

BLAMELESS

Daniel Pyne

BLAMELESS

FADE IN:

TIGHT - THE SPINNING STEEL WHEEL OF A TRAIN

Locked in its groove against a rail. Metal on metal, screaming.

SCREEN GOES BLACK.

TIGHT - THE BULLET NOSE OF A TRAIN ENGINE

A blur of green and grey on either side of the grillwork.

SCREEN GOES BLACK.

Deafening roar of contained space --

EXT. ROCKY MOUNTAINS - A NARROW CANYON - DUSK

Granite and conifers. Parallel silver snakes, railroad tracks, hug the contours of the chasm, one hundred feet above the roiling white rapids of a river. Struck here and there by bright bands of dying sunlight, through which

A MODERN AMTRACK TRAIN

powers downslope, out of a tunnel, passenger cars gleaming silver. Hauling a serpentine, half-mile tail of freight cars and containers to Denver and beyond.

INT. DINING CAR - DUSK

Tea-time. A dozen passengers try to ignore the heated argument at a table against the windows.

ALFRED

Don't leave me.

CLAIRE

You need to stop worrying about what I'm going to do, Alfred. Worry about what you're gonna do.

ALFRED

Everything -- everything I've done, Claire -- I've done for you.

A young couple. The man, ALFRED DECKER, mid-thirties, country club handsome, perfect teeth, stares hard at his young wife, CLAIRE, late-twenties, perfectly beautiful, haunted. A porcelain soul.

CLAIRE

I never asked you to do anything.

ALFRED

(thrown away:)
Bullshit.

CLAIRE
 What? You did this, Alfred. Okay?
 That's what we're left with.

ALFRED
 You could help me.

CLAIRE
 Pay it back? From what?

ALFRED
 Or -- no, no -- it's better if I'm dead,
 isn't it? Easier for you --

CLAIRE
 I would never wish that.

ALFRED
 Bullshit!

Heads turn at the expletive. Alfred is getting up, nearly overturning his chair, spilling his gin and tonic.

ALFRED
 (leans down at her, low)
 You're already gone, aren't you? I'm
 history. What's his name, Claire?

CLAIRE
 That's not --

ALFRED
 -- have you got him on tape?

She SLAPS him. He SLAPS her back, even harder --

ALFRED
 Listen: I can tell them you knew. I can
 tell them you knew, and you helped me,
 and that's why the money was in an
 account in your name.
 (a hard whisper)
 Don't fuck with me.

He pushes away and lurches out of the car. Leaving Claire to mop the spill with her napkin. Willing herself not to cry. A Latino BUSBOY comes over.

BUSBOY
 It's okay, ma'am. I'll clean up.

Claire nods. Stands up. Her skirt is soaked. She takes her purse, digs through it and dislodges

A THICK ROLL OF CASH

it drops to the carpet of the dining car like a pack of cards and spreads out.

THE BUSBOY

sees it. Looks at Claire. She looks back at him, gathering the money and stuffing it back into her purse.

CLAIRE

gets up, slides a hundred dollar bill into the pocket of the Busboy's red serving coat, her eyes already looking toward the door through which Alfred exited.

Tenor SCREAM of the train's horn, and --

SCREEN GOES BLACK.

INT. TUNNEL - THE TRAIN

-- screams past, YANKING us with it, wheels chattering, hurtling us toward the half-circle of twilight up ahead, the other end of the tunnel --

INT. SLEEPING CAR PASSAGEWAY - CLAIRE

Hurrying to catch up with her husband.

CLAIRE
Alfred --

Alfred, half a car away, at the other end unlocks the last compartment door and goes inside. Claire reaches the compartment, tries the door. Locked.

CLAIRE
(a whisper)
Shit.

She knocks. Nothing.

Another tunnel.

SCREEN GOES BLACK.

We hear only the ROARING of the train through space. Then a lighter flickers --

CLAIRE'S FACE

lit, warm and lovely, as she sets fire to the end of an unfiltered cigarette.

INT. SLEEPING COMPARTMENT

The train clears the tunnel. Indigo twilight falls on Alfred's back as he digs in a suitcase and finds a compact, nickel-plated .38 revolver.

He breaks open the cylinder and empties out the bullets.

RESUME - SLEEPING CAR PASSAGEWAY

Claire inhales on the cigarette, closing her eyes. Leans back against the corridor wall next to her compartment door. Exhales slowly.

CONDUCTOR
Miss? It's the law, you can't smoke in here.

A fat CONDUCTOR comes down the corridor.

CLAIRE
I'm sorry.

She looks for somewhere to put her cigarette out.

EXT. CANYON - THE TRAIN

rolls smoothly through another curve, then rattles onto a long, elevated trestle bridge on a granite cliff.

CLOSER - THE TRESTLE BRIDGE

as the train rumbles overhead. Dust and sparks. The steel girders GROAN and flex.

INT. SLEEPING CAR PASSAGEWAY - CLAIRE AND THE CONDUCTOR

Claire wets her fingers and extinguishes her cigarette with a deliberate HISS.

CONDUCTOR
Lock yourself out?

CLAIRE
Um --

CONDUCTOR
(overly solicitous)
Here. Allow me to assist you --

He's looking for his master key --

INT. SLEEPING COMPARTMENT - ALFRED

As, with a definitive snap he clicks the cylinder -- now containing one bullet -- back into the revolver. Spins it. Sticks the gun in his mouth.

Eyes open, he pulls the trigger.

Click.

PANNING DOWN - THE TRESTLE BRIDGE

Geometric angles. Sturdy steel girders streaked with rust, disappearing finally into the dark side eddies of the rushing river, where the water swirls around huge, jagged hunks of ROCK ...

... and finding one girder sagging -- in fact, BUCKLING --

RESUME - SLEEPING CAR PASSAGEWAY - THE CONDUCTOR

unlocks the door to Claire's compartment.

CONDUCTOR

There you go.

CLAIRE

Thanks.

CONDUCTOR

Anytime.

He heads for the passageway to the next car.

BEHIND CLAIRE WE PUSH

into the compartment. She SEES Alfred on the bunk, with the gun. He looks up blankly.

CLAIRE

What are you doing?

Raises the gun and points it at her.

RESUME - TRESTLE BRIDGE - RIVER LEVEL

-- as the failing girder suddenly and completely GIVES WAY --

TRESTLE BRIDGE - MID-LEVEL - QUICK CUTS

-- the fracturing support girder sets off a chain reaction -- the whole structure simply comes apart under the weight of the train passing overhead --

TRACK LEVEL - TRAIN CRASH

a slow-motion roll away from the canyon wall -- train cars twist on their axis -- pulled forward by the front -- pushed outward by the momentum of the remainder of the cars behind them --

INT. SLEEPING CAR PASSAGEWAY - CLAIRE

tumbling like a sweater in a spin dryer.

Explodes through the doorway -- catching herself at the windows, finding herself staring down at dark rushing waters fifty feet below --

EXT. CANYON - TRAIN CRASH

-- breaks, jackknives, and plummets toward the river.

INT. SLEEPING CAR - CLAIRE

Leaping. Willing herself away from the downside windows as the glass shatters and flies in at her -- grabbing hold of the doorframe and pulling herself back into her cabin --

THE FAT CONDUCTOR

comes hurtling back down the passageway, surreal -- he plunges into the dark WATER that suddenly GUSHES into the car as it IMPACTS with the surface of the river --

IN FRAGMENTS - CLAIRE

Darkness.

The rising water is engulfing her. Her legs are pinned under something. More EXPLOSIONS light her face, strangely serene. She's not screaming, beyond panic. She gulps at the air.

CLAIRE
-- Alfred!?

HER PURSE

floats past her, vomiting CASH that swirls around her head like autumn leaves.

Then suddenly the whole car ROLLS, and Claire is lifted up out of the water, pinned against the side. Disappearing up into

DARKNESS.

Silence.

A BREATH of air, EXHALED. Then:

ANDI (O.S.)
(out of breath)
Tell me it was never this good when we
were married.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Utter darkness, except where the edge of a hip, shoulder, or face, is traced with a green phosphorescent sheen from a digital clock.

ED (O.S.)
It was, but we were too busy trying to
kill each other to notice.

Rustle of bedclothes. Now we can make out just the ghost of ANDI SLADE's face: pretty, full lips, her eyes shining.

ED (O.S.)
You're crying.

ANDI
Sort of. Yeah.

A man's hand touches her face gently, tracing the tears.

ANDI
We've gotta stop doing this.

ED (O.S.)
You say that every time.

He rolls up, onto her -- just a shadow that erases her face. A thin line of light ripples across the muscles of his back as he kisses her, and moves against her.

ANDI (O.S.)
I mean it, too.
(beat)
Every time.

CLICK. A light comes on, exposing them: a young man and woman, naked, sweaty, pale, tangled in sheets.

ANDI
Oh God -- it's on a timer. I was gonna
get up and do some --
(buries her head in his
shoulder
Oh God. Oh God. Meyer -- the light.
Kill the light --

The man reaches --

ED
Okay, okay --

ANDI
-- If I can see your face, I'll really
start crying. I will.

The young man gets ahold of the cord on the bedstand lamp and yanks. There's no plug -- it goes straight into the wall.

Yanks harder.

The whole fixture rips out, spitting plaster, and the light crashes down, extinguished, and

THE SCREEN GOES BLACK:

ED (O.S.)
Whoa.

Andi's soft half-giggle.

Then only the sound of Andi's rhythmic breathing. Or what we assume is Andi's breathing. Until

THE BEAM OF A FLASHLIGHT

cuts the screen lengthwise revealing:

CLAIRE'S PALE FACE

floating in a still pool of dark water. Eyes blank. Lips blue from the cold. Gulping for air --

MAN'S VOICE

There's another one here -- she's alive --

The flashlight beam leaps around the crushed inside shell of the SLEEPER CAR, then the dark, slick wet suits of several RESCUE DIVERS dance around Claire's gasping face --

MAN'S VOICE

Don't let her head go under --

Sounds overlap, loud, jumbled: motors, the whipwhopping blades of a low flying helicopter, voices, metal pounding metal. Huge metal JAWS OF LIFE are passed down from above, disappear into the dark water. Two of the Divers work to free Claire's legs.

She moans. Intense pain.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

as, on the cut, the tiny BEEP BEEP of a pager breaks a soft silence. Ed rolls out of bed to find his pants. Andi mumbles something in her sleep, muffled by the blankets.

BATHROOM

The overhead light comes on, blasts ED MEYER into a hard squint as he pulls up his pants and sits on the lidded toilet. He's thirty, good-looking, utterly sure of himself. And therefore lost.

He takes the receiver off the convenient wall phone and dials.

ED

(softly, after his call)
connects)

It's me.

He listens for several moments. Then:

ED

Okay. Book me a red-eye.

HOTEL ROOM

Andi is a lump in the bed. Ed passes through frame, a shadow, retrieving something, then disappears. HOLD Andi as the door opens quietly, and clicks closed again. She stirs, rolls over, doesn't wake up.

INT. SLEEPING CAR - NIGHT

Cacophony of sound. Wet suits lifting Claire out of the water, limp. We get just a glimpse of her blood-smeared legs, shoeless blue feet as they pass up out of the car.

EXT. CANYON - SITE OF THE TRAIN WRECK - NIGHT

Claire's body is hurriedly fixed to a steel litter and then hauled up into hovering helicopter. Camera PULLS BACK, taking in the entire, horrible scene as the helicopter thunders away.

SLOWLY DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CANYON - SITE OF THE TRAIN WRECK - DAWN

WORKERS have erected a metal catwalk, spanning the river from the wreckage side, to the opposite bank, where heavy cranes and equipment are already gathering among the police cars and dying road flares on the shoulder of the highway.

THE HOVERING HELICOPTER

deposits four MEN onto the track beyond the collapsed section of trestle.

It's Ed, in blue jeans, boots, leather daypack and a heavy jacket, with two PHOTOGRAPHERS who carry their equipment in waterproof bags, and a five foot tall private detective, BOO HUDSON, who always wears a sport coat, tie and steel-toed work shoes.

Over the ROAR of the river:

ED

(to the photographers)

I need a composite of the train, the bridge here -- get as close as you can, show me stress points, fractures -- the track coming into the site, the track going out -- and then from the other side, wider, trajectory and placement.

BOO

Details. Minutiae and details.

ED AND BOO

slipsliding down the embankment to a narrow, level spot where the front-most sleeping car is wedged among the rocks. Met at the bottom by a SHERIFF'S DEPUTY in plainclothes --

DEPUTY DALE
HEY. Men, this is a restricted area.

ED
(all business)
Hi. Ed Meyer. Victim Services. My
investigator, Mr. Hudson.

BOO
(shakes hands)
Your foot's in the water.

As the Deputy moves his boot --

ED
You are?

DEPUTY DALE
Dale Richardson, sir.
(then frowns)
Victim services? I don't --

ED
Dale, I can't thank you guys enough for
the time and care you've put in on this,
Richardson. You know, we're setting up a
relief station with at --

BOO
You got sealer on that boot?

ED
(as if he's forgotten)
-- the hospital -- where ... where the
most critically injured --

DEPUTY DALE
Pitkin County Memorial.
(to Boo)
They're supposed to be waterproof.

ED
-- In Glenwood Springs. Right.

BOO
Waterproof in the store, maybe.

DEPUTY DALE
I'm sorry, but I've got to ask you to go
to the other side, Mr. Meyer -- these
rocks are unstable and we don't need to
be looking for any more bodies
downstream.

ED
(this is news to him)
No, I guess not.

He starts toward the catwalk.

ED

Mr. Hudson will endeavor to stay out of your way, Deputy. Don't worry, he's certified.

WIDE - THE CANYON

As Ed moves onto and along the catwalk. He stops for a moment, to take it all in. Dwarfed by nature. The river roils ferociously beneath him, water spraying from the edges of the broken train

HIGHWAY SIDE OF THE RIVER

Ed comes off the catwalk. Cops and Deputies watch him curiously. He walks right into them:

ED

Hi. Ed Meyer. Victim Services. Deputy Richardson over there indicated that one of you gentlemen might give me a lift to County Memorial?

INT. COUNTY HOSPITAL - TRAUMA WARD CORRIDOR

Ed with a FLOOR NURSE, explaining:

ED

... I'm not a relative, just a concerned friend, really. I heard about the accident and heard Mavis was on the train and I came here as soon as I could ...

HOSPITAL ROOM

An elderly woman, MAVIS, stares at Ed through two blackened eyes, her split nose heavily taped, with air tubes running through the nostrils.

ED

(soothing, sincere:)
Mavis, hi, my name is Ed Meyer --
(sitting down, bedside)
-- I got here as soon as I could. You've been through quite an ordeal. How're you feeling? You getting treated okay?
(off her nod)
... Mavis, cut to the chase, I'm a victim's rights advocate ...

ANOTHER HOSPITAL ROOM

where a fiftyish man, BOOTH, lies in traction, a full cast on his leg, temporary cast on his arm, listening attentively to Ed's seamless bedside spiel --

ED
 ... Mr. Booth, I'm sure you've heard
 about so-called ambulance chasers, I want
 to assure you that is not what I am --

ANOTHER HOSPITAL ROOM

where a young, pale woman, POLLY, who looks more scared than
 injured, sits up in her bed, her young husband, RORY, beside
 her, Stetson in one hand, her trembling hand in his other.

ED
 -- believe me, you will be approached by
 lawyers from big-time firms with big-time
 agendas -- firms that do this every day,
 Polly --
 (then looks at Rory)
 -- and frankly may use your case as a
 bargaining chip with some fat-cat insurer
 to gain advantage for some far more
 important, fat-cat client.

A DOUBLE HOSPITAL ROOM

where Ed paces in front of the beds of two more VICTIMS, one
 of whom is the fat Conductor who let Claire into her cabin.

ED
 Me, I'm solo. I have no hidden agendas,
 I work for you. My only objective in
 taking on your case is --

BOOTH'S HOSPITAL ROOM

Ed is in the bathroom, returns, having filled Booth's water
 cup as:

ED
 -- to see to it that the responsible
 person or persons or corporate entity
 shoulders the due blame and assumes
 financial responsibility for your pain
 and suffering and loss of income --

POLLY'S HOSPITAL ROOM

Ed is sitting bedside now, Polly's husband's where Ed was
 sitting and Ed is addressing his pitch as much to him as to
 Polly:

ED
 -- Rehabilitation. The emotional toll
 it's taken on your loved ones.
 (beat)
 What happened here was not your fault.

MAVIS'S ROOM

Ed on the bed beside Mavis, his daypack open, showing Mavis a simple retainer contract:

ED
The last thing I want to do is pressure you into anything -- but because I'm just one guy, there's only so many people I'll be able to help ...

HOSPITAL TRAUMA WARD CORRIDOR - ED

emerges from a room, stuffing contract material into his daypack. Consulting a folded list of names. Walking down the hall to the next room -- its door slightly open --

ED
Mrs. Decker?

CLAIRE'S ROOM

Ed entering hesitantly, finds Claire Decker, unconscious in a special bed. Immobilized, as if her slightest movement will cause catastrophe.

Ed moves closer. Stares at her, transfixed:

ED'S P.O.V. - CLAIRE

Frighteningly fragile and beautiful. Luminous in the dim glow of a single overhead light.

WOMAN'S VOICE
(behind him)
I don't think she's allowed to have visitors.

Ed whirls.

A MIDDLE AGED WOMAN sits upright in a corner chair, plain green cloth coat and sensible shoes, her dark hair cut in a efficient pageboy. Call her VAN PETTON.

ED
Are you a member of the immediate family.

VAN PETTON
No.

ED
Well I am.

VAN PETTON
(smiles)
Isn't it against the law for you to be in here, Mr. Trial Lawyer? Hustling victims?

Ed considers his options, goes for honest and earnest:

ED

Look. Inside half a day, some suit from the Railroad is going to cruise up here, probably offer fat cash money to pressure these people into giving up their right to fair compensation before they even know what happened out there. Buy them off, shut them up. And that's perfectly legal. But me ...

(beat)

-- I believe a victim has a right to know she's got other options.

VAN PETTON

(no expression)

I guess it'll take me about fifteen seconds to get to the nurse's station and tell them you're in here.

(smiles again)

I walk slow.

She exits.

Ed stares at Claire. Pulls a fountain pen from inside his coat pocket, and a business card. SCRAWLS on the back of the card: "I can help."

He leaves it propped up on her bedside table, at eye level.

INT. PITKIN COUNTY HOSPITAL - GROUND FLOOR - DAY

as Ed emerges from the elevator and runs into two MEN in lawyer-blue suits:

MAN

Hey, it's Meyer -- the spore that sprouts in the wake of disaster.

ED

That's real witty, Carl. And I guess the railroad's sending you guys upstairs to cheer up my clients?

He keeps walking. Out the door, as:

OTHER MAN

His clients?

EXT. CANYON - ACROSS FROM THE ACCIDENT SITE - DAY

An argument on the shoulder of the highway as Ed's patrol car taxi pulls up. COPS, DEPUTIES, Ed's two Photographers, Boo, and three Insurance Company INVESTIGATORS --

BOO

(facetious)

Helicopter put us down on the wrong side.

BOO
 (sorrowful)
 You did. I forgot. I'm sorry.

Andi rolls her eyes.

ED
 My people get overzealous, but always in
 the pursuit of a fair result for our
 clients. No harm, no foul?

ANDI
 Clients?

ED
 (to the Investigators)
 You gentlemen won't mind if Mr. Hudson
 observes you on your preliminary site
 inspection? Might spare you
 embarrassment down the line, us finding
 something you missed.

The company men look at Andi, who, knowing when to fold, nods
 slightly, while:

ANDI
 -- and Mr. Meyer, may I speak to you in
 private?

She walks away. Ed nods to Boo, follows Andi a short
 distance to

AN EMBANKMENT OVERLOOKING THE RIVER

A CONSTRUCTION CRANE tries to dislodge some of the wreckage.
 DIVERS in wet suits guiding the cable into place.

ANDI
 You've already been to Denver, racking up
 clients?

ED
 Denver? Nah. That's where all the
 nickel and dimers are, Andi. Whiplash
 and vagaries.
 (shakes his head)
 The A-list is at County Memorial.
 There's thirteen total, I'm down with
 ten, two pending, and one ... well --

He starts to take the list from his pocket. Andi fights with
 her unruly hair.

ED
 They contacted me, of course -- you want
 to go over the names?

ANDI
 The early worm gets the birds.

ED

They are under no obligation to eat.

ANDI

You're a weasel for leaving without telling me where you were going last night.

ED

Of course I'm a weasel. That's a given. That's where we start.

(then helping her, tender:)

Here, lemme just ... your hair has always had a mind of its own.

He gets her hair smoothed back. She stabs two barrettes in place. Better, not great. Andi's staring at Ed:

ANDI

Yeah, well, at least my hair still does.

Andy flips through computer print-outs clipped inside her portfolio folder.

ANDI

This is a conflict of interest, I should turn the case over to someone else --

ED

Oh, come on. Didn't you ream me on the Delta 600 crash? Ripped me to shreds, I barely got my clients' hospital bills covered.

ANDI

(smiles)

Just do me one favor? Don't lie to me, Ed. I can help you, if you'll just be straight with me. For once?

ED

We're practically grown-ups, Andi. This is real life, we can handle it.

(then:)

My list, in alphabetical order:

(reading)

Amundsen, Bakke, Coolidge, Decker --

ANDI

(fighting with her hair)

Damn it.

ED

Decker, Decker. Decker's non-responsive -- I want to talk to her husband.

Andi looks at her print-out.

ANDI
 Decker. Alfred.
 (looks up at Ed)
 Still missing. Presumed drowned.

TIGHT - CLAIRE'S FACE

She's crying.

DOCTOR (V.O.)
 -- drowned.

Silent. We're --

INT. HOSPITAL - CLAIRE'S ROOM - DAY

A young DOCTOR has just told her about her husband. She lies on her side, turned away from him. Numb. Arms hugging the blankets tightly against her chest.

DOCTOR
 I am sorry.

He leaves. Claire stares at:

TIGHT - ED'S BUSINESS CARD

propped on Claire's nightstand: "I can help."

Claire reaches out to turn it around. Reads Ed's name, the "attorney-at-law" underneath it.

TIGHT - BOTTOM OF THE WASTEBASKET

as Ed's card drops into and settles among the crumpled tissues and medical waste.

EXT. WESTERN SLOPE LAW GROUP - DAY

A converted fast-food franchise on the edge of Glenwood Springs.

MAN (V.O.)
 Mr. Edward Meyer -- some of you may
 already know of his work from the
 national magazines --

INT. WESTERN SLOPE LAW GROUP - DAY

where the dozen or so EMPLOYEES -- attorneys, clerks, secretaries -- are variously assembled in the main bullpen of desks, listening while long-winded senior partner HOWARD STANLEY pays homage to Ed, who sits on a desk just behind him.

STANLEY

-- don't let the hype and or his tender age fool you, though -- some of us old farts think this young gun's gonna be the Clarence Darrow of victim advocacy. He's chosen us to be his co-counsel in several civil actions against Denver-Pacific Railroad, and their insurer, American Mutual, and ...

Beside Ed is a framed blow-up of an advertisement: "Accident victim? Somebody's gotta pay. Make sure it's not you." Photograph of a smiling young family.

STANLEY

... hell, I feel good just standing next to him. Let's get behind this, work hard, and prove that big city firms have got nothing on us, huh?
(turns to Ed)
Floor's yours, counselor.

He leads an awkward, half-assed applause as Ed steps forward to speak to his new colleagues --

INT. HOSPITAL - MOBILE MRI UNIT

as Claire's lifted off her gurney and then glides into the cylinder on a tray.

SERIES OF SHOTS

The MRI of Claire's legs, pelvis, spine. Bright blurs of color.

TIGHT - CLAIRE'S LEGS

as HANDS move from heel to hip, pricking the skin with a long stainless steel instrument.

DOCTOR (O.S.)

Let me know when you feel something, Claire.

The instrument is at the soft curve where buttocks meets the back of her thigh before:

CLAIRE (O.S.)

There.

The hand moves higher. Near her tailbone, where a massive bruise spreads out like butterfly wings.

CLAIRE (O.S.)

Ow.

Then returns to the top of the back of her thigh.

DOCTOR (O.S.)
Can you tell where I'm touching you right now?

CLAIRE (O.S.)
(after a beat)
On my heel.

TIGHT - CLAIRE'S HEAD

Cushioned on a towel, turned to one side.

CLAIRE
-- or ankle. I don't know ...

DOCTOR (O.S.)
Wiggle your toes for me.

Claire concentrates.

TIGHT - CLAIRE'S FEET

They don't move at all.

CLAIRE (O.S.)
How's that?

INT. HOTEL GLENWOOD - ED'S SUITE - NIGHT

Biggest two-room suite in this old-fashioned resort hotel. Ed's command center. One wall is covered with photographs that fit together like a Hockney collage, showing the entire canyon accident scene. Ed on a telephone:

ED
(pacing, on the phone:)
I just wanted to make sure she got my card.

BOO
Choo-choo come onto the trestle going about forty miles per.

Boo is pointing out details for Howard Stanley and a couple young ASSOCIATES. Off notes scrawled on legal pads:

BOO
Engineer's got no visual of trouble. He's cruising. Ten cars get across before bridge go boom. Two cups of coffee and half a ham sandwich. Urine and breath an hour afterward test clean.

ED
(on the phone)
I see. Did she hire someone else?

Other, smaller collections show details of train cars, the broken trestle bridge. A collection of faces -- Polaroids from the hospital, computer-scanned I.D. and passport photos.

Ed waits on the phone, stares at the face of Claire Decker. Even in this driver's license snapshot, she looks great.

BOO

Ahhhhhhhh! Next cars snap free. Fail-safe backup brake jams the wheels on the remainder of the train. Whooaahhhh! Three cars are already airborne. Eeeeeee! Four more doomed by their own momentum, three by the weight of the train trying to stop behind them --

ED

(on the phone)
Uh-huh. Okay. Thanks.

He hangs up, frowning to himself, as:

BOO

(pointing)
-- Mess, mess. Thirty-two injured, seven swept downstream. Could of been worse, though, without the fail-safe. The whole kit and caboose would've wound up in the river, and we'd be talking to the bereaved relateds.

ED

Who built the bridge?

BOO

Railroad itself. 1931.

ED

Inspections --

BOO

Every week.

STANLEY

We should get somebody to --

BOO

-- it's already on my schedule. Original blueprints are getting checked out by structural engineer. Railroad's being very cooperative.

ED

Very cooperative or too cooperative?

Ed has moved across the room to the photos of the crippled trestle bridge.

ED
 Engineer error. Rust. Corrosion. Metal
 fatigue. Sabotage. Poor workmanship.
 Poor maintenance. Inept inspections --

STANLEY
 Act of God.

Ed looks at him.

BOO
 Act of God means no payday. For client
 or legal counsel.

STANLEY
 I know, I know. But, supposing it was?
 Some freaky thing.
 (beat)
 Nobody's fault.

ED
 It's always somebody's fault.

STANLEY
 All I'm saying --

ED
 Act of God? Like what? If He does exist
 -- and if you believe in him -- you
 better design your drains big enough for
 forty days and nights of rain, put enough
 rebar in your Jericho walls so some joker
 with a horn can't bring them down --
 muzzle your whales, curb your locusts,
 and if your wife gets turned into a
 pillar of salt -- God help you -- I'll
 find so many OSHA and FDA violations your
 insurer's insurer will be filing for
 Chapter 11 into the next century.

Beat.

STANLEY
 Geez, Ed, all I'm saying --

ED
 Howard, the only reason you're here is
 because I need a local Bar member in
 order to practice law in this state. I
 opened the Yellow Pages, closed my eyes,
 and pointed.
 (beat)
 You got lucky. Stay lucky.

Ed stares at him until Stanley looks away, uncomfortable.

BOO
 What about the Decker woman?

ED
What about her?

BOO
Legs spoiled, husband downriver. An Ed Meyer special.

ED
She's unresponsive.

BOO
A slam dunk. Ten mil, minimum, if you can get her in front of a jury.

ED
(dismissive)
I'm not going to beg, Boo.

CRASH CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - NURSE'S STATION - DAY

Ed leans over the counter toward the Floor Nurse, who pretends she's engrossed in her paperwork.

ED
Come on. Please. Just tell her you know me, and that I'm a good guy, and she should talk to me.

NURSE
What kinda guy?

ED
Good deeds never go unrewarded, Amy. What do you want? What do you crave? What's your wildest fantasy?

NURSE
(without looking up)
You on a spit, getting flame-roasted like a ballpark wienie.

Beat.

ED
I can arrange that.

The elevator doors OPEN behind them.

The Nurse looks up at him hard, then past him -- he turns and sees --

IN THE ELEVATOR - CLAIRE DECKER

She's in a wheelchair manned by an ORDERLY. The Woman In The Cloth Coat (VAN PETTON) is with them, along with A MAN in a NICE SUIT.

The doors start to close. Ed jams his arm between them and squeezes in, lasered on Claire:

ED
(softly)
Mrs. Decker. I'm Ed Meyer, I --

CLAIRE
-- you can help. I know.

ED
It's not what you think, ma'am. First off, I just want to make sure that you're getting --

CLAIRE
-- I'm fine.

Ed glances at the Orderly. At the woman in the green coat. At the man in the nice suit. He smiles faintly, professionally. Crouching down, eye-level for Claire.

ED
If I could just talk to you for -- three minutes --

CLAIRE
(talks over him)
I would have called you, Mr. Meyer, if I wanted to speak with you. I understand what you want me to do, and, politely, I decline. It was an accident, accidents happen.

ED
Yes they do, and I --

CLAIRE
Finding someone to blame it on won't bring my husband back, Mr. Meyer. Or help me to walk.

Ed is stunned.

ED
No it won't.

He glances at the orderly. At the nice suit man. At the woman in the green coat -- recognizing her from before, as:

CLAIRE
Do you know Lieutenant Van Petton, of the Denver Police Department? And --
(looks at the nice suit man)
-- I'm sorry --

NICE SUIT
-- Detective Ruth.

CLAIRE
I'm bad with names.

Van Petton smiles vaguely at Ed.

VAN PETTON
Nice to meet you.

The ELEVATOR DOORS OPEN to the lobby. Everyone gets out except for Ed.

The doors close.

INT. CLAIRE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The Orderly helps Claire into her bed, and Van Petton looks for answers:

VAN PETTON
Why were you moving?

CLAIRE
My husband was transferred to Seattle.

RUTH
Your husband was terminated by Dean-Witter over a month ago.

Claire blinks.

VAN PETTON
Last week he finalized a second mortgage on your house. Two days ago he put the house on the market, and started transferring his bank accounts into your name.

Beat.

CLAIRE
I didn't ... Alfred took care of all our finances. I never --

VAN PETTON
Why would your husband have purchased your tickets under an assumed name?

CLAIRE
I don't know. I --

VAN PETTON
Mrs. Decker --

ED
-- Don't answer her.

Everyone looks at him. He stays in the doorway.

ED
 Don't say anything.
 (at Van Petton)
 Is she accused of a crime?

VAN PETTON
 This is a private conversation.

ED
 Is she a suspect in a crime? Do you even know if a crime has been committed?

VAN PETTON
 Mr. Meyer, we're just --

ED
 You're grilling her like some lowlife perp, and the fact that you're smiling or wearing that Carol Brady housecoat when you're doing it doesn't excuse your need to advise Ms. Decker under Miranda or get a subpoena.

A long beat. Van Petton stares at Ed, seething.

Then she walks out into the hallway ... and Ed follows ... but stays in the doorway so that Claire can still eavesdrop on what's coming:

HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Van Petton whirls, gets right up in Ed's face -- completely betraying her benevolent housewife act:

VAN PETTON
 You are not her lawyer.

ED
 I don't think that changes your legal obligation to --

VAN PETTON
 -- And you are not a criminal lawyer, so I don't guess you'd be much help with this, either way. Her husband is missing. I'm merely asking a few routine questions in order to --

ED
 (talks over her)
 Sure, sure you are. And I'm McGyver. I can make a civil suit from a matchbox, beeswax and a cheap clock. Let's see, violation of civil rights? Maybe. Sexual harassment, abusive behavior under the color of uniform -- infliction of emotional distress, no question. And if her condition worsens, there's negligence, badgering, even extortion.
 (MORE)

ED(cont'd)
 I could sue the department. The city.
 The state. And you. Garnish your wages,
 get you fired, ruin your credit, take
 your house --

(beat)

-- which, by the way, is literally the
 last thing I'd want to do, it's probably
 real nice, and you've probably worked
 real hard to get it.

A wired beat.

VAN PETTON

I don't like you.

ED

Nobody does. Until they need me.

He walks back into

CLAIRE'S HOSPITAL ROOM

where Claire and Ruth have taken this all in, without
 speaking. From the doorway, Van Petton motions with her head
 for Ruth to follow her. Then turns and disappears down the
 hallway without even looking back at Ed or Claire.

After Ruth is gone --

CLAIRE

I haven't done anything wrong.

ED

I know, I just --

CLAIRE

But now it's quite possible -- extremely
 likely, in fact -- that the police think
 I did.

(sarcasm:)

Thank you so much, Mr. Meyer.

Ed sags.

ED

I thought the cops were --

CLAIRE

Don't work me, okay? Don't.

ED

I'm not.

CLAIRE

You're wasting your time here. Other
 lawyers have come by, trying to talk me
 into suing the Railroad. When I tell
 them that you asked me first, they all
 say the same thing.

ED
What's that?

CLAIRE
They tell me that whatever I do, do not
sign with Ed Meyer.
(beat)
What have you done, I wonder, to earn
this high regard?

ED
What do you tell them?

CLAIRE
I tell them I'm not signing with anybody.

Silent. Ed nods, walks out.

Claire waits.

Then Ed returns suddenly to the doorway -- and it's as if
Claire knew he would:

CLAIRE
What.

ED
There's nothing, nothing at all that I
can do for you?

Claire stares at Ed. He looks right back at her, his gaze
steady, unwavering.

CLAIRE
-- Don't leave.

An awkward beat. Claire doesn't seem to want to say any
more. And for once, Ed is speechless.

CLAIRE
Stay and talk to me. That would be a
nice thing.

ED
Okay.

Beat. Ed frowns. Claire still stares at him, levelly. It's
as if this is some kind of test.

ED
I thought --

CLAIRE
No, think.

Beat.

CLAIRE

You jumped to a conclusion. You were wrong. I'm sorry if I gave you a different impression, because I was talking about one thing, and you assumed that it applied to another.

Claire smiles slightly. A great smile.

CLAIRE

Now, pull the chair over here, closer, and I'll pretend you're really interested in me and not my accident.

TIGHT - BILLOWING CLOUDS OF STEAM

A shadow passes through the mist. Lapping sound of water.

ED'S VOICE

Some kind of nerve damage. They're shipping her to Denver Spine Center tomorrow, she may need surgery. Rehab, physical therapy, full-time home care ...

ANDI'S VOICE

Won't her insurance cover all that?

Ed's face appears, water-level. Floating on his back.

ED

I don't want her insurance to pay for it. And then raise her rates and then terminate her. I want you guys to pay for it.

ANDI'S VOICE

Goodwill.

ED

Heard of it?

Her head surfaces near his. Hair slicked back like an otter. The ghost of the Glenwood Hotel looming like a medieval castle in the b.g. We are --

EXT. GLENWOOD HOT SPRINGS - DUSK

The huge, natural hot-water pools behind the hotel.

ANDI

I've got a question: what about your real clients? Why aren't we talking about them? We've offered the Denver group a settlement package that --

ED

I don't have to be someone's lawyer to want to help them.

ANDI
Excuse me?

ED
I'm just saying.

ANDI
You don't want to be Decker's lawyer?

ED
What I want isn't at issue here.

ANDI
Sure it is. You want me to help you help her.

Andi circles in and kisses Ed on the lips.

ANDI
What's crawling through your reptilian brain, Meyer? The hair shirt? Gonna win her with abject selflessness?

ED
She's not bitter. She's not vengeful. She's not blaming anybody --

ANDI
-- she's not asking for handouts.

ED
No.

ANDI
You think we didn't work out because we're so much alike?

She kisses him again, slips her arms around him, pulls herself closer to him.

ED
I thought we weren't supposed to do this anymore.

ANDI
She pretty?

ED
Andi --

ANDI
Hmmm. A cute, crippled widow with principles.
(kissing his neck)
You want this one so badly you're drooling.

Ed stands up, fast, taking Andi with him -- then she slips off and splashes back clumsily into the water.

ED
You don't get this, do you?

ANDI
I do. I get that even some third-rate, ambulance-chasing hack could turn Decker into a cash cow of alarming proportions. Which would not be in my company's best interest. And I get that on some level you can't live with yourself, and crave that one thing, that one great, ennobling act that will redeem you.

ED
You don't get this.

Ed disappears under the water and swims away. Silence. Andi stands listening, until she hears him surface, somewhere off in the impenetrable steam.

ANDI
(calls out:)
I get it, but maybe I want you to work for it, okay?
(no response)
Meyer?

ON THE EDGE OF THE POOL

Ed pulls himself up out of the water and stands up, dripping wet. Shivering.

The thickest part of the steam is below him, it blankets the surface of the huge pool, hiding Andi.

ANDI'S VOICE
Meyer, I was teasing -- gimme a wish list -- we'll see what we can do, 'kay?

Ed says nothing.

ANDI'S VOICE
Ed? -- I'm sorry, okay?

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY - MOVING SHOT

Following Claire Decker as she's rolled, on a gurney, through double doors and out into -- Ed right beside her, holding her hand --

EXT. HOSPITAL PARKING LOT - DAY

where a HELICOPTER has landed in a yellow bull's-eye. ORDERLIES hustle Claire across the pavement, slide her into the chopper bay and secure the gurney. Ed lets go of her hand, says something lost in the roar of the blades, moves clear --

INT. GLENWOOD HOTEL - LOBBY BAR - NIGHT

Boo's drinking a martini.

BOO

What if it backfires? What if, after all these good deeds, the widow Decker gets so impressed with the insurance company she says, "hey -- Ed's wrong. These rat bastards who put me in a wheelchair are good people, they're really sorry, and I'd be a rat bastard myself if I sued 'em."

Beside him, Ed drains the last of his beer and sets the bottle down.

ED

Maybe there's no agenda here, Boo. Maybe I'm just trying to help out.

Pause. Boo stares at Ed doubtfully.

BOO

Oh.
(beat)
You in love with her?

ED

No. No, Jesus, no --

EXT. DENVER MEDICAL CENTER - NIGHT

An AERIAL SHOT from the helicopter as it makes its approach. Tiny figures in pastel surgical scrubs wait below on the rooftop landing pad.

MED-EVAC LANDING PAD

as Claire is unloaded and rolled inside.

INT. OPERATING ROOM - ARTHROSCOPIC VIDEO

Claire's lower spine. Silvery blurs that are instruments flash in and out of technicolor tendons and tissue. SOUNDS of an operating room, VOICES overlapping, calm.

SERIES OF SHOTS - HANDS, EYES, INSTRUMENTS

Details of surgery.

EXT. COLORADO RIVER - A ROARING WATERFALL - DAY

Water cascades over huge, grey chunks of granite. A tangle of logs and branches and debris wedged into one narrow channel ... and through this the deathly pale white flesh of a HUMAN ARM, extended, made alive by the water.

WORKERS

form a human chain from the rocks above, to haul two BODIES out of the cold, rushing river. The SOUND of the waterfall is deafening.

ON THE EMBANKMENT - BOO HUDSON

watches, hands jammed deep in the pockets of his sportcoat. The Garfield County Sheriff's Deputy, Dale Richardson, in a windbreaker beside him, explaining over the wad of Red Man gobbled in the pocket of his lower lip:

DEPUTY DALE

Couple a kids spotted 'em first about a mile upriver. We got crews checking eddies they might of got hung up in between here and there.

(then, thoughtful:)

God, that is an ungodly blue they get, isn't it?

BOO'S POV - THE BODIES

as they rise from the water, stiff and bloated. Long hair, pale blue flesh.

BOO (V.O.)

Women.

DEPUTY DALE (V.O.)

Uh-huh -- your men tend to stay under longer, being not so gassy --

RESUME - HUDSON AND THE DEPUTY

The Deputy spits. Boo is already turning away to climb back up to level ground.

DEPUTY DALE

-- dollars to donuts we're gonna find your client's husband in Utah, if we find him at all.

INT. APARTMENT SUITE - DAY

as on the CUT: electric draperies open to reveal a stunning panorama of downtown Denver and the Rockies beyond.

The apartment behind him is sleek and modern: big rooms, high ceilings, lots of light. A real estate lady (DONNA) moves through, touching things lightly and possessively, like Vanna White.

DONNA

... you'll notice that the doorways are extra-wide, and the counters and doorknobs and light-switches have been lowered to accommodate the physically challenged ...

She disappears into a bedroom.

DONNA (O.S.)

... there's even a master control panel in here so that your client can turn off lights or turn up the heat and so forth, right from the bed.

ED

She's not my client.

Donna returns.

DONNA

What?

ED

Mrs. Decker isn't my client, Donna. You'll be coordinating everything through Andrea Slade at American Mutual Insurance. It's not necessary for Mrs. Decker to be aware I'm even involved.

DONNA

(a beat)

Okay.

FREEZE FRAME.

Ed dissolves from the room, leaving a STILL PHOTOGRAPH of the apartment -- A POLAROID -- and we are

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Claire is strapped down flat on a bed, in traction. Mirrors help her to see the room, but right now her eyes are on THE POLAROID she holds above her.

CLAIRE

It looks nice. It's very nice.

Claire's eyes shift to the mirror, where she can see Andi Slade leaning against the back of a chair at the foot of her hospital bed.

ANDI

We can move you in as soon as your doctors give the okay. The building operates in conjunction with the hospital for certain outpatient accommodations. Cases like yours.

CLAIRE
This -- what you're offering me -- is all
so ... so ...

ANDI
Nice.

CLAIRE
Yeah.
(beat)
My generic word for all occasions, nice.

Pause.

CLAIRE
You're staring at me, Miss Slade.

Andi fusses with her hair, self-conscious.

ANDI
(a beat)
I didn't expect you to be so pretty.

CLAIRE
A compliment. Thank you.
(beat)
Or were you making a pass at me?

ANDI
(blushes)
No.

CLAIRE
It's okay if you are, I'm not offended.

ANDI
-- God no.

CLAIRE
I went through a phase, I think everybody
does, for me it was right after college,
when I was actually sort of attracted to
other women.

Claire puts the Polaroid down. Her arms are tired.

ANDI
I didn't. Go through that phase.

Claire just looks at her.

CLAIRE
I'm not blaming the railroad for what
happened.

Pause.

ANDI
Will you sign a statement to --

CLAIRE
 (cuts her off)
 Do you have any cigarettes? When they
 take me outside --

ANDI
 I don't smoke.

CLAIRE
 Now, or ever?

ANDI
 Never have.

CLAIRE
 My dad used to say "nice girls" don't
 smoke. His metaphor for sex, I think.

ANDI
 I'm not that nice, Mrs. Decker.

CLAIRE
 Huh.
 (beat)
 Well, this is my point.
 (beat)
 Do you know Ed Meyer?

ANDI
 I do.

CLAIRE
 Ed Meyer would like me to sue the
 railroad. Ed Meyer blames the railroad
 for what's happened to me.

ANDI
 This is his job, assigning blame.

CLAIRE
 -- And your job is to keep that from
 happening. By being nice to me.
 (tired)
 I don't mean to sound ungrateful ...

ANDI
 No. We're done.

Andi picks up her purse and her briefcase, but --

CLAIRE
 Why does everyone hate him?

ANDI
 Who? Meyer?

CLAIRE
 I believe Mr. Meyer even hates himself.

ANDI
You have good instincts.

CLAIRE
You don't?
(off Andi's look)
Hate Ed Meyer, I mean.

ANDI
No. God help me.

Andi smiles, uncomfortable. Claire just waits, studying Andi in the mirror above her bed.

ANDI
We like to think that we don't feed off each other. Lawyers, I mean. That there are rules of engagement.
(beat)
Couple years ago Meyer sued some big-time Seattle lawyers for malpractice. He won. Then he took their former client's case to trial, and won that, too, he's really, really good.

CLAIRE
Well what's so bad about --

ANDY
The offending attorney's careers were destroyed. Their firm went under. One of them committed suicide.
(beat)
Meyer, however, made a lot of money.

Claire is quiet. Andi starts to leave.

CLAIRE
Miss Slade? If you were me. What would you do?

Andi stops and turns, in the doorway.

ANDI
I'd let us settle with you now, and send Ed Meyer on his way.

CLAIRE
You're lying.

ANDI
(shrugs)
I'm not you.

She walks out.

INT. HOTEL GLENWOOD - ED'S ROOM - NIGHT

An industrial-sized coffee maker and a platter of glazed donuts has been added to the growing clutter

ED

The railroad is offering each of you a thirty-thousand dollar buyout.

Ed stands facing his half-dozen CLIENTS crowded into the room, sitting wherever they can -- Polly, Booth, Mavis, the fat Conductor ... Mavis raises her hand.

MAVIS

Would this be in addition to our medical expenses, or --?

Howard Stanley, off to one side, clears his throat.

STANLEY

In addition to. Thirty big ones.

CONDUCTOR

Sounds fair.

POLLY

It's chump change. What about that lady that got a million dollars for a hot pickle'at fell off her hamburger?

ED

You can't compare cases.

(beat)

But if you do accept this settlement, you will be agreeing not to pursue any other civil action, regardless of the verdict of the NTSB investigation into this accident.

Another pause.

CONDUCTOR

I hear a lot of the passengers who got shipped down to Denver jumped all over this deal.

STANLEY

Yes they did.

POLLY'S HUSBAND

Fair for who?

ED

Look, I can't guarantee we'll get you a better result if you decide to gut this out. Maybe we get more, maybe we get nothing.

(beat)

(MORE)

ED(cont'd)
 But ask yourselves one question: if
 they're not at fault, why is the Railroad
 offering you anything at all?

CRUSHED AND TWISTED TRAIN CARS

recreated like dinosaurs from fossils. Broken, torn-off
 portions dangling from cables that disappear up into the
 shadows of --

INT. A HUGE AIRPLANE HANGAR - DAY

where the National Transportation Safety Board investigation
 unit has set up camp in an abandoned hangar at Denver's
 defunct Stapleton Airport.

Every recovered FRAGMENT of the crash numbered and carefully
 arranged in an attempt to pinpoint the cause of the accident.

It's as quiet as a morgue. A door opens, closes, as:

DELGADO (O.S.)
 I'm telling you, man -- off the record --
 this wreck? It's the bitch that don't
 bark. Leave her lie, man. Don't count
 on her for nothing.

Footsteps on concrete. A small, Latino man (DELGADO), white
 shirt and tie and a grey ponytail, leads Ed toward the middle
 of the hangar, where the SLEEPER CAR has been assembled from
 its wreckage.

INT. THE SLEEPER CAR PASSAGEWAY - DELGADO

whips the beam of a huge flashlight around the inside of the
 crushed carcass. Light spills through gaping gashes in the
 metal, from the warehouse, onto Ed.

DELGADO
 Decker, right?

ED
 Yes.

Delgado aims the flashlight at the burst doorway of a cabin.

DELGADO
 Husband was in the cabin. Your client
 was out here. Smoking. Luckies.

He waves the light around the corridor in which they stand.
 Waterstained.

ED
 She's not my client.

Delgado turns the light on Ed's face. Doubting this. Ed
 takes it, trains it back on the ceiling -- the HOLE that
 rescue crews cut in it to get Claire out.

Rectangular strips of paper stuck to the walls. MONEY.

DELGADO

That would be cash from Mrs. Not-your-client's handbag.

Now Ed turns the light on Delgado's face. A gold molar crown gleams. Delgado takes the flashlight back from Ed, as:

ED

How do you know?

Corridor GOES BLACK.

DELGADO (O.S.)

Estoy solo de paso, man ...

Then: the flashlight beam pierces the gloom of the sleep cabin where Alfred Decker played Russian Roulette. Walls still bleeding river water.

DELGADO (O.S.)

... we also found bullets.

ANOTHER PART OF THE HANGAR - LATER

Bullets spill out of Delgado's hand, and across the top of a table like dice, and ricochet off the side of a sodden, busted-open suitcase.

DELGADO

Five .38 caliber. Kind that go in a revolver what holds six.

Ed looks carefully through the Deckers' belongings. Shoes. Pile of wet clothing. This table is one of perhaps two dozen, arranged in church pew rows, holding items recovered from the accident.

DELGADO

We collect all these little bits of people's lives. Just looking for the big picture, you know -- the explosive device, or what have you.

Ed picks up Claire's purse. Finds two more damp hundred dollar bills, like the ones stuck to the sleeping car. Lipstick. Wallet. Cigarettes. Lighter. House keys.

DELGADO

I did a plane crash in Indiana once. This famous ballplayer, he was on the flight, man -- I can't tell you his name on account of, you know, but he's, like, big, okay? Got a high school named after him.

TIGHT - CLAIRE'S WALLET

Driver's license, credit cards. The usual stuff.

DELGADO (O.S.)

Come to discover in his luggage the head of a goat -- hollowed out and the eyes gone so you can see out. And all this other Satan shit.

RESUME - ED

closing the wallet, pocketing the car keys smoothly as he looks up at Delgado.

DELGADO

Professional baseball player.

ED

You find the gun?

DELGADO

(takes a moment to catch up)
You mean, like, goes with those bullets?

ED

That's what I mean.

Delgado reaches down into a BOX of unsorted, untagged miscellanea ... rummages for a moment before he straightens up, holding Alfred's waterlogged .38 revolver.

DELGADO

Like this one?

EXT. ROCKY MOUNTAINS - NIGHT

Summer thunderstorm. LIGHTNING crackles through the blue darkness --

INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Camera GLIDES down an empty aisle of private rooms. THUNDER rumbles, low, distant. Rain pounds windows.

INT. CLAIRE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

A NURSE awakens her gently --

NURSE

Mrs. Decker.

-- Claire blinks, sleepy. Looks blankly at the Nurse.

NURSE

You have a visitor -- it's after hours, but we can make exceptions for relatives.

BOO
 Nuh-uh. Nothing there. They were -- if anything -- going too slow at the time of the accident.

ED
 Tampered with?

Boo puts the train up on the trestle, moves it slowly along.

BOO
 Unlikely. Nobody complained about speed during the trip. Traffic survey shows no deviation from pattern. Choo-choo was where it was s'pose to be more-or-less when it was s'pose to be there.

ED
 History of upkeep and inspections on the trestle bridge.

BOO
 Tidy. Very tidy and regular.

ED
 Shit.

Boo SNAPS a crossmember and the whole bridge SAGS under the weight of the toy train. Topples off onto the table.

BOO
 Crossmember failure.

ED
 Okay, okay, but caused by what?

He sits up -- stands up -- small change and keys spilling from his pants pocket onto the bed and the floor.

ED
 Overweight train? Bad maintenance? Bad workmanship? Defective materials?

He scoops up what fell from his pocket. Now we SEE Claire's house keys, along with Ed's own -- he took them from her belongings in the NTSB warehouse.

BOO
 The nitty gritty.

ED
 Juries like details. It lends a --

BOO
 -- a patina of order to chaos.
 (then)
 Wanna go to ground zero with me an' the structure guy tomorrow noon? He's gonna test the steel.

ED
 (jingling the keys absently)
 I've got other plans tomorrow.

He goes into the bathroom, runs water.

BOO
 Decker?

ED (O.S.)
 Denver.

The door closes softly. Boo stares at it, frowning.

BOO
 Same dif.

EXT. HIGHLAND PARK - SOUTH OF DENVER - DAY

Crisp, clear blue sky, like a suburban dream.

A green Chevy rent-a-car crawls up a narrow, new street of little trees and big new-money houses, parks in front of one with a FOR SALE sign out front in the lawn.

Ed strides up a flagstone walk to

FRONT PORCH - DAY

There's sealer tape across the front door, indicating that the Marshals have been here to secure the house. Ed looks in the window --

ED'S P.O.V. - CLAIRE'S HOUSE

Bright and quiet and empty. A few packing boxes in the big front room. A rolled up rug.

INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR - DAY

The Big Man in the overcoat strolls past the nurse's to the doorway of Claire's room and --

CLAIRE'S HOSPITAL ROOM

-- discovers that it's empty.

NURSE
 (behind him)
 Ms. Decker was released this morning.

The Big Man turns.

BIG MAN
 Where'd she go?

NURSE

I'm sorry, we're not allowed to give out that information -- but if you leave your name and a number ...

The Big Man is already walking away.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT SUITE - DENVER - DAY

FOLLOWING Claire, pale and awkward, as she stubbornly wheels herself into the flat -- sparsely furnished now in some kind of Denver-modern -- followed by a young day attendant, SHEILA, and rental agent, Donna --

DONNA

... the doorways are extra-wide, all the counters, and doorknobs and lightswitches lowered to a convenient height ...

Claire stops in the middle of the main room, with her back to Donna -- who throws open curtains to the spectacular day.

CLAIRE

Tell Mr. Meyer that I appreciate everything he's done.

DONNA

What?

Claire tries to turn herself around to face Donna, but hasn't quite mastered the proper technique. Sheila helps her.

CLAIRE

Please thank Ed Meyer for me, Donna. Will you do that?

Off Donna's flustered look --

THEN:

RESUME - HIGHLAND PARK - ED

FOLLOWING HIM as he walks back across Claire's yard, to the driveway. The triple-car garage door is locked. Through the window Ed can see there's only one car inside.

Ed takes out Claire's keys and triggers the REMOTE locking device. Nothing.

He goes back to the

STREET

and looks up and down the row of parked cars. Aims the remote in different directions and triggers it.

Still nothing.

INT. REHAB CENTER - DUSK

Free weights on a bench press go up and down. Up and down. Claire, in sweats, lies flat on her back, lifting. Her attendant, SHEILA, stands ready, beside her.

In the mirrored wall, Claire can see Ed approach, through a room crowded with other rehab patients.

ED
(to Sheila)
Hi. Ed Meyer.

CLAIRE
(doesn't look at him)
Our anonymous benefactor, Sheila.

SHEILA
Hello.

ED
I just came by to see how you're doing.

CLAIRE
Don't believe him. Nothing about Mr. Meyer is so casual.

She falters under the weight of the bar. Sheila catches it, moves it back to the support frame. Then starts to help Claire sit up, but --

CLAIRE
No, let him do it. Mr. Meyer wants to help me up, Sheila. Mr. Meyer wants so badly to help.

Now she looks at Ed, almost a challenge.

He accepts, reaches down, lifts Claire into a sitting position --

CLAIRE
(to Sheila)
See?

Sheila takes over and Ed steps back.

CLAIRE
Now he probably wants to ask me out to dinner or something. But he can't find words that won't make it sound totally phoney.

ED
(unfazed)
Will I order the chicken or the red meat?

CLAIRE
Fish, mostly likely. Cod.

ED

Was I wrong in thinking you might like to get out and go somewhere? Your doctor says it's okay.

CLAIRE

My doctor's the one who told me you'd be asking.

(then)

Let's see. An expensive restaurant, possibly French. An air of romance and seduction -- since, in a way, that's what this is, isn't it? You in your best DKNY suit, trying to impress me with what you think will impress me. And if I think maybe you're falling for me, that's okay too. Because, however you can get me there, this is all still about suing the Railroad and making some money.

Beat.

ED

I don't think it is.

CLAIRE

No? Well if it's not about money --

ED

-- it's about you.

A beat.

CLAIRE

You don't want to do this, Ed Meyer. You don't even know me.

Ed glances at Sheila, then crouches down beside Claire's chair. Softly, very intensely:

ED

I wish I could tell you that I'm just working you, like any other potential client. But I can't. 'Cause I'm not.

(beat)

I'm a trial lawyer, it's all I've ever been. I love my job, I love helping my clients. But -- Claire -- no bullshit -- I truly hate it that I have never met an individual who didn't lunge at the chance to cushion their misfortune with a super-size helping of insurance company cash.

(beat)

Until you.

Pause. Claire stares at him. The moment of truth.

CLAIRE
 (softly)
 If you're going to take me somewhere, I
 want it to be someplace you go for
 yourself. Someplace you never take
 anyone else.

EXT. WHEAT FIELDS - DUSK

Ed's rent-a-car rumbles down a dirt road that cuts between two rolling waves of grain. The western horizon is ablaze with sunset.

EXT. RAVINE - DUSK

As Ed lifts Claire out of the car, carries her in his arms and heads up the side of an untilled hill of wild grass --

CLAIRE
 What about my chair?

ED
 No chairs where we're going.

FOLLOWING ED AND CLAIRE

up the steep hill. His feet slip, his legs struggle.

CLAIRE
 I'm too heavy --

ED
 You're not. It's me, I'm a geek.

Near the crest of the hill he falls to his knees and puts Claire down gently in the grass where a picnic basket and a blanket have already been positioned. Winded:

ED
 In fact, you're -- lighter than -- I
 expected --

CLAIRE
 In another life, I was a dancer. Before
 Alfred. I know how to make myself
 lighter.
 (then)
 Where are we?

ED
 Shhhh.

A low RUMBLING. Grows LOUDER, LOUDER, LOUDER, until it's DEAFENING and then

A JUMBO JET

roars over them, so low it seems they could reach up and touch it. Claire laughs as the rumble tickles her, she puts her hands over her ears.

Ed just SCREAMS. At the top of his lungs. Stops only when the plane is gone.

CLAIRE

Jesus.

ED

(watching the jet go)
There were probably three hundred and fifty people on that flight.

(beat)
If it went down, right now, on approach, they'd all die.

Claire looks at him.

ED

It's the first thirty seconds and the last thirty seconds of any plane flight that are the critical areas. Engine failure, landing gear fuck-up, flaps ice up or stick. Wind shear is big trouble. With wind shear you've got to establish pilot error.

Ed props himself up on an elbow, looks right at her.

ED

A jet like this takes off somewhere in the United States every ten seconds. Millions of take offs, millions of landings. 'Course, they hardly ever go down -- you're statistically more at risk crossing the street or riding your bicycle ... but.

He's confessing, suddenly, despite his better judgment.

ED

But three hundred and fifty people times, what, a million dollars, which would be a conservative jury award in an airplane wrongful death -- that's three hundred and fifty million dollars changing hands in a split second.

(embarrassed beat)
And I'm in for thirty percent.

ANOTHER JET

roars overhead. Smaller. Ed lies back on the ground and just watches this one.

CLAIRE
 (quietly)
 You come here and think about people
 dying?

ED
 I do.

A pause. A COMMUTER JET floats down out of the dark eastern sky. A big star at first -- then a line of lights -- then it materializes, growing huge as it gets closer -- floats over them, impossibly graceful --

-- and as the wake of displaced air hits them, Claire leans over onto Ed and kisses him. Softly. Tenderly.

ED
 What was that for?

CLAIRE
 That was for trying.

ED
 Trying what?

CLAIRE
 Ed, what if the crash -- my crash -- was simply an accident. A whatchamacallit --

ED
 -- Act of God?

CLAIRE
 Or something, yes. Nobody's fault.

ED
 In my experience there's no such thing.

CLAIRE
 In your experience.

ED
 Yes.

CLAIRE
 At thirty.

Another, longer pause. Ed doesn't know what to say, or do. And a RUMBLING begins again. Then:

CLAIRE
 I didn't love my husband, Ed. And I don't miss him. In your experience, does that make my reluctance to sue the Railroad a kind of penance for my guilt? Or just a wrong-headed determination not to build my future on more lies?

Another JUMBO JET roars off into the sky. Claire is blinking back tears, and Ed is looking at her, kind of stunned, but all he can hear is the roar of the plane, which becomes --

EXTREMELY TIGHT - TELEVISION SCREEN

-- the startling, muddled WHITE NOISE of an AMATEUR SEX VIDEO. Two men and a woman. Bad light, awkward angle, grainy, blurred bodies overlapping ...

O.s. sound of keys in a door lock, and --

PAN AWAY:

INT. HOTEL GLENWOOD - ED'S ROOM - NIGHT

As, from the corridor, Ed enters the darkened room. Stops short at the sight of his t.v. turned on and glowing --

ED
Somebody in here? Hello?

For a moment thinks he might be in the wrong room --

INTERCUT - TIGHT - TELEVISION SCREEN

The woman in the video throws hair back off her face -- it's Claire.

CLAIRE'S VOICE
(television)
You're hurting me --

RESUME - ED

Suddenly aware that someone else is in the room, as:

CLAIRE'S VOICE
(television)
-- oh God Alfred -- don't --

Turning --

-- the Big Man (ANDERSON) aims a remote, and MUTES the sound of the high-eight video.

ANDERSON
See anybody you know?

Light from the television plays off his face, and the barrel of the HANDGUN that he's got aimed at Ed.

ANDERSON
Get on the floor.

Ed doesn't move.

Anderson shoves the fat black gun into Ed's face and sends him stumbling backward, kicking the door closed and then suddenly pistol-whipping Ed down onto his hands and knees.

ANDERSON
Get down.

ED
Ow --

He spits blood. Anderson frisks him for a weapon, empties pockets, flips Ed's wallet open, as:

ANDERSON
Don't talk. I ask questions, you answer
yes or no.

ED
I don't --

Anderson slaps him again with the side of the gun.

ANDERSON
Yes or no. Alfred Decker. Do you know
where he is?

Ed gasps for breath. The sex video whirls on the t.v. like a bad dream, Claire's face in the camera, then gone -- replaced by ALFRED'S --

ED
Dead.

Anderson squats down.

ANDERSON
You know that for a fact?

ED
No.

ANDERSON
Does his wife?

ED
No.

Anderson rocks back on his heels. Beat.

ANDERSON
I don't think she does either. I've been
on her like white on rice. My gut says
Decker ran and the train crashed, and he
got the cosmic payback.

ED
Who the hell are you?

ANDERSON

A guy he owed -- owes -- some money.
 (then)
 You want some mini-bar ice for your head?

ED

No.

Ed sits up and Anderson aims his gun between Ed's eyes again, sideways, point blank.

ANDERSON

Alot of money. Which explains ... I mean
 (meaning Ed)
 ... nothing personal.
 (then)
 I come in hard, I don't get hurt. That's
 my modus operandi. And most of the time
 people are so scared they don't lie to
 me. Lying is a big problem.

Silence. The gun doesn't waver.

ANDERSON

Widow Decker gonna sue the railroad, is
 that the plan?

ED

Even if she does, it's not community
 property. You can't hold her accountable
 for the dead husband's debts.

Beat.

ANDERSON

The dead husband. Very cold, Ed. Very
 cold and convenient for you, huh?
 (thinks)
 For everyone. Except maybe yours truly,
 the Big Man.

ED

And the dead husband.

ANDERSON

Smart guy. Got it all figured out,
 don'tcha? Well. Ride the brakes. Don't
 be so sure about Decker, my friend. No,
 no no ...

Gestures vaguely to the sex playing out in a video smear on
 the television.

ANDERSON

Or the wife.

He reaches into his coat pocket, takes out a business card
 and flips it at Ed, all with his free hand, keeping the gun
 steady and sideways.

ANDERSON

This is me. This is a number where I can be found, day or night. In case we're both wrong about Mrs. Decker.

Then he's up on his feet, backing to the door again, letting the gun fall slightly, relaxing some.

ANDERSON

You can keep my tape for your late-night enjoyment.

He goes out the door, closes it quietly. Ed just sits on the floor, head throbbing, the lurid colors of the video playing across him like a hallucination --

ON THE TELEVISION

The other man's face: Anderson is the third person in video. His tongue darts in and out of Claire's mouth -- they roll out of frame and focus -- leaving Alfred watching them --

INT. CORRIDOR - HOTEL GLENWOOD - MORNING

Ed opens the door and squints out at Boo. Ed looks terrible, as if he slept in his clothes. His temple is black and blue.

BOO

Trouble shaving, again?

ED

What do you want?

BOO

Good morning. Nice to see you too. Might I deduce from your good mood that Mrs. Decker is now a client?

ED

No.

(beat)

But I'm gonna get her the money anyway.

Boo stares at him.

BOO

Uh-huh.

(as if to a child)

Why?

ED

Because she deserves it. Because she doesn't want it.

Boo sighs.

BOO

Huh. Well. I located some snappies you got to look at, then, pronto.

ED
Snappies?

BOO
Pictures.

ED
Of what?

BOO
God. Acts of.

INT. ONE-HOUR PHOTO SHOPPE - DAY

Snapshots grind out of an automated machine. Faces and places, livid Kodachrome. Flop, flop, flop.

THROUGH A PHOTOGRAPHER'S LOUPE

Wildly distorted details of a photograph. Smiling heads. Crisscrossing shapes that resolve themselves into the crossmembers of the trestle bridge in Glenwood Canyon.

ED (O.S.)
I don't see any difference.

AT A GLASS-TOPPED LIGHT TABLE

in the back of the shop, Ed and Boo look down at two similar 8x10 enlargements of the trestle bridge, from across the river. One of them has some TOURISTS lined up in it, smiling for the camera. The other is clearer, professional. And the bridge has fallen down.

BOO
Look at the rocks at the foot of the trestle bridge, both pix.

ED
(frowning)
Very scenic.

BOO
I faxed every place that develops pictures within a hundred or so mile radius of here, queried 'em if they'd happened across pre-accident photos of the bridge. It's right next to a photo op turnout, so ...

As Ed compares the photographs again, using the loupe, without it:

ED
(still stumped)
Rocks. Big deal.

Boo points to the bottom of the broken trestle bridge in one picture.

BOO

Those rocks. There. There and there.

He pulls over the other picture, where the bridge is still intact.

BOO

No rocks in this one, though.

Ed looks. Then looks more closely, through the loupe.

BOO

The earlier picture was taken two days before the crash. That very same night, apparently there was this extremely big thunderstorm. A caterwauling fireworks from the sky kind of thing.

Boo reaches out -- gently moves the loupe to the top of the earlier photograph, while Ed looks through it --

THROUGH THE LOUPE - THE PHOTOGRAPH

A blur of cliffs. Then the sharply defined ridge at the canyon's top. Sheer walls of rock.

SWISH PAN TO:

THE OTHER PHOTOGRAPH (THROUGH THE LOUPE, CONTINUOUS)

A gap in the ridge. As if a huge chunk had fallen away.

THE LOUPE

moves downward in a blur. Settles on the broken base of the trestle bridge. The huge shards of rocks.

BOO (O.S.)

Voila les changes.

Sound of ROARING WATER fades up, taking us --

EXT. GLENWOOD CANYON - BASE OF THE TRESTLE BRIDGE - DAY

as Ed and Boo clamber over boulders wedged up against the twisted support members of the broken bridge. Boo has to shout to be heard over the rapids twenty feet below:

BOO

Railroad had just inspected all this. I pulled the records. Also, they did their due diligence after the storm, checked the track for obstructions.

Ed stops, looks up at the place where the rocks fell away from the cliffs, high above them.

ED

But not down here.

BOO
 Falling rock prolly dinged the bridge
 pretty good. Maybe broke it, and then it
 buckled under the weight of the train.

ED
 That trestle bridge should have been
 engineered to withstand it.

BOO
 (shakes his head)
 Hand of the Almighty Whoozit.

ED
 The Railroad should have anticipated --

BOO
 This was the biggest t-storm they've had
 in the hundred years locals've kept
 records. Off the charts. Lightning that
 shears off a hunk of mountainside?
 Odds've gotta be ten million to one.

A long beat.

ED
 What are you telling me? You're telling
 me I don't have a case.

Boo says nothing. Doesn't have to. Ed looks up at the
 cliffs again. Across the canyon. At Boo. Mind racing.

ED
 The Railroad doesn't know about this.

BOO
 Yet.

INT. THE SMASHED SLEEPER CAR - DAY

Delgado at work inside when Ed comes in, making the whole
 compartment tremble -- Delgado looks up, surprised --

ED
 Andi Slade. They told me she was down
 here --

DELGADO
 She just left. You didn't pass her?

INT. AIRPLANE HANGAR - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Ed comes out onto scaffolding, down to the floor and runs
 past the rows of salvage to the back door --

EXT. HANGAR - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Ed emerging into the sunlight to discover a black corporate Lincoln Town Car pulling away, across the empty tarmac, heading toward a gate in the chain link security fence.

ED

Andi!

The car doesn't stop. Ed sprints toward the fence, which parallels an access road.

THE TOWN CAR

goes through the gate, and turns onto the access road.

ED

gets to the fence -- leaps onto it and climbs. The Town Car is fast approaching. Ed hauls himself over the top of the fence and drops ten feet to the ground -- right in front of

THE TOWN CAR

which SLAMS on its brakes, nearly hits him. Ed pounds on the hood --

ED

Andi?!

Andi Slade emerges from the back of the car --

ED

(out of breath)
Decker wants to sue.

A beat.

ANDI

(his bruises:)
You been fighting windmills with your face?

ED

Andi --

ANDI

I thought you said Mrs. Decker wasn't asking for anything.

ED

Come on. We both know this will never get to trial -- jury takes one look at Mrs. Decker in her wheelchair and American Mutual can kiss the case goodbye.

ANDI

So you're suggesting --?

ED

We work up a fair settlement right now which your employer will gladly rubber stamp. You look smart, I look statesman-like, and Mrs. Decker gets her money. Everybody wins.

ANDI

She's real pretty, Meyer.

Ed ignores this, he's got his briefcase open on the hood of the limo, he's pulling stuff out:

ED

These are her medical reports, test results, documented, notarized --

ANDI

Has she hired you? Are you her attorney of record now?

ED

-- you'll have to go with these, because she won't consent to an outside evaluation and if she finds out what I'm doing she'll freak out and stop us.

Another beat.

ANDI

Us?

ED

I want a fair settlement -- you want to cut your net losses. A climate ripe for compromise.

ANDI

And malpractice. And criminal fraud.
(stops, pissed)
She's not your client, is she?

ED

This is the right thing to do.

ANDI

Don't, don't do this, Ed! Last time, at least, your kamikaze mission was legal.

ED

My kamikaze mission? You were the one who told me your ex-partners were making sweetheart deals behind their client's back --

ANDI

(hot)
We were married!
(MORE)

ANDI (cont'd)
 I had an ethical conflict and I talked to my husband about it! Next thing I know, my whole world is exploding around me and you're strutting around like ... like ...

ED
 You know me -- knew what I'd do in those circumstances. You wanted me to do it.

ANDI
 -- I trusted you!

ED
 Yeah, and at the end of the day? What we did was right. Your partners were scuzz-buckets, and I busted them.

ANDI
 And ruined their lives.
 (beat)
 And ruined us.

Silence. Ed knows enough not to say anything.

ANDI
 And now you want to deflower the crippled virgin.

ED
 It's not about what I want.

ANDI
 Stop saying that! Name one thing you've ever done for selfless reasons!

Beat.

ED
 I can't. That's why I'm doing this.

ANDI
 You think that one morally unassailable client will make up for all the other stunts you pull in the name of civil justice?
 (shakes her head)
 You want her 'cause you can't have her.

She starts to walk back around to the open door of the limousine. Ed holds her back --

ED
 Get me five million for Decker and I'll convince all my other clients to accept the Railroad's buyout.

Half a beat.

ANDI
 What?

Another beat.

ANDI
You didn't say that. I didn't hear that.

ED
I need a Decker settlement, Andi.

ANDI
-- oh, no, no -- selling his clients short is the one thing Ed Meyer would never ever do.

ED
(resolute)
Take it back to Texas. Run it up the flagpole and see if anybody salutes.

ANDI
(desolate)
You bastard. You know that I have to take it to them ... and you know that they will.

Silence.

ANDI
(softly, resigned)
Still celebrate the big wins?

Ed says nothing.

ANDI
Hotel Glenwood.

ED
(noncommittal)
Room 565.

ANDI
(sad smile)
We've gotta stop doing this.

Ed says nothing. She gets into her car, pulls the door quietly shut and the town car drives away.

INT. WESTERN SLOPE LAW GROUP - DAY

Howard Stanley following Ed through, like a stray dog:

STANLEY
What about all the work we've done? Good Lord, we're three-quarters through depositing everybody -- we got an ethical responsibility --

ED

-- they're gold-diggers, Howard. The Railroad offered them a perfectly legitimate buy-down -- not one of these people suffered permanent injury, mind you -- and they refused the offer.

STANLEY

It was you -- us -- told them to!

ED

Fine. You take them -- you keep all of them, I'll hang onto Mrs. Decker, I won't bill you for time spent or my investigator --

STANLEY

You can't drop our other clients.

ED

Watch me.

STANLEY

Decker's the cash cow! You're gonna make a million bucks on her, I get the chum! What about my staff and overhead!?

Ed suddenly whirls on him, grabs Stanley by the lapels and slams him back into the big framed advertisement of the smiling family, so that only "Somebody's gotta pay" is readable.

ED

Ever watch buzzards eat road kill, Howard?

The other lawyers and paralegals falling silent, as:

ED

Look in the mirror -- that's you on the highway, with the pink fleshly head. You're not a lawyer, you're a scavenger. Tearing off the rancid, leftover litigation that nobody else will touch.

Suddenly Boo is behind Ed, squeezing his arm --

BOO

Let's take a walk.

ED

(shakes Boo off)
I made this play possible for you. Without me you're back filing soft tissue nuisance claims and convincing trailer trash they've got whiplash.

ANDI (cont'd)
 Not to mention the additional expense of
 litigating the case, and all the bad
 publicity for the Railroad that could
 result from it.

INT. ED'S HOTEL SUITE - GLENWOOD SPRINGS - DAY

He's packing up. Taking down the photographs from his wall
 and stuffing them in a fat brown document folder, while Boo
 just watches, hands in his pockets.

BOO
 If lawyers were horses I'd have you put
 down and call it a humane act.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - ANDI

Still going over the details:

ANDI
 (on the phone)
 -- come on, Barry -- you know I wouldn't
 be presenting this settlement for
 approval if I didn't recommend it
 unconditionally --

INT. HOTEL SUITE - ED

taking down the Polaroids of his clients -- or, ex-clients --
 pausing a moment to stare at the one of Claire, as:

BOO
 You're in love with the client and she's
 not even the client --

ED
 I am not.

BOO
 And meanwhile all the real clients are
 innocent bystanders caught in the
 crossfire of drive-by love.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - ANDI

Phone cradled against her shoulder. Drawing concentric
 circles in the margin of her legal pad full of notes.

ANDI
 (on the phone)
 Okay. Okay.
 (beat, carefully:)
 Look. What if I can get him to take the
 Denver settlement for his other
 plaintiffs, so we only take the big bite
 on Decker ...?

INT. HOTEL SUITE - ED

Now he's packing his clothes, neatly, in suitcases.

ED

As soon as the Railroad figures out the crash can be called an Act Of God, they're gonna withdraw the thirty grand settlement offer and all those other victims will get nothing.

The phone rings. Boo picks it up:

BOO

(on the phone)
Hell in a handbasket, Hudson speaking.

A beat. He holds out the receiver.

BOO

It's your ex-wife.

Ed stops what he's doing -- hesitates before crossing to take the phone from Boo's hand --

INT. REHAB CENTER SWIMMING POOL - NIGHT

Brightly lit from beneath the surface. Claire is alone in the pool, black one-piece swimsuit, easing herself along stainless steel rails. Her legs useless.

She struggles to keep her head above water.

She gets to the end, stops, tired, letting the rails slide under her armpits to hold herself up --

CLAIRE

Sheila. SHEILA.

A door opening. FOOTSTEPS on wet concrete. A TOWEL enters frame, Claire uses it to wipe her face and eyes.

CLAIRE

Help me get out, please --

She hands the towel back, and now she notices the black wingtips on the pool's coping in front of her -- definitely not Roz's shoes. Looks up at Ed. He's in a suit and tie.

ED

I sent Sheila home.

He kneels, takes a bottle of Champagne from behind his back, two champagne flutes from his coat pockets. POPS the cork out of the champagne and fills the glasses, letting the foam slosh over, as:

CLAIRE

(tired and stubborn)
I want to get out of the pool. I need Sheila to ...
(watching him pour)
lift me out of the ... pool.

ED
I can lift you.

Beat.

CLAIRE
You'd have to get in the pool.

Without hesitation Ed leaps into the pool -- shoes, suit and all. His tie floats in front of him. Claire can't help but laugh.

Carefully he puts his arms under her -- she circles his neck with hers -- and he lifts her, turns ...

... and carries her up the handicapped ramp out of the shallow end, pool water pouring from his clothes.

ED
Guess what --?

INT. HOTEL GLENWOOD - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Old-fashioned elevator doors OPEN and Andi strides out. Legs and lipstick. She wobbles slightly on very high heels, sexy. Tugs at her short skirt, fusses with her hair.

Finds the suite number she's looking for (565, it's written on her hand), makes one last hair adjustment and knocks.

Turns away, checking her breath. The door opens, she whirls:

ANDI
You better not have started without --

In the doorway of what was once Ed Meyer's suite stands a stocky middle-aged WOMAN in a Colorado Rockies bathrobe.

ANDI
-- me.

INT. CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Champagne bottle empty on the floor. Sound of the SHOWER, and laughter, in the bathroom.

CLAIRE (O.S.)
Careful -- be careful --

Then no shower -- Ed emerges, stark naked and wet, pushing Claire, also naked, in her special shower wheelchair.

CLAIRE
What are you -- Ed? -- no -- slow down --

Across to the bed, leaving wet tire tracks -- front wheels jamming against the champagne bottle -- Claire is thrown forward, face-down onto the bed. Giggling.

CLAIRE
What have you done to me?

ED
Nothing, yet.

CLAIRE
You are so wrong.

Claire clutches the sheets, pulling herself up onto the bed.
Ed climbs up next to her, helps her --

ED
Look, you can give the money away if it
really bugs you. Give it to charity. I
don't care. It's yours now. All of it.

Claire rolls over, tangled in the sheets. Ed looks down at
her face and hair.

CLAIRE
What about your fee?

ED
I'm not your lawyer.

Ed kisses her lightly.

CLAIRE
No one has ever done anything like this
for me.

ED
You've been hanging with the wrong
people.

Ed leans down to kiss her again, but Claire stops him --
holds his face above hers.

CLAIRE
You didn't have to do it.

ED
No, I didn't.

CLAIRE
I asked you not to.

ED
I didn't listen.

She studies his eyes.

CLAIRE
No you didn't ...

ED'S HAND

moves slowly down the side of Claire's torso, following the gentle curves -- across her hip --

ED (O.S.)
How much can you still feel?

CLAIRE (O.S.)
I don't know.

CLAIRE

She pulls Ed's head down to her --

CLAIRE
What I can't feel, I can imagine. And sometimes that's better, isn't it?

She kisses him, hard, passionate. As Ed's body slides onto hers --

INT. LOBBY - HOTEL GLENWOOD - NIGHT

Andi at the front desk, talking to the friendly NIGHT CLERK.

ANDI
... he usually leaves a forwarding number, in case someone calls for him.

The Clerk is searching their computer records.

ANDI
Or, you know, a hotel address.

She turns away, distracted. Looks across the lobby. SEES Boo Hudson in the adjacent bar, by himself. She's already walking away when the Clerk looks up from his screen --

LOBBY BAR - HOTEL GLENWOOD - NIGHT

Boo savors a sip from one of three martinis lined up in front of him. Andi comes in --

ANDI
Where's Meyer?

Boo just looks at her.

ANDI
Boo --

Boo pats the empty stool next to him. Looks at her.

BOO
Let me buy you a drink, Andrea. You'll want to be drinking.

Andi stares at him. Backs away. Walks out.

INT. CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Claire and Ed make love. No hurry. Barely a sound.

CLAIRE'S LEGS

Unmoving. Her breathing ... quickening ...

... and then, suddenly her knees bend, pulling her legs up alongside his, her heels scrape across the backs of his thighs --

INT. CLAIRE'S BEDROOM - DAWN

Ed sits up, disoriented. How much of what just happened was real, how much was a dream?

The bed beside him is empty. No sign of Claire.

Ed gets up, wrapping a blanket around himself.

LIVING ROOM

Ed comes from the bedroom, blanket-man. Finds Claire out on the balcony, in her wheelchair, smoking a cigarette, watching sunrise hit the peaks of the Continental Divide.

BALCONY

Claire smiles faintly at Ed as he comes outside.

CLAIRE

What am I going to do with five million dollars?

ED

Pay taxes. Buy gas. Like I said, that's your problem. I'm done.

Claire smiles again, smokes. Ed goes to the edge of the balcony and stares out at the city.

CLAIRE

God, I love to smoke.

(then)

Alfred hated it.

(resentful)

Alfred.

ED

You must have loved him.

CLAIRE

(shrugs)

He changed.

An easy silence.

ED
I was married.

CLAIRE
Did you love her?

ED
I did.

CLAIRE
I want to know everything about you. I
don't even know where you live --

ED
My ex-wife got everything when we split
up, so I put all the clothes and books I
couldn't carry into one of those storage
bins, and I've been living in hotel rooms
ever since.

Claire taps the ashes off her cigarette, takes one last drag.

CLAIRE
Sounds unresolved.

ED
No, it's over. Talking to her is like
talking to myself.
(correction:)
My old self.

CLAIRE
I don't feel crippled when I'm with you.

She flips the cigarette off the balcony, turns her chair
around --

CLAIRE
Statement of fact.
(then)
Push.

Ed grabs the handles of the chair, and Claire put her hand on
his as they go inside --

EXT. STREET - IN FRONT OF CLAIRE'S BUILDING - DAWN

The tumbling ember of a cigarette explodes in tiny sparks mid-
street, not far from where --

ANDI SLADE

sits on the front fender of her rent-a-car, sipping a cafe
latte. She looks up at the building, at the empty balcony of
Claire's top floor apartment.

Silent tears smear dark mascara down her cheeks, as she
slides off the fender, gets into the car and drives away.

EXT. IRRIGATION POND - SOUTHERN UTAH - DAY

A MAN with a grappling hook and waders stands knee deep in the water, fishing for something.

Boo stands with Deputy Dale and one of the American Mutual Insurance INVESTIGATORS we've see before.

INVESTIGATOR
When they opened the sluice gates, they saw the shadow of it slip through. I thought bodies floated.

DEPUTY DALE
Women especially.

The grappling hook guy gets ahold of something. Hauls it in. A HUMAN CORPSE, bloated, blackened, face down.

The deputy and the investigator help haul it out onto dry land. Boo hunches his arm, puts his sleeve over his mouth and nose.

CLOSER - THE BODY

Boo crouches next to it.

DEPUTY DALE
(holding his nose)
Find his I.D.

Boo finds a wallet, tosses it in the direction of the deputy. More interested in a SHINY BIT OF METAL left in the smear of discolored water draining from the head of the corpse.

DEPUTY DALE

examining the wallet. Reads from the driver's license:

DEPUTY DALE
Decker. Alfred R.

BOO

holds up the pebble of bright steel in his thumb and forefinger, studying it.

INVESTIGATOR
What's that?

Boo slips it into his coat pocket, no-big-deal.

BOO
Fools's gold. I collect it.

WIDER - THE BODY

as they turn it over, and --

BOO, DALE, INVESTIGATOR - THEIR REACTIONS

are all we need to see, as they take in the face --

DEPUTY DALE

Holy moly. River rocks must've torn his skin off.

INT. MORGUE - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Ed and Boo, on either side of Claire. A MORGUE ATTENDANT walks behind them. Claire wheels herself silently along a tile floor lit by a fluorescent ceiling. And finally into --

A VIEWING ROOM

Through the window of which a black body bag forms a long lump on an examining table in the storage room beyond. The Attendant uses buttons to lower the table so that Claire can see better from her chair.

Then he goes inside, with the body, and unzips the bag.

ON CLAIRE

as she studies the corpse for a moment, sad. Exhales. Nods.

CLAIRE

That's my husband.

And then turns herself away, and rolls out into the corridor again. Ed follows.

MORGUE CORRIDOR

Heading back the way they came.

CLAIRE

I want the body cremated. No ceremony. No urn or anything. Alfred didn't believe in God.

ED

All right.

Boo squeezes Ed's arm -- and when Ed glances over at him he presses something into the palm of Ed's hand, and veers into a Men's Room. Claire keeps going, pulling Ed with her. Tears in her eyes.

CLAIRE

If Alfred owed money to someone, can they come after me now, for restitution?

ED

Depends on the debt. And your involvement. You'll have to tell me --

Ed feeling what's in his hand, glancing back at the Men's Room, while:

CLAIRE
 Dream. This is like a dream I'm going to wake up from.

ED
 Claire?

CLAIRE
 Or maybe Alfred was the dream. And now I'm awake. You, now, this is real, right? Right?

Ed grabs Claire's chair and stops her.

ED
 Claire.

CLAIRE
 What?

ED
 'Scuse me for a sec --

INT. MEN'S ROOM - BOO

at the mirror when Ed comes in. Pulling nose hairs with a pair of tweezers from his Swiss Army knife. He puts it away, politely, when Ed:

ED
 What is this?

Ed holds out his hand. Has the pebble of metal in it.

BOO
 I'm told that is a slug from a .38 caliber revolver.

Boo walks around the small bathroom, looking under and checking the stalls, and then bolting the door as if for security, as:

BOO
 Selsame kind one might use to shoot someone in the face and then bust their head up with a blunt object to conceal the entry wound and make it look like an accidental death.

ED
 (numb)
 What?

BOO

But forgetting that the slug's still in there, bound to come rattling out sooner or later. Or figuring it will, but nobody's gonna dredge a hundred miles of river-bottom to maybe find something they don't even know is there.

(thin grin)

Especially if you can be the one to positively I.D. the body and avoid any probative coroner's inquests.

ED

This came from Claire's husband's body?

BOO

Head. Kinda dropped out of his skull like a bent quarter in a Coke machine change box.

Boo has returned to the sink. Runs water, wets his face.

BOO

I don't mean to piss on your picnic, Eddie, I truly don't. But.

Boo reaches for a paper towel. Ed has barely moved.

ED

She killed her husband? She used the train crash as an excuse to kill her husband?

(it won't compute:)

She's paralyzed. She nearly died.

BOO

(shrugs)

I just find stuff out. You're the Einstein who puts it together and makes a story out of it.

Off Ed's look of utter disbelief --

INT. MORGUE CORRIDOR - CLAIRE

waiting for Ed.

He comes out of the bathroom and nearly falters as he meets her gaze. Boo right behind him. Smiles slightly, pleasantly, and keeps Ed moving forward.

INT. CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Claire's sleeping. Ed sits in a chair in the corner, staring at her, unable to rest.

KITCHEN

The lights come on, and Ed goes to the refrigerator, aimless. Finds nothing there. Closes the door for a moment and just stands in the middle of the room.

CLAIRE'S HANDBAG

is on the counter.

ED

stares at it.

Crosses to it. Opens it and looks inside. Nothing.

Hesitates. Then turns it over and dumps everything out anyway ... and has immediate second thoughts --

ED

No, no, no --

He starts sweeping everything back into the handbag with his arm, but --

TIGHT - DOORWAY - CLAIRE

has been watching Ed go through her purse. Tight-lipped. She draws her wheelchair back out of sight before Ed finishes restoring her purse to the way he found it ...

CRASH CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT - UNION TRAIN STATION - DAY

Ed and Boo walk into this WPA-era train station's long-term parking. Ed's freaking out now, no smile:

ED

-- but then, I can't resist it: I do a little phone work and discover Claire holds a half a million dollar life insurance policy on Alfred -- and she's not filing a claim. She's refusing to file a claim. And now I'm, like, what is up with that?

BOO

Prolly doesn't want to give anyone a reason to investigate the circumstances surrounding her late husband's demise.

ED

Something's bent with me. Why can't I just, why do I always have to --
(sighs)
But these are not positive developments.
Fuck, fuck --

Ed has Claire's keys out of his pocket -- he aims the remote into the field of parked cars and pushes the alarm trigger:

somewhere in the parking lot a car CHIRPS.

ED
-- FUCK.

They both look, trying to locate the car.

BOO
Never trust a girl who says she doesn't know what to do with money.

ED
This doesn't happen to me. This never happens to me.

Ed triggers the remote again, and now they see an AUDI's lights FLASH, two rows over. Moving toward it --

ED
(mind spinning:)
Okay. Okay, okay. What if ... she's the long-suffering spouse, he's the schmendrick who's made her suffer. He owes serious money to some small-time mook, Anderson a.k.a Big Man -- they're running away from Denver, carrying the last of their cash ... last of the money Alfred owes ...

BOO
.. according to her.

ED
On their way from Denver to ... I don't know --

BOO
Busboy in the dining car, he has 'em embroiled in a brouhah.

ED
About the money. Claire wanted him to pay the debt.

Boo rolls his eyes.

ED
What? Hey, I am trying to keep an open mind here, my friend. I am trying not to go to the dark place where I used to live.

BOO
Used to?

They've reached Claire's car, the Audi. Ed opens the door, sits in the driver's seat.

BOO

'Member the joke about the scorpion and the horse? Horse is swimming 'cross a river, this drowning scorpion comes floating past --

(tiny voice:)

'Help me, help me! Let me climb on your big strong back and swim me to shore.'

(then)

Horse says he'd do it, except he thinks the scorpion will sting him. Scorpion swears he won't, begs the horse. Crying little scorpion tears.

(beat)

So the horse plays the hero, puts scorpion up on his back -- scorpion immediately stings him. Now they're both gonna drown. But before the horse goes under, dying, he asks the scorpion-fuck why he did it. Scorpion shrugs, says

(tiny voice:)

'It's my nature, man, it's just my nature.'

Ed stares at Boo.

ED

I thought it was a frog and a scorpion.

BOO

I'm just saying.

ED

(pointedly)

Who's the scorpion, though? Boo. In this scenario? Who's the scorpion?

INT. ANDI SLADE'S OFFICE - DAY

Andi sits at her desk, working. Trying not to think about anything that's happened during the past week. The intercom BEEPS. A receptionist's voice:

RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)

(intercom:)

Andi, line three ...

Andi stares at the flashing line. Picks up the phone --

ANDI

Andi Slade.

INTERCUT - CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - CLAIRE

on the telephone:

CLAIRE
Hi, this is Claire. Decker. I --

Hesitates. Starts again:

CLAIRE
I'm sorry to bug you, but I need some
advice about Ed Meyer and ... I don't
know, would it be possible for me to be
paid in bearer bonds or cash or
something ...?

RESUME - ANDI'S OFFICE - ANDI

No expression as she listens.

CAMERA PULLS BACK FAST -- out of her office and across

A FIELD OF ADJUSTORS' CUBICLES

everybody talking -- we can't hear Andi's reponse to Claire,
we just know that they're talking --

CRASH CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT - UNION STATION - DAY

Ed's still in the Audi. Talking it through with Boo:

ED
Alfred was threatening to take her down
with him -- or so she thought. Claire
was scared.

BOO
Pissed off. Fed the hell up with him.

ED
Alfred brought the gun. The .38. For
his own protection.
(beat, to himself:)
Or Claire did. Wishful thinking.

BOO
I though you weren't going to the dark
place.

ED
(ignores)
Train crashes.
(beat)
There's chaos and confusion.
(beat)
She seizes the moment -- her chance -- to
solve her problem -- do the thing that's
been in the back of her mind, maybe for a
long time. BOOM. Dead. Gone.

A long beat. Ed reaches into the glove compartment and pulls out a bunch of papers, maps, registration, insurance information, and sorts through it absently, as:

BOO
Dead as dead.

ED
She mutilates his face -- to disguise the crime -- just like you said. Shoves him out, downstream.
(beat)
But then, what ... gets pinned in as she tries to climb out?
(beat, unconvinced)
The one thing she didn't plan on, getting pinned, getting paralyzed?

BOO
It's kinda romantic, though.

Ed stares at him, surfacing.

ED
What?

BOO
Romance. She popped her bad guy, fell in love with the hero, and hit the jackpot. All we need's a sunset and a big white horse.

ED
She used me. I look like her accomplice.

BOO
You're good at figuring these things out.

Ed quickly sorts through the rest of the documents. Stops short, holding a small certificate. Stares at it:

ED
Fuck, fuck, FUCK ME --!

He jumps out of the car and backs away from it, as if there's a hornet inside.

BOO
What was that? What'd you find?

ED
Gun permit. Registration for a .38 revolver. In the name of Claire Decker.

Boo whistles tunelessly. Ed kicks the door shut, whirls, starts walking briskly away.

BOO
Ed. I need some direction here --

Ed keeps walking.

BOO
 -- Tell me what to say if anyone asks --
 gimme some guidance --

THE BROKEN SLEEPER CAR

Hangs, complete, its fractures marked by a million tiny orange flags that shudder as someone moves around inside taking FLASH photographs:

DELGADO (O.S.)
 Everything you see there on the tables
 there is passenger personal effects we
 haven't got around to returning.

INT. AIRPLANE HANGAR - DAY

Ed at the salvage tables, impatient, searching --

DELGADO
 Assorted alphabetical by last name, so
 don't move anything, or I'm toast ...

Ed finds D ... Decker ... tagged items including one slightly rusting .38 revolver.

ED
 (lying:)
 I don't see it.

DELGADO
 What?

Ed quickly pockets the .38. Nobody here to see him.

ED
 It's not here. Thanks anyway.

Turns and walks out.

DELGADO (O.S.)
 Well, hell. It's not like that pistol
 brought the train down or anything,
 right?

ED
 (out the door)
 Adios.

TIGHT - SLEEPER CAR WINDOW - DELGADO

pokes his head out, as:

DELGADO
 It's a footnote to the crash.

Ed is gone.

DELGADO
 (to himself)
 Anecdotal.

INT. CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Ed comes in, still spooked, looking for --

ED
 Claire?

He sees, but does not register Claire's empty wheelchair in the middle of the living room. He keeps moving, back to --

THE BEDROOM

Claire's not in the bedroom, either.

FLASH:

ED'S MEMORY - THE LIVING ROOM (SLOW MOTION)

As he came in. Claire's empty wheelchair. No Claire.

RESUME - BEDROOM

Ed doing the slow turn to head back out to the living room -- but here's Claire, rolling in --

ED
 Where were you?

CLAIRE
 On the sofa.

FLASH:

ED'S MEMORY - THE LIVING ROOM (SLOW MOTION)

As he came in. The back of the sofa. The wheelchair seemingly too far away for a paraplegic to get up and into it so quickly.

CLAIRE
 -- Ed?

RESUME - BEDROOM

Ed stares blankly at Claire.

ED
 I just wondered where you were.

CLAIRE
 You're acting extremely weird.

He sits on the edge of the bed. Looking at nothing.

ED
 I'm sorry.
 (hesitates)
 We've got to do something with your
 money, it shouldn't just sit in your
 checking account. Has the check cleared?

CLAIRE
 What?
 (then)
 I don't want to think about it.

ED
 You don't have to. I've been thinking
 about it. And I can --

CLAIRE
 Forget about the money.

ED
 -- it's your future, Claire, lemme --

CLAIRE
 It's my money!
 (beat)
 And I don't want to think about it!
 (beat)
 And why should you care what I do with my
 money anyway?

Silence.

ED
 I don't.

CLAIRE
 Is this about your commission, your
 thirty percent? Because --

ED
 -- No. You're right, forget it.

Silence.

CLAIRE
 Christ, what is going on with you, Ed? I
 feel like suddenly I'm staring at your
 tail-lights.

ED
 I'm sorry.

He moves to embrace her. It's awkward, because of the chair.
 He lifts her up, pivots, puts her down lightly on the bed.

She holds onto him --

CLAIRE

We're in this together, all the way.
Right?

She says it tenderly, but it means something altogether different now, for Ed.

ED

Right.

They kiss. But Ed's eyes stay wide open.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Claire lies curled up against Ed's shoulder, sleeping. Ed's awake. He gently disengages from Claire, and slips out of the bed. Takes the portable phone off the bedstand.

BATHROOM

The light comes on, Ed squints as he sits on the edge of the bathtub and dials the phone in his hand.

BEDROOM - ON CLAIRE

As Ed gently wakes her. Blinking sleep out of her eyes to look at him. He's dressed.

ED

I've got to go Texas. Another accident.
(he kisses her lightly)
I'll be back tonight.

And he's gone.

EXT. DENVER INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAWN

A 747 lifts off the runway and flies right into the rising sun. Banks right, heading south across a cloudless sky.

EXT. TEXAS HILL COUNTRY - OUTSIDE AUSTIN - MORNING

A blue rental car pulls up the long dirt driveway of a large, two-story, whitewashed farmhouse nestled in trees. Dust billows in the car's wake.

CLOSER - THE FARMHOUSE

Ed parks, gets out of the car. Walks up wide steps to the screened-in porch. This could be the house from "Giant."

ANDI

is already waiting at the open front door, wearing only a bathrobe. She walks back inside before Ed reaches her.

INT. ANDI'S HOUSE - MORNING

A cool, pristine home filled with American Regional antiques on huge, thick Navajo carpets. Ed follows Andi --

ANDI
I bought some coffee.

ED
The place looks great.

THE KITCHEN

is huge and bright, built for a serious cook, but nothing's been used. Seven randomly-sized paper cups of coffee items are on the center serving island, milk foam erupting from the plastic covers.

ANDI
(won't look at Ed)
After you called I couldn't sleep.
There's two regulars, a de-caf, a cafe latte, a decaf cappuccino, two double-espressos and ... I can't remember what this is. I didn't know if you ran leaded or unleaded these days, I was in my bathrobe ...
(losing momentum)
... all these yuppies on their way to work staring at me. I just wanted to get out of there ..

Ed reaches out to touch her lightly. She whirls and HITS him hard, with an open hand, across the side of his head --

ANDI
Don't --!

-- and then she's swinging at him wildly, harmless blows he fends off with his arms.

ANDI
Don't you touch me, you bastard! Ever again! YOU did this -- you got us into this -- you made me help you --

ED
I didn't make you do anything.

ANDI
-- so you could -- you could --
(she can't say it)

ED
(calm)
When, in fact, as they say, that's what she was doing to me.

ANDI

And you knew! When we made the settlement -- that the crash was an Act of God! That it was nobody's fault! I saw the pictures, Ed! Photo place said you'd been there two days before me!

ED

I'm supposed to tell you that?!

ANDI

Yes.

ED

I'm supposed to do your job for you, and mine?!

Andi stops swinging, tired.

ANDI

Sex with a cripple. Talk about your trial lawyer's wet dream.

ED

Can we move off this subject and talk about what I came here to talk about?

ANDI

Knock yourself out.

Andi picks up one of the coffee cups --

ANDI

I'm having the Latte. Since I know you want it.

ED

Look, we have to get our story straight -- they can't implicate us if --

ANDI

(talks over him)

No. All you have to do is get the five million dollars back, and give it to me so I can give it to my company and salvage my goddamn career!

Beat.

ED

I don't think I can do that.

ANDI

Then we have nothing to --

ED

She killed her husband, Andi! She shot her husband on the train -- during the crash, after it, I don't know, but --

ANDI
 (cuts him off)
 Oh, this would be just about you.

ED
 Will you listen to me --

ANDI
 It's always about you. You you you -- I don't see where this intersects with my best interests, since all I can do is get buried deeper in your shit --

ED
 -- what am I supposed to tell the police? How do you think this looks, she killed her husband and then got a huge settlement 'cause I rigged the game?

ANDI
 (sad)
 Oh Meyer. They've already been here, the cops ...

She tightens her bathrobe.

ANDI
 ... They're waiting out front.

She walks out of the kitchen, carrying her coffee.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - MORNING

Ed emerges from the open door to discover Andi already out in the yard, where two n.d. SQUAD CARS with bubble-lights are waiting. Ruth and Van Petton are waiting with the local DEPUTIES.

Andi is already in the yard, peeling off her robe to reveal bicycle shorts, a tank top and a BODY WIRE that has recorded their entire kitchen conversation. Angrily she yanks it free.

Ed turns and bolts --

INT. FARMHOUSE - FOLLOWING ED

as he sprints to the back. Through the kitchen. Out the back door --

EXT. FARMHOUSE - BACK DOOR

-- Ed bursts out and is SLAMMED to the ground by a UNIFORMED DEPUTY who's been waiting there, just in case.

Ed gets his face planted against the ground -- a knee against his back as the cop handcuffs him --

INT. POLICE INTERROGATION ROOM - AUSTIN, TEXAS - DAY

Table and chairs, Ed, and Van Petton.

VAN PETTON

You sure?

ED

Yes.

VAN PETTON

Call me cautious, I never feel right about letting anyone speak without their attorney present.

Detective Ruth bumps in the door, carrying a tray that contains five familiar Starbuck's coffee cups, a big fat envelope and a thin case folder.

RUTH

Miss Slade was kind enough to donate coffee. Hadda nuke 'em, though --

(pointing)

Decaf, these here are the real thing, this is one of those ex-pressos ... or is it this one ...

VAN PETTON

(talks over him, to Ed)

Coffee?

ED

You guys don't need to chat me up.

Van Petton picks up the envelope, empties out Ed's personal effects: keys, wallet, watch, belt, pager, loose change. She finds the bullet slug in the loose change.

VAN PETTON

Would this be the bullet slug that killed Alfred Decker?

Ed says nothing.

VAN PETTON

We got a writ to keep the corpse from getting fried, despite the widow's desire to light the burners. Autopsy showed the blunt facial wounds occurred after the victim was dead. Signs of gunshot trauma. You know, this thing never felt right to me, from the beginning.

(beat)

What happened to the gun?

Ed says nothing.

VAN PETTON

You were over at the NSTB investigaton unit a couple of times, according to Mr. Delgado. Asking about the gun.

Ed says nothing.

VAN PETTON

She's pretty.

Van Petton opens a case file, takes out a photograph of a younger Claire. Wedding pictures with a man, not Alfred.

VAN PETTON

Did you know that her first husband is in Mexican jail? Used Car dealer from Ft. Wayne, Indiana, got himself into a little trouble trying to import three kilos of Yucatan brown in the wheel wells of a Cadillac Eldorado to tide him through a slow sales quarter.

(points)

I don't care much for the little mustache.

Ed stares at the picture.

VAN PETTON

Which makes you, what, meal ticket number ... three?

RUTH

That we know of.

ED

(after a moment)

You want me to roll on her.

VAN PETTON

(smiles)

Hey, you figured that out.

(to Ruth)

He figured it out.

RUTH

He's a professional.

ED

You'll give me immunity for any criminal fraud or obstruction relating to the insurance settlement, if I help you prove she killed her husband.

VAN PETTON

Sounds like a plan.

ED
No.

VAN PETTON
No?

ED
I want no charges filed against myself or Miss Slade. No suggestion of wrongdoing. I want it clear that I'm cooperating because I feel morally and ethically obligated to do so.

VAN PETTON
(nods, at Ruth:)
He's worried about a civil suit.

ED
I can testify to what I know, and what I've seen. You can ask me questions, I'll answer them honestly.
(beat)
But you have to sew the pieces together all by yourself, I won't do it for you.

Beat. Ed looks down at his hands.

VAN PETTON
(to Ruth)
He still loves her.

RUTH
(thinks)
Which one?

INT. REHAB CENTER - DAY

Claire is working out. Two MEN in plainclothes-cop-suits stroll through the facility, looking for her. Sheila helps her up, before they get there --

MAN
Claire Decker?

He hands her a couple of court orders.

MAN
I have here a warrant to search all your personal property and effects for material evidence relating to the murder of Alfred Decker ...

Off her stunned reaction:

INT. CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - QUICK CUTS

as COPS and CRIMINALISTS let themselves into Claire's apartment and begin their search.

RESUME - REHAB CENTER

As before:

MAN

-- and this one is a copy of the warrant issued today in Arapahoe County authorizing a search of your home in Highland Park.

EXT. PARKING LOT - UNION STATION - DAY

More police FORENSICS GUYS comb the Audi for clues, find the gun registration in the glove compartment.

INT. ED'S DENVER HOTEL ROOM - DAY

The curtains are closed, the television is on. Ed sits on the edge of the bed, watching the sex video of Claire and Alfred and Anderson. No sound.

He's got the .38 in his hand. He spins the chamber. Stops it. Spins it. Stops.

KNOCKING at his door.

BOO (O.S.)

Ed? Edward?

Ed doesn't answer.

INT. VAN PETTON'S OFFICE - DENVER POLICE HQ - DAY

Claire sits across from Van Petton. Claire's hair is wet from a recent shower, her hands folded on her lap.

CLAIRE

I want to talk to my lawyer before I answer any of your questions.

VAN PETTON

Why? There may not even be a crime here.

CLAIRE

My lawyer will like that.

VAN PETTON

Ms. Decker. Were you reluctant to sue the Railroad because you were afraid of an investigation into your husband's death?

Waits.

CLAIRE

Did Ed Meyer tell you I was reluctant?

VAN PETTON

Domestic murder, you know, it's never cut and dried. Maybe your husband was beating you up, maybe you had a good reason --

CLAIRE

Are you charging me with the murder of my husband?

VAN PETTON

(dry)

A .38 caliber bullet slug was found with the body of your husband. Blood and tissue on it matches, the coroner has confirmed that the bullet killed him, and match loose .38 caliber bullets found in your sleeping compartment on the train. We found the registration for a .38 caliber revolver in the glove compartment of your car --

CLAIRE

Alfred bought it for me. I hate guns.

VAN PETTON

Where is the gun, Ms. Decker? It was among your personal possessions in the wreckage, now it's gone.

CLAIRE

Are you charging me with murder?

VAN PETTON

(exasperated)

Yes we are. Yes.

CLAIRE

Read me my rights.

VAN PETTON

You can help yourself by helping us --

CLAIRE

(talks over her)

Charge me, and take my picture, and fingerprints or whatever else you do, and then let me call my lawyer, please.

Beat.

VAN PETTON

Your lawyer.

CLAIRE

Ed Meyer.

Pause. Off Van Petton's look --

EXT. ANDI SLADE'S FARMHOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

A red rental car hurries up the driveway to the front yard, and parks next to the blue one already here. Ed and Boo both get out of the red car.

BOO
You should talk to her.

ED
Just get my briefcase, okay?

Ed climbs into the blue car and waits, watching Boo walk up to the front door.

INTERCUT: TIGHT - THROUGH A MUG SHOT CAMERA LENS

Nothing but the background. Then the camera TILTS DOWN to find Claire at wheelchair level. FREEZE FRAME. Then she struggles to turn herself sideways --

INT. DENVER COUNTY JAIL - LATE AFTERNOON

A strip-and-search cell. Claire removing her clothes. It's a struggle, in the chair. A FEMALE GUARD helps her, extremely self-conscious.

EXT. ANDI'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - LATE AFTERNOON

Front door opening to reveal Andi. Her eyes are red, she's been crying some. She has Ed's briefcase.

ANDI
(looks past him)
He hasn't got any right to judge me --
after what he did --

Then she shouts at Ed, in the blue rental car:

ANDI
You did this to yourself, asshole!

ED
(from the car)
Get the briefcase, Boo --

Andi throws the briefcase out somersaulting into the yard.

BOO
Thank you.

ANDI
Where's my five million?!

ED
You turned me in!

ANDI
You broke my heart!

Ed gets out of the car to get the briefcase. His BEEPER sounds.

ED
We're divorced.
(at Boo)
How can I break her heart after we've
already been divorced?

ANDI
(at Boo)
He doesn't know anything about women.
(at Ed)
Plus he's a coward.

ED
What?

ANDI
You don't even believe in yourself.

ED
We're divorced!

The beeper goes off again. Ed checking it, while:

ANDI
That's her, isn't it?

ED
(losing it)
It's my message service!!!

ANDI
She's calling you.
(turns)
Go to her, Meyer. Sink and drown.

She goes into the house and SLAMS the door shut.

ED
DAMMIT!

He takes his briefcase to the hood of his car and BANGS it down so hard it opens. There's a cell phone inside. Ed dials.

Boo just watches him. The shadows across the driveway are long, the sun low. Sound of doors SLAMMING inside the house.

ED
(to Boo)
Don't say anything. Don't say a fucking
thing.
(on the phone:)
You paged me --

EXT. AUSTIN AIRPORT - NIGHT

A commuter jet hurtles toward us, takes off --

INT. DENVER COUNTY JAIL - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Ed is led by GUARD to a private visiting room. Van Petton is waiting outside. She keeps her voice low, mad as hell --

VAN PETTON

Tell her to get another lawyer. It should take you about 30 seconds.

Ed says nothing, waiting for Van Petton to move away, so he can go into the room. She doesn't move.

VAN PETTON

You're our star witness, Meyer. If you screw that up, if you agree to be her counsel and claim attorney-client privilege, we will not only try to tie you to the Alfred Decker murder and have you removed from the case, we will file those forgotten charges of criminal fraud against you and Andrea Slade, and set fire to your whole fucking career.

Ed says nothing. Reveals nothing. He moves around Van Petton, goes through the door as:

VAN PETTON

(a harsh whisper)

You can't be her lawyer. You shouldn't even have taken her call.

INT. JAIL - ATTORNEY-CLIENT CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Claire is waiting for Ed. She's in a prison jumpsuit. She looks pale, helpless. Ed stays near the door.

CLAIRE

Get me out of here.

ED

I helped put you in here.

CLAIRE

So?

ED

Ordinarily, that would pretty much disqualify me as your attorney.

Beat.

CLAIRE

Have you told the police anything that isn't true?

ED
I don't think so, no.

CLAIRE
Then I don't see what the problem is.
Did you bring cigarettes?

Ed takes a pack out of his coat pocket, and tosses them onto the table for Claire. As she opens the cellophane wrapper --

CLAIRE
This is one good thing about jail. I can smoke wherever I want.

She puts a cigarette between her lips. Ed crosses, lights it. She puts her hand on his, to steady the flame.

CLAIRE
You gave up on me.

ED
I looked at the facts, I made a judgement call.

CLAIRE
The facts. Facts can lie.
(then, sad)
Do you really think I killed Alfred?

ED
Can you move your legs, Claire?

Claire lets go of his hand.

CLAIRE
Is that a question, or an answer?

ED
Could be both. Where's the settlement money?

CLAIRE
(blows out smoke)
Do you trust anybody?

ED
(dry, the lawyer:)
It's not important for you to tell me whether you did it or not. But you gotta tell me what happened, Claire. Maybe if you tell me what really happened on the train, we can figure out --

CLAIRE
(talks over him)
-- YOU HAD THIS ROLE FOR ME.
(waits for him to shut up)
In your life.
(MORE)

CLAIRE(cont'd)
 This impossible role, probably nobody
 could play, but for sure not me -- and
 when I couldn't, couldn't be perfect, you
 gave up.

ED
 I was in love with you, and you used me.

CLAIRE
 You were the one who wanted me to have
 the money! You were the one who wanted
 me to sue! I didn't want anything!!

Silence.

CLAIRE
 Except not to be with my husband anymore.

Claire has let her cigarette burn out. She places it on end,
 balancing the cylinder of ash on the filter. Pushes back
 from the table, smoothing her pastel jail smock.

CLAIRE
 Alfred invested some money for this
 'friend' we met, okay? Okay, well, more
 than a friend, he ... it's like ... when
 Alfred and I, when our marriage began to
 go bad, we tried some things, we --

ED
 I saw the tape. I met the friend.

Claire stares at him, her eyes filling with tears. Looks
 away, ashamed.

CLAIRE
 Yeah, well. It was the kind of money you
 don't ask where it's coming from because
 there's so much of it.
 (squeezes her eyes shut)
 And Alfred's friend liked me ...
 (then, composed:)
 When the stock market went to hell.
 Alfred took a big hit, everybody lost,
 but. Our friend, Anderson, he wanted his
 money back. He said that we assumed the
 risk.

ED
 So you ran. By railroad.

CLAIRE
 I don't fly. Alfred was suicidal.
 Terrified of our friend, terrified I was
 going to leave him.

ED
 Were you?

As Claire considers the question --

FLASHBACK - THE ACCIDENT - SLEEPING COMPARTMENT

Claire tumbling as the train plunges into the canyon. The walls and windows EXPLODE. She's thrown under a collapsing cabin. Water POURS IN.

BATHROOM DOOR

washes open. Alfred SURFACES, bloody, pale, staring -- a gaping bullet hole in the side of his head. He's dead.

His body twists, his hand comes up, still holding the revolver -- then the river SURGES and Alfred's body plunges out through an opening, into the darkness --

RESUME - INTERVIEW ROOM

Claire looks down at her hands, remembering:

ED
He shot himself.

CLAIRE
The gun went off when the train crashed.
Whether Alfred meant for it to happen, or
... it just ...
(looks up at Ed)
What?

ED
There's no way to prove this.

CLAIRE
No there isn't.
(ironic)
Acts of God.

FLASHBACK - THE ACCIDENT - SLEEPING COMPARTMENT

Water pouring in on Claire. Explosions, O.S., momentarily lighting her hell. Pain and fear.

RESUME - JAIL CELL - CLAIRE

Calm, but bitterly:

CLAIRE
I just go from cage to cage.

ED
What does that mean?

CLAIRE
I really didn't want a settlement, Ed. I
didn't want the insurance, I didn't --

She brushes tears from her eyes.

ED
 (cold)
 You never asked me to do it. But you
 knew I would.

CLAIRE
 Men do what they do for me. I have no
 control over it.

Silence.

CLAIRE
 I gave Alfred's friend what we owed him,
 but it's not enough. He wants it all.
 He wants me.

ED
 I guess the free samples made the sale.

CLAIRE
 (pissed)
 You did this to me! You fix it!

She jerks her chair around the table, rolls to the door,
 POUNDS on it twice. Turns her chair.

ED
 What'd you tell Alfred's friend?

Claire smiles sadly. The Guard opens the door. Van Petton
 is still waiting outside.

CLAIRE
 I told him
 (looking right at Ed)
 to talk to my lawyer.

The Guard takes Claire out, pushes her down the corridor,
 back to her cell. Ed stands, numb, in the middle of the
 room, for a moment. Van Petton folds her arms, waiting.

Then suddenly Ed's walking. Out the door. Past Van Petton
 without saying anything. Disappearing the way he came in.

She knows what this means. Says nothing. Lips tight.

EXT. RIVER RAPIDS - NIGHT

The roiling, black water. RESTLESS CAMERA: a shape appears,
 a woman, helpless. Gasping for air. Then a man -- it's ED --
 grabbing the woman, arm around her chest like a lifeguard --
 fighting the current -- hauling her heroically to the shallow
 banks where --

BANK OF THE RIVER

Ed hauls the woman half out of the water. It's CLAIRE. The
 ROAR of the rapids is deafening. Ed coughs out water. Looks
 down at Claire.

She pulls out a nickel-plated .38, aims it between Ed's eye and FIRES.

ON CLAIRE

No expression as she puts the gun away. Stands. Then gropes in the darkness for a huge rock. She raises it over her head, and SMASHES it down on Ed's head, below frame.

Again. Again. Each time, the rock gets slicker with blood --

INT. ED'S HOTEL ROOM - DAWN

Ed shudders out of his night terrors, eyes wide, sweating. Faint, grey light through the windows.

BOO
(softly)
Edward.

Ed looks. Boo stands at the foot of the bed, fully clothed, suit and tie. As if he never sleeps.

BOO
I found the friend.

INT. DENVER COUNTY JAIL - RELEASE DESK - MORNING

as a DESK COP shoves some documents across a counter for a vaguely familiar young WOMAN -- her back turned -- to sign:

DESK COP
Case like this? Only reason they allow
bail is on account of her disability.

The woman scrawls a name, in several places. Pretty hands.

DESK COP
I mean, it's cheaper for us not to keep
her, and it's not like she's gonna get up
and run, is she?

A DOOR OPENS, and Claire rolls out, pushed by the Guard. Now we see the young woman who made bail, full-on --

-- it's Andi.

EXT. CENTRAL CITY - MORNING

A mining ghost town gone Vegas. Ugly faux-Victorian Casinos line the single road up the canyon. Neon and mine tailings.

BOO (V.O.)
Now might be an excellent time to retool
your mojo vis-a-vis women individuals ...

INT. CASINO HOTEL - THIRD FLOOR CORRIDOR - MORNING

Elevator doors open and Boo and Ed emerge. They walk down a long, pumpkin-colored corridor lined with numbered doors.

ED (V.O.)
This is not my mojo.

BOO
Whoa! What color is this carpet?

ED
And we're just going to talk to this guy, okay?

Boo pulls out a huge gun.

ED
(worried)
Boo.

BOO
She didn't ask you to kill him?

ED
No.

BOO
I thought she might of.

ED
No.

BOO
Hokay.
(re: his gun)
We're just going to talk to him. Mm-hmm.
Try and reason this out.

He checks the clip, slams it home. They stop in front of room 343. Ed puts his ear to the door, listening. Boo touches Ed's shoulder, gestures him aside. Taps on the door with his fingernail, judging the resonance.

Then puts his gun away, squares up. And PUNCHES his hand violently through the wood -- it SPLINTERS. He reaches and opens the knob from inside, extracting his scraped forearm and hand as he pushes the door open.

BOO
(wiggles his fingers)
Science.

Ed hesitates, Boo pushes past him, gun held at the end of a stiff arm -- they RUSH IN --

INT. CASINO HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

Boo spins and sticks his gun right into the face of a terrified MINIBAR MAID in the broken doorway.

She SCREAMS, scattering tiny liquor bottles everywhere.

BOO
Pardon moi.

He puts the gun down. The maid runs.

BOO
It would appear that the Big Man has checked out.

Sure enough, the maid has been getting the room ready for the next customer. No suitcases, no sign of Anderson. Minibar door wide open.

ED
He checked out. You sure this is the right room?

Boo scowls at him. Of course it is.

Ed wanders past the bed, glancing at the telephone. The MESSAGE LIGHT is flashing. Ed picks up the phone, retrieves messages:

THE PHONE
You have one new message --

Ed presses the pound key.

CLAIRE (V.O.)
(on the phone)
Hi, it's Claire. By the time you get this message I'll be gone ... so I just called to say --
(taunting)
FUCK YOU.

She hangs up. Ed is frozen --

TIGHT - CLAIRE

rising weirdly up through frame. We're --

EXT. UNION STATION PLATFORM - DENVER - MORNING

-- a special wheelchair lift takes Claire from a platform SWARMING with PEOPLE and their HUNTING DOGS, to train level where Andi is tipping the PORTER who brought their NEW, MATCHED, SAMSONITE LUGGAGE up.

ED (V.O.)
What time was she released?

INT. CASINO HOTEL - CORRIDOR - MORNING

Boo and Ed hurry back the way they came -- Ed shifting his cell phone to his other shoulder as he digs through the pockets of his clothes, frantic:

ED
 (on the phone)
 Well who the hell posted bail?
 (to Boo)
 Somebody sprung her.

He finds what he wants -- a business card --

ED
 (on the phone)
 What? Yeahyeah, I know it's privileged information, I'm her lawyer, asshole -- and I have the privilege to --

Dial tone.

ED
 (on phone, to dial tone:)
 -- know who made her bail ...

Boo shoves open a stairwell exit door -- Ed angrily CLAMSHELLS the phone shut --

EXT. UNION STATION - PLATFORM - MORNING

The train is pulling out. Anderson comes sprinting out of the terminal and chases it -- catching hold of a railing at the last moment and swinging up and into a passenger car.

O.S. ditty of TOUCH TONE DIALING and --

EXT. CASINO HOTEL - MORNING

Running to their car, Ed listens to his cell call ring on the other end.

ED
 Come on, come on --

Boo slides in behind the wheel of a Taurus rental car --

INT. AMTRACK TRAIN - PASSENGER CAR - ANDERSON

squeezing through the crowded cabin, his cell phone RINGING "Take Me Out To The Ballgame" irritatingly, until he stops and answers:

ANDERSON
 (into the phone)
 Yeah?

The TRAIN BLARES ITS HORN --

INTERCUT - CASINO HOTEL PARKING LOT - ED

PUSHING TIGHT as he LISTENS: to the tail end of the train's warning horn, to the clack clack clack of steel wheels slowly building speed on the rails ... putting it all together ...

ANDERSON (V.O.)
 (on the phone)
 Hello? Hel-lo?

Click. Ed hangs up.

INT. AMTRACK TRAIN - HANDICAPPED-ACCESS CABIN - ANDI

backs in, pulling Claire. The beds are put away. There's a place to park the wheelchair, a table, a tiny bathroom with an oversized doorway.

Andi squeezes past Claire, closes the door, and sags against it with a look of "what am I doing?"

CLAIRE
 I need a cigarette.

ANDI
 You can't smoke on a train.

Claire twists around in her chair and locks eyes with Andi.

CLAIRE
 You don't work for the railroad anymore.

EXT. I-70 - NORTH DENVER - MORNING

Aerial shot, PUSHING IN RAPIDLY on a rent-a-car --

BOO (V.O.)
 You think she's making a run with the money?

INT. RENT-A-CAR - ED AND BOO

Boo's driving. Ed has a big Colorado map spread out across his lap.

ED
 I don't know.

BOO
 You think he'll kill her if he catches her?

ED
 I don't know.

Tracing their location with his finger.

ED
Westminster. There's an overpass at
Sheridan and Highway 34.

EXT. SUBURBAN DENVER - MORNING

A passenger and freight train snakes through postwar housing developments, aiming for the tumble of foothills that front the Rocky Mountains.

INT. CABIN - CLAIRE

Smokes. The window is open, a prairie wind whips at her hair. Andi is in the bathroom, washing her face. She looks even younger, stripped of make-up. Vulnerable. Exposed.

CLAIRE
You're scared.

ANDI
I guess I am.

CLAIRE
We haven't done anything wrong.

ANDI
(unconvinced)
I know.

CLAIRE
It's like sex. There's nothing bad about it, but from the beginning, it's like they brainwash us to think that there is.

Andi drains the water from the sink, wipes her face with a paper-thin towel. Claire is staring at her when she turns.

CLAIRE
Listen. When we get to Portland, you can take your share of the money and do what you want. Stay, go. No strings, just like we agreed.

ANDI
I don't know what I'll do.

Claire nods. Puts her arms up --

CLAIRE
Can you help me get out of this chair?

Andi hesitates, then moves to Claire and reaches down -- awkwardly taking Claire into her arms as Claire puts her arms around Andi's neck --

CLAIRE
I'm just grateful you're helping me, you know? I just ... want this to be over.

-- Andi lifts -- Claire comes up out of the chair, full-height, their faces inches apart.

CLAIRE
I want to move on.

Claire KISSES HER, right on the mouth.

Andi is too stunned to resist -- she's holding a paraplegic in her arms, she can't exactly drop her.

But then it goes on ... and on .. and Andi is resisting -- twisting, trying to maneuver an uncooperative Claire to the bunk -- they lose balance, TOPPLE OVER LUGGAGE and onto --

THE BUNK

-- where Claire's body pins Andi against the wall.

CLAIRE
Or we can stay together.

Andi's face has blushed bright red, she struggles to get up --

ANDI
I, um, I'm sorry, this, wait --

Claire, brushing her lips across Andi's:

CLAIRE
-- women kiss better. It's a known fact.

EXT. RAILROAD TRACKS OVERPASS - DAY

Ed and Boo stand on the narrow sidewalk in the center of the concrete overpass, directly above the tracks. Watching the train come toward them, picking up speed.

BOO
So I guess the question of the hour is:
are you hankering to repossess the five
mil and get your ex-wife off the hook?
Or is this just an act of conscience
'cause you fucked the Fem-fatal?

Beat.

ED
I don't know.

Boo nudges Ed. He gets up on the concrete wall, throws his legs over and sits. Waiting.

THE ENGINE OF THE TRAIN

powers beneath them. The horn BLARES.

ED'S P.O.V. - DOWN AT THE TRAIN CARS

As they slip beneath him. A dozen feet beneath him.

ED

not going anywhere.

ED

Train doesn't make another stop before
when?

BOO

(behind him)
Grand Junction. Four hours.
(then)
Pick a flat one. Tuck and roll.

ED

I can't do it.

INT. TRAIN - CLAIRE'S CABIN - DAY

Andi struggles off the bed, clumsily over Claire and up onto her feet, as:

ANDI

I can't, I can't, I ...I just --

Then she's up, flustered, fighting with her hair, Claire turned, propped on one elbow, Mona Lisa smile:

ANDI

-- need a drink. A soda, or -- do you
want me --

Moving toward the door -- BANGS her head on the bulkhead.

ANDI

-- can I -- OW -- get you --

CLAIRE

I want another cigarette.

Andi reaches, finds them -- hands them to Claire, who seems to be enjoying Andi's fluster.

ANDI

I'm sorry.

CLAIRE

Don't apologize. Never apologize.

ANDI

I can't --

CLAIRE

-- we all make our own choices. I thought
maybe you --

ANDI

-- no.

Claire nods, okay.

ANDI

I'm gonna ... I'm gonna ...

She lurches out into the hall. Claire lies back on the bed with her unlit cigarette. And laughs.

EXT. RAILROAD TRACKS OVERPASS - DAY

BLUR of the train below, car after car ...

BOO

First eleven cars are passengers and baggage. Jump late, you're in the freight, gonna be doing a lot of open-air travelling to get forward, where Mr. Bad Guy and Mrs. Decker are.

(looking down)

There's one. Two. Three --

ED

I'm a coward, Boo.

Boo puts his hand on Ed's back --

BOO

You're not -- four -- you're a lawyer.

ED

(tries to psyche himself)

Damn it! Damn it!

BOO

ED

Five. Ed --

Maybe if I close my eyes.

BOO

No -- six --

He shoves Ed off --

BOO

Don't close your eyes!

EXT. TOP OF THE TRAIN - DAY

As Ed hits the access catwalk, stumbles, slips off -- barely catches himself and hangs on to the safety-rail.

RESUME - OVERPASS - BOO

Now he jumps onto --

EXT. CONTAINER CAR - DAY

-- BOO hits a BLACK TARPAULIN COVER, stretched tight -- hits it feet first, and slices through like a paring knife, disappearing.

EXT. TOP OF THE TRAIN - ED

crawls back onto the catwalk and stays there, on his hands and knees, shuddering. CALLS back at the container car --

ED

Boo?!!

INT. CONTAINER CAR - BOO

Up to his armpits in soybean meal. Flailing.

BOO

(to himself)

I'm stuck.

(then realizing)

I'm sinking.

Sure enough, each vibration of the train shifts the grain and Boo gets sucked further down. Like quicksand.

EXT. TOP OF THE TRAIN - ED

Crawling toward the ladder that leads down. And, of course, there's --

ED'S P.O.V. - A TUNNEL

Right up ahead.

RESUME - ED

Lunging for the ladder. Practically falling down it head first moments before the train enters the tunnel and

EVERYTHING GOES BLACK.

Clackclackclack of the train, and:

INT. SLEEPER CAR PASSAGEWAY

As the train comes out of the tunnel, Andi rocks down the hallway, unsteady, trying not to hyperventilate.

Through a door into --

A DINING CAR

Packed with PEOPLE having cocktails. Nametags shaped like dogs. A few heads turning as Andi squeezes through

ANDI

(to herself)

I'm okay. I'm okay.

Suddenly the Big Man, ANDERSON is right in front of her -- heading the opposite direction. Their eyes meet, but they don't know each other, so they do the awkward dance until Andi gives way and Anderson slips past her.

ANDERSON
(a mumble)
Thanks.

Andi thrusts herself forward through the cocktail party, to the bar, making people step out of her way --

INT. CONTAINER CAR - SAME TIME

No sign of Boo. Sunlight stabs down through the rip in the tarp.

Then he erupts from the soybean near the end of the container, pulling himself up the ladder until he's free. Covered with soybean chaff. He shakes some out of his coat. His gun falls out -- into the soybean meal. Swallowed.

BOO
Shit.

INT. SLEEPER CAR - ED

comes THROUGH THE PASSAGEWAY DOORWAY softly. Walks down the long compartment lined with closed doors.

There's no missing the big Handicapped logo marking the berth at the end. Ed stops, stares, trying to figure out his next move, then --

THE OTHER PASSAGEWAY DOOR OPENS

Ed and Anderson stare at each other.

ANDERSON

grabs Ed by the shirtfront and RAMS him head-first into the bulkhead, then pulls him away again and SLAMS him back into the outside side of the car.

ED
Oh man.

ANDERSON
(pissed)
Tell me about it.

INT. DINING CAR - ANDI - SAME TIME

at the bar, watching the BARTENDER make her drink.

ANDI
No Tabasco. No pepper.

A sharp nosed MAN with a dog-biscuit tie clasp leans over Andi's shoulder and breathes on her.

DOG MAN
Are you partial to long hairs or short hairs?

ANDI
I'm only in this for the castrations.

The Dog Man goes pale. Andi pays for the Bloody Mary and pivots away --

RESUME - SLEEPER CAR - ED

JAMMED up against the window by Anderson:

ANDERSON
Where is she? Where's my money?

ED
She gave you your money.

ANDERSON
She didn't give me shit.
(then)
Are you gonna be the new guy, is that what this is?

He pulls his gun out of his pocket and SHOVES it into Ed's mouth --

ANDERSON
Or did she ask you to kill me?

BOO (O.S.)
That's what I thought --

BOO

comes down the corridor from the other direction. Still shedding soybean chaff.

BOO
-- turns out he's here to be a hero. Ask him.

ED

uses the distraction to slip Anderson's gun and take a wild swing at Anderson, but --

ANDERSON

shoves Ed away, whips the gun around and OPENS FIRE as Boo charges him. Boo is blown backward, into Ed's arms.

WIDE - THE PASSAGEWAY

Ed stumbles away, holding the sagging -- gasping -- body of Boo. Claire SCREAMS.

ED
What have you done?! Jesus, what have
you done?!

INT. SLEEPING COMPARTMENT - CLAIRE

RAPIDLY PUSH IN on her face, hearing everything outside the compartment. Numb.

RESUME - PASSAGEWAY

Boo's blood is all over Ed. Anderson comes forward out of the cabin, gun aimed now at Ed's head --

ANDERSON
(a little freaked)
He came at me -- you saw him, he --

ED shoves Boo into Anderson. Giving Ed enough time to throw open the boarding door and jump --

EXT. TRAIN - ED

He grabs hold of the access ladder outside the sleeper car boarding door, and scrambles up on top of the car.

RESUME - ANDERSON

Disentangling himself from Boo too late to catch Ed.

ANDERSON
(to Boo)
This was your fault.

-- and he throws Boo out --

EXT. TRAIN - DAY

Boo's body comes hurtling into the heavy forest of a steep, remote mountainside ... disappearing into the thick foliage below grade.

ON TOP OF THE SLEEPER CAR - SAME TIME - ED

He's crawling backward as fast as he can. Reaches the end of the car and disappears down as --

AT THE ACCESS LADDER - ANDERSON

comes up from below. No Ed. Anderson ducks back down.

INT. ANOTHER SLEEPER CAR - PASSAGEWAY - ED

runs, legs wobbly, glancing back over his shoulder. Then ducking into a

SERVICE BAY

A nook for meal carts and linens. He strips off his bloody coat, balls it up, uses it to wipe his face, and hands, and discards it.

Beat. Panicky. Now what?

PASSAGEWAY - FOLLOWING - ANDERSON

as he moves deliberately from one car to another. He has his gun at his side, half-hidden ...

... He finds the service bay. No Ed. But the bloody sportcoat tells Anderson he's on the right track.

ANOTHER PASSAGEWAY - ED

comes to the end of the public access on the train. A door says: RAILROAD PERSONNEL ONLY. Ed glances back down the passageway.

Distorted, through the glass of the access doors, he can see someone coming.

He tries the metal door. It opens, and Ed slips into darkness --

BAGGAGE CAR - ED

He finds a light, turns it on, and suddenly the space erupts with BARKING DOGS -- at least two dozen of them in cages carefully positioned among the other luggage.

And they're all barking at Ed. It's deafening. Ed turns off the light again.

ANOTHER PASSAGEWAY - ANDERSON

he can hear the barking. He walks to the metal door marked: RAILROAD PERSONNEL ONLY. The barking stops.

Anderson tries it. Open.

Cautiously he slips inside --

BAGGAGE CAR - ANDERSON

Turning on the light to discover that the HUGE DOGS are all out of their cages. Ed has liberated them. They jump Anderson, as much from excitement as aggression --

-- Anderson gets tangled and falls.

He aims blindly at the retreating Ed. FIRES.

Ed is spun around, thrown to the floor. The dogs go berserk. Anderson reaches for the door handle, somehow gets it open, and the dogs surge through, into the train --

ON ED

wounded in the side, crawling for cover. He crams himself between two trunks and tries to be very small.

ANDERSON

struggles up, also bleeding. His eyes follow a very Ed-like smear of blood leading like a trail back through the baggage.

The gun is up again.

ANDERSON

Edward?

INT. SLEEPER CAR - PASSAGEWAY - ANDI

Comes through the door, and suddenly the dogs are on her. Surreal. Thundering past her, around her, in a surging pack.

RESUME - BAGGAGE CAR - ANDERSON

Gun out, poised. Just in case. Not moving yet.

ANDERSON

You know what's weird, Ed? Survival.

Now he starts to walk, toward the loading door.

ANDERSON

Take Alfred. He did things for Claire -- like used my money to cover his losses and whatnot -- but, hey. And even what she supposedly did for Alfred was really just him doing it to himself -- I mean, all the sex stuff with me, that, to get my money just so he could lose it later. And lose her. 'Cause that's where it was going. Dumb fuck.

ON ED

fumbling for something behind his back --

ANDERSON (O.S.)

I dunno. She gets you doing things you've never done before, huh?

Ed pulls out Alfred's .38. Holds it like someone who doesn't really shoot guns --

RESUME - ANDERSON

ANDERSON

I mean, hell, look at me.

The baggage car is silent, except for the rumble of the train tracks below him, the creaking of the car.

ANDERSON

It's like -- you ever read those stories in Reader's Digest? True-life stories about people surviving incredible ordeals -- this logger who chews off his own leg to get out from under a tree that's crushed him ... I've always been, like, no way, could I ever do that.

(beat)

But here I am. And here you are. All on account of this ... one fucking woman.

INT. SLEEPER CAR - ANDI

discovers blood on the wall and carpet outside Claire's compartment. Scared, she tries the door -- it SLIDES OPEN:

Claire is gone.

But her wheelchair is here.

RESUME - BAGGAGE CAR - ANDERSON

As he YANKS open the baggage loading door, revealing:

A YAWNING EXPANSE OF OPEN AIR that plunges down into a DEEP CANYON, and a roaring river.

ANDERSON

It's primal. Medulla oblong stuff, your lizard brain, compelling you forward.

He walks cautiously back to where he knows Ed is hiding --

ANDERSON

Do you think she killed him?

(no response)

I don't. She didn't have to.

(no response)

Women like Claire, they never have to.

BEHIND ANDERSON - THE LOADING DOOR

slides back and forth on its rails as the train rocks. Daylight pulses across the inside of the baggage car.

ANDERSON (O.S.)

What's totally sick is I don't care if she did. Do you? I don't think you do, or you wouldn't be here ...

ANDERSON

comes around the stack of suitcases, gun ready, just in case Ed tries something stupid --

-- which of course he does.

WITH ED

.38 aimed at Anderson, he pulls the trigger. CLICK. Empty chamber.

ANDERSON
(took his breath away)
Holy --

Ed LUNGES out of a crouch like a caged ferret, drive his good shoulder into Anderson's chest and they CRASH BACKWARD into and over the baggage.

The .38 FIRES WILDLY, clatters free.

ANDERSON AND ED

fighting like a lawyer and a guy who knows what he's doing -- ferociously and one-sided, with Anderson quickly getting the better of the lawyer -- trying to WHACK Ed off of him with the side of the gun in his hand, but Ed CLIMBS ONTO HIS BACK and they whirl together --

-- Anderson twists, SLAMS into the wall next to the open baggage door --

-- dropping his gun, which TUMBLES AWAY.

-- and knocking the wind out of Ed, who falls away ... hits the floorboards of the baggage car and

FALLS OUT THE DOOR.

EXT. TRAIN - ED

Clutching the metal track of the sliding door as his body flops over the open air of the canyon, like a limp flag. The narrow bed of the train track rushes by, beneath his legs.

ED'S P.O.V. - THE BAGGAGE CAR DOOR

sliding on its rails toward's Ed's hands --

RESUME - BAGGAGE CAR - ANDERSON

-- catches the door and shoves it open wide again.

Looking down at Ed: who won't let go, but has no strength left to pull himself in. Anderson PICKS UP THE .38 and shoves in the waist band of his pants, and crouches down.

For one curious moment we think he might help Ed.

ANDERSON
I'm doing you a favor, man, really.
(leans closer)
I mean, eat it now or eat it later.
(MORE)

ANDERSON(cont'd)
 She's the constant. We're the variables.
 You, me -- the Big Man -- Alfred, or Mr.
 John Doe -- it's all the same to her. Cue
 up and wait your turn.
 (smiles)
 But you jumped the line. So.
 Survival of the fittest, right?

He puts his foot on Ed's hand, to crush his fingers. But --

CLAIRE
 Don't --

Anderson turns his head to look --

CLAIRE

is in the middle of the boxcar. Standing there.

ANDERSON
 You're walking.

He watches, amazed, as Claire takes three uncertain steps forward and throws herself at Anderson. Her hands hit squarely on his back and push --

ANDERSON

goes sailing out the open boxcar doorway. Very, very surprised.

CLAIRE

stumbles and falls to the deck of the baggage car, face-to-face with Ed.

EXT. TRAIN - ANDERSON

falling, tumbling down into the canyon without a sound. Into the rocks and water.

INT. BAGGAGE CAR - CLAIRE AND ED

She stretches her hand out to him.

CLAIRE
 Take my hand.

He does, but --

CLAIRE
 Let go of -- grab hold with both hands,
 it's the only way I can -- help you --

Ed stares at her. If he lets go -- and she lets go -- he's history.

CLAIRE
 Trust me.

He can't. Claire sees this in his eyes.

CLAIRE

No no no no no no ...

And suddenly she's up on her feet again, fighting angry tears, pivoting sharply away as ED HEARS:

Barking.

Dogs dancing in, wildly happy. .

People. From the Cocktail Party -- with the dog nametags -- and RAILROAD EMPLOYEES. They ENGULF Claire and keep Ed from sliding out the door.

And then ANDI IS WITH THEM -- she helps haul Ed in.

He lies back, exhausted --

ED'S P.O.V. - LOOKING STRAIGHT UP

This weird ballet of dogs and faces, VOICES and BARKING. The roar of the train. The pounding of his own frightened heartbeat.

An UPSIDE DOWN ANDI, face etched with worry:

ANDI

You're shot. Jesus, he's been shot. Ed?
Oh God. Hang on, baby, it's gonna be ...
it's gonna be okay. Ed? Ed? Where's
Claire ...?

ED

The money.

ANDI

Forget about the money. Ed?

ED

closes his eyes.

INT. TRAIN - SLEEPER CAR PASSAGEWAY - CLAIRE

Moving aside so A DOCTOR and a CONDUCTOR can hurry past her. Then opening the door of her cabin, disappearing inside.

INT. HANDICAPPED SLEEPER COMPARTMENT - CLAIRE

Methodically rooting through her luggage, taking only what's important and throwing it into a big overnight bag. Then sliding:

A HARD SUITCASE

out from under the bunk. It's heavy. She lifts it --

EXT. FOREST - DAY

GLIDING THROUGH the underbrush ... FINDING BOO in a tangle of pine saplings, scrub oak and juniper. PUSHING in on his scratched and bloody face. He sits up abruptly -- spitting blood -- and puts his hand to the bullet wound on his neck.

BOO
(very hoarse)
Good Lord, I'm alive.

He tries to get up, falls over. Sits up again. As he starts to rip a strip of cloth from his shirt, to make a bandage for his neck --

INT. FIRST CLASS COMPARTMENT - DAY

Claire walks through, perfectly composed. Finds an empty berth, puts her overnight bag onto the overhead rack and slides the heavy suitcase under the seat.

She sits, lets her head float back against the headrest.

PUSH IN - ON CLAIRE'S FACE

After a moment, she turns her head and looks out. Expressionless. Images float across the glass in front of her like reflections on a pond.

Shapes, shadows. Mountains, clouds, sky.

Fragmenting her. Obscuring her. Until she's gone, replaced by a wash of pale blue that becomes

EMPTY SKY.

and then, soaring through it:

TIGHT - A BODY

spinning at the end of a rescue harness, dripping water.

It's Anderson, bloated, blue, his battered face turned to one side. Eyes milky.

BOO (O.S.)
I bought you some mink oil for those
boots, Dale. I'd hate to see 'em ruint.

DEPUTY DALE (O.S.)
Nobody ever gives the local authority the
time of day, you noticed that?

He floats down to where --

EXT. GLENWOOD CANYON - A FEW DAYS LATER

-- COP CARS and RESCUE VEHICLES are lined up. Anderson's body dangles from the cable of a SMALL CRANE.

BOO
I think you should write a letter.

Deputy Dale stares moodily at the big bandage on Boo's neck.

DEPUTY DALE
Bullet missed your jugular and your spine?

BOO
Act of God.

FIREMEN haul Anderson gently down to the ground.

DEPUTY DALE
(still ticked:)
Did anybody tell us this was a murder investigation? No. Did anybody say, hey, Dale --

BOO
What's that -- in his pants?

The Deputy glances at Boo. Eyebrows raised.

BOO
(as if surprised:)
Is that a gun?

The Deputy squats, grimaces, reaches down into Anderson's trousers, and unearths the .38 revolver caught there.

Handling it carefully, in case there's still fingerprints.

INT. GLENWOOD SPRINGS HOSPITAL - PRIVATE ROOM - ED

sits in bed, silent.

VAN PETTON (V.O.)
The gun found on the assailant, Mr. Anderson, was the same gun used to murder Alfred Decker.

WIDER, revealing Ruth and Van Petton, standing. Ed's in his street clothes, his wounds bandaged, his arm in a cast.

ED
Really? The .38? Probably what he shot me with.

He looks at Van Petton, innocently. She looks at Ruth.

VAN PETTON
What a convenient coincidence.

ED
There are no accidents.

VAN PETTON
And Mrs. Decker?

ED
She's got her five mil, and she's gone.
(then)
I don't believe she ever got on that
train the other day, Lieutenant. It was
all a ruse to throw Mr. Anderson off her
trail.

RUTH
On account of the money her husband owed
him.

ED
Oh, I think he wanted more than the
money, Detective Ruth.

Van Petton sighs deeply, takes a short lap around the bed,
shaking her head.

VAN PETTON
What did you want, Mr. Meyer?

ED
Me.

Van Petton waits.

ED
I was just trying to save my ass.

Van Petton stares at him, not believing it.

VAN PETTON
They're gonna come after you, Ed. Yank
your Bar card. Make it so you can't
practice.

ED
I know.

RUTH
What are you gonna do?

ED
Find myself a lawyer.

EXT. TROPICAL PARADISE - DAY

Palm trees lean, lunatic, against an idigo sky incandescent
with sun.

Cigarette smoke swirls, lazy.

Claire stands on the balcony of a nice hotel, looking across
a lush rain forest dotted with whitewashed stone colonial
houses, to the sparkling sea.

Her face is flushed, beautiful, skin seeming to shimmer in the heat.

EXT. ANDI SLADE'S FARMHOUSE - DUSK

The door opens and Andi stands, barefoot, startled to find Ed facing her. Ed's got grocery bags.

ED
Should I make you strip to prove you're not wearing a wire?

ANDI
Why would anyone bother to tape your conversations? You haven't made a truthful statement since third grade.

ED
Your hair looks good.

ANDI
My hair sucks.

Andi touches it, self-conscious. But begrudgingly pleased by the compliment. Off the grocery bags:

ANDI
I thought we were going to talk about your legal troubles.

ED
Talk law, eat dinner.
(moving past her)
I miss my kitchen.

INT. ANDI'S KITCHEN - DUSK

Ed is making a meal. He's really good at it. And really messy.

ANDI
Looks like the criminal fraud charge is a smokescreen.

Andi sits at the center counter, sipping Cabernet, and sorting through piles of legal documents, subpoenas, warrants.

ANDI
Unless you actually stole the gun from the accident investigation lock-down.

ED
(evasive)
If I lived here, I would use this kitchen every night.

ANDI

(flat)

That was the plan.

(then, sighs)

Look, they're trying to bait you into pleading a nolo, which would establish reasonable cause for both the disbarment proceeding and your abandoned clients' civil suit.

ED

I forgot how much I admire the way your mind works, Ms. Slade.

ANDI

Fuck you.

ED

Seriously.

ANDI

Meyer. Stay on the point, please --

ED

I am on point. And I just want to say, for the record, how sorry I am about the money.

ANDI

Don't worry about it.

ED

Even though you turned on me like the bitter feminist you wish you could be --

ANDI

Ed. Don't worry about the money.

He looks at her. Frowns.

EXT. TROPICAL PARADISE - HOTEL BALCONY RAILING - DAY

A cigarette rests, abandoned, thin thread of smoke goes straight skyward.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Claire heaves the heavy suitcase up onto the bed. Tired, happy. Kneels down and CLICKS it open.

IN THE SUITCASE:

Nothing but white typing paper. Reams and reams of it.

CLAIRE

as her mouth opens in utter horror --

INT. ANDI'S FARM HOUSE - DUSK

SUITCASES, untouched, from Andi's train trip, wait in the cool darkness of Andi's front room. One of them IDENTICAL to the suitcase Claire just opened.

ED
She kissed you?

THROUGH THE KITCHEN DOORWAY: Andi watches Ed as he cooks.

ED
Did you like it?

ANDI
(vague)
I don't know. Did you?

Camera PULLING SLOWLY BACK ... Andi gets up, stretching. And Ed turns to face her.

ED
Jesus.

A long beat.

ANDI
Ed, I've got a question: did you jump on that train for me, or for her?

They're staring at each other. Intense. Behind Ed, the food is sizzling, steam billowing up.

ED
You know me, what do you think?

Beat. Andi sighs.

ANDI
I think the civil suit is bad.

ED
Oh.

Andi walks past him, running a hand lightly over his shoulder, disappearing from the doorway ... leaving Ed alone.

ANDI (O.S.)
Yup. Could get us tied up in trials forever.

Ed smiles slightly. PULL BACK through the front window ... into the yard, the glow of the kitchen warm in the blue darkness of Texas hill country. Crickets and quiet.

ED
Okay. Well.
 (beat)
Who can I sue?

BLACKOUT.

THE END