighborhood restaurant the waiters watch with bemused affection as Maura and Simon, wearing paper party hats, quietly finish their meal.

One of the waiters picks up their empty plates and as Maura nods to him he winks and nods at the other waiter who disappears into the kitchen for a moment then returns with a birthday cake with the number 25 emblazoned across it.

AFFECTIONATE ITALIAN WAITER
Happy Birthday Simon.

As Maura and the waiters sing him 'Happy Birthday' Simon shyly looks at his mother and blushes and, as the waiter cuts into the cake, we hear, overlaid, a high pitched scream as we -

CUT TO:

EXT. CONEY ISLAND, AMUSEMENT PARK - DAY

The park screams into life as Simon absorbs the full electrifying impact of the images and sounds around him.

- Maura and Simon are on the giant Ferris wheel overlooking the entire bay as a red kite flies high in the background.

- Two teenagers blast their paint-ball guns at a moving target, but, as Simon steps up to try it, Maura says no.

- Simon stops and stares with fascination at a cop's tattoo but the cop impassively looks away.

- Two women argue at a clam bar as, in the background, a young boy flies his red kite off the boardwalk.

- Simon watches a female performer dancing with a doll to hot Samba music, but, again, his mother gestures disapprovingly for him to come away.

- As Simon and Maura queue for the bumper cars Simon becomes embarrassed when he sees, in the distance, one stray dog humping another.

- Maura does the steering as she and Simon ride in one of the bumper cars and as Simon points at the next attacking bumper car, it's too late, they laugh as they get hit again.

- The sun is getting low in the sky as Simon eats a large pink candy-floss while Maura instructs him to wait for her outside the female toilets.

As Simon waits for his mother his contentment is suddenly affected by a boy's cry, and as he looks over at the kid flying the red kite he sees the twine unravelling from the plastic holder and the kite slowly floating away.

As the boy drops the holder, calls out and runs to his father, Simon registers the boy's anguish, then looks back up at the kite floating into the twilight sky.

EXT. PUBLIC TOILETS, CONEY ISLAND - DAY

Maura comes out of the female toilets and sees the half finished pink candy-floss on the ground.

Light seems to be fading fast around her as Maura tentatively makes her way towards the male toilets.

She hesitates then calls out into the toilets.

MAURA

Simon?

She listens to the silence then moves in a little further.

MAURA

Simon, are you there?

She listens again then tentatively moves further into the dark toilets and, as she whispers Simon's name, a dwarf looks back at her from the darkness of an open toilet cubicle and gently whispers.

DWARF

Come on in baby.

EXT. CONEY ISLAND, AMUSEMENT PARK - NIGHT

The last of the light dies in the sky as a worried Maura talks to two cops and, as they listen into their walkie-talkies, they shrug apologetically.

EXT. HOTEL EXCELSIOR, ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Maura pulls up in her car and runs inside to the receptionist's desk.

INT. HOTEL FRONT DESK - NIGHT

Maura is becoming increasingly agitated with the Porter.

MAURA

But you don't understand,
he's....he's unwell.

EXT. CONEY ISLAND, Q SUBWAY STATION - NIGHT

Simon stands alone in the station, the red kite under his arm, patiently waiting.

The Station Master suspiciously approaches him then Simon reaches into his pocket and produces the hotel business card.

The Station Master points to the train, lets Simon through the barrier for free, then sympathetically gestures to his other colleague that Simon is simple in the head.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

As Maura waits in the police station she watches in quiet horror at the array of whackos and deadbeats being brought past her.

INT. HOTEL EXCELSIOR HALLWAY OUTSIDE ROOM 636 - NIGHT

Simon walks up the hallway and when he comes to his door he stops outside it, stares at it, takes a step in closer to it - his nose almost touching the paint - and he waits, motionless like that, for a long time, then walks back down the hallway.

INT. HOTEL EXCELSIOR BAR - NIGHT

Simon passes in the background as the woman in the room next to him, Karen, sits at the bar; an unlit

cigarette in hand, her nail varnished fingers stirring the melting ice in the remainder of her glass of scotch.

EXT. HOTEL EXCELSIOR BAR - NIGHT

Simon hesitates at the door, stares down at the step, breathes deeply, exits, sits on the stoop, making sure his back is against the wall, lights a cigarette, and inhales.

A woman with a dog passes and the dog looks at Simon then stops.

The woman is confused as the dog stares at Simon and when Simon makes an almost inaudible high pitched whistle with his lips the dog becomes even more compelled to move towards him.

The owner allows the dog to pull her towards Simon as the dog investigates him further and, as he licks Simon's hand, Simon responds with effortless warmth, rubbing the dog affectionately causing it to wag its tail with delight.

The woman nods at Simon appreciatively and, as she pulls on the lead to go, the dog reluctantly continues to walk with her but it keeps looking back at Simon as they move on then Simon suddenly hears a voice.

KAREN (O.C.)

Nice mutt.

Simon turns, sees Karen, and, instantly becoming paralysed by shyness, he looks away.

Karen clicks her lighter and sucks on the cigarette but the lighter doesn't ignite.

She tries it again and it doesn't ignite again.

KAREN

That would be your cue kiddo.

Simon doesn't understand so Karen takes his cigarette, lights her's off it and hands it back to him.

They smoke in silence as they watch people pass, then Karen speaks, almost to herself.

KAREN

A part of this town died the day
they banned smoking in bars.

Simon looks at her then quickly looks away again.

KAREN

Outside like a criminal.

She sucks on the cigarette then looks at it as she exhales.

KAREN

A pariah.

They continue smoking in silence, then, as Karen stubs out her cigarette and goes to re-enter the hotel, Simon, despite himself, finds the words coming out of his mouth.

SIMON

What's 'pariah'?

Karen wonders whether to respond or not, then looks at him.

KAREN

So you're not a deaf mute, Doctor
Doolittle?

Simon clams up again and, as he makes to open the door to go back into the hotel, Karen pulls out another cigarette.

KAREN

Light me up before you go?

Simon hesitates, his back to her, frozen in his inability to connect, then he reaches for his matches and hands them to her without turning around and as she lights her cigarette she remembers his question.

KAREN

A pariah is an outcast Honey.
Like you and me smoker-boy, the
outsiders.

Simon turns to her - he likes what she said - and she takes out another cigarette, puts it in her mouth, lights it off the already lit one and offers it to him.

Simon stares at the cigarette, at the lipstick around the filter.

KAREN

A hint of lipstick never killed
nobody son.

Simon reaches for the cigarette, and, as they both smoke in their troubled silence, neither of them notice the wind gently lift the red kite and carry it away into the night.

INT. HOTEL EXCELSIOR BAR - NIGHT

As they come back inside Simon walks ahead of Karen, presses the elevator button, and silently waits for it to arrive.

KAREN

Take one of my cigarettes then
let me die of thirst at the bar?

Simon doesn't turn around.

SIMON

I don't drink.

KAREN

What kind of man doesn't drink?

SIMON

I can't.

KAREN

Why not?

Simon doesn't want to answer.

KAREN

You get all violent on drink or something smoker-boy?

Simon shakes his head, no.

KAREN

Don't go back to the deaf mute act, what is it?

SIMON

I'm...sick.

KAREN

A shot of scotch is going to kill you?

Simon shakes his head, no.

KAREN

Then you're healthy enough for me.

Simon hesitates, turns and really looks at her for the first time.

INT. HOTEL EXCELSIOR BAR - NIGHT

As Simon takes two glasses of scotch to Karen at a table, the movie 'An Officer and a Gentleman' plays on the television in the background.

KAREN

Love that movie.

Simon looks up at the movie, then, as he sits beside her, she slides a glass across to him and picks up her own.

KAREN

The secret to drinking Scotch is to let it rest on the back of the pallet and find its own way down.

Simon tastes a small amount of scotch, winces, hesitates, then gulps down a mouthful - he doesn't choke but tears well up as the scotch stings his throat.

KAREN

Hurts like a razor blade now son, but, down the line, you'll learn to love that sting.

Simon takes another sip of scotch.

KAREN

Slow down cowboy; first learn to ride the horse before you strut.

Simon becomes embarrassed and pushes the glass away.

KAREN

You're about as sensitive as a severed scrotum son; what are you doing here?

SIMON

Waiting.

KAREN

Ain't we all.

SIMON

What's 'scrotum'?

KAREN

You don't know what your scrotum is?

Simon, shakes his head, no.

KAREN

Your nut sack son, your crown jewels, your children's future.

Simon is confused, still not understanding her.

KAREN

What's your name son?

SIMON

Simon.

KAREN

Simon. Simple Simon. I'll drink to that.

She raises her glass to toast him and he hesitates, then they clink their glasses, and, after she knocks back the last of her drink, she takes money out of her purse.

KAREN

I'm Karen, and it's my round.

As Karen goes to the bar, Simon stares up at the television and watches the scene in, 'An Officer and a Gentleman' where Richard Gere's character gets emotional and repeatedly asks his commandant "Permission to speak sir," but then Simon becomes distracted when he sees the edge of Karen's business cards in her purse.

He hesitates, then quickly takes a business card out of her bag, and slides it into his pocket.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY TOWARDS KAREN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Simon and Karen silently walk down the long hallway then arrive outside her hotel room.

KAREN
This is me.

Simon nods and as he continues walking away Karen watches him from behind.

KAREN
Where are you going?

Simon turns and sways slightly from the scotch.

KAREN
What are you going to do in your room?

SIMON
Wait.

KAREN
Come here.

Simon hesitates then moves back to her.

KAREN
Closer.

Simon nervously moves in closer to her.

KAREN
We're not fooling around so get that idea out of your head right now.

Simon stares at her mouth, at her lipstick.

KAREN
Okay, maybe a little, but that's it.

Karen stands closer to Simon, the proximity inviting the inevitable kiss, but Simon doesn't kiss her.

KAREN
What are you waiting for son, a written invitation?

SIMON
I'm schizophrenic.

KAREN

Who isn't?

Karen opens her mouth and tenderly kisses him, then, when she slowly slides her tongue into his mouth, Simon doesn't know how to respond, and Karen pulls back.

KAREN

You're right, I'm too old and too drunk. Go to your room.

But Simon doesn't move, he trembles slightly as he stares at her mouth then looks at her breasts.

KAREN

There was a time they defied gravity son; you wouldn't have hesitated then. Go to your room and play your waiting game.

Karen enters her room and closes the door.

Simon waits, then moves on down the hallway to his room, stands outside the door, steps in close to it, and calmly stares at the paint on the door.

INT. KAREN'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Karen kicks her shoes off, slumps on the chair, clicks the television on with the remote control and, as she flicks through the channels, she glances at the door.

INT. EXCELSIOR HALLWAY, SIMON'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Motionless, Simon still stands in front of his door.

INT. KAREN'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Karen watches a young and beautiful woman sing out at her from the MTV music videos, switches off the television and stares at the door.

INT. EXCELSIOR HALLWAY, SIMON'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

As Simon stares at his door, the Tamagotchi beeps in his pocket, but Simon still doesn't move.

INT. KAREN'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Karen still stares at the door, hesitates, then pushes her feet back into her shoes, pulls open the door, and is stunned to find Simon standing there.

SIMON
What's 'fooling around'?

INT. KAREN'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Simon is seated on Karen's bed as she stands about five feet away from him, watching him watching her.

KAREN
Tell me what you see.

We suddenly see Karen from Simon's POV in a series of extreme close ups, the images slowing down and speeding up as Simon absorbs every minute detail of :

- her lower lip
 - the side of her neck
 - the hint of her cleavage
 - the imprint of her nipple through her bra and blouse
 - the slight protrusion of her stomach
 - the curve of her hip winding it's way toward her crotch
 - the power of her thigh working it's way down to her knee
 - her calf muscle flowing towards her foot
- and with rapid speed we go through them again in the reverse back up to her mouth again as she whispers:

KAREN
Tell me.

Simon looks at her and answers the only answer he knows.

SIMON
Woman.

Karen frowns slightly - was that a good or bad answer?

KAREN
Why are you here?

SIMON
Waiting.

KAREN
I mean, in this room?

Simon doesn't answer.

KAREN

What are you waiting for, I'm here?

When Simon still doesn't move Karen hesitates then carefully slides out of her panties, her dress still concealing her nakedness.

KAREN

This what you're waiting for?

We see her panties from Simon's POV in quick shots :

- close on the label at the back
- closer on her outstretched fingertips holding the panties
- extreme close up on the cotton in the centre
- macro close up on the almost breathing cloth fibres
- close up on Karen's mouth as she speaks :

KAREN

Hey, deaf mute, is this a monologue?

Simon snaps back to reality as Karen looks at him - he doesn't know what to say.

KAREN

Come over here.

Simon hesitates then slides off the bed and moves to her.

KAREN

You want to see under my dress?

Simon meekly nods yes.

Karen touches the side of Simon's face then tenderly brings him to his knees as she stands over him.

He looks up at her as she gently looks down and raises her dress a little.

KAREN

Go ahead.

Simon is trembling as he slowly lowers his head towards the ground and furtively looks up her dress.

Karen gently steps forward and covers his head with her dress and she too begins to tremble slightly as Simon's head slowly moves it's way up inside the contours of her dress.

INT. POLICE STATION, INTERVIEW ROOM - NIGHT

A bored DETECTIVE JACKSON, late 50's, world weary and burnt out but considers himself a comedian, sits across from Maura.

JACKSON

Could he be considered dangerous?

MAURA

Because he's a moderate schizophrenic you presume he likes attacking women in showers with an axe?

JACKSON

Maybe you could pass on my ex-wife's address to him.

Jackson smiles but Maura just coldly stares back at him.

MAURA

Is that what passes for humour around here Mister Jackson?

JACKSON

Lady, I'm a detective not Bob Hope, and I was just trying... forget about it. Give it twenty-four hours, if we hear anything we'll be in touch.

MAURA

That's it? My boy is missing and you'll be in touch?

JACKSON

At twenty-five he's hardly a boy.

MAURA

Is there someone else I can speak to please?

JACKSON

I'm all you got. So, do you want to do a second take here and start again, or do you want to leave?

INT. KAREN'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Karen, confounded, stares at Simon.

KAREN

You're bullshitting me.

Simon shakes his head, no.

KAREN
Never?

Again Simon shakes his head, no.

KAREN
And do you want to?

Simon nods, yes.

KAREN
Now? With me?

Simon nods, yes.

KAREN
I'm going to burn in hell.

Still wearing her dress, Karen unbuckles Simon and lowers herself onto him.

As she guides him into her, she is very tender, listening and watching as Simon winces and breathes rapidly.

Karen writhes slowly, then freezes as she sees tears forming in Simon's eyes.

KAREN
It's okay, I'll stop.

But Simon frantically shakes his head, no, and moves deeper into her, causing her to softly cry out in pleasure.

INT. POLICE STATION, INTERVIEW ROOM - NIGHT

Maura is now less argumentative and Jackson less abrasive.

JACKSON
Does he have a girlfriend?

MAURA
Of course not.

JACKSON
They don't have lovers?

MAURA
They?

JACKSON
You know, schizos.

MAURA
Not my one.

JACKSON

Does he have friends?

MAURA

His friends steal from him.

JACKSON

Does he have money, credit cards?

MAURA

I've taken care of him from day one. Everything. He doesn't need...he has a few dollars for cigarettes.

JACKSON

He smokes?

MAURA

You don't think the mentally ill smoke?

JACKSON

Just so you're under no illusions here I know more about the Adam's Apple of a flea than I do about these types.

MAURA

I don't think fleas have Adam's Apples.

JACKSON

See? Tells you how much I know about schizos.

MAURA

Please don't call them that.

JACKSON

What does he like?

MAURA

What do you mean?

JACKSON

His general character, the things he likes to do, or would like to do in the future?

Maura thinks about this and realizes that she really doesn't know.

MAURA

I don't now.

JACKSON

Don't worry, most of us really
know nothing about our children.

MAURA

But I...I'm his mother.

INT. KAREN'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Karen and Simon lie beside each other, his head resting on
her breasts, as they appear to sleep.

KAREN

You think they'd have good scotch
in Nebraska?

Too caught up in her warmth, Simon doesn't answer.

KAREN

Didn't think so.

INT. SIMON AND MAURA'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Maura sits on the chair, alone, without purpose or reason,
staring out the half opened door.

INT. KAREN'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY

In the early morning light Karen and Simon dress in
silence.

Simon sneaks a glance at Karen then looks away.

Karen sneaks a glance at Simon then she too looks away.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE KAREN'S ROOM - DAY

Karen opens the door and lets Simon step outside.

Simon makes to say something but no words come out so he
just moves away.

Karen watches him as he walks up the hallway then slowly
closes her door.

INT. SIMON AND MAURA'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Simon stands outside the half open doorway watching his
fully clothed mother snoring on the chair.

INT. KAREN'S HOTEL BATHROOM - DAY

Karen stares at herself in the mirror then looks at the five capsules of sleeping pills that she put out on the bathroom shelf earlier.

She ritualistically opens all five containers, hesitates, then spills a carton out onto the side of the sink.

She grabs another carton and pulls the top off that one too.

As she spills out a third container of pills we track through the wall into:

INT. SIMON AND MAURA'S HOTEL ROOM - BATHROOM - DAY

Simon stares at himself in the mirror.

He smells his finger tips, breathing in Karen's scent, then delicately touches a finger with the tip of his tongue.

He puts his hand inside the front of his underwear, touches himself, takes his hand out and brings it back to his nose, and as he deeply breathes in her scent, his reverie is suddenly shattered by his mother's voice.

MAURA

What are you doing?

Simon spins around to see his mother standing in the doorway - how long has she been watching him?

MAURA

What in the name of Christ are you doing?

Embarrassed, Simon turns and washes his hands.

MAURA

I asked you a question Simon.

Simon puts soap on his hands and vigorously cleans them.

MAURA

Answer me. Where were you?

Simon can't make eye contact with his mother as he dries his hands.

MAURA

Look at me.

Simon looks at her.

MAURA
Where were you?

SIMON
I'm tired.

Maura looks at Simon then frowns, steps closer and peers at his mouth.

MAURA
What's that?

Simon looks in the mirror, sees the trace of lipstick left by Karen's mouth, and he quickly rubs it off.

MAURA
Where were you?

As Simon guiltily looks at his mother we track back into Karen's room :

INT. KAREN'S HOTEL ROOM - BATHROOM - DAY

Karen puts a handful of pills into her mouth and just as she's about to swig back a shot of scotch to ease their journey down her throat she is suddenly interrupted by a banging on the door.

Karen tries to ignore the banging and tries again with the whiskey but as the banging continues she coughs up the pills into the sink.

INT. KAREN'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY

An angry Karen opens the door to an angrier Maura who is holding up Karen's business card.

MAURA
Is this you?

KAREN
Who wants to know?

MAURA
The mother of the child you just seduced.

KAREN
Who?

MAURA
Simon?

KAREN

And what the fuck can I do for you?

MAURA

I should've known a seducer of innocence would have a toilet of a mouth. I'm calling the police.

Karen opens the door wide.

KAREN

Use my phone why don't you?

Maura is confounded.

MAURA

What?

KAREN

Go ahead.

MAURA

Who do you think you are?

KAREN

A prematurely ageing air-hostess downgraded to training newbies who hates her life. Anything else you need to know?

MAURA

Are you totally insane?

KAREN

Big word insane; who knows? You want to come in?

Maura is further confounded by Karen's behavior.

MAURA

Why would I want to come in?

KAREN

Fair enough.

MAURA

Have you nothing to say for yourself?

KAREN

About what?

MAURA

About stealing the virtue of an innocent boy like some kind of whore.

KAREN

I'll let you away with that once lady but don't say it again.

MAURA

Now you're threatening me?

Simon appears at the door and both women become quiet - the silence lasts a long time.

KAREN

You got to love those long uncomfortable silences.

Simon laughs like a shy kid and Maura stares at him.

MAURA

Go back to your room.

Simon looks at Karen then shakes his head, no, at his mother.

MAURA

Do what you're told Simon. Don't have me tell you again.

Simon hesitates, makes to walk away, but then he turns back to his mother and calmly says:

SIMON

I love her.

Maura is horrified as Simon lovingly stares at Karen.

Karen looks back at Simon, and, without malice, whispers:

KAREN

Shit.

INT. KAREN'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Karen pours herself a drink as Maura and Simon sit on the chairs waiting for her.

KAREN

You're sure you don't want a drink?

MAURA

It's nine o'clock in the morning.

KAREN

Yeah, but, as they say, somewhere it's midnight. Simon?

MAURA
Simon doesn't drink.

Simon smiles at the memory of drinking last night.

MAURA
What are you smiling at?

Simon abruptly stops smiling and they continue to sit in uncomfortable silence.

KAREN
So, here we are, one happy family.

Maura stares at Karen in disgust as an almost imperceptible smile etches its way across Simon's face.

KAREN
It's just a figure of speech.

INT/EXT. MAURA'S CAR - DAY

A tense Maura turns onto the New Jersey Turnpike as behind her the Manhattan Skyline grows ever distant.

Simon presses play on the car stereo and Bob Dylan's 'Man Gave Names to the Animals' kicks in, but only for a short time, because Maura snaps it off again.

As they continue in silence Simon rests his face against the side window and blankly gazes out.

EXT. PSYCHIATRIC HOME - DAY

Fred watches Maura's car pulling up and notices the stern faces of both occupants, and, as Simon gets out the car, takes his bag and makes to move away, his mother calls him back.

MAURA
Simon.

Fred watches as Simon stops, but doesn't turn back around.

MAURA
Come back here.

But Simon doesn't move and as Fred watches he becomes nervous and excited by Simon's momentary rebelliousness.

MAURA
Simon. Get over here now.

Simon hesitates, then moves back to his mother's car.

Maura stares at Simon then hands him the jigsaw puzzle box of the New York skyline.

MAURA

This is how you show your appreciation of a gift? Leaving it behind?

Simon takes the jigsaw box and makes to move away again.

MAURA

Aren't you forgetting something?

Simon stops, leans forward, kisses his mother goodbye, then silently moves away and in through the hospital entrance.

Maura watches him from the car, then, as she pulls away, Fred runs in after Simon.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC HOME, COMMUNITY ROOM - DAY.

As Fred looks around for Simon, he sees the queue forming outside Nurse Stephanie's office as she counts out pills, and, though he continues to crane his neck looking for Simon, he obediently joins the queue.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC HOME, SIMON'S ROOM - DAY

Simon's room is quiet, and, with the curtains pulled, only a dim light comes through as Simon slumps onto his bed.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC HOME, NURSE STEFANIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Fred is next in line as Nurse Stefanie hands out the pills, then, another resident, ROBERT, makes the beep-beep sound of the cartoon character, 'Road Runner' and bolts away.

An orderly runs after Robert as Nurse Stephanie hands Fred two pills and a plastic cup of water.

NURSE STEFANIE

Where is Simon?

Fred swallows the medication and looks at the container of pills with Simon's name on it then Nurse Stephanie softens.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC HOME, SIMON'S ROOM - DAY

Simon lies in bed, staring at Karen's business card then, jumps off the bed and does an untutored but beautifully spontaneous dance of joy but he suddenly stops as he hears screaming then he looks through the open door to see Robert being chased by the orderlies.

INT. HALLWAY IN FRONT OF SIMON'S ROOM - DAY

As Fred walks along the hallway with Simon's pills, the orderly Curtis pushes a patient into a room and, as Fred passes, he hesitates as he catches a glimpse of Curtis taking money out of the patient's closet.

Curtis turns and sees Fred outside the doorway.

CURTIS

Boo.

Startled, Fred rushes away.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC HOME, SIMON'S ROOM - DAY

As Simon smells Karen's business card, Fred comes in and puts the water cup and the pills on to the bed side table.

Fred silently sits down next to Simon, lights two cigarettes and hands one to Simon.

As they smoke in silence they hear Robert screaming again and as he comes back past their door they watch as the orderlies grab Robert, push him to the ground, strap him up, pull him up off the floor, and drag him away.

Fred starts laughing then Simon turns around and starts laughing too but then Simon abruptly stops.

Fred tries to force himself to continue laughing but then he too stops and as they continue to smoke in silence:

FADE OUT.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC HOME, HALLWAY, DAY

Maura, carrying shopping bags, walks towards Simon's room but when she arrives at the doorway and sees the room is empty, she makes to move away, but stops when the lights flicker for five seconds then return to normal.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC HOME, COMMUNITY ROOM - DAY

Simon, Fred and a couple of other residents watch an episode of the children's television show, 'Blues Clues.'

Interference sparkles across the television screen as the lights flicker again and Simon and Fred look at each other knowingly as another resident grins maliciously and makes Robert's beep-beep noise then imitates being electrocuted.

MAURA

Simon.

Simon looks up to see his mother then looks away from her.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC HOME, CAFETERIA - DAY

Maura pulls out two take-out dinners and puts them in front of Fred and Simon.

FRED

Thank you so much.

MAURA

General Tso's chicken and brown rice.

Simon doesn't respond.

MAURA

Aren't you going to talk to me today?

Simon hesitates, looks to Fred, then whispers to his mother.

SIMON

Thanks mother.

Maura smiles, wets a piece of tissue with her mouth then lovingly wipes a speck of food off the side of Simon's mouth with the wet tissue.

INT. BRODY DELI, BASEMENT - DAY

Tired, Simon sits on a box, having just finished his work for the day and, as he pulls out Karen's card and looks at it, the beautiful temptress Marisol arrives for work, and smiles at him.

He watches her as she moves to the dressing area but his eyes lack their previous curiosity.

Marisol slips off her tight fitting sweater and looks to Simon but is surprised by the deadness in his eyes.

Simon's Tamagotchi beeps and Simon calmly takes it out of his pocket and as he concentrates on pushing the toy's buttons Marisol frowns at his lack of interest in her.

She hesitates then undresses further, down to her panties, pushing it more than she ever has before, and then, as she stands with her back to Simon, allowing him time to fully absorb her bountiful physicality, she turns around expecting him to be staring at her but he has already gone.

EXT. NEWARK, DOWNTOWN STREET - DAY

Smoking a cigarette, Simon strolls down the busy street, and tries to cancel out the sounds of those around him as they begin to slowly increase in volume.

The homeless man beams with a wide dirty-toothed smile as he calls out to Simon.

HOMELESS MAN

My brother from another mother.

Simon moves towards him and reaches for a cigarette but when he looks back down at the homeless man he can't stop focusing on the decaying plaque on the man's teeth.

HOMELESS MAN

You okay my nigga?

As Simon continues to focus on him, the plaque on the homeless man's teeth begins to slowly shift like millions of tiny maggots.

Simon recoils, pulls out a couple of cigarettes, throws them at the confused homeless man and rushes away as the homeless man calls after him.

HOMELESS MAN

What's wrong man? What did I do?

As Simon slips away into a side street, he wipes the sweat off his face and struggles to compose himself.

- A trans-sexual passes by and winks at Simon and, as he passes, Simon looks back at him/her then quickly moves deeper into the side street.

- A man coughs as he passes and as Simon watches the sneeze in slow motion he hears the exaggerated sound of earthquakes.

- As Simon moves further down the side-street he sees a heavy breasted fat woman beating a skinny older man over the head with her bag and, and, as he rushes across the street to escape this onslaught, he is thrown into the air as he bounces off the hood of an oncoming taxi.

As the taxi skids to a halt, and Simon lands on the ground, the various weirdos rush to help him, and, desperate to escape their attentions, Simon pulls himself up off the ground but, like a punch drunk boxer, his legs give way underneath him, and he slumps back down onto the ground.

The taxi driver bolts out of the car.

TAXI DRIVER

You fucking prick. He shot out
right in front of me.

The Transsexual tries to help Simon up.

TRANSSEXUAL

Leave him alone.

TAXI DRIVER

Fuck you Mister he-she. You all
saw him, the dumb shit jumped on
the hood.

The transsexual touches Simon's face.

TRANSSEXUAL

You doing okay Honey?

Simon struggles not to look at the transsexual's breasts
but then he hears the faint electronic musical sound of the
Marseillaise coming from the distance.

BYSTANDER

You're not supposed to touch him.

TRANSSEXUAL

It's you're not supposed to
'move' him - not, 'touch' him.

TAXI DRIVER

Who died and made you surgeon
general?

TRANSSEXUAL

Fuck you.

TAXI DRIVER

Wouldn't you love to.

Drawn to the seductive allure of the tuneless music, Simon
slowly gets to his feet, and as the others squabble among
themselves, he looks around and finds the source of the
music is emanating from a Chinese trinket stand.

As Simon stands and stares at the trinket stand the Taxi
Driver points to him.

TAXI DRIVER

See? I told you there was nothing
wrong with the shit.

As Simon hobbles his way towards the trinket stand the Taxi
Driver and Transsexual continue to squabble in the
background.

TRANSSEXUAL
He should sue you.

TAXI DRIVER
You should blow me.

TRANSSEXUAL
You couldn't afford me.

TAXI DRIVER
Name your price big shot.

TRANSSEXUAL
Two hundred.

TAXI DRIVER
Then get your fat ass in the car
big mouth because two hundred it
is.

TRANSSEXUAL
No need to be an asshole about
it.

TAXI DRIVER
At these prices I can be whatever
I want to be. You in or out
ladyboy?

As Simon reaches the trinket stand, in the background behind him, the transsexual hesitates, then gets into the taxi.

The Taxi Driver has a quick glance around then gets into the other side and as they pull away the Taxi Driver honks the horn at Simon but Simon is too enraptured by the music to notice.

Simon sees that the music is coming from a cheap electronic plastic lighter and as the Chinese woman behind the counter smiles at him he picks up one of the lighters and when he opens it the same music emanates from that lighter.

Simon closes the lighter, looks at the price of it, carefully counts out the money for the Chinese lady, then as he limps away, he opens the lighter and delights at the music drifting out of it.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC HOME - NIGHT

As Simon returns to his room, Curtis is waiting for him.

CURTIS
Hey, Hop Along Cassidy, what
happened to you?

Simon hesitates then begins to tell Curtis what happened.

SIMON
I was walking down...

CURTIS
It's okay Simon, I wasn't really asking.

Curtis slips his hand into Simon's breast pocket, takes out the remaining dollars and, unknown to Simon, he also takes Karen's business card.

CURTIS
What's this?

Simon sees the business card and snaps it out of Curtis' hand and Curtis is momentarily surprised then calmly looks at Simon.

CURTIS
Give it back to me.

Simon just stares back at Curtis.

CURTIS
You eyeballing me?

Simon looks away but still holds onto Karen's business card and Curtis frowns, surprised by Simon's quiet defiance.

CURTIS
I'm going to count to three.
One...

As Curtis says, 'two' he swiftly slaps Simon on the face.

Simon, biting back the rage, stares right back at Curtis.

CURTIS
Please don't tell you're actually eyeballing me again Fucko?

Simon doesn't look away this time and Curtis calmly grins - then swiftly head-butts Simon in the face - and Simon collapses.

CURTIS
Now, look what you made me do.

Curtis stands on the hand that Simon holds the business card in and, as his heavy boot crunches into the bones, Simon cries out and opens his hand to release the business card.

Curtis picks up the card, examines it, then indifferently tears it in half and throws the two pieces back at Simon.

CURTIS
All this could've been avoided
you know.

Simon doesn't respond.

CURTIS
Your hand okay?

Simon doesn't answer.

CURTIS
I asked you a question Simon.

Simon nods that his hand is okay.

CURTIS
Good boy.

As Curtis exits, Simon reaches for the ripped business card then winces at the pain in his hand as he lifts the torn pieces of the card off the ground.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC HOME, COMMUNITY ROOM - NIGHT

The empty boom of canned laughter erupts from the comedy on the television screen as the residents focus on it.

Some laugh, some are bored, and others talk among themselves, but in the middle of all of them sits Simon, staring at his busted hand, a new level of intensity etched across his face.

Fred watches Simon and just as he is about to talk to him, the previously ebullient resident Robert is led into the room by two orderlies.

The residents go quiet as they see the vacuous expression in his dead eyes.

The orderlies move one of the other residents off a chair and sit Robert down onto it.

As the residents stare at Robert, the orderlies make to exit, but then one of them stops, pulls the remote from his pocket, turns up the volume on the television and, as they exit, the booming canned laughter once more distracts the residents as they turn back to the television.

As Simon watches him, Robert's thousand yard stare blankly centres on the television and the canned laughter seems to increase to a deafening volume.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC HOME, HALLWAY OUTSIDE SIMON'S ROOM - NIGHT

The empty, dimly-lit hallway is quiet as the residents prepare to slip into their nights slumber.

As Nurse Stephanie and the other duty nurse push the medicine trolley around the corner Simon quietly steps out from his doorway, looks down the long empty hallway, listens to the squeak of the wheels vanish into the distant silence, then steps back into his darkened room.

INT. HOSPITAL, SIMON'S ROOM - NIGHT

Simon pulls on a strip of transparent sticky tape then freezes as the sound of the tape cuts through the dark silence.

He waits, unmoving, then, when he's sure nobody is coming, he cuts the tape with his teeth.

He places the two torn parts of Karen's business card together and, wincing at the pain in his busted hand, he meticulously repairs the card with the tape.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC HOME, HALLWAYS - NIGHT

Muted radio sounds, coughing, and snoring flow into the hallways as Simon stealthily makes his way down them.

He pauses outside Fred's door and Fred looks out at him from his bed.

Simon puts his finger to his lips, waves goodbye to Fred, and, as Simon moves away, Fred covers his mouth with the bed sheets to mute the excited giggle inspired by his friend's courage.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC HOME, NURSE'S STATION - NIGHT

Through the open door, Nurse Stephanie and the other duty nurse eat and relax in front of the television as their attention is absorbed by one of the many reality television shows.

Hiding, Simon watches them from outside then focuses on the medicine trolley.

As he quietly creeps in the nurses are unaware he is there but just as he reaches for a specific box of medication the phone rings loud and, as it startles him, he freezes.

Without turning around Nurse Stephanie reaches for the phone and answers it.

NURSE STEFANIE

Hello?

Simon listens to her on the phone as she lowers her voice and discusses her troubled relationship.

NURSE STEFANIE

It's me...No, I can talk...but I don't know if I want to.

As she continues quietly talking on the phone Simon reaches for the medicine.

NURSE STEFANIE

You have to tell her. That's not my job, it's yours.

Simon gets his fingertips to the medicine boxes but they slip and Nurse Stephanie turns but she sees nothing then responds to what is said to her on the phone.

NURSE STEFANIE

Don't you say that to me. That's not true and you know it.

Simon reaches again for the medicine and as Stephanie begins to softly weep on the phone, he successfully takes a box and, and as he slips back outside, he hears Nurse Stephanie.

NURSE STEFANIE

You promised me; you promised me everything.

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF PSYCHIATRIC HOME - NIGHT

Simon steps out the building, slips the medication into his pockets, and, as the breeze comes up, he takes a last look at the night sky and disappears in the darkness.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

As Simon walks on the city street, he sees a police car and he makes a turn onto a deserted industrial street.

EXT. DESERTED INDUSTRIAL STREET - NIGHT

Simon walks by a hooker and her john and, as her john goes about his heavy breathed business, he has his back to Simon.

The hooker looks into Simon's eyes and Simon's world drifts into slow motion as the hooker warmly smiles at him.

Simon stops, touched by the warmth of her smile and smiles back at her.

Simon seems utterly unaware of the sex act taking place in front of him as he slowly moves towards the woman and points to the repaired business card.

SIMON

New York?

The woman continues to smile at him warmly but the voice he hears and the aggression fuelling it doesn't seem to match her serene face, and, as Simon looks to her mouth, and sees that her lips are not moving, he snaps back to reality and sees that the woman is in fact snarling at him.

HOOKER

What are you gaping at cracker?

As Simon moves away he looks back at the hooker then quickly reaches for one of the boxes of pills and forces a few into his dry mouth.

As he tries to swallow he begins to choke, then he coughs up one of the pills and as it falls to the ground, a car slowly drives by then stops a few feet ahead of Simon.

Simon hesitates then continues walking and as he passes the car it slowly moves again and drives alongside Simon.

Simon dares not look in the darkened window as he continues walking, then, when the front wheels of the car slowly dip in closer towards Simon, the side of the car bumps against his hip, dangerously nudging him.

Simon suddenly bolts and, running as fast as he can, he makes his way towards the bright lit intersection at the end of the industrial estate.

The car speeds up and follows Simon.

Simon is terrified as he runs with exhausting speed, but, as he looks over his shoulder he sees that, no matter how fast he runs, the car is gaining on him.

Simon makes one final desperate dash for the bright lit intersection, and, just as the car is about to smash into the back of him, he leaps into the safety of the light and as he roughly lands on the ground, amid people coming from either side, he turns around, and sees that there is no car there - maybe there never was.

People avoid him, stepping around him, as he lies on the ground then he pulls at the medicine carton but before he can get it open a bright light is directed into his face.

As he looks up he sees that it is the powerful beam of light from the lamp of a police car being trained directly into his eyes by a cop, JOE.

JOE THE COP

Stand up and put your hands on your head.

Simon hesitates, puts his hands up but as some of the pills spill out of the container and over his head, he pulls his hands back down to try to catch them, however, unaware of what precisely is going on Joe the cop pulls his weapon and shouts.

JOE THE COP

I said put your hands onto your head. Do it now.

Terrified Simon bolts through the crowds and, as Joe gives chase, Simon comes to an intersection, and bolts down a ramp that leads to the highway.

EXT. HIGHWAY 1 - NIGHT

It's a dangerously busy night on the highway and, as cars zoom by, honking their horns, Simon keeps running.

The police car shoots down the ramp and, as the siren wails, Simon panics, jumps over the barrier and stumbles down into the bushes below.

The police car skids to a halt and the two cops, Joe and HARRY, rush out and scan the bushes with torches.

Simon hides under the dark bushes and looks up with terror as the two cops step over the barrier and survey the area with their torches.

Simon ducks down as the flashlight beams swipe across his face and the cops respond to the noise in the bushes.

Joe the Cop, steps through the undergrowth towards Simon, and, as Joe's boot lands beside Simon's face, Simon shuts his eyes and struggles not to breathe.

Joe scans the area with his flashlight, then his partner casually strolls over.

HARRY THE COP

I'm hungry; let's get out of here.

As the cops step away Simon slowly opens his eyes and doesn't move as he watches them move towards the barrier.

Simon begins to breathe again but suddenly his Tamagotchi toy beeps and Joe the Cop spins around and looks in the direction of the beeping sound.

Simon frantically grabs the Tamagotchi through the material of his pocket and struggles to choke back its beeping sound.

As the now almost imperceptible sound of the Tamagotchi toy faintly drifts out through Simon's clenched fist Joe the cop waits and listens intently.

The other cop, Harry, stops and looks at Joe the cop as he listens to the night.

HARRY THE COP

What's wrong?

But Joe doesn't answer him, he just keeps listening as a terrified Simon peers through the bushes and grips his Tamagotchi tighter.

HARRY THE COP

I'm dying of old age here Joe.
Not to mention malnutrition.

JOE THE COP

Harry, can you think about
anything else other than that fat
stomach of yours?

HARRY THE COP

Sometimes I think about a larger
organ a little lower down Joe,
but that's only when that wife of
yours is around.

JOE THE COP

I'm glad the pig does it for
somebody.

As the cops deadpan their way back to their car Simon watches from the bushes.

HARRY THE COP

She's too good for you.

JOE THE COP

Then take her, please, I beg you.

As the cops get into the car, Simon keeps a close eye on them, and as they pull away onto the highway, he watches them join the traffic then his attention is drawn to the highway signs above the cars and he can't stop smiling when he sees the road sign for New York.

As Simon takes out two pills and swallows them back, his Tamagotchi beeps again and he takes it out of his pocket, presses the buttons to make it stop beeping, excitedly points out the New York sign to it, kisses it, then lovingly slips it back into his pocket.

EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

It's after midnight as Simon walks towards a gas station off the highway.

A white car with four rich shy teenage boys waits outside the gas station, staring with longing at the alcohol inside the store through the window.

As Simon passes, the teenage driver, JEREMY, nervously tries to get his attention.

JEREMY
Excuse me, sir?

Simon turns and silently looks at them.

JEREMY
Are you going inside?

SIMON
New York.

JEREMY
No, I mean, are you going into the gas station?

Simon shows him Karen's business card.

SIMON
Going to see Karen in New York.

The teenagers are a little confused but they build in confidence as they realize Simon might be slow.

ALEC
How?

SIMON
Walk.

JEREMY
We're going to New York.

SIMON
You know Karen?

JEREMY
No, but...we can take you there.

SIMON

Thank you.

As Simon makes to get into the vehicle Jeremy interrupts.

JEREMY

But maybe we should bring her something?

SIMON

I have her present.

JEREMY

No, I mean alcohol.

SIMON

Karen likes scotch.

ALEC

You should get her some. We'll wait for you.

SIMON

How much is scotch?

JEREMY

Don't worry about money, we have plenty; here.

As they give Simon money he looks in at the alcohol then back at the teenagers.

SIMON

You are very kind.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

Heavy metal music roars out of through the windows as the white car speeds over the country roads.

INT. TEENAGER'S SPEEDING WHITE CAR - NIGHT

As the music pounds out of the car stereo, an increasingly uncomfortable Simon sits squeezed in between the two teenagers in the back.

As the teenagers pass around the bottle of scotch they laugh in derision as one of them begins to choke on the potent taste.

One of them extends the scotch bottle to Simon but he shakes his head no, and, as the chorus to the song kicks in, the four teenagers scream rather than sing the chorus.

Simon looks out the window trying to find street signs but there are none then he looks at the bottle of scotch.

Several attempts by Simon to speak up are drowned out by the pounding music and the young men's screaming but when the song eventually ends Simon takes his opportunity.

SIMON

That's supposed to be Karen's.

JEREMY

We'll get her another one.

SIMON

When will we get to New York?

The young men burst out laughing and Jeremy switches off the stereo and pulls the car over and they are in Elisabeth Port.

JEREMY

New York City! Last stop!

Simon is confused but Jeremy reassures him.

JEREMY

We're here.

Simon's face lights up, but, when he looks out the window, all he sees is an abandoned industrial area in Elisabeth Port with burnt out warehouses.

SIMON

This is not New York.

JEREMY

Show me the card again.

Simon hesitates, then shows Jeremy the card.

JEREMY

Yes, that's definitely the address. See that warehouse, she lives there? Come here, I'll show you. Alex, let him out.

As Jeremy gets out, Alex gets out too and lets Simon out, then, as Alex casually gets back in, Jeremy guides Simon by the arm away from the car towards the warehouse and takes out his cell phone.

JEREMY

That's the address, just there.
You want me to call her?

Simon nods and Jeremy takes the business card, dials the number into the phone and as he waits for an answer Simon is transfixed by the burnt out warehouse.

Rain begins to lightly fall on Simon as Jeremy watches him then Jeremy calmly walks backwards towards the car and as he reaches the door, Simon turns to see him jump inside, followed by an explosion of derisory laughter erupting from the car as it accelerates away.

Simon panics, not because of the car but because of the business card, and as he bolts towards them he sees the card on the ground and stops, relief and rain etched on his face.

Simon picks up the card, carefully looks at the address, then, through the increasingly heavy rain, he makes his way towards the burnt out warehouse.

INT. BURNT OUT WAREHOUSE, ELISABETH PORT - NIGHT

Simon steps in through the high doors and looks into the vast darkness inside.

He nervously looks at the card then politely knocks on the side of the door and waits.

Then he knocks again and, as the sound is drowned out by the rain, he gently calls out Karen's name.

He waits again then knocks harder and calls louder.

SIMON

Karen, it's me. Simple Simon.

He waits but as the rain pounds harder on the battered roof there is no reply from the vast darkness inside.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC HOME, NURSE STEFANIE'S OFFICE - DAY

The residents queue as Nurse Stephanie dispenses their medicines.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC HOME, SIMON'S ROOM - DAY

Fred enters Simon's room with Simon's pills in his hands but Simon isn't there so Fred places the medication on the bedside table and exits.

EXT. ELISABETH PORT - DAY

Dark clouds cover the sky over Elisabeth Port.

INT. WAREHOUSE, ELISABETH PORT - DAY

Asleep, Simon lies motionless on the warehouse floor as the remainder of the rain drips down from the high roof above.

A filthy pair of hands slowly pilfer through Simon's pockets taking out the money and pills and as the hands slowly work their way towards Simon's crotch Simon wakes with a start to see a filthy man with a mucus infested beard holding Simon's money and pills and staring at him.

Simon freezes as the man continues to stare at him then the man looks at Simon's mouth and, and almost tenderly, he feels compelled to tentatively move in to kiss Simon.

Simon pulls back imperceptibly and the man, almost apologetically, puts his finger on Simon's mouth, then silently moves away out through the large doors.

Simon is calm then he panics when he can't find the business card, lighter and Tamagotchi, and, he frantically looks around for them, he calms when he sees them on the ground - the business card battered and wet, but still legible.

EXT. WAREHOUSE, ELISABETH PORT - DAY

As Simon stands at the entrance of the warehouse, the rain comes down again, heavier than ever.

A stray dog stands in the clearing about fifty metres away from Simon and, as Simon sees him, the dog suddenly stiffens with fear.

The dog and Simon stare at each other then Simon sees the warm light of a diner on the boardwalk in the distance.

Simon carefully folds Karen's business card, tightly grips it in his hand, then steps out into the downpour.

EXT. SEA FRONT, ELISABETH PORT - DAY

As Simon moves to a bin by the boardwalk he roots through the filthy garbage until he pulls out an unfinished burger then he turns back to the dog and extends the burger.

As Simon gently approaches the frightened dog, the dog quickly moves back a few metres, but then turns back to look at Simon.

Simon stops, lowers himself to this hunkers, carefully places the meat on the ground then backs away.

The dog can smell the meat from a distance, and, as he looks at Simon suspiciously, he takes a few steps closer to the meat but then fear grips him again and he runs back to where he was.

Simon stares at the dog, gently waves goodbye to him, then turns and walks into the oncoming rain.

The dog watches Simon move away, hesitates, then tentatively moves towards the meat and hungrily eats it.

INT. BOARDWALK DINER - DAY

MIKE, the burly owner and short order cook of the half full diner pours coffee for two truckers at a table.

MIKE

So I told her, I said, take the house, take the car, but please, leave my Bob Dylan collection.

TRUCKER

What did she say?

MIKE

'It's all over now baby blue.'

As the truckers respond in sympathy, Mike looks out the window and sees Simon approaching in the rain.

EXT. BOARDWALK DINER - DAY

Simon checks his pockets and, remembering that he has no money, he moves under the diner porch roof, and, as he sits down on the stoop, he listens to the rain pounding on the roof.

As Simon looks around he sees the dog is across the other side of the street, nervously staring at him through the rain.

Simon makes the high pitched whistling sound and the dog's ears twitch as it responds, but still it doesn't advance any further towards Simon.

Simon feels groggy and, as he tries not to fall asleep, the dog watches him.

INT. BOARDWALK DINER - DAY

Taking out his cigarettes, the diner owner Mike looks out at the dog staring at Simon.

EXT. BOARDWALK DINER - DAY

Mike steps outside, lights a cigarette, and looks at the dog across the street, then at Simon.

MIKE
You going to sit there all day?

SIMON
Sorry.

Simon makes to move away.

MIKE
You a homeless hobo too?

Simon doesn't understand.

MIKE
My wife, she...never mind. You coming in or out?

Simon empties his pockets to show he has no money, then walks into the rain.

Mike hesitates then calmly talks through the rain.

MIKE
My brother had what you have.

Simon stops, allowing the full impact of the words to hit him, then he turns.

MIKE
I can spot you from a hundred yards.

Simon just stares at Mike.

MIKE
Am I wrong?

Simon slowly shakes his head no and as Mike watches Simon, the dog watches both of them.

Mike stubs out the cigarette, opens the door, then stands back, holding it open as an invitation to Simon.

MIKE
You want breakfast or not?

Simon doesn't say anything, he just stands in the rain, looking at the open door and the kind offer.

INT. BOARDWALK DINER - DAY

As Simon spreads out Karen's business card on the table and tries to iron out the creases on it, Mike puts a plate of sausages, hash browns, eggs and fried tomatoes on the table in front of Simon then pulls out a ten dollar bill and slips it under the plate.

Simon looks up at Mike, a mixture of embarrassment and appreciation on his face.

MIKE

I know you're good for it. But don't tell any of these deadbeats or they'll think I'm getting soft.

Simon giggles like a child being let in on a secret then slips the money into his pocket, and Mike watches him as he meticulously folds back up the business card, then begins to eat.

INT/EXT. NEW JERSEY, CHINESE RESTAURANT - DAY

Maura picks up the takeaway food for Simon and Fred.

MISTER TANG

You say hello to Simon for me?

MAURA

I will, thanks again.

Maura exits the restaurant, gets into her car and drives away.

INT. BOARDWALK DINER - DAY

Simon wipes his plate clean with a piece of bread but he has kept a sausage on the plate.

Simon takes a tissue and, as he wraps the sausage in it, Mike stands beside him, looks out at the dog and winks and Simon smiles and shyly nods back at him.

INT. HOSPITAL, SIMON'S ROOM - DAY

Carrying the take away food, Maura enters Simon's room but he is not there then as she is about to exit she frowns when she sees that the cups containing his medication for two days are still sitting there.

INT/EXT. BOARDWALK DINER - DAY

The rain has stopped and, as Simon steps out of the empty diner, the morning sun glistens off the wet road.

From inside the diner, Mike watches through the window as the dog lies on the ground, then, when the dog sees Simon, it stands up.

Simon slowly approaches and as he stands on one side of the street he unwraps the sausage and lets the scent drift over to the dog on the other side.

Watching, Mike smiles as the dog tentatively takes a step towards Simon, but then it stops.

Simon makes the high pitched whistle and the dog responds to it with immediate curiosity.

Simon does it again and the dog wags his tail and takes two steps towards Simon, but, as he takes a third step, a truck appears from nowhere and as it speeds between them, Simon hears a thud, immediately followed by the painful cry of the dog.

Mike rushes out of the diner and, as the seemingly never ending truck passes, a horrified Simon screams and struggles to get across the road, then, when the truck finally passes, Simon rushes to the numb and paralysed dog.

Simon lies down beside the dog and sobs uncontrollably as he wraps himself around the dog, trying to protect it from the pain.

Going into shock, the dog begins to shiver, and, as Simon tenderly holds the dog's head, Mike arrives.

Mike reaches down to touch Simon, but Simon just cries louder, then Mike sees the meticulously folded business card in Simon's hand.

Mike gently takes the card out of Simon's hand and rushes back towards the diner.

INT. KAREN'S HOUSE - DAY

An eclectically furnished apartment with memorabilia from all over the world, there is a sense of a museum about Karen's place.

The coffee table holds a single glass and a half full bottle of scotch and the sound is turned down low on the television as a dating show beams out from the screen.

The low volume is suddenly punctuated by the sound of somebody vomiting in the bathroom then the phone suddenly rings, piercing through the air.

As the vomiting continues and nobody answers it, the phone rings out, then there is a cough from the bathroom as the vomiting turns to a dry wretch.

The phone rings again.

Karen, wearing a bathrobe and looking wretched, steps out from the bathroom.

She stands at the phone listening to it ring, willing it to stop, then reaches across, and picks it up.

KAREN

What?

MIKE

(on the phone)

Karen Preston?

INT. PSYCHIATRIC HOME, HALLWAY - DAY

Maura approaches Nurse Stefanie's office.

MAURA

Stefanie, have you seen my son?

As Maura shows Nurse Stefanie the pills still in their cups, Nurse Stefanie frowns.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC HOME, HALLWAY - DAY

Nurse Stefanie and Maura quickly walk towards Fred's room and as Fred comes out he panics slightly.

NURSE STEFANIE

Fred, have you seen Simon, today?

Too honest to be a good liar Fred quickly walks away from them and as Nurse Stefanie is about to call him Maura stops her then gently calls after Fred.

MAURA

I was just looking for him for dinner Fred, I got Kung Po Chicken for the two of you, but you and me can start without him.

Fred stops, turns back around, and shyly smiles.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC HOME, COMMUNITY ROOM - DAY

As Maura watches Fred eating, bringing the fork up and down to his mouth, Fred avoids eye contact.

Maura employs fake warmth and the simplest form of reverse psychology as she attempts to get information.

MAURA
How's the food?

FRED
He told me not to tell anyone.

MAURA
That's okay Fred, I really don't want to know unless you really want to tell me.

FRED
Simon will be angry with me if tell anyone.

Maura watches the fork as it goes back up to Fred's mouth.

MAURA
Then you're right, don't tell me.

FRED
You won't tell him if I tell you?

MAURA
You have my word.

FRED
Scouts honour?

MAURA
Scouts honour.

FRED
Swear and hope to die?

MAURA
Fred.

FRED
He's gone to...a woman.

Fred sniggers with prurient delight.

MAURA
Is it Karen?

Fred is stunned.

FRED
Who told you?

Maura hides her disgust and forces a smile.

MAURA
Simon did.

FRED
What? When?

MAURA
This is all a great big game
between us. But I can't remember
the address, do you know?

Fred stops the fork halfway between his mouth and the plate.

FRED
A game?

MAURA
A brilliant game. But I need to
know her address.

FRED
Can I play?

MAURA
Of course you can but now I need
that address.

FRED
Who do I play?

MAURA
Karen Preston, what is her...?

FRED
Can I be Spiderman?

Maura suddenly grabs Fred's hand and, as she slams it down on the table, the mood rapidly shifts and Fred is scared.

MAURA
Tell me her address Fred.

Fred looks at his hand and tears well up.

FRED
He just said New York.

Fred tries not to cry and Maura lets go of his hand.

EXT. HOSPITAL CAR PARK - DAY

Maura pulls out of the driveway, cuts across three lanes of traffic, and heads onto the freeway.

EXT. BOARDWALK DINER - DAY

Mike watches over him as Simon has fallen asleep beside the dog and, though the dog is weak, he is still alive.

Mike watches as a car pulls up outside the diner and Karen steps out.

She looks across at Mike and, as he gestures to her, Karen hesitates, then begins to make her way towards them.

EXT. NEW YORK, HOTEL EXCELSIOR - NIGHT

Maura pulls up on the street outside the hotel and, leaving her car door open, she rushes inside.

INT. NEW YORK, HOTEL EXCELSIOR - NIGHT

Maura argues with the same concierge as before.

MAURA

But she has my son.

CONCIERGE

I'm sorry madam but unless you're a cop we cannot give you customer information.

MAURA

But he's...he's...You showed me this same indifference the last time, what kind of man are you?

PORTER

At the risk of paraphrasing Oscar Wilde madam; perhaps you might ask what kind of mother are you? Because to lose your son once might be tragic, but to do it twice is merely careless.

EXT. NEW YORK, HOTEL EXCELSIOR - DAY

An enraged and frustrated Maura steps out of the hotel and as she makes her way towards her car, she looks to where it should be, but the car is not there and as she looks around she realizes her car has been stolen.

EXT. POLICE PRECINCT - DAY

Jackson is on his way out of the station as Maura approaches him.

MAURA
Mister Jackson?

Jackson sees her and walks the opposite way but she follows him.

MAURA
My car and my son have been
stolen. Please help me?

Jackson doesn't stop walking.

JACKSON
Lady, I clocked off eight minutes
ago. Your problems ain't mine no
more.

MAURA
Then clock back on. I'll pay you.

JACKSON
You think I'm your private dick?

MAURA
I'll pay you four hundred
dollars.

JACKSON
Offer the nigger money to jump
and the nigger asks, 'How high
Massa?' Is that it?

MAURA
Please don't use that disgusting
language.

JACKSON
Lady, if a black man can't say
nigger what does a black man have
left?

MAURA
Five hundred?

Jackson suddenly stops walking and turns to Maura, a new, quiet excitement in his voice.

JACKSON
When was the last time you had a
good time?

MAURA

Excuse me?

JACKSON

You know, a good night out with a lot of laughs?

MAURA

What are you talking about?

Jackson lowers his voice and becomes self-conscious as he looks around to make sure none of the other cops are eavesdropping.

JACKSON

Tell you what...I'll help you, but not for money.

MAURA

I beg your pardon?

Jackson lowers his voice further.

JACKSON

You heard me.

MAURA

You think I'm that kind of woman?

Jackson, slow to understand, has to think about what Maura meant by this, then her meaning hits him and he is stunned.

JACKSON

Are you out of your mind?

MAURA

What?

JACKSON

Are you out of your delusional Anglo Saxon white-bread mind?

MAURA

You weren't talking about...?

JACKSON

Jesus Christ lady, first it's - how high can the nigger jump for money; now it's - the nigger has to be a degenerate sexual deviant?

MAURA

Mister Jackson I haven't slept properly so I might be...

JACKSON

Forget about it lady; this conversation is over.

Jackson walks away and this time Maura doesn't follow him; she just calls after him.

MAURA

Please, tell me; I was wrong...I shouldn't have...tell me.

Jackson thinks about this then stops, shifts uncomfortably then walks back to Maura.

JACKSON

The guys at the station...they're my friends and all but they...I need an objective opinion.

MAURA

On what?

Jackson stares at her then takes her arm and gestures for her to follow him.

EXT. HOLLAND TUNNEL - NIGHT

Karen silently drives as Simon sits in the back seat, holding the dog.

Karen presses play on a CD and as the music of Mavis Staples' drifts from the stereo Simon responds and furtively looks at the CD cover and reads the name on it.

Karen looks at Simon through the rearview mirror but he freezes and doesn't look back at her, then as she turns her attention back to the traffic, Simon looks at Karen in the rearview mirror but when she looks back up at the mirror, Simon quickly looks away again.

KAREN

Why didn't you just call me?

Simon looks at the card and can't believe he never thought of that but he decides not to answer.

KAREN

What happened to your hand?

SIMON

I fell.

EXT. JACKSON'S CAR - NIGHT

Maura is confounded as she looks at a very serious Jackson.

MAURA

But why?

JACKSON

A nigger ain't allowed to dream?

MAURA

Please stop using that word.

JACKSON

Whitey gives us the word then
Whitey tells us where and when we
can use it?

MAURA

I'm not Whitey, Mister Jackson.

JACKSON

You sure as shit ain't black
baby. We got a deal or not?

MAURA

Do I have a choice?

JACKSON

Of course you do. You can
continue being a stuck up pain in
the ass whiter than white holier
than thou diva and get the fuck
out of my car or you can shut
your hole, open your ears and
give a guy who's trying to help
you a motherfucking break?

Maura decides to keep her mouth shut and remain in the car.

JACKSON

Thank you. Lord knows this shit
is difficult enough without you
making me more tense. You ready?

Maura nods and watches him as he nervously rolls his neck
and clears his throat.

JACKSON

Now, I've never done this before
so...you know...I'm not going to
give it the whole nine yards, you
understand, because, you know,
you're an audience of one - an
audient so to speak.

Maura doesn't respond; she just gestures for him to
continue.

JACKSON

Okay, here we go...I've been announced, 'Ladies and gentlemen...' all that shit and I walk out and I say, 'You're all under arrest' and they laugh. And I say, 'This is no motherfucking joke' and they laugh louder, and get this, I take out my gun and start picking them off, one by one, blowing each of them away - obviously there are blanks in the gun - but can you imagine the moment where they think it might be real? It'll tear the roof off the place. What do you think?

Maura just stares at him, lost in incomprehension.

JACKSON

What's the face for?

Maura tries to cover her patronizing tone.

MAURA

Nothing. It's good. Very good.

JACKSON

You really think so?

MAURA

Yes, it's...it's good, very good.

JACKSON

You said that already.

MAURA

Perhaps I'm not the critic you presumed Mister Jackson. I've upheld my part of the agreement, could you please honour yours?

Maura suddenly struggles to stop herself yawning.

MAURA

Excuse me, I apologize.

JACKSON

You're yawning in my face?

MAURA

Mister Jackson, I happened to be exhausted, it is not a reflection of the quality of your comedic material.

JACKSON

Tell me what's wrong with it?

MAURA

I told you Mister Jackson...

JACKSON

Yeah, I heard you - good, very good - only a woman can insult so effectively with a compliment.

MAURA

Can we please not...?

JACKSON

Not until you tell me what's wrong with it?

MAURA

It's not funny.

Jackson tries to hide the hurt.

JACKSON

You're full of shit. That's what you are Miss white bread...

MAURA

Yes, I know, 'holier than thou snob and all the rest' but you asked for the truth and there it is. You say you want to be a vaudevillian but you are simply not funny.

JACKSON

Not motherfucking funny? You don't know funny that's what's happening here. Alright, what do lawyers use for contraception?

Maura stares at him blankly.

JACKSON

Their personalities. See? I'm funny.

Maura still doesn't react.

JACKSON

Don't you get it? Their personalities? Are you honestly telling me that shit's not funny? I'm ahead of my time is what I am. A hundred carrot gold real deal one of a kind rarest of the rare diamond is what I am.

(MORE)

JACKSON (cont'd)
 What the hell would you know? And
 what the hell kind of word is
 vaudevillian? You're a relic
 lady. A distant dead relic who's
 too blind to recognize that she
 has just witnessed comic gold.

Maura pauses then calmly ends the subject.

MAURA
 Can we find my son now?

Jackson starts the car and as they pull off he mutters to himself.

JACKSON
 Vaudevillian. It's 'comedian'
 lady.
 (annunciating each
 syllable)
 Com-e-di-an.
 (mumbling to himself)
 Deaf dumb blind white-bread
 motherfucker telling a black man
 what's funny.

EXT. GENERAL HOSPITAL, NEW YORK - NIGHT

Karen pulls up outside the hospital and steps out of the car but Simon and the dog remain inside.

As Simon gently holds him, the dog looks out the window and, as an injured patient is rushed out of an ambulance and in through the main doors, the dog recoils in fear.

Karen opens the passenger door and looks down at Simon and the dog.

SIMON
 Who is Mavis Staples?

Karen glances at the Mavis Staples CD cover in the front seat then looks back at Simon.

KAREN
 Let's go; we need someone to look
 at your hand.

Simon looks at the dog then back at Karen.

SIMON
 I can't leave him.

EXT. NEW YORK, HOTEL EXCELSIOR - NIGHT

Maura and Jackson make to enter the hotel but Jackson stops Maura.

JACKSON

Wait here.

Offended, Maura reacts.

JACKSON

You want the address? Then you wait here.

EXT/INT. GENERAL HOSPITAL, NEW YORK - NIGHT

A very uncomfortable Karen stands at the outside window holding the injured dog in her arms and watching through the window as a nurse gently bandages Simon's hand inside.

NURSE

That your dog?

Simon hesitates, thinks about it then nods, yes.

NURSE

Lovely.

Simon nods and smiles out at Karen.

NURSE

That your mother?

Simon hesitates, thinks about it, looks at Karen outside, nods yes, then bursts into giddy laughter.

Karen watches from outside and frowns as Simon looks at her again and laughs even louder.

Suddenly Karen stops frowning, turns white and passes out.

As she slumps to the ground, with the dog on top of her, the nurse bolts out and calls to the staff who follow her outside and pick Karen up.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Karen is lying down as a nurse takes her pulse and Simon waits outside with the dog, out of earshot.

KAREN

Is this really necessary?

NURSE

The doctor said you need rest.

KAREN

I need to get out of here is what I need. Where's what's-his-name gone?

NURSE

Your son is feeding the dog; he's fine.

Karen winces at the 'son' reference then DOCTOR HERNANDEZ enters, reading a test result.

DOCTOR HERNANDEZ

What age are you?

KAREN

Why?

DOCTOR HERNANDEZ

Putting your body under this much pressure at your age? It's not surprising you're fainting.

KAREN

Pressure?

DOCTOR HERNANDEZ

In your condition you can't be carrying dogs around the place.

KAREN

I don't have a condition, I have the odd drink now and then but don't you presume to tell me I have some kind of problem.

Doctor Hernandez looks back at the test results then grins.

DOCTOR HERNANDEZ

I'm not talking about that condition Miss Preston, though your blood does show a high level of alcohol, I'm talking about your pregnancy.

KAREN

What?

DOCTOR HERNANDEZ

Evidentially you didn't know.

KAREN

Say that again. Say what you just said.

DOCTOR HERNANDEZ
You're pregnant.

KAREN
And you're an asshole.

Karen pulls away from the nurse.

KAREN
Get me out of here.

INT. JACKSON'S CAR - NIGHT

Jackson and Maura drive in stone cold silence.

Maura suddenly yawns again and Jackson looks at her out of the side of his eye with disgust.

Maura whispers to herself.

MAURA
Excuse me.

EXT/INT. KAREN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Karen opens her front door and Simon, holding the dog, hesitates.

KAREN
We going to stand here all night
or are you coming in?

INT. KAREN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Simon wraps the dog in a blanket on the couch as Karen pours herself a scotch and knocks it back in one, then, when she realizes Simon is watching her, she hesitates.

KAREN
You're going to stand there
judging me?

Simon shakes his head, no.

KAREN
Then, you'd better join me.

She grabs another glass, pours scotch into both and offers one to Simon.

Simon hesitates, pats the dog, then moves towards Karen and takes the glass.

But it's too close for Karen and she steps back.

KAREN
Make a toast.

Simon hesitates again, looks at the scotch then back at Karen.

SIMON
I meant it when I said love you.

Karen knocks back the drink and pours another glass.

KAREN
Make another one.

SIMON
I do.

KAREN
Let's drink to your mutt. What's his name?

SIMON
He doesn't have one.

KAREN
The dog with no name. We'll call him Clint. Here's to Clint.

She knocks back the drink and allows it give her some kind of balance.

KAREN
Okay, what now?

INT. KAREN'S HOUSE, BATHROOM - NIGHT

Karen sits on the edge of the almost full bath as the hot water pours into it.

Simon appears in the doorway, holding his filthy clothes, and, as Karen turns to him, she sees he is naked.

SIMON
I do Karen.

Karen grabs the filthy clothes off Simon and snaps at him.

KAREN
Stop saying that. You hear me?

Simon nods and as Karen recognizes how close their physical proximity is in her small bathroom she becomes flushed then she exits.

Simon turns off the faucet and, as he slips into the bath, we move outside the bathroom to reveal Karen, propped with her back against the wall, confused and compelled, as she listens to the sound of Simon in the water.

EXT. KAREN'S STREET - NIGHT

Jackson and Maura slowly drive along the street, checking house numbers.

INT. KAREN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Karen carries Simon's clothes into the living room, picks up the bottle of scotch and a glass and exits down to the laundry room in the basement.

INT. KAREN'S HOUSE, BATHROOM - NIGHT

Simon submerges his head under the water and, in the distorted way that sound is affected by water, he says, 'I love you Karen' then he resurfaces, smiles to himself and submerges himself under the water again.

EXT. KAREN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

As Jackson's car draws closer to Karen's house he slows down, then, when he verifies it's the correct address, he stops and doesn't even look at Maura.

JACKSON
You wait here.

Jackson gets out of the car and crosses to Karen's house.

INT. KAREN'S LAUNDRY ROOM, BASEMENT - NIGHT

Karen pours another drink and stares blankly at the washing machine as Simon's clothes pound against the noisy washing machine door then she rests her head against the machine and allows the thumping of the engine to pound the thoughts out of her head.

In the distance there is the almost inaudible sound of her doorbell but she doesn't hear or respond to it.

EXT. KAREN'S HOUSE, FRONT ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Jackson waits, looks over at Maura in the car, then pushes the doorbell again.

INT. KAREN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

As Simon keeps his head submerged under the water he shouts out with everything he's got, and, as the distorted sound of his words reverberate through the water, 'I LOVE YOU' he can't hear the doorbell.

Just as Simon resurfaces from the water he hears the final ping of the doorbell and frowns, but, as he listens in silence and hears no more, he shrugs it off and submerges himself under the water once more.

EXT. KAREN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jackson rings the doorbell one final time then walks back to the car, gets back inside, and they sit in silence.

MAURA

What do we do now?

INT. KAREN'S LAUNDRY ROOM, BASEMENT - NIGHT

As the clothes dryer clicks off, Karen takes Simon's clothes out, looks upstairs, braces herself, then moves up the steps.

INT. JACKSON'S CAR - NIGHT

Jackson and Maura sit in silence, watching the entrance to Karen's home.

Maura tries to conceal another yawn as exhaustion takes hold.

JACKSON

It only takes one to watch, if
you want to sleep...

MAURA

I have no intentions of sleeping
Mister Jackson.

INT. KAREN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Karen watches Simon, wrapped in a bathing robe as he soundly sleeps beside the dog on the couch.

The dog is awake and looking better and as Karen gently touches him, he licks Karen's hand.

INT. JACKSON'S CAR - NIGHT

As Jackson continues to watch the entrance Maura begins to fall asleep and as her head slowly leans in Jackson's direction he becomes increasingly uncomfortable as Maura's head gets closer and closer to him.

He delicately pushes her head back away with the tips of his fingers then let's go but her head begins to tilt towards him again.

He struggles to ignore her head but as it comes ever closer to his shoulder he repeats titling her head back away from him again then sighs with relief as her head stays up this time.

He goes back to watching the front door but after a few seconds Maura's head tilts towards him again and he gives up the fight, allowing her head to rest on his shoulder.

He sits uncomfortably, glancing at her head every so often then relaxes into it and decides it's not so bad.

INT. KAREN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Karen drains the last of scotch as she watches Simon sleep.

She checks through the phone book, finds a number, dials, and, as she curls up at the end of the couch, she listens to the phone.

INT. JACKSON'S CAR - DAY

Next morning, as Jackson watches the front door, Maura sleeps against his chest.

Maura adjusts herself to get more comfortable and emits a small sigh of pleasure as she touches his chest then she bolts upright as she fully awakens and realizes who she is with.

JACKSON

Don't worry, I didn't let you touch me.

Despite herself Maura smiles at this, then laughs softly, then loudly.

JACKSON

It wasn't that funny.

But Jackson is privately delighted that she laughed.

INT. KAREN'S HOUSE - DAY

Simon is watching as a still fully-clothed Karen sleeps at the end of the couch.

Karen wakes and watches Simon watching her then as Simon makes to touch her, Karen stands up.

KAREN
I'll make breakfast.

As she makes to leave Simon tenderly reaches for her hand and she stops with her back to him.

KAREN
We can't do this?

SIMON
Why not?

Karen turns to Simon and they kiss softly at first then with increasing hunger then Karen pulls away and moves towards the front door.

INT. JACKSON'S CAR - NIGHT

Jackson checks his watch as Maura adjusts herself.

JACKSON
Nobody's been in or out all night.

MAURA
Sorry...for falling asleep.

JACKSON
No point in both of us staying awake.

MAURA
But you...why did you...?

JACKSON
We had a deal. I honour my debts.

Maura hides how impressed she is by this then Jackson reacts to something outside the car.

JACKSON
That her?

Maura looks up and she sees Karen at the top of her stoop picking up the paper but then Maura becomes quietly horrified as she watches a pair of hands appear from behind and sensually slip around Karen's waist, and as Maura looks up she sees Simon's head appear from behind Karen and kiss her on the neck.

MAURA

Arrest her.

JACKSON

For what?

As Maura struggles to find an answer she watches Karen hesitate with Simon's arms around her, then, as he moves his hands up towards her breasts, Karen reacts with pleasure, turns, playfully pushes Simon back inside and closes the door behind them.

MAURA

For that. My baby boy Mister Jackson. That woman has, not for the first time, taken advantage of him.

JACKSON

Looks pretty consenting to me.

MAURA

What?

JACKSON

What age is your boy?

MAURA

Twenty-five but that's nothing to do with it.

JACKSON

She may have a couple of years on the kid but we don't arrest people for that. He's an adult. She's an adult. Let them do their adult thing I say.

MAURA

Don't be disgusting. And 'adult' implies he can make up his own mind Mister Jackson.

JACKSON

The way he slipped his hands round her waist, kissed her neck and let his fingers do the walking toward her titties made me think his mind was firmly made up.

Maura reacts with disgust and makes to step out of the car but stops halfway, frozen in confusion.

MAURA

What do I do?

JACKSON

You go out there and try to fight for him with the post coital haze of another woman hanging over him he's likely to politely tell his loving mama to go fuck herself.

MAURA

I'm getting lessons in parenting from a...from a...

JACKSON

From an old childless nigger cop? Ain't life wonderful.

Karen hesitates, then sits back and closes the door.

MAURA

Just because I didn't get out doesn't mean I agree with you Mister Jackson.

JACKSON

We couldn't have that now, could we?

MAURA

Alright, since you're dispensing all the psychological insights, you tell me, what do I do now?

JACKSON

All I know is I have to be in work in an hour. You want me to pull a Morgan Freeman and drive you some place, a hotel, a friend, I'll do that, but, when it comes to advice or insight, you're on your own Miss Daisy.

INT. KAREN'S HOUSE - DAY

The dog, looking much better, watches as Simon and Karen tear at each others clothes, and, as he affectionately barks at them, they laugh, then allow desire to soar through them.

INT. JACKSON'S APARTMENT - DAY

Jackson opens the door and brings in a hesitant Maura.

MAURA

I really can't impose like this.

JACKSON

I know it's probably more down-market than you're accustomed to but I'm working, so why let an empty place go to waste? Stay if you want, don't if you don't; I'm getting cleaned up.

As Jackson exits to the bathroom Maura stands in the middle of the room looking around nervously and she jolts when she hears the water explode from the shower cistern then she slowly sits on the couch and listens to the splashing shower water.

INT. KAREN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Karen and Simon slump with exhaustion and exaltation as they wallow in clean sweat and sticky tremblings.

KAREN

I mean it, we can't do this.

They both pause then, the Tamagotchi toy beeps in delight and, as, they look at the confounded dog, they laugh louder and kiss deeper.

INT. JACKSON'S APARTMENT - DAY

As Jackson comes out wearing a towel wrapped around him Maura turns away.

JACKSON

What's wrong with you?

Maura gestures that nothing is wrong.

JACKSON

Oh, I get it; you've never been alone in a room with a bogeyman before? This is where the jungle beast in me comes out and savages the white woman innocence in you?

MAURA

I was merely allowing you some modesty Mister Jackson.

JACKSON

If I'm not in work in ten minutes
they'll be firing my modest ass.
You want something to drink?

MAURA

What do you have?

JACKSON

No Queen of motherfucking England
tea that's for sure; you want a
beer?

MAURA

Does everybody in this town drink
beer first thing in the morning?

JACKSON

What does that mean?

MAURA

Nothing. Ignore me.

JACKSON

That's not quite as easy as I'd
like it to be. What the fuck am
I, your private barman, you want
a beer or not?

MAURA

You're serious?

JACKSON

You never had breakfast beer?

MAURA

No Mister Jackson, I haven't.

JACKSON

Best beer of the day is the one
you have for breakfast.

Maura watches as Jackson cracks open a bottle and sinks it
back.

MAURA

You know what Mister Jackson?

JACKSON

What, miss whatever the hell your
name is?

MAURA

I will indeed join you in that
breakfast beer?

Jackson smiles for the first time, a genuine affection on his lips.

JACKSON
Will you indeed? How
motherfucking spiffing.

INT. KAREN'S HOUSE - DAY

As Karen holds Simon in her arms he rests his head against her breasts and looks like a man who never wants to leave then Karen thinks about her words and quietly speaks.

KAREN
Simon?

But Simon treats it like it's a game.

SIMON
Karen.

KAREN
Seriously Simon.

SIMON
Seriously Karen.

KAREN
You know you have to go back?

But this time Simon doesn't repeat her words, he just closes his eyes and tries to blot out reality.

KAREN
Simon?

SIMON
I need my pills.

KAREN
Exactly.

SIMON
But you will visit me?

Karen hesitates and nods - unconvincingly.

INT. JACKSON'S APARTMENT - DAY

Several beers later and Maura has completely loosened up and as the phone rings Jackson cracks open another two bottles and hands one to Maura.

MAURA
They're looking for you again.

JACKSON

The city ain't going to fall on its knees because I didn't turn up for work. Anyway they can't fire me, I'm retired next week.

MAURA

May I ask you a question?

JACKSON

You may.

MAURA

Did you ever take somebody's life Mister Jackson?

JACKSON

No. But I've always been a bad shot.

MAURA

I'm serious Mister Jackson.

JACKSON

Change the subject.

MAURA

Are you an alcoholic Mister Jackson?

JACKSON

No, but I'm working on it.

Maura laughs and Jackson raises his bottle in appreciation.

JACKSON

You know Miss Daisy, I may be wrong, but it's possible you might not be the total bitch I thought you were.

MAURA

Mister Jackson, that's probably the nicest thing anyone has ever said to me.

There is a tender moment between them and as the moment stretches further they draw closer towards the inevitable kiss but, as their mouths stop just short of contact, Maura suddenly pulls away.

As they sit in silence Jackson calmly puts a cigarette in his mouth and lights it.

EXT. NEW YORK STREETS - DAY

As Karen drives Simon and the dog home Simon pets the dog.

SIMON

They won't let me keep him in the home.

KAREN

Don't look at me, I can't.

Simon looks at Karen in the rearview mirror and, as the dog looks at her too, she looks away.

KAREN

Christ, one is worse than the other.

Simon smiles then he sees a poster advertising a Mavis Staples concert stuck among a bunch of other posters on a billboard outside, and, just as he's about to blurt out in excitement to Karen, he decides to hold back as he has an idea.

EXT. PSYCHIATRIC HOME - DAY

Karen pulls up outside the home with Simon in the back seat.

SIMON

I will call you on the phone this time.

Karen kisses Simon on the cheek and Simon turns his face to meet her mouth and jokes.

SIMON

We can't do this.

Simon kisses her quickly then gets out of the car and waves to the dog in the back seat.

As Simon makes his way to the front entrance, Karen watches him then looks at the dog in the rearview mirror.

KAREN

What are you looking at?

As Simon stops at the entrance and looks back at Karen, she hesitates then drives away.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC HOME - DAY

Simon rushes to his room, gathers his books, audio tapes and anything else he can manage and puts them outside the door.

As curious residents slowly gather Simon grabs a pen and paper and, as he writes 'YARD SALE' in large bold print across it and props it against the items, a resident picks up a tape.

RESIDENT

How much?

Simon smiles, trying to contain his excitement.

EXT. KAREN'S HOUSE - DAY

As Karen gets out of the car she opens the back door.

KAREN

You getting out or not?

The dog doesn't move.

KAREN

Listen mutt, I don't have time for your shit. You got two seconds to come inside or I'm dropping you off at the nearest pound.

Karen looks up to see Maura on her doorstep.

KAREN

Jesus, here we go again.

Maura walks towards her.

KAREN

What is it with you people?

MAURA

You told me you wouldn't see him again.

KAREN

What did you want me to do?

MAURA

Send him back.

KAREN

Maybe if you did your job he wouldn't have been lying semi-conscious on the side of the street and I wouldn't be...what do you want?

MAURA

You think you know me? A lush who has to take advantage of children to get some attention?

KAREN

That's it, don't hold back on the motherly love.

Karen looks back in at the dog.

KAREN

This is your last chance Clint.

MAURA

Simon never lied to me before the day he met you, never, so I had no reason to think he wasn't safe in the psychiatric home.

KAREN

Funny the way they call it a home isn't it? It's not a home. Home is where he should live but it isn't. It's a hospital lady. A handy place to dump your son so that you can return 'home.'

Karen grabs the dog and pulls him out of the car.

KAREN

And, for the record, you know your son so well? He's no child mommy dearest, if you get my meaning?

MAURA

You're disgusting.

Karen locks the car and, holding the dog, she stares at Maura.

KAREN

You know, you're right. I'm all that. A disgusting, lush, loser but Simple Simon, when he looks at me, he sees... something different.

As Karen walks away Maura hesitates then calls after her.

MAURA

Of course he sees something different, he's retarded.

Karen doesn't stop.

KAREN

Nice word to use for your son.

MAURA

You 'wouldn't be' what?

Karen looks for her keys outside the door.

KAREN

What am I doing here? I got a dog I don't want, and a bitch I want less. Don't worry yourself Mommy, I won't be seeing your precious baby again, I'm moving out of this shithole city.

MAURA

You didn't answer my question. You 'wouldn't be' what?

Karen gets the door open.

KAREN

Nebraska. Far enough away for you?

MAURA

He wouldn't be lying semi-conscious on the side of the street and you wouldn't be what?

Karen gets the door open but she doesn't enter; she just stands there, her silence communicating everything.

INT. KAREN'S HOUSE - DAY

Sitting at the table, Karen pours a drink as Maura stares at her, waiting.

MAURA

You're certain he doesn't know?

Karen stares at the glass of vodka but doesn't drink from it.

MAURA

I need to be sure.

KAREN

What did I just tell you? He was outside, he heard nothing.

MAURA

What are you going to do? At you're age and condition you're obviously in no fit state to -

Karen picks up the vodka bottle and pours a little more into the glass.

KAREN

I forgot you were the expert on parenting.

MAURA

I'll pay for the...all expenses.

KAREN

You just can't stop those motherly instincts spilling out of every pore can you? You just learned about your grandkid yet I bet you'd strangle the foetus yourself if you could.

MAURA

You want it growing up knowing it's father is mentally retarded?

KAREN

There's that lovely word again.

MAURA

In fact, at your age the thing will probably be retarded itself?

Karen doesn't react but her silence conceals deep hurt.

MAURA

My God, you're actually considering having the child?

KAREN

At least this time you called it a child, instead of a thing.

Karen raises the glass of vodka.

KAREN

A toast. To the glorious irony that the religious conservative is trying to convince the harlot to abort.

MAURA

That's not an answer. What are you -

Karen gestures for Maura to stop talking as she raises the glass of vodka to her mouth but still she doesn't drink from the glass.

KAREN

You don't want to buy a dog do you?

MAURA

Please tell me what - ?

KAREN

I already made an appointment. Last night.

MAURA

When are you - ?

KAREN

He doesn't need a lot of feeding.

MAURA

When?

KAREN

Next week.

MAURA

You're doing the right thing.

Karen looks at Maura and speaks gently.

KAREN

Get the fuck out of my house.

Maura gets up to exit but stops, takes money out of her purse and moves to put it on the table.

KAREN

You put money on that table, I'll cut your hand off.

Maura stops.

MAURA

Promise me you won't see him again.

KAREN

Lady, he's the one who contacted me again. So maybe you should talk to him.

MAURA

You have to humiliate him.

KAREN

Excuse me?

MAURA

I know my son. With him it's for life. The only way to break it is to hurt or humiliate him.

KAREN

It's a laugh a minute with you isn't it? No wonder the kid's fucked up.

Maura glares at Karen, the insult having found its mark.

MAURA

If you care for him at all you'll hurt him to cure him of you.

KAREN

Like the disease that I am. Fair enough. Now, if you'll excuse me, I usually don't like drinking alone but, in your case, Mommy, I'll make an exception.

As Maura exits, Karen puts down the glass of vodka and looks at it with disgust.

She pulls out the letter from the airline company and glancing at the line 'training opportunities in our Nebraska branch...' she ticks the box beside, 'YES'

She pushes the letter aside, stares at the vodka glass, hesitates, then grabs it and knocks back the entire glass in one mouthful.

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF KAREN'S HOME - DAY

As Maura walks down the street she tries to appear calm.

She sits on a stoop and struggles not to weep but fails.

INT. COMEDY CLUB - DAY

Jackson talks to FLY the young and cocky manager and compere of the comedy club.

COMPERE FLY

Amateur night has a waiting list the size of my dick; why should I let you jump the queue?

Jackson tries to be funny.

JACKSON
If it's the size of your dick
then surly it's a small list?

The Compere stares at Jackson disdainfully.

JACKSON
I'm joking. It's a joke.

COMPERE FLY
Get your saggy old ass out of
here and stop wasting my time.

Jackson makes to exit but then Fly has an idea.

FLY
Unless...?

EXT. DELI - DAY

As the Mexican workers unload the truck, Simon strolls up, waves them hello, then dances down the ramp into the basement.

INT. TRAINING ROOM - DAY

As a trainer is giving instructions to Karen and the other new trainees, Karen is at the back, drawing disinterestedly on her pad, but she stops when she realizes she has been drawing a foetus.

INT. DELI, BASEMENT - DAY

Simon works with incredible pace and as Marisol watches him, she undresses and as Simon casually looks to her, waves, then calmly returns to his work, his indifference confounds her and, she slumps on the seat, wondering if she's lost it.

EXT. KAREN'S HOUSE - DAY

Karen returns home as a TO LET sign is being erected outside her building.

INT. SIMON'S ROOM - NIGHT

Simon and Fred are smoking and as another resident enters, Simon lifts his stereo, gives it to the resident and takes the money offered.

Simon counts the money then carefully puts it with more money into his sock.

Fred hesitates, then takes a few more dollars from his pocket and offers them to Simon but Simon vigorously shakes his head, no.

FRED

Please Simon, I want to.

Simon smiles in appreciation but still refuses to take the money off his friend.

INT. KAREN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Karen packs her bags as the dog looks up at her.

KAREN

Don't think for a second you're coming with me you piece of shit.

But the dog just wags his tail.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC HOME - DAY

Simon passes an audio tape to a resident and as he is handed a dollar, the money is swiped out of his hand.

Simon turns to see Curtis who quietly whispers as he leans affectionately close.

CURTIS

You been avoiding me Fucko?

Simon doesn't respond.

CURTIS

All this overtime and extra curricular of yours, I want my slice; you hear me mummy's Boy?

Slice nods yes.

CURTIS

Good girl.

EXT. CLINIC - DAY

Karen pulls up outside the abortion clinic and waits in her car.

EXT. DELI, BASEMENT - DAY

Simon gets paid as Brody takes down the cigarettes.

BRODY
You've been working hard Simon.

SIMON
Can I do the weekend too?

Brody shrugs.

BRODY
Why the hell not?

Brody offers the pack of cigarettes to Simon but Simon just takes the money, shakes his head, no, and exits.

INT. CLINIC - DAY

As Karen sits alone in a waiting room the nurse enters.

NURSE
Can I offer you a tea or coffee?

KAREN
Anything stronger?

The nurse doesn't smile at this attempt at levity so Karen just shakes her head no then as the nurse exits, Karen suddenly brings her hand to her mouth as she wretches.

INT. CLINIC, BATHROOM - DAY

A woman washes her hands as she hears the sound of vomiting coming from one of the cubicles.

The woman's pallor is white, the blood drawn from her face, and as she hears the vomiting, she closes her eyes hard, trying to banish the sound.

As Karen comes out of the bathroom, wiping her mouth with tissue, she sees the other woman at the mirror.

KAREN
Sorry about that.

The woman tries to politely smile as if to say, 'it's okay.'

KAREN
I don't know whether I'm vomiting because I'm...or because...

She stops, incapable of saying either of the words, 'pregnant' or, 'aborting'

The woman's eyes well up and she exits.

Karen watches her exit then catches a glimpse of herself in the mirror and she freezes as she stares at her reflection.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Simon and his mother eat Mexican food.

MAURA

I don't know why you asked to come to this place, it's awful.

But Simon is barely listening to her; instead he glances over her shoulder at the ticket shop across the street.

SIMON

I like it.

MAURA

And I'm glad you do Simon but sometimes you have to take other people's likes and dislikes into consideration.

Simon doesn't respond.

MAURA

Do we understand?

Simon nods, yes.

MAURA

Which means I can trust you will talk to me in future before doing what you like?

SIMON

I have to use the bathroom.

As Maura continues to eat, Simon appears to go in the direction of the toilet but instead he sneaks out the door.

INT. KAREN'S HOUSE - DAY

Karen is standing in front of her answering-machine and, as it plays, the dog responds with delight to Simon's voice.

SIMON'S VOICE

It's me again, and the truth is I just wanted to hear your machine again.

(MORE)

SIMON'S VOICE (cont'd)
 Your voice is...anyway please
 don't be late because it starts
 at eight. Bye.

As the message ends another one kicks in.

SIMON'S VOICE
 Guess who? You really do have the
 most beautiful voice Karen. Sorry
 to keep ringing but I couldn't
 remember if I left the time. The
 tickets say eight o'clock sharp
 so if you could maybe meet me at
 the home at seven that would be
 brilliant.

As the phone message ends another message kicks in.

SIMON'S VOICE
 Or earlier than seven is good
 too. As early as you want. But
 seven is okay too. I love your
 message. It's Simon by the way.

As the message ends the machine clicks off and the red
 light displays 27 MESSAGES.

EXT. PSYCHIATRIC HOME - DAY

As the sun throws a beautiful glow across the lawns Maura
 kisses a nervous Simon goodbye.

MAURA
 I'll see you tomorrow.

SIMON
 Bye.

MAURA
 Are you okay?

SIMON
 Just tired.

MAURA
 Get some rest, okay?

SIMON
 Thanks.

MAURA
 You want me to tuck you in?

SIMON
 No thanks.

Maura kisses him again.

MAURA

I'm glad this is all behind us.
Everything can be as it was.

SIMON

See you tomorrow.

Simon watches Maura exit then when she's out of view he bolts to his room, drags off his clothes and changes into new ones.

Fred sits on the bed as Simon checks himself in the mirror while, through the door, the now catatonic resident Robert is being pushed in a wheel chair into his room.

SIMON

What time is it?

FRED

Quarter past seven.

Simon tries to control his fear that she won't arrive.

FRED

Actually my watch is fast.

EXT. CARPARK OUTSIDE PSYCHIATRIC HOME - DAY

Dejected, Simon sits with Fred at the entrance staring at the street and, as his Tamagotchi toy beeps, he ignores it.

FRED

Sorry Simon.

As Fred goes inside Simon smokes in silence then Karen's car pulls up and Simon's face lights up as he runs down to meet her.

Karen gets out of the car and holds her hand up.

KAREN

Stop.

Simon abruptly stops and smiles.

SIMON

Yes.

KAREN

We can't do this.

Simon smiles, moves forward and kisses her.

KAREN

Are you listening to me?

Simon holds up two concert tickets to Mavis Staples and Karen is moved.

KAREN
I can't believe you did that.

SIMON
We can still see the second half.

Simon moves to kiss her again.

KAREN
I'm serious. Stop right now.

Confused, Simon hesitates, then, remembering the movie that Karen said she loved in the hotel that first night, 'An Officer and a Gentleman,' Simon steps back and playfully salutes her.

SIMON
Permission to speak sir?

KAREN
Stop playing around, this is not a game.

Simon hesitates then salutes again.

SIMON
Message received and understood sir.

KAREN
Are you completely retarded?

Karen is shocked by her own cruelty.

KAREN
I didn't mean...

Simon is becoming anxious so he struggles to cover it up by forcing the game to continue.

SIMON
Permission to speak sir?

KAREN
Go on.

Simon whispers to her as if she's breaking the rules.

SIMON
No, you have to say, 'permission granted.'

Karen's heart almost breaks at his innocence and her foreknowledge that she's about to destroy that innocence.

KAREN
Permission granted.

SIMON
You always say, 'we can't do
this' then we do it.

KAREN
Not this time.

SIMON
Then when?
(snapping back into the
game)
I mean then when sir?

KAREN
No more Simon.

SIMON
Excuse me sir, I
don't...understand. When?

KAREN
Never again Simon. The game is
over.

SIMON
But...you always say...

KAREN
I have to go.

SIMON
I mean, permission to speak
sir...

KAREN
Permission not granted. Goodbye
Simon.

Karen moves to get into the car and Simon forces a laugh.

SIMON
That was fun. Hurry up or we'll
miss the rest of the concert.

Karen reaches into herself and, as she finds the necessary
ugliness, she screams at him.

KAREN
Fuck off Simon. Fuck off and die.
You hear me? Your mother was
right. You are retarded. You're a
fucking mental retard and I want
nothing to do with you?
(MORE)

KAREN (cont'd)
Is that permission to speak
enough for you?

Karen looks at him as the words register and he scrambles to find some kind of response.

SIMON
Permission to...I know what
I...But I can be smart...I can
read books and watch movies and
listen to the news and...talk.

KAREN
Simon, I'm no good for you. I'm a
lousy bitch who'll cut your heart
out just to watch you bleed.

SIMON
You wouldn't do that to me.

Simon's Tamagotchi beeps and he takes it out of his pocket, presses the button, then offers it to Karen.

SIMON
He likes you too.

KAREN
Stop Simon.

SIMON
Please take him.

Karen grabs the Tamagotchi toy and contemptuously throws it through the open window of the car.

KAREN
Stop, just fucking stop. We don't
live in your romantic illusion
Simon. Maybe you did save my
life, maybe I was at the hotel to
end...to...but we live in this
shit and there's nothing we can
do about it. I can't have a
relationship with a normal...how
in hell am I supposed to with
a...with a...?

Simon struggles not to weep as he whispers.

SIMON
With a man Karen. I'm a man.

Karen kisses him hard and bites back emotion.

KAREN
Yes you are Simon. More than
most. Goodbye.

Karen gets in the car and, as she turns the ignition, the dog looks at Simon through the back window and excitedly barks at him as they pull away.

Simon stares at the car for the longest time, until it no longer exists on the horizon, but even then he still doesn't move.

EXT. CARPARK OUTSIDE RESIDENT'S HOME - NIGHT

Night has fallen and as the rain pours down Simon still hasn't moved.

Curtis looks back at the other male nurses standing in the shelter of the doorway as he trudges towards Simon.

CURTIS

Hey Rain Man, you think I got
nothing better to do than stand
here and get pissed on?

Simon suddenly snaps to attention, salutes Curtis and roars:

SIMON

Permission to speak sir?

Curtis grins and looks back up at the distant doorway to see the male orderlies talking among themselves and ignoring him and Simon.

CURTIS

Permission granted private.

SIMON

Why does love hurt sir?

Curtis laughs.

CURTIS

Because life's a bitch son.

Curtis hits Simon a swift punch to the stomach and Simon goes down on one knee.

CURTIS

There's something to take your
mind off the pain.

Curtis looks up at the sky and the rain begins to pour down even heavier.

CURTIS

Fun's over Fucko, let's go.

As Curtis casually makes to grab Simon's hair, Simon screams out and, with astonishing strength and speed, he grabs Curtis by the throat, drags him to the ground, and, as Curtis wails out, Simon repeatedly pummels him in the face with his fists.

The violent onslaught seems to go on for a horribly long time as the orderlies run down from the home and try to grab Simon but he is impervious to all attempts to stop him as he continues pummeling Curtis into unconscious.

A third orderly arrives and jabs a needle into Simon's neck.

Simon's punches become groggy and he too slips into drug induced unconsciousness and passes out on top of Curtis - two enemies becoming one:

FADE TO WHITE

INT. HOSPITAL WARD - DAY

Fade up on the hospital ward and, as staff go about their daily routine, Maura enters with Doctor Lahiri.

They approach the unconscious Simon, strapped to a bed.

DR. LAHIRI

His lack of response to the anti-depressants is worrying.

MAURA

Are the straps still necessary?

DR. LAHIRI

At least another week until we establish an overview of Simon's violent behavior. My staff need to know they are protected.

MAURA

But you know Simon would never...or has never before...

Maura stops mid-sentence, realizing she has no defence.

DR. LAHIRI

Your confusion isn't uncommon but neither is sudden aberrant behavior in schizophrenia. Did you know he tried to stop taking his medication again?

Maura looks at the small amount of dried mucus on the side of Simon's mouth.

DR. LAHIRI

We found several doses hidden under his bed. Convinced himself he could be normal without it. Delusional and paranoid, he believed the member of staff he attacked was his nemesis. He can't differentiate between illusion and reality. Which brings us to his lack of response to the anti-depressants.

Simon suddenly wakes and screams out.

SIMON

Karen!!?

As Simon attempts to leap up, he discovers he is strapped to the bed and, bewildered, he looks at the straps, at his surroundings, then at the doctor.

DR. LAHIRI

Hello Simon.

Simon remembers where he is and as desolation sweeps over him again Doctor Lahiri increases the dosage on the drip and Simon looks down at the tube going into his vein.

Maura touches him as he fights against the drug increase.

MAURA

Simon, it's me.

Simon looks at his mother, hope and heartbreak in his eyes as he whispers to her.

SIMON

Where's Karen?

Maura hesitates then ignores the question.

MAURA

Sleep sweetie, sleep.

Tears well up then Simon slips back into unconsciousness.

DR. LAHIRI

So, who is Karen?

Maura hesitates then feigns ignorance.

MAURA

Karen who?

DR. LAHIRI

He told me you know her.

MAURA

I don't know any Karen.

DR. LAHIRI

That's all he asks about. You have no idea who she is?

Maura continues to feign ignorance.

DR. LAHIRI

Piecing together the information we can get from him in his more lucid moments we think he's convinced himself they were married or something and the member of staff was his rival for this Karen. Hence the assault.

MAURA

What do we do?

DR. LAHIRI

We increase the medication and we wait.

MAURA

For what?

DR. LAHIRI

Some people don't respond as well as others to the anti-depressants. So we might have to consider those alternative methods.

MAURA

Have you ever had a dog doctor?

Doctor Lahiri's beeper goes off and she checks it.

DR. LAHIRI

Never had the time nor the interest. If you'll excuse me I have to take this.

As Doctor Lahiri exits Maura looks at Simon then she brings a handkerchief to her mouth, puts a small amount of spit onto it, and wipes the dried mucus off her son's mouth.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE KAREN'S HOUSE - DAY

As a passer by stops to read the TO LET sign in the window of Karen's empty house, Maura exits her car, and as the passer by walks away, Maura moves to the house and peers through the windows into the empty rooms.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC HOME, SIMON'S ROOM - DAY

Maura enters Simon's room, carefully scans it then methodically goes through Simon's personal belongings.

She finds Karen's business card in his coat, slips in into her jacket pocket, then, in his other pocket she finds the Mavis Staples concert tickets, examines them, and again carefully slips them into her jacket pocket.

As she goes through the rest of his clothes, Fred enters.

FRED

Is he going to be okay?

Startled, Maura turns around then tries to smile.

MAURA

Don't worry, he'll be fine. Where is his Tamagotchi?

FRED

What happened to him?

MAURA

I just asked you a question Fred?

FRED

Sorry...I don't know.

MAURA

This place is full of thieves. Did you ever meet any of Simon's friends?

FRED

I'm his friend.

MAURA

His other friends?

FRED

I'm his best friend.

MAURA

I know that Fred. Did you ever meet Karen?

Fred becomes embarrassed.

MAURA

It's alright Fred. Simon told me.

FRED

What did he say?

MAURA

Did you meet her or not?

FRED

Why?

MAURA

Just answer the fucking question
Fred.

Both of them are stunned by Maura's foul language.

FRED

Did I do something wrong?

MAURA

Of course not Fred. I'm sorry
for...my back is sore that's all.

FRED

Simon told me about her but I
never...

MAURA

You never met her?

Fred shakes his head no.

FRED

Why?

Maura kisses Fred's forehead.

MAURA

You're a good boy Fred.

As Maura exits, Fred is left alone in the room.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC HOME, INTENSIVE CARE WARD - NIGHT

Glistening sweat on his forehead, Simon sleeps, and as his eyes suddenly snap open from the troubled sleep he looks at the straps holding him down then he hears whispering.

He peers around the frighteningly dark ward where he sees the dark shape of a woman in the shadows and there is a mixture of fear and hope in his voice, as he whispers in the direction of the shadow.

SIMON

Karen?

The dark form of the woman steps into the light to reveal Nurse Stephanie and she gently whispers back to him.

NURSE STEFANIE
Go back to sleep Simon.

Devastated, Simon turns back into the pillow.

INT. HOME, INTENSIVE CARE WARD - NIGHT

As Maura enters she hesitates when she sees Simon verbally arguing with Doctor Lahiri and some other staff in the distance then she continues.

Simon sees her and immediately responds.

SIMON
Tell her mother. Tell the doctor.

MAURA
Good morning Sweetie.

SIMON
Tell her you know her. We'll see who's imagining things?

MAURA
Did you sleep well?

SIMON
Karen, tell her about Karen?

MAURA
Karen who Sweetie?

SIMON
Karen, from the hotel. Karen.

Maura shakes her head no and Simon becomes embarrassed.

SIMON
Mother, don't joke around.

MAURA
Do we have to go into this again?

SIMON
What?

MAURA
You keep asking for somebody called Karen and I keep telling you I don't know her.

SIMON
You do know her.

MAURA
I love you Simon but...

SIMON
That hotel. You met her, you had
a fight

MAURA
I'm sorry Simon, but I never -

SIMON
Why are you lying?

MAURA
Okay, I met her. Are you happy?

SIMON
Really?

MAURA
Yes, at the hotel.

Doctor Lahiri frowns at Maura as Simon gets excited.

SIMON
See? I told you. I told all of
you.

Doctor Lahiri discreetly whispers to Maura as Simon laughs
with joy.

DR. LAHIRI
This is not doing him any good.

SIMON
She was there. She knows Karen.

MAURA
Yes. It's true.

SIMON
Thank you mother, thank you.

MAURA
We had a fight. At the hotel. And
I was there.

Simon senses something is wrong with his mother's answers.

SIMON
Wait.

MAURA
I just want you to be happy.

SIMON
Mother?

MAURA

We had a fight at the hotel and
Karen is real and I met her.

Simon suddenly recoils.

SIMON

What are you doing?

MAURA

Me?

SIMON

What did she look like?

Maura acts confused.

MAURA

I said it's okay Simon. I believe
you. I know it's true. I know
Karen is real.

Simon becomes confused by his mother's reverse psychology.

SIMON

She is real.

MAURA

I know, that's what I said.

SIMON

You're lying.

Maura doesn't reply, her carefully choreographed silence
seen by Simon as an admission of guilt.

SIMON

You never met her.

MAURA

I'm sorry.

SIMON

But you did, you...you...mother?

As Simon begins to doubt his own memory he falters.

SIMON

Help me. Somebody help me.

MAURA

I'm here, Simon; mother is here.

As she reaches for Simon he backs away and screams out for
Karen.

SIMON
KAREN?!!!!

As he screams louder and louder the orderlies make their way towards him and, in rage fuelled fear, he shouts back at them and his mother.

SIMON
She is real! Karen is real!

As the orderlies descend on Simon and inject him, his mother watches on as her son breaks down.

INT. JACKSON'S OFFICE - DAY

In his office Jackson stares at Maura in disbelief.

JACKSON
I was right the first time, you are out of your motherfucking mind.

MAURA
Are you going to judge me or help me Mister Jackson?

JACKSON
You really believe this is in his best interest?

MAURA
My son is mentally ill Mister Jackson. Do you think it's a good idea to leave a new born baby in the hands of someone who might love and protect it with all his heart in the morning then start to believe during the night that the devil is transmitting signals through that same baby?

JACKSON
I thought you said she got rid of it?

MAURA
Did you ever have a dog as a child Mister Jackson?

JACKSON
Am I on motherfucking Oprah here? I had many dogs.

MAURA

Simon had a dog. Zack. And he loved that dog as only a child can. The day Zack got killed I knew I couldn't tell Simon. To protect him I told him the dog had been offered a place with all his other dog friends at a beautiful farm and we would be going to visit the dog tomorrow. Simon cried but I explained that the dog was so happy to be with all his other dog friends and imagine how excited he will be when Simon comes to visit. It made Simon feel better. Next day we told him there was a problem with the car but we would take the bus tomorrow and Simon cried. Day after that we told him there was a bus strike and he cried, but, you know what Mister Jackson, he cried less. It was three years before he stopped asking about that damned dog but then, one day, what happened - Simon didn't know anymore if the dog had been real or not? And he asked me about it and I told him it was story book I used to read to him as a boy. And my son smiled and said, 'I thought it was real.' And I said that just means you have an artist's imagination and he smiled some more. And, at that moment Mister Jackson, we were as close as we had ever been. I want to protect my son Mister Jackson. I want to convince him that this woman never happened. Convince him she never existed.

JACKSON

Who exactly is the sick one here?

MAURA

My son is a delusional paranoid schizophrenic. He sees and hears things that don't exist. He experiences events that never happened.

JACKSON

But this did happen.

MAURA

Not if we say it didn't. My son has never met you Mister Jackson. If I tell him I'll help him find this Karen woman and bring him to this precinct I want you to appear to investigate this woman and prove she never existed.

JACKSON

That's cold, woman.

MAURA

I know my son, and I love my son, Mister Jackson, but, in the presence of a baby, I fear my son. And I fear more for the welfare of the baby.

JACKSON

Who is Simon's father?

MAURA

Will you do this for me? One final decent thing before you leave this place.

JACKSON

I've never had children so I don't know what happens when -

MAURA

Yes or no.

JACKSON

What's in it for me?

MAURA

That day when you tried to kiss me...

JACKSON

What about it?

MAURA

I pulled back.

JACKSON

So?

MAURA

Next time, I won't.

EXT. STREETS LEADING TO KAREN'S HOUSE - DAY

As Maura drives, Simon is slumped in the seat, blankly staring out with indifference at his surroundings.

Maura turns a corner and Simon continues to blankly stare out but then his eyes suddenly flicker in recognition, he sits up, recognizes something else, then turns to Maura.

SIMON

Where are we?

Simon's mother doesn't reply; she just continues driving until she turns onto the street where Karen lived.

SIMON

This is it! This is the street!

Overwhelmed with excitement Simon opens the fast moving car door.

MAURA

Simon!

Maura pulls the car to a skidding halt and Simon bolts out of the car and sprints down towards Karen's house.

Maura pulls after him in the car but as Simon gets closer to Karen's house he sees the TO LET sign and he slows down.

Simon bolts up the steps and peers through the window then, as he pushes the doorbell and doesn't take his finger off it, Simon aggressively shouts down at his mother.

SIMON

Where is she?

MAURA

I told you Simon, there is nobody there. There never was.

SIMON

You're a liar! I was here. I was.

MAURA

What more do you want me to do?
You want me to go to the police
to prove she doesn't exist? Are
they liars too Simon? Are all of
us liars?

Simon just stares through the window into the empty rooms, listening to the shrill ring of the doorbell inside.

INT. POLICE STATION, HALLWAY OUTSIDE JACKSON'S OFFICE - DAY

As Jackson is on the phone he sees Maura enter followed by Simon.

SIMON

Thanks mother. Really, thank you.

Behaving like she's never been in the police station, Maura sees Jackson and looks away as Jackson hangs up the phone and exits his office.

MAURA

Where do we go?

Simon approaches a police officer.

SIMON

Excuse me, do you know Karen?

POLICEMAN

Karen who?

SIMON

Preston.

Jackson calls down from the hallway.

JACKSON

It's alright Joey, I got this.

Maura looks to Jackson then to a smiling Simon.

SIMON

I'm Simon.

JACKSON

What can I do for you?

SIMON

Prove I'm not crazy.

INT. POLICE STATION, JACKSON'S OFFICE - DAY

Simon and Maura are sitting at Jackson's desk.

JACKSON

You're sure this is the address?

SIMON

Yes. We just came from there.

MAURA

It was empty. A 'To Let' sign in the window.

SIMON
She must have moved.

JACKSON
And you're sure her name is Karen
Preston?

SIMON
I had her business card.

JACKSON
Where is it now?

SIMON
I can't seem to...it's gone.

JACKSON
According to our records the
previous occupant of that address
was a man in his eighties.

Simon tries to hide his confusion.

SIMON
No, it was Karen. I was in there.

MAURA
Maybe she was his daughter?

SIMON
Yeah, good idea. Did you check
that?

JACKSON
His name was Isaac Greenblatt.
Lived there for forty years and
had no next of kin.

Simon struggles to retain his composure as he whispers.

SIMON
But...I was there.

Maura gently puts her arm around Simon and helps him up.

MAURA
Thanks for your time officer.

EXT. FRONT ENTRANCE, HOME - EVENING

Maura pulls up in the car as a quiet Simon sits beside her.

MAURA
Home at last.

Simon hesitates then whispers.

SIMON
I'm sorry mother.

MAURA
For what?

SIMON
For everything.

MAURA
We're going to be okay.

Simon tries to smile but the pain seeps through.

SIMON
Mother, I know she's not real but
how do I get these pictures out
of my head? Out of my stomach?

MAURA
You'll see Simon, I promise,
we'll be closer then ever.

SIMON
How did you know what street she
lived on?

MAURA
What?

SIMON
Karen, you knew the street and
the house. How?

MAURA
You told me.

SIMON
What?

MAURA
You told everybody. Don't you
remember?

SIMON
When?

MAURA
Are you going to continue this
Simon? That is how I knew. How
else could I know?

SIMON
I really am sorry mother. I hate
that I did this to you.

As Simon moves away Maura watches him, ashamed.

INT. SIMON'S ROOM - NIGHT

Simon is sitting on his bed staring at the unmade New York City skyline jigsaw that his mother got him for his birthday.

In his peripheral vision he sees Karen's hand sliding its way into his hand but when he pulls back he is alone.

He stares at his open hands again then slowly closes it into a fist and smashes himself in the face.

He responds to the pain, breathes deeply, then smashes his fist into his face again, drops his face into his chest and repeatedly smashes his fists on his head.

EXT. DOORWAY OUTSIDE JACKSON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Standing outside Jackson's door Maura takes out a tube of lipstick, liberally applies it to her mouth then coldly knocks on the door.

Jackson opens the door and stares at her then steps back.

JACKSON

I suppose you'd better come in.

Maura shakes her head no, but doesn't move away either.

They stare at each other in silence as Jackson looks at her thickly applied lipstick.

JACKSON

What are you doing?

MAURA

Like you Mister Jackson, I honour my debts.

Maura steps closer to Jackson, purses her lips and closes her eyes.

Jackson hesitates then steps closer to her.

He looks at her mouth but he doesn't kiss her.

Maura waits but when his lips don't touch hers she opens her eyes to see Jackson looking at her.

JACKSON

I've done a lot of shit in my time lady, and I've never been ashamed of any of it. Until now.

Maura tries not to react as Jackson closes the door behind him then, as she stares at the closed door, she slowly but forcefully rubs the lipstick off her mouth.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC HOME, SIMON'S ROOM - NIGHT/DAY

As the days and nights go by Simon lies in bed alternately weeping then becoming angry then weeping again as he is restrained and strapped to the bed.

- Fred brings in Simon's medication but Simon refuses it.

- Maura attempts to engage Simon in making the jigsaw puzzle of the New York skyline but Simon just stares blankly ahead.

- As Maura talks to him he becomes aggressive then weeps when has to be restrained.

- Fred sits beside him in silence, smoking into the night.

- Fred watches as Simon wets the bed, indifferent to his own urine spreading across the sheets.

- Orderlies pull Simon out of bed and angrily change the bedclothes.

- Simon becomes aggressive again and after he is jabbed with a needle he slips into a painful sleep.

- In his doped and unconscious state Simon's face is a grimace of despair and as the sweat pours from his body Maura wipes the sweat off his bound body with a cloth.

EXT. PSYCHIATRIC HOME, COURTYARD - DAY

Simon, strapped into a wheelchair, eyes puffed from crying, silently stares out into the distance as, beside him, Maura and Doctor Lahiri read a brochure on Electroconvulsive Therapy.

DOCTOR LAHIRI

According to the American Psychiatric Association the success rate is eighty to ninety percent whereas anti-depressant medication comes in at only sixty percent. That makes it the most effective treatment for depression there is. You are obviously kept informed of the process and you can withdraw the consent at any time.

(MORE)

DOCTOR LAHIRI (cont'd)
 He would have twelve treatments
 over the next three weeks.
 Monday, Wednesday and Friday
 mornings.

Maura looks to Simon.

MAURA
 Please talk to me. I know you're
 there Simon.

But Simon doesn't respond, he just continues staring.

DR. LAHIRI
 Right now he's showing no signs
 of improvement. The silence, the
 anger, the constant weeping. And
 the higher doses are having no
 impact. Eighty percent success
 rate. All taken care of by
 insurance. After we do the chest
 x-ray, electrocardiogram, and
 blood and urine tests we -

MAURA
 I told you, I'm not going to put
 him through that.

DR. LAHIRI
 The myths associated with it are
 just that, myths.

MAURA
 Simon, talk to me? Tell me what
 you want?

Simon continues to ignore them.

MAURA
 Simon?

DR. LAHIRI
 It's admirable that you think he
 can make up his own mind but...

MAURA
 Simon, I know you can hear me.

Simon continues to ignore her.

DR. LAHIRI
 Apart from the memory loss, the
 reality is there are far more
 advantages to this treatment if -

SIMON
 I want it.

Maura and Doctor Lahiri are surprised by Simon's sudden interruption.

MAURA

No Simon.

DR. LAHIRI

Say that again Simon?

SIMON

What you said, I want it.

MAURA

No you do not Simon.

DR. LAHIRI

Why do you want it Simon?

Simon turns to his mother.

SIMON

Memory.

Maura shakes her head, a silent plea to her son, no.

DR. LAHIRI

You know you can ask, in fact, should ask, any questions you want?

SIMON

I don't need to ask anything.

DR. LAHIRI

Maybe you should consider -

Simon interrupts Doctor Lahiri and stares at his mother.

SIMON

I know these memories aren't real mother, but, if I can take these pictures of her out of my head, I know I can be better again.

Maura nearly breaks as she recognizes the consequence of her plotting.

MAURA

Simon, I'm so sorry.

SIMON

Help me mother, let me do this.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC HOME, ECT ROOM - DAY

Doctor Lahiri, Nurse Stephanie, and Maura watch as the self-conscious Anaesthetist finds it difficult to locate a vein in the front of Simon's hand, while Simon, dressed in a hospital gown, with sticky pad electrodes attached to his head and fingers, nervously looks to his mother.

ANAESTHETIST

You haven't eaten or drank
anything since midnight?

Simon shakes his head no, then winces as the Anaesthetist once more fails to enter a vein with the IV needle.

DR. LAHIRI

You have your mother's veins.

Simon smiles at his mother but she can't conceal her own nervous guilt as she forces a smile back.

MAURA

We can stop anytime, okay?

Simon winces again as the Anaesthetist successfully penetrates the vein and slides in the IV needle then Doctor Lahiri begins to talk Simon through the process.

DR. LAHIRI

You'll sleep for no more than ten
minutes and you'll have no
recollection of what occurred so
don't worry about anything.

Simon nods yes as Doctor Lahiri looks to him then Maura.

DR. LAHIRI

Any further questions?

Simon and Maura look to each other, then, as they both silently shake their heads no, Nurse Stephanie slips the mouth guard into Simon's mouth.

Simon's breathing begins to rapidly increase and, as the Anaesthetist injects the anaesthesia, Doctor Lahiri examines the oxygen mask.

DR. LAHIRI

I'm going to slip this over your
face. Is that alright?

Simon looks to his mother then nods yes and as Doctor Lahiri slides the oxygen mask over Simon's face he nods to the Anaesthetist.

DR. LAHIRI
Lie back, relax and count down
backwards from ten. Ten, nine...

The Anaesthetist monitors as Simon begins to count down and as he watches his mother she tries to smile at him.

Simon's eyes suddenly reveal a rush of panic but, before he can react, he slips into unconsciousness and, as the Anaesthetist injects the muscle relaxant, Doctor Lahiri turns to the quietly distraught Maura.

DR. LAHIRI
Muscle relaxant; just means his
body won't move during the
seizure. We're ready but there's
still time to withdraw consent.

Maura stares at her unconscious son breathing behind the oxygen mask and she struggles to sound in control.

MAURA
He said it's what he wants,
didn't he?

Doctor Lahiri nods and gestures to the nurse to proceed.

DR. LAHIRI
We have to test the machine first
to insure the settings are
correct for Simon.

As Doctor Lahiri tests the machine Nurse Stephanie passes a tube down Simon's throat to assist breathing then Doctor Lahiri places two padded electrodes on Simon's temples.

DR. LAHIRI
The shock will last for only four
seconds but, be aware, the
seizure can last anything up to a
minute or longer. Alright?

Maura nods yes, Dr. Lahiri pauses, then, as she sends eighty powerful volts of electric current soaring through Simon's head, Maura watches on in horror as her son has an epileptic-style grand mal seizure that makes his entire body stiffen and twitch as he bites down too hard on the mouth guard.

After four seconds Doctor Lahiri stops the electric current but, as everyone watches on in silence, the seizure continues for a painfully long minute and ten seconds then Simon's body relaxes as the seizure subsides.

As Nurse Stephanie takes the oxygen mask off and uses the tube to wash the vomit out of Simon's mouth Doctor Lahiri turns to Maura.

DR. LAHIRI

I know it was probably a little difficult to watch; the first time always is, but, be in no doubt, you did the right thing. He should regain consciousness in about half an hour. I'll come back then. Alright?

Maura nods yes and as Doctor Lahiri and the Anaesthetist exit Maura is left alone with Simon and Nurse Stephanie.

NURSE STEFANIE

It's okay, you can touch him.

Trembling, Maura raises her hand slightly but then she stops and doesn't move towards her son; she remains where she is, keeping distance, in case she falls apart.

As Nurse Stephanie wipes the vomit off Simon's mouth Maura steps out of the room, then, once outside, she slumps with her back against the wall, tightly shuts her eyes and as she slides down the wall into herself, the sobs rip through her.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC HOME, ECT ROOM, HOME - DAY

Doctor Lahiri gently talks to the still unconscious Simon as Maura and Nurse Stephanie watch.

DR. LAHIRI

Simon? Simon? Are you coming back to us? Simon? Time for breakfast.

Simon opens his eyes and winces as he feels his head.

DR. LAHIRI

Welcome back. How are you feeling?

Simon looks at his mother.

SIMON

My head hurts. What happened?

DR. LAHIRI

You just had your first electroconvulsive experience.

Simon looks to his mother.

SIMON

Where is Karen?

Maura looks to Doctor Lahiri.

DR. LAHIRI
It takes time. There are still
eleven more to go.

As Simon becomes more agitated Doctor Lahiri and Nurse Stephanie try to gently intervene by holding his arms.

SIMON
Where is Karen?

DR. LAHIRI
Take it easy Simon, you need to
rest, not -

SIMON
I WANT KAREN!!!

As Simon lashes out he accidentally hits his mother in the face then recoils in panic and horror as he sees his mother's nose burst out bleeding.

As Doctor Lahiri and Nurse Stephanie hold him down and inject him with a sedative, blood pours between Maura's clasped fingers and Simon whispers to her.

SIMON
I remember her, mother...I still
remember her.

Simon struggles to focus on his mother then passes out :

FADE TO BLACK

INT. PSYCHIATRIC HOME, SIMON'S ROOM - DAY

Fade up on Maura, two years older, and smiling.

MAURA
Ready Sweetie?

Simon slowly looks up at her, his face drawn and thinner, his eyes docile, compliant and soulless.

Simon slowly puts on his jacket and, as they exit, we move to the now completed jigsaw of the New York City skyline, laminated and stuck to the wall, dust attached to the sticky laminate where it looks like it's been hanging for a long time.

INT. BRODY DELI - DAY

Behind the counter Marisol is laughing and flirting with the Mexican van loader but they suddenly becomes quiet as Maura and Simon enter - a mixture of sympathy and embarrassment lying heavy in their silence.

As Maura goes to pick up her packet of glass sweets Simon stares at a fly on a piece of fruit but there is no curiosity in his stare, just the bland indifference.

Marisol tries not to stare at the deadness in Simon's eyes but she can't avoid glancing at him, however there is no recognition of her whatsoever from Simon.

INT/EXT. NEW JERSEY TURNPIKE AND STREETS - DAY

As they drive in silence Simon stares out the window but he has interest in nothing outside.

Maura slips a glass sweet into Simon's mouth, presses play on the car stereo but Bob Dylan's song, 'God Made the Animals' is strangled as the tape gets tangled up in the stereo.

Maura quickly ejects and apologetically shows the snapped tape to Simon but he is indifferent to it.

INT. BAYRIDGE, ITALIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The staff in the restaurant watch from a distance as Simon and his mother sit with their paper party hats on and the same Affectionate Italian Waiter carries a birthday cake with the number 28 emblazoned across it and it lays down on the table but his previous warmth now sounds like a sad lament.

AFFECTIONATE ITALIAN WAITER
Happy Birthday Simon.

Simon barely responds and, as the other staff continue to watch them, Maura blows out the candles on her son's 28th Birthday cake.

EXT. CONEY ISLAND, AMUSEMENT PARK - NIGHT

As people scream and cheer in the distance Simon and his mother silently walk through the sights and sounds of the amusement park.

As they pass the Freak Show theatre they are indifferent to the sound of laughter emanating from it but suddenly Maura stops when she sees the 'AMATEUR OPEN MIKE' poster and as she moves closer to the small photographs of the comedians on the poster she recognizes one of them as Detective Jackson.

INT. OPEN MIKE NIGHTCLUB, CONEY ISLAND - NIGHT

Jackson is at the microphone.

JACKSON
How are you folks?

A heckler calls from the audience?

HECKLER
Get on with it.

Jackson frowns and looks out at the heckler with mock hurt.

JACKSON
Dad?

Some of the audience laugh.

JACKSON
Ever been in love folks? Hurts
like cancer, don't it? I got
divorced twenty years ago. Ex-
wife became an anorexic lesbian -
only thing she'll eat now is
pussy.

Some of the crowd laugh and some of them boo.

JACKSON
Too politically incorrect? Let me
tell you, I used to be a cop; had
to wipe the owner's parking fines
to get my first gig. That's not a
joke. But if you want politically
incorrect you have no idea how
bad the station can get. One
night at the station they hauled
in this hooker with a glass
eyeball...

Jackson suddenly stops and his bravado vanishes as he sees
Maura and Simon entering at the back.

Maura falters and looks at Jackson with a mixture of
yearning and hope that surprises even her and Jackson
himself is moved her.

The audience reacts and looks back to see what Jackson is
looking at and, as Maura and Jackson's eyes remain locked
together, a Heckler calls out.

HECKLER
Don't tell me we have to watch
old people having sex?

Some people laugh and others don't but Jackson and Maura
barely hear anything as they continue to look at each
other.

Then Jackson sees the vacant eyed Simon and as he remembers what they did to him he looks back at Maura and there is now deliberate and dead indifference in his eyes.

Maura swallows hard and Jackson deliberately cuts her off as he looks back to the audience.

JACKSON

So we hear whistling coming from
the cell where this hooker with
the glass eyeball is being
held...

As Maura quickly exits with Simon she struggles to regain her composure.

INT. OPEN MIKE NIGHTCLUB, CONEY ISLAND - NIGHT

As Maura and Simon stand outside Maura hesitates then grabs Simon and holds him in a tight embrace.

Simon lets her hold him but there is no affection in his blank response.

EXT. CITY PARK - DAY

Simon and a group of residents from the home are brought to the park by three care workers and Maura.

As a football is brought out and some of the residents kick it around, people stare at them, some smiling, some patronizing, while a few others get up from their seats and move away from them.

Maura and one of the care workers watch as Fred rolls the ball towards Simon but, as it lands at his feet, Simon ignores it.

Fred gives up and moves back to the group playing with the other footballs.

Simon stares at the ball then looks up to see a pair of children's feet ambling their way towards him.

The feet stop and Simon looks into the hesitant eyes of a small boy.

The small boy looks down at the ball with barely concealed yearning then looks back up at Simon but Simon still doesn't respond; he just stares blankly at the kid.

As a woman's feet step behind the boy, the boy turns around and looks up at his mother.

Simon too looks up with his dead eyes and sees Karen looking back at him but after a few moments Karen falters as she looks into Simon's lifeless eyes and realizes that he doesn't know who she is.

Maura and the care worker see Karen standing in front of Simon and, as the care worker sees the stunned expression on Maura's face, he makes to approach Karen and Simon but Maura stops him.

MAURA

No.

Surprised, the care worker turns to Maura and sees that her expression has turned to one of hope as she looks at Simon and Karen.

MAURA

It's okay.

Karen tries to smile again at Simon but Simon slowly looks away and stares into the distance and, though Karen feels like running away again, her little boy takes Karen's hand and beckons her to bring him closer to the football.

Simon feels something against his hand and ignores it.

But whatever it is against his hand it is persistent and when Simon does look down, he sees Clint, the dog whose life he saved, licking his hand.

Simon looks away from the dog with total indifference and Karen is quietly devastated but she forces a smile for the boy.

Simon still ignores him as the boy tentatively reaches forward for the ball but when the dog licks his hand again Simon looks down at him and as the dog looks back up at him, Simon's eyes slowly, almost imperceptibly begin to awaken to a distant recognition.

The dog barks excitedly, willing Simon to wake up.

Simon slowly turns to look at the boy standing in front of him then looks up at Karen.

We suddenly see Karen from Simon's POV in a series of extreme close ups, the images slowing down and speeding up as Simon absorbs every minute detail of :

- her lower lip
- the side of her neck
- the hint of her cleavage
- the imprint of her nipple through her bra and blouse

- the slight protrusion of her stomach
 - the curve of her hip winding it's way toward her crotch
 - the power of her thigh working it's way down to her knee
 - her calf muscle flowing towards her foot
- and with rapid speed we go through them again in the reverse back up to her mouth again and as she smiles Simon struggles to control the pounding in his chest as he whispers.

SIMON

Karen.

Karen smiles through tears as, in the distance Maura too is moved by what she is watching, and as the dog continues to bark excitedly, Karen gestures for Simon to look at the small boy.

Simon looks at the boy and suddenly his eyes become electric with hope as he absorbs every minute detail:

- the clear pupil of the boy's eye reacting to the sun
 - the sun light catching the eye lash
 - the tiny fingers touching his mouth
 - the curve of his mouth
 - the tiny fresh clean teeth inside his mouth
 - the tiny button nose
 - the tiny earlobe
 - the curl of his soft hair against his forehead
- and with rapid speed we go through them again in the reverse back up to the clear pupil of the boy's eye and as the boy smiles at him; and, Bod Dylan's 'Man Gave Names to all the Animals' kicks in, Simon stares back in recognition of his own son.

THE END