

THE APPRENTICE

By

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FADE IN:

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

A small, middle-class home. Nice shrubs. No flowers.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A shaft of light shines through the peephole in the front door. The light flickers.

CLICK. Slowly, smoothly, the door opens.

A MAN IN BLACK enters the house. The chill of the night turns his breath to steam. He closes the door. CLICK.

The Man sneaks across the dark living room like a shadow.

HALLWAY

The Man In Black glances into the kitchen before continuing quietly down the dark hallway.

BEDROOM

A MIDDLE-AGED MAN sleeps in a double bed. Shadows move across his face. The silenced barrel of a handgun appears at his temple.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Two flashes erupt from behind the curtains of the bedroom window. THWIP. THWIP.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

The Man In Black searches a few cabinets. He knocks over a big stack of plastic cereal bowls and they fall, bouncing and CLATTERING all over the room.

The Man fights a strong urge to go ballistic. Then he collects himself and picks up one of the bowls.

BEDROOM

He places the bowl next to his victim's head.

KITCHEN

He rummages through the refrigerator, finally coming out with a canned drink and a restaurant to-go box.

He sits down at the kitchen table and has a little snack.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Peace.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

The Man in Black rummages through some drawers.

He cuts his finger on a knife and struggles not to howl in pain. Then he finds what he's looking for - one of those little basting brushes.

BEDROOM

The Man enters sucking on his finger. He rakes the comforter and blanket off the dead Man's body and spreads the remaining white sheet out over the bed.

He picks up the bowl next to the dead Man's head. Stirring the contents lovingly with his basting brush, he circles the bed, regarding it like a painter would a blank canvas.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

After a few still moments, the Man In Black exits through the front door and melts into the shadows.

CUT TO:

EXT. ANOTHER HOUSE - TWILIGHT

A white van pulls up in front. A graphic on the side says:

The Daily New Yorker. Your Window to
the World.

The van pulls away, leaving a big bail of newspapers.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

An adolescent mess. There's a Lump in the bed.

The digital alarm clock says 5:46.

Now it says 5:47 and MUSIC is blaring. The Lump in the bed GROANS and starts to move.

CLICK. The bedside lamp illuminates a nearby bulletin board. Concert tickets, photos and news clippings with headlines like "Police fear serial killer," "Murder or Satanic ritual?" and "Sorcerer slayings continue."

Shadows move across the wall as the Lump rolls out of bed.

A shadow moves across a shelf stocked with books bearing titles like The Encyclopedia of Serial Murder, The Zodiac Killer and Mindstalker: Hunting Humans Who Hunt Humans.

A nearby TOILET FLUSHES as the VCR blinks 12:00, 12:00, 12:00 - videos like The Silence of the Lambs, Seven, Kiss the Girls and The Cell are stacked on top of it.

A pair of jeans gets dragged off the back of a chair.

The top of the stereo is littered with cassette tapes of acts like Slayer, Ozzy Osbourne and Marilyn Manson.

Shadows move as the Lump leaves the room.

THE LUMP'S MOM (O.S.)

Chad? Do you want breakfast? Chad?

EXT. CHAD'S HOUSE - DAY

CHAD emerges from the front door lighting a cigarette. He's nineteen years old and pathetically average. Jeans. Black t-shirt. Moldy jacket. He's visibly tired. Or maybe he always looks that way.

CHAD'S MOM (O.S.)

You're not smoking are you?

He takes a long drag off his cigarette and surveys a world that annoys him deeply.

CUT TO:

EXT. RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Chad listens to his headphones as he advances down the street with a big canvas bag full of newspapers.

LATER

Chad delivers papers with contempt. Ignoring the sidewalk, he mopes across everyone's front yard, uncomfortably close to their houses.

He flings a paper. SLAP. It nails someone's front door.

He throws the next one even harder. SLAP!

Now he grits his teeth. SLAP!!

And on he goes - assaulting houses with the morning news.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

A familiar middle-class home. Nice shrubs. No flowers.

A newspaper violently SLAPS the front door. There are two weeks of The Daily New Yorker on the doorstep already.

Chad doesn't notice. He just continues on his way, angry and oblivious.

CUT TO:

INT. THE DAILY NEW YORKER - CITY ROOM - DAY

Everyone's busy, including a certain thirty-something reporter. According to the nameplate on his desk, his name is MARC KUYKENDALL. He's ruggedly handsome and too confident for his own good. He laughs at his own jokes.

Right now his CELL PHONE IS RINGING. So, he answers it:

MARC

Kuykendall. Wha--? Yes! Fantastic!
You know that's not what I meant. In
Queens? You got an address for me?
Alright, yeah, call me back.
I'll bring the money. A tip's a tip.
Just call me right back. Alright.

(hangs up)

Yes!

Marc bolts to an office and sticks his head in. The nameplate next to the door says:

Murray Harvey, City Editor

MARC (cont'd)

Murray! We--

There's nobody there, but...

MURRAY (O.S.)

I've told you a thousand times: Don't
exaggerate.

Marc turns around and there's MURRAY HARVEY walking this way with a JUNIOR REPORTER.

MURRAY (cont'd)

This is a newspaper, not an ad agency.
Gimme a rewrite by noon or your fired.

The Junior Reporter looks at his watch and hustles away. Murray's a big, imposing man. A lifetime in the newspaper business has put him in a bad mood. Indefinitely.

MARC

Murray! We got a possible sacrifice.

MURRAY

The Sorcerer? Whereabouts?

MARC

Old house in Queens. I'm waiting for an address.

Over Marc's shoulder, Murray sees Chad enter the City Room.

MURRAY

Hm, he's late.

MARC

Yeah, it's been almost a month now since the last murder. Should I--

MURRAY

(to Chad)

You're late.

CHAD

I know.

MARC

Hey Chad, your route's in Queens. You see anything?

CHAD

Like what?

MURRAY

(to Marc)

Go.

Marc jumps to it.

MURRAY (cont'd)

(to Chad)

Where the hell have you been?

CHAD

I was doing my route.

Murray looks at his watch, then eyes Chad with disapproval.

MURRAY

See anything?

CHAD

Like what?

MURRAY

Forget it. You never made it to Parker's yesterday. We had to run the lead without pictures.

CHAD

It was raining.

MURRAY

Screw you it was raining. Do your job!

CHAD

Sorry.

MURRAY

Damn right you're sorry. A sorry paperboy, sorry copy boy.... If it wasn't for your father you wouldn't have a job here - or anywhere else. Find Kim. She's got some runs for you.

Murray storms off. Marc comes back for his cell phone.

MARC

I always forget this.

CHAD

What happened in Queens?

MARC

Murder. Got a tip it's the Sorcerer.

CHAD

Really?

MARC

Or maybe it was you.

CHAD

Yeah, it was me. Want the interview?

MARC

Ha, ha. Maybe when I get back.

Here comes Murray again.

MURRAY

What are you still doing here? You want him to start sending letters to the Times?

Marc slings his camera over his shoulder and takes off. Murray glares at Chad. Chad shuffles away.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

A familiar middle-class home. Nice shrubs. No flowers.

Except this time there are COPS everywhere.

An old brown Buick pulls up with red and blue lights flashing in the windshield. A plain-clothes police detective everyone calls SAM gets out and sizes up the situation. A nearby COP greets him:

COP

Hey there, Sam.

SAM

Kenny here yet?

COP

Yes, sir. Right inside.

Sam is past retirement age and a little overweight, but he wears his overcoat and fedora with pride. He lumbers toward the house, nodding hello to various Cops along the way.

He's greeted at the front door by KENNY SPARKS, a plain-clothes detective in his thirties - a nervous intellectual type who writes everything down on a clipboard. Everything.

SAM

When did it happen?

KENNY

(consulting his clipboard)

Uh, we think about two weeks ago. Probably. One of the neighbors noticed all the newspapers.

Sam notes the pile of newspapers on the doorstep. He nudges them with his foot.

SAM

Hm. Find out who the paperboy is.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sam enters and Kenny writes on his clipboard as he leads him through the house.

KENNY

We're pretty sure it's the Sorcerer.

SAM

The paperboy?

Kenny doesn't get it.

SAM (cont'd)

How many times I gotta tell you,
Kenny? He's not a sorcerer.

HALLWAY

Sam glances into the kitchen. Officers are snapping photos and dusting for prints.

SAM (cont'd)

He's a murderer.

BEDROOM.

SAM (cont'd)

But it's him alright.

The bed is exactly as the Man in Black left it. Except now there's a huge pentagram crudely painted on the sheet.

In blood.

SAM (cont'd)

Jesus.

Two INVESTIGATORS dust the room etc. - shielding their faces and grimacing from the stench. Sam and Kenny do the same. Sam and the Investigators ad lib greetings, then...

SAM (cont'd)

What'd he use this time?

Kenny consults his clipboard for the answer, but...

INVESTIGATOR #1

Two bullets to the head.

SAM

Same gun as always?

INVESTIGATOR #1
Looks that way.

INVESTIGATOR #2
Couple weeks ago from the look of it.

Investigator #2 starts to throw the sheet back, but...

SAM
No, spare me. Just some guy, right?

INVESTIGATOR #1
Late forties.

KENNY
He worked for Transit Authority.
Subway schedules.

SAM
Subway schedules. Whole city prob'ly
wanted him dead.

INVESTIGATOR #2
Found quite a stash of child
pornography under the bed here.

SAM
Hm. I'd a killed the bastard myself. Not quite
like this. Jesus.

(on his way out)
Keep up the good work, boys. Lemme
know if you find anything unusual.

Funny looks.

SAM (cont'd)
You know what I mean.

HALLWAY

Sam and Kenny retrace their steps through the house.

KENNY
He left the kitchen in some disarray. There
was no sign of forced entry, but--

SAM
There never is. Smart little bastard.
Thinks he's got everything covered.
So far, so good.

KITCHEN

The murderer's restaurant box is still on the table.

SAM (cont'd)
What, he have a little snack?

KENNY
Uh, we're looking into it.

SAM
Cocky sonofabitch.

LIVING ROOM

KENNY
Nothing but partial fingerprints.
Again. But we think we found some of
his blood back in the kitchen.

SAM
That's a first. You sure it's his?

KENNY
Well, It's not the victim's. We--

SAM
Aw, shit.

Sam's looking out the front door.

Marc Kuykendall's on the sidewalk, pleading with a SHIFTY-EYED COP to let him closer to the house.

SAM (cont'd)
How the hell does he get here so fast?

EXT. FRONT YARD - DAY

Marc sees Sam and wants to pounce, but the Shifty-eyed Cop won't let him pass - albeit a little too apologetically.

MARC
Detective Moriarty! Sir! It's him.

Sam lumbers to his car. Marc meets him there brandishing a handheld tape recorder.

MARC (cont'd)
It's the Sorcerer, right?

SAM
How the hell do you get here so fast?

Marc eyes the Shifty-eyed Cop — who self-consciously stuffs a wad of cash into his breast pocket and moves away. Sam doesn't see.

MARC
(to Sam)
It's the Sorcerer, right?

SAM
Nah, just some guy died in his sleep.

MARC
Oh, c'mon! Sir. I talked to his neighbor...

Marc gestures to a WOMAN on the edge of the property. Some COPS are comforting her.

MARC (cont'd)
Said she saw a "circled star" in the bedroom. In "red paint"? C'mon Sam, gimme something. Please?

SAM
...Dammit. I know as much as you do. Bastard's been killing somebody every other week since Christmas. Leaving that stupid symbol....

MARC
You're saying it was him? For sure?

SAM
Dammit.

MARC
This one's number nineteen, then. I hear the guy's been dead for a while.

SAM
Maybe.

Marc snaps a picture of the house. Sam eyes the newspapers piled at the front door.

SAM (cont'd)
You got any idea who the paperboy is around here?

Marc smiles like he just remembered a funny story.

CUT TO:

EXT. A CITY SIDEWALK - DAY

Chad walks with purpose, flipping through some loose sheets of paper. He tries to hop a cigarette out of his pack like a hotshot, but he ends up spilling them all on the sidewalk.

A few cigarettes fall through a subway grate...

And land on a DEAD MAN's body.

Chad stares in disbelief.

The Dead Man stares back.

Dumbstruck, Chad kneels for a closer look.

A puddle of blood expands steadily under the Man's head. And there's a pentagram scrawled on his white dress shirt.

In blood.

Chad's startled when TWO SMART-ASS TEENS walk by:

SMART-ASS TEEN #1
Smooth move, dumb ass.

SMART-ASS TEEN #2
Need a light?

They LAUGH, but they don't stop.

Chad watches them walk away...

And sees a suspicious-looking MAN IN BLACK emerge from a subway entrance further up the street.

He looks down at the Dead Man again, then back at the subway entrance. There's yellow tape stretched across and a few signs that make it obvious the entrance is closed.

The Man In Black ducks under the tape and looks around. He's wearing a black suit and tie, but he doesn't wear them well. Late thirties. Hair greased back. Kinda squirrely.

Chad lowers his head, shuffling the paper in his hands. Looking up slightly, he sees the Man turn and walk away.

Chad follows from a safe distance. Maybe too safe. He has to jog to catch up from time to time.

He follows block after block. A corner here, a corner there, into the subway....

CUT TO

INT. SUBWAY

Chad follows the Man in Black to his platform and hides behind a payphone.

Out of breath, eyes fixed on his quarry, Chad picks up the handset and dials 911 - but here comes the train.

The Man follows a crowd into one of the cars. Fascinated, Chad hangs up the phone and gets on an adjacent car.

The train pulls away.

INT. SUBWAY CAR

Chad watches the Man through the window between the cars.

CUT TO:

EXT. QUEENS - DAY

The Man In Black emerges from the subway.

Followed by Chad.

The Man walks a few blocks before cutting through an alley.

Chad waits for him to get through to the other block before following. But when he runs to catch up, the Man is gone.

Chad studies the sidewalks, the streets. Nothing.

He gets bumped from behind and it scares him half to death. But it's nobody.

NOBODY

Excuse me.

Chad recovers, looks around some more. Nothing. Damn.

CUT TO:

INT. DAILY NEW YORKER - CITY ROOM - DAY

Marc watches the TV mounted near the ceiling.

ON THE TV: A politician speaks from a podium. The graphic at the bottom of the screen says he's "MAYOR CHAD GIBBONS." Sam and Kenny and some others stand noticeably behind him.

MAYOR GIBBONS

"We have searched the scene of every crime, following up on any clue or lead that might bring a solution."

Marc's CELL PHONE RINGS.

TELEJOURNALIST

(rising above the crowd)

"Mayor Gibbons, do you plan to..."

The PHONE RINGS again. Eyes glued to the TV, Marc answers.

MARC

Kuykendall. Shit, really? Two in one day?

MARC (cont'd)

Today?! When? Alright, alright.

(writing)

Yeah, I got it, I got it.

Marc hustles to Murray's office.

Murray's at his desk. In a bad mood as usual.

MARC (cont'd)

Murray, I'm--

MURRAY

Has Chad made it back yet?

MARC

Haven't seen him. Listen, they found another sacrifice. I'm headin' out.

MURRAY

Two in one day?

MARC

Looks like it.

MURRAY

"Sorcerer claims two!" Get outta here.

Marc grabs his camera and hurries to the elevator. When the doors slide open, there's Chad. As they exchange places:

MARC
Murray's looking for you.

CHAD
What for?

Marc shakes his head like it's a shame. And as the elevator doors glide shut, the smarmy bastard says:

MARC
Good luck.

Chad stands at the elevator wondering what to do. Then he resigns himself to his fate and heads for Murray's office.

When he gets there, Murray's on the phone, so he moves away. Until Murray snaps his fingers - "get in here!"

MURRAY
Sid, can I call you back? I gotta yell at somebody. Right.

MURRAY (cont'd)
(to Chad)
Where the hell have you been all day? I buzzed your pager twice.

CHAD
Uh, I think I lost it.

Murray restrains his anger.

MURRAY
That's comin' outta your paycheck. Y'know you've been delivering papers to a dead guy for the last two weeks?

Chad chews on his fingernails.

MURRAY (cont'd)
Kuykendall investigates a Sorcerer killing in Queens this morning and there's twenty papers piled up at the front door. On your route! How is it you still have a job at this newspaper? Two jobs, no less? One fucking promise. You fuck up at least once every single day and I never fire you. If it wasn't for promises I made to your father, Chad....
(at a loss for words)
Dammit. You start a new route in the morning. Get outta here. Get out.

Chad gets out.

MURRAY (cont'd)
And try to do your damn job!

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

CHUMPF. A big bail of newspapers hits the sidewalk. The headline says:

Sorcerer claims two.

EXT. CHAD'S HOUSE - DAY

Chad comes out of the house with his headphones on.

MUSIC UP

He stops to adjust the volume on his walkman.

MUSIC WAY UP

Chad keeps his headphones on as the MUSIC CONTINUES throughout the following sequence:

1) EXT. CHAD'S FRONT YARD - DAY

Chad manhandles today's bail of papers.

2) INT. CHAD'S GARAGE - DAY

Chad admires today's headline. He tears out the article, then starts folding papers and stuffing them into his bag.

3) EXT. RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Chad walks his new route - right through everyone's yard. He consults an ungainly computer printout of addresses before violently flinging each paper.

4) EXT. AN OLD WOMAN'S HOUSE - DAY

The owner of the house sits on her porch. According to the name on her mailbox, she should be called MS. BASFORD. Her CAT lounges on the porch next to her.

Here comes Chad. Without looking, he flings a paper and knocks over a potted plant. The Cat runs off while Chad tromps through one of the gaudy flower beds in the yard.

Ms. Basford curses him violently, but Chad's too into his music and address list to even notice.

5) EXT. A LITTLE YAPPY DOG'S HOUSE - DAY

Chad doesn't see the little YAPPY DOG in the window - barking at him as he walks by.

The Dog follows Chad from window to window, BARKING away. Chad never sees it.

6) EXT. SHITTY LITTLE WHITE HOUSE - DAY

Bars on the windows. A NEWSPAPER SLAPS the red front door.

HOLD on the door as Chad walks away.

The MUSIC FADES. The door opens.

Holy shit. It's the MAN IN BLACK. Except he's not wearing black this time. He's wearing an old pink bath robe. And he seems rather annoyed.

He looks around in vain for the asshole that "delivered" his paper. Then he picks it up and smiles proudly at the front page before retreating into his house.

CUT TO:

INT. DAILY NEW YORKER - CITY ROOM - DAY

Marc watches TV with keen interest.

ON THE TV: Mayor Gibbons pounds on his podium and addresses the press while Sam stands in the entourage behind him looking decidedly annoyed.

MAYOR GIBBONS

"But nevertheless, results. We must have results. Results!"

An ANCHORWOMAN takes over the screen just as Chad shows up.

ANCHORWOMAN

"That was Mayor Chad Gibbons, denouncing for the second time yesterday the serial killer known as the 'Sorcerer' after Daily New Yorker reporter Marc Kuykendall..."

MARC

Marc Kuykendall! You hear that?! Huh?! Chad? Check. Me. Out!

CHAD

Yeah. Great. I read the article. It was pretty good.

MARC

Pretty good? It was damn good. Your dad asked me to keep your name out of it – the one on your route.

(pause)

You don't talk to him much, do you? Your dad.

CHAD

He's always busy.

MARC

He's a busy man.

CHAD

(annoyed)

I guess that's why he's always busy.

MARC

How'd the new route work out this morning?

CHAD

(shrugs)

Different houses.

MARC

Any murder victims on it? Ha, ha.

CHAD

Yeah, but they don't subscribe, so....

MARC

Ha, ha. You'll let me know if you see anything suspicious, though, right?

MURRAY (O.S.)

Chad!

Marc winces. Chad rolls his eyes and marches off to face the firing squad.

CHAD

Yeah, I'll keep an eye out.

ON THE TV: The Anchorwoman wraps up.

ANCHORWOMAN

"The police have announced no clues as to the identity of the killer."

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

ANCHORWOMAN

"The murders are still a mystery."

CHUMPF. A big bail of newspapers hits the sidewalk. The headline says:

Murders still a mystery.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Chad delivers papers in his usual style.

EXT. MS. BASFORD'S HOUSE - DAY

Chad doesn't realize he's walking through Ms. Basford's flower bed again. Without looking, he tosses a paper and suddenly a stream of water hits him in the face. He freaks.

Ms. Basford stands on her porch holding her garden hose on him. Her Cat stands behind her like some kind of henchman.

MS. BASFORD

You stay outta my flowers! Everyday!
You and the mailman and the kids over
there and... (blah, blah, blah).

Chad runs away soaking wet while MS. BASFORD drones on.

EXT. YAPPY DOG'S HOUSE - DAY

Chad's wet clothes stick to him. His shoes make obscene noises with every step. Shaking water out of his walkman, he's distracted by the Yappy Dog, moving from window to window - YAPPING away.

Chad glares at the mutt as he slogs by.

EXT. MAN IN BLACK'S HOUSE - DAY

Chad flings a newspaper at the front door and like a shot the Man in Black opens it from the other side.

This time he's wearing a black t-shirt and blue jeans. Except he must have his shirt on inside out - the telltale blob of an iron-on decal is showing through.

MAN IN BLACK
Tryin' to knock it down?

Chad turns and gapes. He stares, petrified, into the face of a killer.

MAN IN BLACK (cont'd)
Tryin' to knock my fuckin' door down?

Chad shakes his head "no."

MAN IN BLACK (cont'd)
What, it was a fragment of my imagination? Some kinda optical delusion? Every morning, it wakes me up.

The Man picks up his moist paper.

MAN IN BLACK (cont'd)
What the fuck? It's all wet. What the fuck happened?

CHAD
...I, uh, I got caught in a sprinkler.

MAN IN BLACK
Oh. That sucks. What's your name?

The Man approaches Chad - who looks like he's trying to think of something to say besides "Chad."

CHAD
Chad.

Oh, well.

MAN IN BLACK
Steve.

The Man in Black/STEVE offers his hand. Chad drops some papers shaking it. Steve helps him pick them up.

STEVE
Sprinklers. That shit's exactly why I don't water my yard, man. Hey, nice shirt.

CHAD
Thanks. Um, yours is inside out.

STEVE
Yeah. Aerosmith - can't stand 'em.

Steve peels the shirt away from his chest.

STEVE (cont'd)
Sticks to my chest, too. Man, you're fuckin' soaked. You want a towel or something?

Chad looks like a deer caught in the headlights.

CUT TO:

A LITTLE RED LIGHT

STEVE (O.S)
This one looks pretty clean.

CHAD (O.S)
Thanks.

STEVE (O.S)
So, you like deliverin' papers?

CHAD (O.S)
Not today.

STEVE (O.S)
I hear ya. Y'know, Ted Bundy was a paperboy.

CHAD (O.S)
Huh?

STEVE (O.S.)
Ted Bundy? Serial killer?

CHAD (O.S.)
Yeah?

STEVE (O.S)
Yeah, he delivered papers.

CHAD (O.S)
Yeah, uh, David Berkowitz was, uh, a mailman.

STEVE (O.S.)
Son of Sam? No shit. Everybody knows that. You know Gacy was a shoe salesman? In Chicago?

CHAD (O.S.)
John Wayne Gacy? Yeah, he had all the bodies buried under his house.

STEVE (O.S)
Yeah, that guy. Shoe salesman.

CHAD (O.S.)
I thought he managed a restaurant.

STEVE (O.S)
Chicken.

CHAD (O.S)
Huh?

STEVE (O.S.)
Chicken place. After the shoes.
(musically)
Everybody needs a little KFC.

CHAD (O.S.)
Ha, ha. Wasn't he also like, a clown
or somethin'?

STEVE (O.S.)
Who, Gacy?

CHAD (O.S.)
Yeah, after the chicken place, I think
he was a clown. "Pogo the Clown"?

STEVE (O.S.)
"Pogo the Clown"? No shit? Not a very
funny clown.

The red light goes out, leaving behind TOTAL DARKNESS.

CHAD (O.S)
Um, the little red light went out.

STEVE (O.S)
Oh, yeah.

FOOTSTEPS come closer and hinges GROAN as Steve opens the door to his oven.

INT. STEVE'S OVEN

Steve shovels wet newspapers into the grimy oven while Chad watches from his seat at a rickety card table. A tattered pink towel hangs around his neck.

STEVE
Mom used to do this all the time. Dry
'em right out.

Hinges GROAN as Steve closes the oven door.

INT. STEVE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Steve brushes his hands together after a job well done.

CHAD

Y'know, that's a great disguise.

STEVE

...Disguise?

CHAD

John Wayne Gacy. Who would ever accuse a clown of being a serial killer?

STEVE

Oh. Shit, I would. I hate fuckin' clowns.

CHAD

...You fuck clowns?

STEVE

Heh. That's funny. I always hated clowns. Chalk white faces, big lips: all bloody red - scare a kid to death.

CHAD

Ha, ha, scares me.

STEVE

Not surprised.

Steve likes to sit on the backs of chairs with his feet in the seat. He does this now as he unfolds a wet newspaper on the card table. He refers to the front page:

STEVE (cont'd)

So, what do you think of this "Sorcerer" guy, huh? Talk about scary. You guys get any more letters up there lately?

CHAD

Huh?

STEVE

From the Sorcerer. Y'know, he sends those letters to the paper?

CHAD

Oh. No. I mean, I don't think so.

STEVE

Hm.

CHAD

When did you mail it?

Oh, shit. Way to go, Chad.

The two men stare at each other for a moment – like they're trying to read each other's minds. Finally, Steve stands.

STEVE

What did you say?

Chad cowers, scared shitless. He stands. Backs away.

CHAD

Uh, I saw the, the.... Uh, um...

Chad motions to the oven.

It's producing quite a bit of smoke.

STEVE

Aw, shit!

Steve busts his ass bolting to the oven. He opens it to some huge flames – a real fire.

STEVE (cont'd)

Shit!

Steve shields his face with his arm. He searches the kitchen frantically for... anything, while Chad beats at the flames with his pink towel.

Steve throws a nearby cup of coffee into the oven and sparks fly. The guys jump back as the lights in the kitchen flicker and burn out.

Thick black smoke billows out of the oven.

Chad struggles, COUGHING, to get closer with his towel.

STEVE (cont'd)

Get it wet! Get it wet!

Steve yanks the towel away from Chad and darts to the sink.

Chad knocks the card table over grabbing for Steve's newspaper. He fans the flames, COUGHING, until Steve returns with the wet towel.

Steve drapes the soaked towel over the burning newspapers and kicks the oven door closed.

That seemed to do the trick.

STEVE (cont'd)

Shit.

Steve and Chad stand breathless in the smoking half-light of the kitchen.

STEVE (cont'd)

Thanks for helpin' save my house, man.

CHAD

...Will you teach me?

STEVE

What?

CHAD

I want you to teach me... what you do.

STEVE

What? Are you serious?

CHAD

You can teach me. You're The Sorcerer.

Steve studies Chad for a moment. Then he opens a drawer and takes out a big steak knife. Morning sunlight from the window glints off the blade.

CHAD (cont'd)

Are you gonna kill me?

Steve places the blade on the palm of his own right hand and pulls it across without flinching. Blood fills his palm and runs off onto the floor.

He offers the knife to Chad.

Chad flinches hard as he cuts his own right hand.

Steve takes the knife back and stabs it into the counter.

He offers his bloodied hand. Chad takes it. The two men share a short silence. A solemn silence. Until the knife topples over and falls CLATTERING to the floor.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - DAY

A huge room packed with desks. Lots of activity. Sam enters and good mornings his way toward his office.

Meanwhile, Marc Kuykendall's friend, the Shifty-Eyed Cop sits at one of the desks listening to a handcuffed loser named EDDIE "confer" with his deadbeat LAWYER.

EDDIE
Because I dint do nuthin'!

EDDIE'S LAWYER
Eddie--

EDDIE
It's harassment! These guys just want me to go to jail or somethin'.

EDDIE'S LAWYER
Eddie, c'mon--

EDDIE
You c'mon. I was only lookin'--

INT. SAM'S OFFICE - DAY

Kenny and two men in suits wait for Sam.

Agent SCOTT RITCHEY sits in Sam's chair and fidgets with a paperweight. He's a blonde-haired, blue-eyed frat boy who probably thought it would be cool to be in the FBI.

Agent DOUG JOHNSON is an older man - gray temples, glasses. He looks at everybody like he knows some dark secret about them. He sits comfortably on the corner of Sam's desk talking quietly with Kenny.

Meanwhile Eddie and his Lawyer continue to go at it:

EDDIE(O.S.)
-- in the bag to see what was in it!

EDDIE'S LAWYER (O.S.)
Don't, don't talk about the bag now,
Eddie. You got a right to be silent.

Kenny's eyes light up. Agent Ritchey springs nervously out of Sam's chair.

KENNY
Sam! These men--

SAM

What'd I tell you, Kenny?

Sam walks by the office without looking. Kenny fidgets with his clipboard and explains:

KENNY

Um, coffee. First thing.

The three men wait, listening to Eddie plead his innocence.

EDDIE'S LAWYER (O.S.)

Eddie, please.

EDDIE (O.S.)

No, I want a whatchacallit.

EDDIE'S LAWYER (O.S.)

What?

Kenny sharpens his pencil in the electric pencil sharpener. Then his eyes light up as...

Sam walks by with a cup of coffee.

Kenny settles back down and watches Eddie through the door.

EDDIE

A test. A... a telegraph test.

EDDIE'S LAWYER

What are you--

EDDIE

A lie-detecting test.

EDDIE'S LAWYER

A lie detector--

S.E.C.

You mean a polygraph test?

EDDIE

Yeah, what he said.

EDDIE'S LAWYER

You want a--

S.E.C.

That can be arranged.

EDDIE'S LAWYER
 (to S.E.C.)
 Please.
 (to Eddie)
 Eddie, you want a polygraph, I'll have
 to set up with the judge.

EDDIE
 But I dint do nuthin'!

EDDIE'S LAWYER
 I'll set up with the judge, okay? A
 polygraph. Alright?

EDDIE
 ...I gotta go to jail?

EDDIE'S LAWYER
 A few days, but--

EDDIE
 But I dint do nuthin'!

EDDIE'S LAWYER
 A few days, Eddie! Things take time!
 I'll talk to the judge, okay? Okay?

EDDIE
 ...I get free food, right?

Finally, Sam shows up with his coffee and today's Daily New Yorker. He shuts the door and tosses the paper on his desk.

SAM
 "Murders still a mystery." That's what
 I call good press.

KENNY
 Sam, um, these men are from the FBI.

JOHNSON
 (shaking hands)
 Detective Moriarty. I'm Doug Johnson
 from the Bureau's Investigative
 Support Unit. My associate, Scott
 Ritchey.

RITCHEY
 (shaking hands)
 Detective Moriarty. Good morning.

SAM

Call me Sam.

Sam plops into his chair and gets comfortable.

SAM (cont'd)

Johnson, huh? You wrote that book.

JOHNSON

Oh, you've read it?

SAM

No.

CUT TO:

INT. DAILY NEW YORKER - CITY ROOM - DAY

Chad distributes the day's mail. He's changed into some dry clothes, and his right hand is poorly wrapped in gauze.

Marc notices the hand.

MARC

What happened to you?

CHAD

Huh? Oh, I, uh, I cut it.

MARC

Paper cut? Ha, ha... Newspaper?

CHAD

Yeah. Sandy said give you this.

MARC

Oh, yeah. Listen... what are you doing for lunch today?

CHAD

What do you care?

MARC

I don't care. But if you're not doing anything, we can go to lunch. We can talk. We never talk.

CHAD

We never talk because you're always pumping me for information.

MARC

Wha--? What do you--

CHAD
I don't know anything.

MARC
About what? I'm not--

CHAD
I don't know anything.

MARC
(stops playing innocent)
How could you not know anything? Your dad's the--

CHAD
I don't ask him questions and he never says anything. I never see him anyway.

MARC
Never see him? Chad, you live at home.

CHAD
I sleep at home. I don't hang out there. I told you, he's busy and I never see him, okay?
(glances up at the TV)
Unless he's on TV.

ON THE TV: It's the same footage as before - of the Mayor pounding his podium while Sam stands behind him, annoyed.

MURRAY (O.S.)
Chad!

CHAD
Shit! Lemme guess: I'm late again and nobody got their paper this morning. I can't do lunch today anyway. I'm meeting somebody.

MARC
Ohhhh, anyone I know?

MURRAY (O.S.)
Chad!!

CHAD
You wish you knew.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Steve wears mirrored sunglasses that are too big for his face. His right hand is bandaged much like Chad's.

STEVE

I dunno. This is freakin' me out, man.

CHAD

What?! Why?! We made a pact.

STEVE

"A pact." I don't know what I was thinkin', man. It was the adrenaline or something. I wasn't rational.

CHAD

But--

STEVE

I'm a professional, man! I don't--

CHAD

You get paid to kill people?

STEVE

Who said anything about getting paid? Look: you helped save my house from burning down and I'm grateful, okay? And maybe I owe you something. But maybe I don't, since I was helping you out in the first place, okay?

CHAD

What's the big deal? I just want you to show me the ropes.

STEVE

Look: bonds develop between people who go through traumatic situations together; I understand that. But that doesn't make it rational. It doesn't make it smart.

CHAD

But--

STEVE

You know who I am, man. How do I know you won't... turn me in or somethin'?

CHAD

Turn...? Why would I turn you in?

Chad shows off his bandaged hand.

CHAD (cont'd)

We made a pact, man! In cold blood!

Steve mulls it over.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE CAFETERIA - DAY

Sam, Kenny, Johnson and Ritchey move through the food line.

SAM

Take me: I been on homicide for twenty-seven years.

RITCHEY

So you said.

Johnson scolds Ritchey with a look.

SAM

That's right. Twenty-seven years without a psychological... whatever.

RITCHEY

A psycho-behavioral profile.

SAM

Right, a stereotype. Twenty-seven years, good old-fashioned police work. Every crime can be solved with good old-fashioned police work.

JOHNSON

I'm not debating that, Detective. But you're oversimplifying. A good psycho-behavioral profile is more than a stereotype. If you'd read my book, you'd know that.

Sam rolls his eyes.

JOHNSON (cont'd)

All I'm saying is behavioral science can play an important role in police work - "good old-fashioned" or otherwise.

SAM

Psychobabble crap. Just like the insanity plea.

JOHNSON
The insanity plea?

SAM
All across America, guys are killin'
people, pleadin' insanity. I haven't
heard of one of 'em - not one - that
was insane enough to kill somebody in
front of a cop. That's insanity, my
friend. Injustice.

JOHNSON
I agree one-hundred percent.

RITCHEY
What's your point?

SAM
...How old are you?

RITCHEY
Older than I look.

KENNY
What was the name of that book again?

CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Steve and Chad walk and talk as they finish their Fat
Burgers and Super Sodas. Their injured hands don't help.

Steve's mouth is full.

STEVE
"Mime halka."

CHAD
What?

STEVE
(swallows)
"Mindstalker."

CHAD
"Hunting Humans Who Hunt Humans." Doug
Johnson.

STEVE
Johnson. Right.

CHAD
I have that book.

STEVE
Well, there you go.

Chad doesn't get it

STEVE (cont'd)
The book. It tells you everything you
need to know about what I do.

Chad still doesn't get it

STEVE (cont'd)
Profiles. You read the book, find out
what the killers who got caught were
like, then you act the exact opposite.
(points to a gravestone)
See that one? That's one of mine.

CHAD
Really?

STEVE
See, this guy, Johnson, he says serial
killers fit a profile, right? Like
most of 'em hang out with cops or
whatever - some kinda power trip or
something. Fuck that. I hate cops.
Avoid 'em like the plague, man.

CHAD
That seems like common sense.

STEVE
I don't have an attack dog. Don't
drive a Volkswagen van. Never been a
security guard - don't even want to be
a security guard. I mean it might be
cool, but.... I don't have a criminal
record - never got so much as a
parking ticket. I own one gun,
perfectly legal - waiting period,
license, all that shit. See?

CHAD
See what?

STEVE
The characteristics. I don't fit the
profile. Conscious effort.

CHAD

That's it?

STEVE

What else do you want to know?

CHAD

I wanna learn how to... y'know...
(looks around, whispers)
Kill people.

STEVE

Man, you don't get it. The killin'
part's easy. You gotta know how to get
away with it.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE CAFETERIA - DAY

Sam and the gang are eating. Sam's in the middle of a rant.

SAM

What, he thinks we're just gonna let him get
away with it?! We got partial prints. Hair
samples, carpet fibers.

JOHNSON

Detective--

SAM

The guy slips up, we're gonna catch
him! You know how lucky this guy is?

JOHNSON

Detective--

SAM

Luckiest serial sonofabitch since...

RITCHEY

O.J.?

JOHNSON

Detective Moriarty, Mayor Gibbons
didn't request our assistance because
of any negligence on your part. In
fact he had some very good things to
say about the investigation - about
you in particular. I understand you're
putting off your retirement?

SAM

Until this case is closed, that's right. And I don't need you or your candy-ass partner to--

RITCHEY

Hey!

JOHNSON

Sam, Agent Ritchey and I are not here to usurp your authority or to take over your case. We're here to assist you. This is your case. Trust me, the Mayor thinks you're doing just fine.

SAM

So he calls in the goddam feds.

RITCHEY

Hey, if you don't want our help--

JOHNSON

Scott, please.

(to Sam)

Why did the Mayor request our assistance? Honestly, I think he read my book and--

SAM

Oh! Wait! Wait, when was that book published, Kenny? Jesus, we coulda nabbed this guy in June!

JOHNSON

Well, I wouldn't go quite that far.

SAM

I would. Isn't that when the Mayor first called your office? I remember, I was pretty pissed. So was the Commissioner. If you're so gung-ho to help us out, what took you so long to get here?

RITCHEY

Hey! There are 24,000 police agencies in the U.S. alone. Our unit gets--

JOHNSON

(giving Ritchey the hand)

Detective Moriarty, on behalf of the FBI, I'm sorry to keep you and your department waiting. There were--

SAM

Hey, don't apologize to me. Go down to the cemetery or the morgue. Apologize to everyone who got murdered before you got here - all the "sacrifices."

JOHNSON

...So, you don't believe this "Sorcerer" is a genuine occultist?

SAM

Hell no! "The Sorcerer"? Marc Kuykendall at the Daily New Yorker came up with that one. Prob'ly writin' the TV movie right now. "The Sorcerer." It's tabloid crap!

CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Steve and Chad.

STEVE

It's tabloid crap. The papers came up with it. That guy at the paper - kooey... kendalkoo, whatever.

CHAD

Marc came up with it?

STEVE

You know him?

CHAD

Uh, no. Not really.

STEVE

Well, I got him eatin' outta my hand. "Sacrifices." Ha, ha.

CHAD

So, you're not really a Satan worshiper?

STEVE

Please! Do I look like fuckin' Richard Ramirez to you? I'm not even Hispanic.

CHAD

What about the symbol?

STEVE

I saw it in a book. It's got a lot a baggage. It's another reason the cops'll never suspect me. They think I'm sending people to hell? I don't care where they're goin'. I'm just killin' 'em. Meanwhile I got the cops lookin' for a fuckin' Satan worshiper.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE CAFETERIA - DAY

Sam and company carry their trays to the dishwasher.

SAM

He's no Satan worshiper, that's for sure. His stupid signature, the pentagram, isn't even upside-down half the time. Isn't that how the real Satanists do it? He's no Satanist. And his dog didn't tell him to do it either.

RITCHEY

Don't you mean his neighbor's dog?

JOHNSON

(to Sam)

What's your take on the letters?

SAM

Those letters are bullshit. He sends 'em to Kuykendall for chrissake! The guy's a sensationalist hack - believe me, I know. His editor's a good friend of mine. "Letters to the paper." This guy just wants to be famous.

CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Steve and Chad.

STEVE

Sure, I wouldn't mind being famous, goin' down in history like Jack the Ripper, Zodiac - those guys.

CHAD

You want people to know who you are?

STEVE

What? Fuck no! Are you crazy? I mean, sure, I want people to know who I am, but I don't want 'em to know who I am. Bundy, Son of Sam — God love 'em, but they got caught, y'know? I'm not into that kind of fame. You sure you haven't gotten anymore down there?

CHAD

Anymore?

STEVE

Letters!

CHAD

Oh. Yeah. Pretty sure.

STEVE

Hm. I usually trust the post office. Y'know, Berkowitz was a mailman — Son of Sam? Oh, yeah. We talked about that. I wonder if he got it and he's just sittin' on it.

CHAD

Who?

STEVE

Kooky... kind! That Marc guy! I figured him for a sensationalist. That's why I send the letters to him.

CHAD

Oh.

STEVE

Who delivers the mail down there?

CHAD

At the paper? Um...

CUT TO:

INT. DAILY NEW YORKER - DAY

Chad's holding a big stack of mail. Murray yells at him then storms away.

CHAD

Y'know, I don't know.

Chad drops the mail spitefully into a nearby waste basket.

Among the letters in the trash can is one with an unmistakable red wax seal on it - a pentagram.

STEVE (V.O.)

Hm. Guess I'll have to send him another one. Fuckin' post office.

CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Steve and Chad.

CHAD

So, all that stuff about the ice pick?

STEVE

Total bullshit - all of it. How should I know if those chicks were frigid? I mean, they probably were. But people are like 99 percent water, right? Frigid chicks - ice pick made sense.

CHAD

All that stuff about eternal souls melting in the pits of hell? That was all bullshit?

STEVE

Shit. Keep it down, willya?

CHAD

Ha, ha. You had me goin'.

STEVE

Exactly. See, that's why the cops'll never figure me out.

CUT TO:

INT. SAM'S OFFICE - DAY

Sam, Kenny, Johnson and Ritchey.

JOHNSON

Sounds like you've got him figured out, Detective. You may not have realized, but you've been applying techniques to this case that are described in my book. Your conclusions owe a lot to behavioral science.

RITCHEY

Yeah, as in "B.S."

JOHNSON

I'm serious, Scott.

(to Sam)

With your help, Detective, I think we can develop a solid profile of your prime suspect. Use it to draw him out in the open. Set a trap, so to speak.

SAM

A trap?

RITCHEY

Detective... Sam, if you give us a chance, we can help you catch this guy. We came here to help you.

Sam mulls it over.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY SIDEWALK - DAY

Chad and Steve leave the cemetery behind. The sidewalk is teeming with lunching New Yorkers.

STEVE

Whataya mean?

CHAD

I mean, how do you...? Like that midget: do you hate midgets or--

STEVE

No, I don't hate anybody. I don't wanna hurt anybody. I just... y'know.

CHAD

Then how do you choose 'em?

STEVE

I don't know. I get this... feeling, y'know? In the pit of my stomach, I know. It's a gift. It's like a... a fifth sense or something.

A PUSHY EXECUTIVE shoves his way between Chad and Steve without so much as an excuse me.

Chad's immediately victimized Steve's immediately pissed. He glares at the guy hurrying down the sidewalk.

STEVE (cont'd)
That guy's next.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

The bed is covered with grisly photos of crime scenes.

There's one photo of a woman in a bathtub with a plastic bag over her head. A pentagram is painted in blood on the bathroom tile.

There's another one of a black man on the hood of a white car. A pentagram is painted next to him.

And there are a dozen more photos like these - all grisly, all with bloody pentagrams featured prominently.

Also among the photos, there are some "Sorcerer letters" in plastic evidence bags - written in clipped-out words from newspaper headlines.

Agent Johnson sits on the bed reading from a file folder.

Agent Ritchey - dress shirt, boxers, black socks - enters from an adjoining room with a mixed drink in each hand. He sets one on Johnson's nightstand.

RITCHEY
What do you think?

Johnson swings his legs off the bed. He takes off his glasses and massages the bridge of his nose.

JOHNSON
I think Sam's right.

RITCHEY
(bitterly incredulous)
Really?

Ritchey takes to the bed on his knees. He maneuvers behind Johnson and massages his shoulders.

JOHNSON
For the most part, yeah. This guy crosses all the lines. Gender, race, ethnicity... social standing. No gratuitous mutilation. No indication of sexual dysfunction - oh, right there... ah, yeah. And he doesn't kill as a means to an end like a bank robber or burglar might.

JOHNSON(cont'd)

He kills for the satisfaction. A feeling of power or control. Domination.

RITCHEY

Fine. But... "he wants to be famous"?

JOHNSON

What can I tell you? The guy kills for kicks.

RITCHEY

Any ideas on how we catch him?

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

SAM (V.O.)

What're you talkin' about? Some kinda... P.R. campaign?

CHUMPF. A bail of newspapers hits the sidewalk. Headline:

Murders continue despite police efforts.

RITCHEY (V.O.)

Not exactly.

CUT TO:

INT. SAM'S OFFICE - DAY

Sam, Kenny, Johnson and Ritchey.

JOHNSON

You see, Sam. Right now you've got the press working against you. If this guy wants to be famous then he's getting what he wants. He's all over the news.

SAM

Every channel, every night. Local papers, USA Today--

KENNY

The National Enquirer.

SAM

I been dodging jack-ass reporters since I took on this case.

JOHNSON

I'm sure you have - and why not?
You've had nothing positive to say.

SAM

Still don't.

RITCHEY

No leads, no suspects....

SAM

Rub it in, why don't you? Buncha
tabloid journalists.

JOHNSON

Listen to me: why fight the public's
thirst for knowledge? Use it. Work
with the media, not against them. Use
them to your advantage.

RITCHEY

That's what the killer's been doing.

JOHNSON

Exactly. The press has turned him into
a celebrity. That's why he kills. This
is all based on your profile, Sam: he
wants to be famous. But if we can turn
the tables on him - use the press
against him - it's liable to make him
nervous. And that's what we want. Make
him nervous. Turn up the psychological
pressure.

RITCHEY

We want him to think we are this close
to knowing who he is.

KENNY

How do we do that?

Johnson eyes Kenny, then...

JOHNSON

Sam, you said you know an editor at
the Daily New Yorker....

CUT TO:

INT. DAILY NEW YORKER - COFFEE MACHINE - DAY

Murray wants to make coffee, but the big red can is empty.

He looks in the cabinet and seems displeased about finding nothing but a big brown can. He opens it, grumbling. And just as he's about to scoop some coffee into the filter, here comes Chad.

MURRAY

Chad! What is this?

CHAD

...It's coffee.

MURRAY

Coffee. Very good. It's the wrong color!

Chad looks inside the can.

MURRAY (cont'd)

The can.

CHAD

It's brown.

MURRAY

Yeah. Everybody likes the red.

CHAD

What's the difference?

MURRAY

The brown is brown. The red is red. Are you color blind now? Fix it!

He shoves the can into Chad's chest and storms off.

Chad notices the empty red can on the counter.

He pours the "brown" coffee into the red can.

JOHNSON (V.O.)

With your editor's help, the story stays in the news.

CUT TO:

INT. SAM'S OFFICE - DAY

Johnson and Ritchey, Sam and Kenny.

JOHNSON (CONT'D)(O.S.)
 But not in terms of the "murders" or
 the "Sorcerer", but in terms of the
 investigation - leads, evidence,
 suspects....

KENNY
 We don't have any suspects.

JOHNSON
 He doesn't know that. We'll make him
 think we have a long list of suspects.

RITCHEY
 We'll make him think he's on list.

JOHNSON
 He'll feel so much psychological
 pressure that he won't know what to do
 with himself. He'll be worried,
 inquisitive. He'll want to know what
 we have on him, so he can figure a way
 around it.

RITCHEY
 He might even contact the police
 directly to find out what we know.

SAM
 You think?

JOHNSON
 It's happened before.

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

JOHNSON (CONT'D)(V.O.)
 The first thing we'll do is announce
 that we're joining the hunt - the FBI.

CHUMPF. A bail of newspapers hits the sidewalk. Headline:

NYPD, FBI join forces.

SAM (V.O.)
 Heh. The Sorcerer's not the only one
 who wants to be a celebrity.

CUT TO:

EXT. STEVE'S HOUSE - DAY

Chad waits for Steve to answer the door.

JOHNSON (V.O.)

Ah, but all of a sudden he's not a celebrity anymore. He's the target of a manhunt. The predator becomes the prey. He starts feeling a little heat.

Steve opens the door and Chad shows him today's headline.

JOHNSON (V.O.)(cont'd)

Starts getting a little nervous.

STEVE

Big deal.

CHAD

But look here. It's the guy who wrote the book. He's going on "CBS This Morning."

STEVE

(reading)

"FBI's premier profiler...." Nobody watches CBS in the morning. Hey, you got a few minutes? I got something to show you.

CHAD

What is it?

Steve smiles big.

STEVE (V.O.)

You ready for this?

CUT TO:

INT. STEVE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Steve and Chad are in the hallway just off the living room.

CHAD

What is it?

STEVE

'Cause nobody knows about this.

CHAD

What is it?

STEVE

I mean the only reason I'm showing you is because you know who I am, right?

CHAD

What is it?

STEVE

I mean, you strike me as being a very sincere individual. Otherwise I would have killed you right away, y'know? I didn't get "that feeling" about you, so I figure you're alright.

CHAD

What is it?

STEVE

I mean you haven't turned me in now, you're not gonna, right?

CHAD

What is it?

STEVE

Man, it's great to have someone to share your hobbies with.

CREEEAK. Steve lifts up the grate to his furnace and looks at Chad like "isn't it great?"

CHAD

...What is it?

Steve climbs down into a dark shaft next to the furnace. He disappears into the darkness.

STEVE (O.S.)

C'mon!

CHAD

What's down there?

STEVE (O.S.)

C'mooooon!

Chad descends into the darkness.

THE DARKNESS

CHAD (O.S.)

What is this?

STEVE (O.S.)
Gimme a second to find the string.

CHAD (O.S.)
The what? Ow!

STEVE
Sorry.

FLICK.

INT. STEVE'S "BASEMENT"

A naked light bulb on the ceiling illuminates the small windowless room. Chad stands next to a ladder made of 2x4s.

CHAD
(takes in the room)
Whoa.

Imagine every great serial killer basement you've ever seen. Compared to those, this one is... kinda pathetic.

The walls are covered mostly with newspaper clippings, but also nudie pictures, posters, etc. - like patchwork wallpaper. The ceiling, too.

There's a makeshift workbench and a couple of chairs on one side of the room, and a set of rotting wooden stairs on the other. The stairs come to a dead end at the ceiling. The floor consists of wood planks.

STEVE
Huh? HUUUH?!

CHAD
This. Is. Awesome. What is this?

STEVE
Used to be a cellar. Stairs led outside. I blocked 'em off and planted grass over the top. You can't even see it from outside. Cool, huh?

Chad looks with wonder around the room. Some of the newspaper clippings are old and yellow.

CHAD
These are old.

STEVE
Yeah, that's when I lived in Seattle.

CHAD

How many people have you killed?

STEVE

I lose track. Not as many as cancer,
but I do my part.

CHAD

There was a killer named "Cancer"?
I've heard of Zodiac, but--.

STEVE

The disease.

CHAD

...So, where else have you lived?

STEVE

Seattle, San Diego... I been around.

CHAD

Why did you come here?

STEVE

This here was my uncle's house. Came
to visit, decided to stay.

CHAD

Cool. Wait, you didn't....

STEVE

No, no. He had a heart attack. Fifty-
five years young.

CHAD

Damn.

STEVE

Yeah, it's a shame.

Chad notices the floor and CLOMPS his foot a few times.

CHAD

The floor's wood.

STEVE

Yeah, it takes in a little water.
Whoever built it must've put the
planks down so it could run under.
Look here.

Steve points out a space under the stairs - no planks.

STEVE (cont'd)
Built up about a foot'n a half.

CHAD
Cool. I mean you don't have, like...
people--

STEVE
Fuck no! What am I, Pogo the Clown? I
used to hide stuff under there before
I blocked off the outside.

CHAD
Oh. Cool.

Chad notices a NYC subway map on the wall. Not the kind
commuters might see - more like a schematic.

CHAD (cont'd)
Subway system?

STEVE
Yeah. Got it from a guy worked transit
authority. Shows all the closed and
abandoned stations. Pretty handy.

CHAD
Can he get me one?

STEVE
He doesn't work there anymore.

CHAD
Mm. So... what do you do down here?

STEVE
Well... write all those the letters
for one thing.

Steve motions to an open cigar box filled with little art-
type supplies - an exacto knife, paste, etc.

Chad takes special notice of a little stamp-like utensil.
There's a pentagram on the end of it - and remnants of red
wax. He picks it up.

STEVE (cont'd)
That's what I seal 'em with.

CHAD
Cool.

STEVE

Yeah, I sharpen knives down here,
clean my gun - oh, check it out.

Steve takes one of those aluminum photographer's cases out from under his bench.

He opens the case and there's his gun, packed impressively in molded foam, along with a silencer and some extra clips.

Trying to impress, Steve picks up the gun and smoothly disengages the empty clip. But the clip bounces out of his bandaged hand and rattles on the floor.

STEVE (cont'd)

Shit.

He picks up the clip and pops it back into place. He points the gun at a centerfold and pulls the trigger - CLICK.

STEVE (cont'd)

Pow! Hot shit, huh?

He hands the gun to Chad.

CHAD

Cool. It's heavy.

Chad points the gun at various centerfolds on the wall.

CHAD (cont'd)

Pkch, pkch! Pkch! My dad has a gun,
but he keeps it locked up.

Steve hands Chad his silencer.

STEVE

Does your dad have a silencer? Screws
on the end.

CHAD

Awesome!
(screws it on)
Thwp! Thwp!

STEVE

What's your dad do?

CHAD

(unnerved)
Huh? Oh, he's, uh... uh--

STEVE
Wait, shh. Shh.

CHAD
What?

STEVE
Shh!

Steve's frozen – listening for... what? At any rate, Chad listens, too. Presently, they hear some SCRATCHING noises.

SCRITCH, SCRITCH, SCRAAATCH. Steve takes the gun from Chad, drops out the clip and jams in another one. He looks at the floor, pinpointing the noise. SCRITCH. SCRATCH....

THWIP. THWIP. Steve fires the gun into the floor. THWIP. THWIP. THWIP. What the hell is he doing?

STEVE (cont'd)
God, I hate fuckin' rats.

CHAD
...You fuck rats?

CUT TO:

MONTAGE

1) EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

CHUMPF. A bail of newspapers hits the sidewalk. Headline:

Sorcerer investigation moves ahead.

2) EXT. RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Chad has trouble delivering papers with his bandaged hand.

3) INT. STEVE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Agent Johnson is on "CBS This Morning."

Steve laughs, clapping his hands, then wincing in pain.

He gets up and opens his front door to Chad, who hands him his morning paper and some videos. Steve invites him in, but Chad's gotta go.

Well... okay, but just for a few minutes.

4) INT. DAILY NEW YORKER - DAY

Murray yells at Chad.

5) INT. POLICE HQ - DAY

Sam and company chat as they weave their way through HQ. They pass Eddie, finishing up his polygraph test.

The Shifty-Eyed Cop, Eddie's Lawyer and others look on as the TEST ADMINISTRATOR checks the final results.

EDDIE

Did I pass?

The Administrator eyes Eddie's Lawyer and shakes his head - "no." What a waste of time.

EDDIE (cont'd)

(shrugs)

Worth a shot.

6) EXT. STEVE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Steve and Chad watch "Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer." Steve points to the screen like he's teaching a class.

7) EXT. MS. BASFORD'S HOUSE - DAY

Chad throws a paper from the street while Ms. Basford shakes her hose at him. Her Cat stands beside her for moral support. The water strikes at Chad like a snake.

8) INT. PAWN SHOP - DAY

Steve and Chad look at guns. Steve acts like an expert. The clerk rolls his eyes.

9) INT. DAILY NEW YORKER - DAY

Murray yells at Chad.

10) INT. STEVE'S BASEMENT

Steve sits at his workbench, bits of newspaper everywhere. He drips some red wax on an envelope and applies his seal while Chad hovers over his shoulder.

He shrugs to get Chad off his damn back.

11) EXT. YAPPY DOG'S HOUSE - DAY

The Yappy Dog follows Chad from window to window. He tries to stare the mutt down as he walks, and at the last window, he flicks his cigarette at it.

It leaves the window and Chad walks on, triumphant. Until the Dog comes bounding around the house after him.

Chad bolts.

CUT TO:

INT. STEVE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Steve and Chad at the table. Chad ponders his food.

STEVE

You mailed that letter for me, right?

CHAD

(no, he didn't)

Yeah. Sure.

(beat)

What is this stuff?

STEVE

It's meatloaf. The liver makes it--

CHAD

Liver?!

STEVE

Trust me. It's great. I'm tellin' ya.

CHAD

What are these?

STEVE

Those are fava beans. They're good.

Chad eyes Steve, distrusting.

STEVE (cont'd)

What?

Chad examines the meatloaf suspiciously. Steve smiles.

STEVE (cont'd)

You want some wine to go with it? I got some Chianti in the fridge.

Chad drops his fork and gags. Steve laughs.

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

CHUMPF. A bail of papers hits the sidewalk. Headline:

Happy Halloween!

CUT TO:

INT. DAILY NEW YORKER - CITY ROOM - DAY

CHAD

Another letter.

Chad tosses an envelope on Marc's desk and hurries away. It's the latest "Sorcerer letter."

MARC

Hell, yes! Hm. No postmark.

He takes the letter to Murray.

MARC (cont'd)

We must be doing something right, he's not sending them to the Times.

MURRAY

On Halloween, no less. No postmark?

Marc shrugs. Murray examines the wax seal.

MURRAY (cont'd)

It's from him alright. Good, I gotta call Moriarty back anyway. They got some more stuff for us.

MARC

I can't believe you're letting them tell us what to print.

MURRAY

You want 'em to catch the guy?

Marc shrugs. Maybe he does, maybe he doesn't. Murray nods a silent approval and hands the letter back to Marc.

MURRAY (cont'd)

Where's Chad?

MARC

I don't know. He breezed through. He usually hangs around when we... when we get a letter.

Marc examines the letter, suddenly suspicious.

MURRAY

Huh. Maybe he's takin' care of business for a change.

MARC

(introspectively)

No postmark.

(to Murray)

Can I open this?

MURRAY

Nah, you better wait. You know Sam.

MARC

Ohhhh, yeah.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAUNDRY MAT - DAY

Chad stands in the window with a bag of fast food. He looks at his watch.

Here comes Steve with a big plastic trash bag full of clothes. He's wearing the usual blue jeans, but his shirt is a dazzling blue and yellow Hawaiian number.

INT. LAUNDRY MAT - DAY

Steve enters and proceeds to a washing machine. Chad almost doesn't recognize him.

STEVE

Hey.

CHAD

What are you wearing?!

Steve drags clothes out of his bag and stuffs them into the washing machine.

STEVE

It's wash day.

Steve takes a big box of detergent out of the bag. The box comes out upside down - all the powder's still in the bag.

STEVE (cont'd)

Aw, shit.

Steve takes a big double-handful of detergent out of the bag and starts to put it back in its box, then...

STEVE (cont'd)

Aw, fuck it.

He knocks the box away with his elbow and puts the handful of soap in with his clothes.

STEVE (cont'd)

How's it goin'?

CHAD

Just workin'.

They break out the food.

STEVE

You don't get off for Halloween?

(no)

It's not a fuckin' holiday?

(no)

Work. How can you stand that shit?

Same thing, day in, day out.

CHAD

Need the money.

STEVE

Oh. Yeah.

CHAD

What do you do for money?

STEVE

I got some stashed away. My uncle left me some with the house. Plus, most of the time when I... "work" I pick up... "tips," y'know what I mean?

CHAD

Ohhhhh. Cool.

STEVE

Yeah, I get by.

Steve searches his pockets for washing machine money.

STEVE (cont'd)
Say, you got any quarters?

CUT TO:

INT. SAM'S OFFICE - DAY

Sam's on the phone.

SAM
Will you get off my back about that?
I'm sorry, sweetheart. But I keep
tellin' you: I get there after the
shots are fired. I don't need it.
It's in the back of the closet. It's
too bulky. My shirts barely fit me as
it is. I don't need bigger shirts. I
don't need to wear it - I told you--
I know. I know. I love you, too.
Listen what's the boy been up to?
Haven't seen him for a couple days.

Kenny sticks his head in.

KENNY
The Daily got another letter.

SAM
Sweetheart? We got something, honey. I
gotta go. I told you: I don't need it.
It's heavy. It slows me down. I will.
I'm just going to the newspaper, but I
will. Love you, too. G'bye.
(hangs up)
Jesus.

KENNY
Wife again?

SAM
Who else? "Where's your bullet proof
vest?" She won't let it go.

KENNY
She's right, y'know. You should
wear it.

SAM
Why don't you call the feds, tell 'em
to meet us at the paper.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAUNDRY MAT - DAY

Steve and Chad are still eating.

CHAD

So... when's the next... "job?"

STEVE

Whatayamean?

CHAD

You know. When are we gonna... y'know.

STEVE

Whoa. Whoa. Slow down hot rod. You're just starting out.

CHAD

But, that guy's next. You said--

STEVE

Whoa, whoa, that guy's next for me.

CHAD

But... you said you'd show me the ropes.

STEVE

That doesn't mean you come with me.

CHAD

Why not?

STEVE

Lotsa reasons.

CHAD

Like what?

STEVE

Like... A) you're not ready.

CHAD

I'm ready.

STEVE

B) you'll probably get in my way, and 3)--

CHAD

I won't--

STEVE

And 3)... you're just not ready.

CHAD

We made a pact, man!
(displaying his hand)
Do you know how hard it is to throw
papers with this crap?

STEVE

(regarding his own hand)
Tell me about it. This is like half my
sex life. Takin' forever to heal.

CHAD

Fuck this. I gotta go.

STEVE

Look: The pact was for me to tell you
how it was done. Not for us to do it
together. This isn't like tennis.
Murder's not a team sport.

CHAD

Fine.

He heads for the door.

STEVE

Hey, wait. Lemme think about it, okay?

CHAD

Really? Yeah!

STEVE

Just think about it.

CHAD

Thanks, man.

STEVE

Hey, you still comin' over tonight?

CHAD

Yeah.

Chad leaves happy. Steve watches him go. Then he looks
around to make sure nobody's watching....

He takes off his jeans and puts them in the wash with the
rest of his clothes.

CUT TO:

INT. DAILY NEW YORKER - DAY

Chad gets off the elevator and heads for the City Room.

When he gets there, he sees Sam and Johnson talking to Murray while Marc takes notes.

Kenny and Ritchey examine the latest Sorcerer letter through a plastic evidence bag.

Marc glances up just in time to see Chad disappear into another part of the office.

CUT TO:

EXT. STEVE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Trick-or-treaters walk up and down the street.

INT. STEVE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Steve and Chad watch TV in the dark. The DOORBELL RINGS. They both ignore it. Then Chad stirs.

CHAD

I gotta go. Early route tomorrow.

STEVE

Yeah. See ya tomorrow.

Chad grabs his coat and heads for the door.

He tries to hop a cigarette out of his pack like a hotshot, but he ends up spilling most of them on the floor.

Bending to pick them up, he notices an 8x10 glossy on the wall - a black and white photo framed under glass - of a man in an army uniform who bears a resemblance to Steve.

CHAD

This your dad?

STEVE

Huh? Oh... yeah. Army. Bought it in Vietnam.

CHAD

Hm. You look like him.

STEVE

You think? Never really knew him.

CHAD

Yeah, my dad's always busy.

The DOORBELL RINGS again. Chad picks up his cigarettes.

CHAD (cont'd)

I thought about joining the army.

STEVE

Yeah, me too. Tried a few years back. Couldn't pass the psych - uh, uh, physiological thing - the test. They said I had a... bad back or something.

Chad nods and fiddles with his cigarettes.

STEVE (cont'd)

I figure what the fuck, y'know? Sleep whenever I want. No training, takin' orders. Can't go to war, doesn't mean I can't kill people, right?

DOORBELL.

STEVE (cont'd)

What's your dad do, again?

CHAD

Uh....

There's that question again. Chad's cigarettes fall once more from his nervous fingers. Picking them up....

CHAD (cont'd)

Uh... he... he, uh, works for the, y'know... the city.

STEVE

Bureaucrat?

CHAD

Yeah. Right. For the... city.

STEVE

Fuckin' bureaucrats. No offense.

None taken. THE DOORBELL RINGS again. The conversation stalls. Chad fidgets with the few cigarettes he has yet to put back in the box.

CHAD

Well... see ya.

STEVE

Yeah.

Chad opens the door and jumps back, startled.

DRACULA and the WOLFMAN are standing on Steve's doorstep.

DRACULA/WOLFMAN

Trick or treat!

Chad recovers and tosses a few cigarettes in the monsters' bags.

He grins at Steve on his way out.

Steve kinda smiles. Then his eyes drift to the photo of his dad. The smile fades.

ON THE PHOTO

Steve's tiny reflection stares from the middle of the room.

The DOORBELL RINGS.

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

CHUMPF. Bail of newspapers. Headline:

Sorcerer strikes again.

Chad approaches the papers. He can't believe the headline.

CUT TO:

INT. STEVE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Steve happily watches the morning news.

ANCHORWOMAN

"Halloween gave the city a real-life horror story last night in the form of another Sorcerer killing, this time in Manhattan. The victim was a 39 year-old businessman, believed to be...."

BOOM, BOOM, BOOM, BOOM. Someone's POUNDING on Steve's door. Steve investigates.

It's Chad - holding up today's newspaper.

CHAD

What the fuck is this?

STEVE

What does it look like?

CHAD

You coulda told me you were goin' out!

STEVE

I didn't know. It was an impulse thing. Halloween - made sense. Ha, ha, the guy was drunk off his ass. You shoulda--

CHAD

Shit! "I'll think about it" my ass!

STEVE

I did think about it! What's the big deal? I thought about it. I thought about it a lot. You're not ready.

CHAD

Stop saying that.

STEVE

It's true.

CHAD

Fuck you.

Chad storms off.

STEVE

You're not gonna tell anybody are you?

Chad turns around - hurt. He shakes his head and walks.

STEVE (cont'd)

Hey. Wait. Chad. I got an idea. Look: you're right, okay? You're right. You gotta learn sometime. How about tonight?

Chad stops.

CHAD

Tonight? Really?

STEVE

About nine o'clock?

CHAD
 ...Nine o'clock. Alright. Yeah.

Chad gets going again.

STEVE
 Don't forget to bring your stuff.

Chad holds a newspaper up in acknowledgement.

Steve watches him go.

STEVE (CONT'D) (V.O.)
 (cont'd)
 Alright...

CUT TO:

INT. STEVE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

STEVE (CONT'D)
 Whataya got?

Chad and Steve both wear black. Chad takes stuff out of a little green backpack while Steve nods his approval.

A navy blue ski mask, some rope, a flashlight, a pair of those long yellow rubber cleaning gloves....

STEVE (cont'd)
 What the fuck is this?

CHAD
 Rubber gloves.

STEVE
 Your mom's rubber gloves? Didn't I tell you about the nail polish?
 (no)
 Fingernail polish. Rubber gloves are for pussies, man. You put nail polish on your fingers, it fills in the grooves. You don't leave any prints.

CHAD
 Oooh, can I borrow some of yours?

STEVE
 I left the cap off last night. We'll have to pick up some on the way.

CUT TO:

EXT. DRUG STORE - NIGHT

Steve waits outside the corner drug store until Chad comes out with a little bag. He hands it to Steve. Steve takes the nail polish out of the bag.

STEVE
Wait, wait. What is this?

CHAD
Nail polish.

STEVE
It's pink.

CHAD
It's fingernail polish.

STEVE
You're supposed to get clear, dumbass!

CHAD
I didn't know they had clear! I don't wear nail polish!

STEVE
Shit. Go change it out. We don't have all fuckin' night.

Chad turns to find the store all closed up.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSE - FRONT - NIGHT

A nice two-story house in an affluent neighborhood.

EXT. HOUSE - BACKYARD - NIGHT

Chad and Steve sneak past the swimming pool. Chad's wearing his ski mask and rubbing his fingertips together curiously.

CHAD
It feels funny.

STEVE
Sh.

CHAD
It's all slippery.

STEVE
Will you shut up?

They make it to the back door of the house. Steve shoves a flashlight into Chad's hands.

Chad holds the light on the doorknob while Steve picks the lock. His fingertips are bright pink, but he picks the lock like an expert.

CHAD

How did you do that?

STEVE

Shh! Dammit.

Steve opens the door and they go quietly inside.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Steve guides Chad through the house. Chad trips on an oriental rug.

STEVE

Shh!

Chad knocks over a potted plant.

STEVE (cont'd)

Dammit!

FOYER

Steve motions for Chad to go up the stairs. Chad proceeds carefully. Steve SHUSHES him every time a step SQUEAKS.

HALLWAY

Steve leads Chad to a bedroom where someone is seemingly asleep in a double bed.

Chad and Steve take either side of the door and peer inside. Steve produces his gun and hands it to Chad.

Chad looks at him: "Me?!" Steve gestures adamantly for him to take the gun, so he does.

BEDROOM

Steve herds Chad into the room and up to the bed. A head of hair is visible on the pillow - which is where Steve silently instructs Chad to shoot. Twice.

Chad holds the gun up to his target, ambivalent.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Two flashes erupt from behind the curtains in the bedroom window. THWIP. THWIP.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Chad pulls his ski mask off. He looks kinda pale. Suddenly:

STEVE
Hell yeah!!

Chad jumps, severely startled.

STEVE (cont'd)
Yes! Yes! That was perfect. That
was... Waitaminnit....

Steve paws at Chad's "victim." His eyes widen and suddenly the body lunges toward Chad.

STEVE (cont'd)
Whooooaaa!

CHAD
Aaaaaaargh! Shit!

Steve LAUGHS HYSTERICALLY. The body turns out to be an inflatable sex doll wearing a wig. Steve "dances" with it.

Chad's disoriented. In the halflight of the room, he spies a wedding picture on the nightstand - Steve's in the wedding party, wearing black as usual (a tux).

CHAD (cont'd)
What the hell is this?

STEVE
It's a dry run. You were great.

Steve spins the doll's wig on his finger.

STEVE (cont'd)
Ha, ha, my uncle's bald.

CHAD
Wha--? Who's house is this?

STEVE
My uncle's. I'm house sitting.

CHAD

You said your uncle was dead.

STEVE

Dad had two brothers.

Incredulous, Chad looks down at the gun still in his hand.

STEVE (cont'd)

Blanks. But you were great, man.
Target serviced.

CHAD

Shit! I thought I killed somebody!

STEVE

You did! Ha, ha. No grudges, though.

Steve shoves the inflatable doll in Chad's face.

STEVE (cont'd)

Here, why don't you two kiss and make
up? Mwwaaahhh!

CHAD

Stop it! Stop!

Chad rips the doll away from Steve and shakes it furiously
by the neck while he rants:

CHAD (cont'd)

A dry run!? Thanks for fuckin' tellin'
me! I thought this was real!

STEVE

It was real. Almost. Ha, ha, ha.

CHAD

Shut up! It's not funny!

STEVE

Hey, what do want from me? I painted
my finger tips fuckin' pink for you,
man! I didn't have to do that. I can't
take you on a real job. What about all
that noise downstairs? That's how you
get caught. If this was real, that
woul'da blown it. Fuckin' noise. You're
not ready, yet. You need practice.

CHAD

Practice.

STEVE
That's right.

Staring contest.

CHAD
Fine.

Chad drags his now deflated victim downstairs. Steve follows, stopping at the top of the staircase.

CHAD (cont'd)
I'll prove I'm ready.

STEVE
Prove it? When?

CHAD
Tomorrow night.

STEVE
Yeah?

CHAD
Yeah!

STEVE
Who?

Chad glares up at Steve from the bottom of the stairs.

CHAD
I got someone in mind.

CUT TO:

EXT. MS. BASFORD'S HOUSE - DAY

Ms. Basford sits on her porch in her Sunday best. She waves as a green minivan pulls into the driveway.

SAM (V.O.)
I've never been comfortable at press conferences.

JOHNSON (V.O.)
You still think of the press as your enemy, Sam.

A MAN and a LITTLE GIRL get out of the van. The Little Girl runs to the porch.

JOHNSON (V.O.)(cont'd)
Remember what we're trying to
accomplish.

Ms. Basford gives the Little Girl a hug while the Man gets a suitcase from inside the house. He takes it to the van.

The Cat comes out the house - the little girl wants to pet it, but Ms. Basford herds the animal back inside and shuts the door.

JOHNSON (V.O.)(cont'd)
Chances are our guy watches TV. A
televised press conference'll be a
good way to get under his skin.

Ms. Basford holds the Little Girl's hand as they walk back to the van and get in. The van drives away.

CUT TO:

INT. SAM'S OFFICE - DAY

Sam, Kenny, Johnson and Ritchey walk in and settle down.

SAM
So far, we've gotten under his skin so
much that he killed somebody else.

JOHNSON
I think he did it to force our hand. And I
think he'll be extremely interested in what
we have to say about his most recent effort
- try to figure out if we're really on his
trail.

RITCHEY
I wouldn't be surprised if he showed up.

KENNY
Really?

JOHNSON
It's happened before.

RITCHEY
Ha, ha. One time, a guy actually stood up
during the question/answer session. The week
before, he'd left a bunch of angry messages
on the voice mail of the officer in charge -
told him he's a dumbass, his whole
department's made up of idiots....

RITCHEY(cont'd)

He asks a question at the press conference and right away a dozen officers recognize his voice....

JOHNSON

Ha, ha. They piled on him like it was a game of rugby.

SAM

Is that right?

KENNY

Ha, ha. Is that in your book?

JOHNSON

No.

CUT TO:

INT. STEVE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Steve watches the press conference on TV.

No, wait. He's asleep.

CUT TO:

EXT. MS. BASFORD'S HOUSE - FRONT - NIGHT

Peace and quiet.

BACKYARD

Chad's dressed all in black except for his white socks and yellow rubber gloves. He sneaks through some bushes with his little backpack. He ends up next to a chain link fence.

All of a sudden, a dog attacks the fence, BARKING.

Chad scrambles out of the bushes and crouches behind a bird bath until the dog shuts up. Then he puts on his ski mask and sneaks up to the house.

He checks a few windows. Locked. The whole house is dark.

At the back door, he takes a strange, wiry utensil out of his bag and fumbles with the lock.

After a short attempt to pick the lock, he abandons the effort and moves to a small window next to the door. It's a tad above eye level and just big enough for him.

He pries the screen off. It slips out of his hands and falls on the walk with a dull CLATTER.

The dog next door BARKS again.

Chad crouches, motionless until it stops. Then he slides the window open and tries climb up, but it hurts his hand.

He moves a nearby trash can under the window.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Chad clumsily worms his way through the window head-first, trying his best not to bust his ass – which he does anyway.

He brushes himself off and realizes he forgot something. He looks out the window and there's his bag.

Cursing under his breath, he opens the back door. But the security chain stops it – loudly. He freezes and listens. Nothing. He unhooks the chain and retrieves his bag.

He takes a flashlight out of the bag only to find that it doesn't work. Not even when he shakes it. Not even when he hits it. So, he sneaks through the dark house without it.

LIVING ROOM

Chad hits his shin on a coffee table and winces in pain.

The grandfather clock CHIMES, scaring him out of his pants.

HALLWAY

Chad passes a few empty rooms. The hall seems to go on forever. Suddenly, he notices some movement in the darkness ahead of him. He freezes in his tracks.

He leans into the darkness for a better look and sees...

A man in a ski mask!

CHAD

Aargh!

He drops his bag and jumps back, gasping for breath...

In front of a floor-length mirror.

Chad's at the end of the hallway. The rooms on either side are empty. The whole house is empty! Chad pulls off his ski mask and curses to himself.

Suddenly – KERCHUNK. Chad looks for the sound. The curtains in one of the bedrooms sway slightly.

Eyes fixed on the curtain, Chad takes a big steak knife out of his bag and investigates.

BEDROOM

He pokes the curtain with his big knife, then kneels to inspect a small potted plant capsized on the floor.

Suddenly, Ms. Basford's Cat lunges at him from behind the curtain and bloodies his face.

The cat slips under the bed.

Chad whirls around in a rage, blood in his eyes. He looks under the bed...

And see's the Cat's eyes glowing in the dark.

EXT. MS. BASFORD'S HOUSE - FRONT - NIGHT

STEVE (V.O.)

So, how'd it go last night?

MS. BASFORD'S CAT (O.S.)

(HISSES and SQUEALS bloody murder)

CUT TO:

EXT. STEVE'S FRONT YARD - DAY

STEVE

Ha, ha, ha, ha. It must have put up quite a fight. Ha, ha, ha....

CHAD

Fuck you.

Chad storms off.

STEVE

Heeere kitty, kitty. Ha, ha.

CHAD

Shut up!

Chad flings a paper at the next house.

STEVE

Ha, ha. Hey, what about my paper?

Chad ignores him. Steve shakes his head and goes back inside, CHUCKLING.

MARC (V.O.)
What happened to your face?

CHAD (V.O.)
Nothing.

CUT TO:

INT. DAILY NEW YORKER - COFFEE MACHINE - DAY

Marc pours himself some coffee. The infamous red can is on the counter next to him. Chad shuffles through some mail.

MARC
No, it looks like a scratch or--

CHAD
It was an accident, okay?

MARC
I'm just asking. Reporter's instincts.

Chad storms off. Marc watches him go. He sips his coffee.

MARC (cont'd)
Mm. Good coffee.

CUT TO:

EXT. MS. BASFORD'S HOUSE - FRONT - NIGHT

The house is dark and silent. Until a WINDOW BREAKS.

INT. MS. BASFORD'S HOUSE - NIGHT

While the DOG BARKS incessantly next door, Chad reaches through broken glass and unlocks the back door.

He invades the house.

CUT TO:

EXT. STEVE'S HOUSE - DAY

WHAP! A newspaper slaps hard against the front door. Steve opens it and picks up his paper.

Chad's already next door, moving pretty fast.

STEVE
Shit. You tryin' to knock it down?

Chad spins around.

CHAD

We'll see who fuckin' laughs!

Steve wrinkles his face - what the hell's that supposed to mean? Then he shrugs his shoulders and goes back inside.

CUT TO:

EXT. MS. BASFORD'S HOUSE - DAY

The green minivan pulls into the driveway again. The Man gets out and helps Ms. Basford to her door. She picks up the few newspapers on her porch while he takes her suitcase inside. He kisses her on the cheek and returns to the van.

The Little Girl waves as the van backs out. Ms. Basford waves back, then goes inside.

HOLD.

MS. BASFORD (O.S.)

(SCREAMS bloody murder.)

CUT TO:

INT. SAM'S OFFICE - DAY

Kenny sticks his head in Sam's door. The Shifty-Eyed Cop sits at his desk in the background.

KENNY

Sam! We got something.

The S.E.C. watches Sam and Kenny hustle away, then picks up his phone and dials.

CUT TO:

INT. DAILY NEW YORKER - CITY ROOM - DAY

Marc slams his phone down.

MARC

Yes! Murray, we got something.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE:

1) EXT. MS. BASFORD'S HOUSE - DAY

Cops have cordoned off the yard. A distraught Ms. Basford talks to a Cop on her porch. Sam and Kenny talk to some other Cops in the front yard.

Marc runs up with his camera. A Cop stops him short.

Sam shakes his head and yells at Marc. Then a TV news van arrives. Sam throws his hands up in frustration.

2) EXT. ELECTRONICS STORE - DAY

Chad watches the nine TV sets in the window - all tuned to the same channel.

ON THE TVs: A dozen OVERZEALOUS REPORTERS pounce on Johnson and Ritchey as they get out of a police car. The Reporters follow them as they join Sam and Kenny in the front yard.

3) INT. STEVE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Steve watches the same channel on TV - what's goin' on?

ON TV: Sam, Kenny, Johnson and Ritchey walk through Ms. Basford's flowers. She yells at them from her porch. Ritchey almost falls down sidestepping them.

ANCHORMAN

"--where a cat was found dead this morning. Sources tell us the report wasn't being taken very seriously by police until they allegedly found--"

Steve shakes his head in amusement, until...

ON TV: An ANCHORMAN takes over the screen - a pentagram graphic over his shoulder.

ANCHORMAN (cont'd)

"--the Satanic symbol associated with the 'Sorcerer' scrawled in blood on the carpet near the dead animal."

Steve gawks at the TV, incredulous.

ON TV: The ANCHORMAN now shares the screen with an ANCHORWOMAN.

ANCHORMAN (cont'd)
 "Police won't comment on whether the
 crime was committed by the same--"

4) INT. DAILY NEW YORKER - CITY ROOM - DAY

Murray watches TV.

MURRAY

A cat?

ANCHORMAN

"--individual responsible for the
 Sorcerer killings, or the work of
 a 'copycat.' Back to you, Sandra."

ANCHORWOMAN

"Copy 'cat.' Ha, ha. Thanks, Tom.
 We'll be right back."

5) INT. STEVE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Steve paces the room, seething.

STEVE

Of course it's a fuckin' copycat!

Steve throws pillows and kicks his couch.

6) EXT. ELECTRONIC'S STORE - DAY

A satisfied Chad smiles proudly to himself.

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

CHUMPF. Bail of newspapers. Headline:

ANIMAL SACRIFICE!

Chad approaches. He admires today's headline.

CHAD

Who's laughin' now?

EXT. RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Chad delivers papers with his headphones on, cheerful and
 energetic for a change.

EXT. MS. BASFORD'S HOUSE - DAY

The house is still surrounded by police tape. A police car is parked in front of the house. The porch is deserted. Chad politely tosses a paper and moves along.

EXT. YAPPY DOG'S HOUSE - DAY

The Yappy Dog moves from window to window. Chad baits the dog like he's inviting him outside for a fight.

CHAD

That's right. C'mon. C'mon!

EXT. STEVE'S HOUSE - DAY

Like a little league pitcher, Chad winds up and slings a newspaper at Steve's door - WHAP!

He waits momentarily for something to happen. When it doesn't, he continues on his way.

All of a sudden - CRUNCH! - his walkman explodes! PUMF! - a hole appears in his canvas bag. PUMF! - another one.

Steve's shooting at him from the kitchen window! THWIP! THWIP! THWIP!

Chad takes off running. ZIIING - a bullet whizzes by his head and a WINDOW SHATTERS across the street.

The shooting stops. Chad doesn't.

INT. STEVE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Steve sits in the sink and watches Chad through the blinds.

CUT TO:

EXT. RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Chad rounds a street corner and stops running, exhausted. Still, he walks fast - paranoid, constantly checking behind him. Reflexively, he starts throwing papers again.

He breezes by a MAN putting up a new mailbox at the end of his front walk. Chad tosses a paper at his feet.

MAN

Hey, thanks! Have a nice... day.

The Man picks up his paper and notices something odd. He holds it up to his face and looks through a bullet hole.

MARC (V.O.)
There's a whole paragraph missing.

CUT TO:

INT. DAILY NEW YORKER - DAY

Marc shows today's paper to a COPY EDITOR.

MARC
A whole paragraph of information that nobody gets to see. It's like twenty whole sentences.

COPY EDITOR
I was just doing what I was told. You should ask Murray, because--

MARC
Fine.

Marc walks away all huffy.

COPY EDITOR
And you should learn to spell.

Marc gets to Murray's office and hears:

CHAD (O.S.)
I didn't break it!

MURRAY (O.S.)
The window broke. She saw you running away.

Marc waits outside the office and listens.

CHAD
How did she know it was me?

MURRAY
She said she saw the paperboy running away.

CHAD
Oh.

MURRAY
Tell me something: How come all the weird shit happens on your route?

That sentence makes Marc think. He looks down at his paper.

MURRAY (cont'd)
Forget it. The window's comin' outta
your paycheck. Now get back to work.

Chad gets up to leave, but he turns around at the door.

CHAD
Y'know... I don't think I'll be
getting a paycheck anymore.

MURRAY
What are you talkin' about?

CHAD
Um... I, I think I'm gonna quit.

MURRAY
You're gonna quit?

CHAD
Yeah. Yeah, I think so.

MURRAY
What makes you think I'm gonna let you
quit?

CHAD
...Huh?

MURRAY
I promised your father, Chad. I
promised him that I would never fire
you - God knows why. And I'll be
damned if I'm gonna let you quit! You
got me? Ya got me?!

Chad blinks.

MURRAY (cont'd)
Now, get back to work. The window's
comin' outta your paycheck.

Dumbstruck, Chad shuffles out of Murray's office.

Suspicious, Marc watches him trudge to the elevator.

CUT TO:

EXT. DAILY NEW YORKER - DAY

Chad comes out of the building with a few run sheets. He
continues down the street in a daze.

He stops walking to stare blankly at his reflection in the glass of an office building. People dodge him as they walk by. Cars whisk to and fro behind his reflection. And behind the cars... across the street... is that... Steve?

Chad whips around.

Was it his imagination? He studies the streets.

Is that Steve, there? No.

Chad takes off walking - fast - checking behind him, across the street, everywhere....

There! No, no that's not him.

Chad stops on a street corner and gets bumped from behind. It scares him half to death. But it's nobody.

NOBODY

Excuse me.

Chad studies the streets some more, paranoid.

A block away, Marc watches him deal with his paranoia from behind a pay phone.

CUT TO:

EXT. POLICE HQ - DAY

There's an angry throng of ANIMAL RIGHTS ACTIVISTS in front of the building. Their signs say things like "Catch the Kitty Killer," "Stop the Murder" and "Animal Sacrilege."

ACTIVISTS

No More Dead Pets! No More Dead Pets!

INT. POLICE HQ - DAY

Sam, Johnson, Ritchey and a few uniformed COPS:

SAM

It's a zoo out there all of a sudden.

JOHNSON

Careful, Sam. Mention zoos around that crowd they'll tear you limb from limb.

LAUGHTER. Kenny shows up with a wad of pink phone messages.

KENNY

Messages, Sam.

SAM
 (flipping through messages)
 Looka this: P.E.T.A., A.S.P.C.A. -
 where were they when he was killing
 human beings?

RITCHEY
 Who cares? They're crazy.

JOHNSON
 More about pets than people, apparently.

LAUGHTER.

KENNY
 Uh, we don't think the Sorcerer killed
 the cat, do we?

SAM
 We'll blame it on him, anyway.
 A.S.P.C.A. might form a lynch mob and
 get him for us.

LAUGHTER.

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY INT. CHAD'S ROOM - DAY

CHUMPF. Newspapers. Headline:

Cat killer still at large.

CUT TO:

INT. CHAD'S ROOM - DAY

Chad's clock says 5:46.

Now it says 5:47 and MUSIC is blaring.

Chad sits motionless on the corner of his bed. He's dressed
 for work - jeans, t-shirt - but he's too scared to move. He
 just sits. Staring. Thinking.

Suddenly, his eyes light up.

He leaves the room with a mission.

CHAD'S MOM (O.S.)
 Chad? Do you want breakfast? Chad?

EXT. CHAD'S HOUSE - DAY

Chad steps out of the house wearing an extra-large red plaid shirt. He looks like a damn lumberjack.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Chad walks his route. Lost in thought. Two houses behind...
Marc follows with his camera.

CUT TO:

INT. STEVE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Steve sits in the sink fiddling with his gun, checking through the blinds in the window. Wait... what the hell?

EXT. STEVE'S HOUSE - DAY

Chad shuffles toward the house with his hands raised above his head. His eyes are mostly shut and his head is cocked to one side, waiting for a bullet's impact.

STEVE (O.S.)

What the hell are you doin'?

CHAD

...Are you gonna shoot me?

STEVE (O.S.)

...What the hell are you wearing?

CHAD

...It's wash day.

(beat)

I came to apologize.

Chad's waits. The shooting should start any second now.

STEVE

C'mon in.

Still fearful, Chad shuffles hesitantly to Steve's door.

Marc watches everything from behind some bushes, nearby.

INT. STEVE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Steve jumps off the counter and mutters under his breath as he goes to the door.

EXT. STEVE'S HOUSE - DAY

Marc moves along the bushes to the side of Steve's house.

INT. STEVE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Steve opens the door and there's Chad, hands still high.

CHAD

I'm glad you didn't kill me yesterday.

Steve pokes Chad's canvas bag with his gun. He pokes his finger through one of the bullet holes.

STEVE

Yeah, my aim sucks past a couple feet. I never shoot anybody besides point blank. Put your damn hands down, c'mon.

Chad steps inside and Steve casually closes the door.

And explodes! He grabs Chad by the shirt and SLAMS him violently against the wall. He shoves the gun up his nose and holds him there, quivering with anger.

Chad's head is right next to the photo of Steve's father.

Steve shakes him and shouts:

STEVE (cont'd)

What the fuck? What the fuck, Chad? You think I'm stupid? You think I don't know who the fuck you are? I thought you were my fuckin' friend, man! Friends don't fuckin' fuck friends, man!

CHAD

I'm sorry, I'm sorry, don't--

EXT. STEVE'S HOUSE - DAY

Crouched outside Steve's living room window, Marc watches Steve continue his fuck speech.

MARC

I don't believe it I don't believe it
I don't believe it....

Marc retrieves a cell phone from his pocket and dials.

MARC (cont'd)
Yes, I need the Sorcerer? I mean the
police. I need the police.

INT. STEVE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Steve shoves Chad into the wall, then backs off. He seems a little confused.

STEVE
Dammit! I thought you were my friend.

CHAD
Don't shoot me, please. Please don't
shoot me.

STEVE
Shut up! I'm not gonna shoot you.

Steve paces, trying desperately to calm down.

He eyes Chad.

Then he eyes the photo of his father on the wall.

Then his face is overwhelmed with rage. He points the gun at Chad again, a mix of anger and indecision.

STEVE (cont'd)
Did you tell your dad about me?

If Chad's eyes get any wider, his eyeballs are gonna fall out. He shakes his head in frantic denial.

STEVE (cont'd)
I followed you yesterday. Fuckin'
bureaucrat, my ass. Was that the plan
all along?
(fighting tears)
A father-and-son picnic? Some kinda
cat-and-mouse bullshit? I thought you
were my friend, man!

Steve steels himself to pull the trigger.

Chad steels himself for the end.

EXT. WINDOW - DAY

Marc slowly brings his camera up to his face.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

STEVE

I thought you were my fucking friend.

Steve wipes tears from his face...

And sees a twinkle in his father's eye. Actually, it's a glint on his father's photograph - something reflected in the glass. No, someone... with a camera?

Steve whirls, firing - THWIP THWIP THWIP THWIP....

Holes explode in cheap sheetrock. The window shatters and Marc's camera explodes as he disappears from the window.

STEVE (cont'd)

God, my aim sucks!

Steve manhandles Chad over to the window.

STEVE (cont'd)

I knew it! Who is that, Chad? Huh?!
Who the fuck is that? This a fuckin'
stake out?

There's a hole in Marc's forehead. On the ground next to him, his CELLULAR PHONE RINGS.

CHAD

(sotto)

Marc.

STEVE

What?

CHAD

Kuykendall.

MARC'S PHONE RINGS again.

STEVE

Mother. Fucker!

CHAD

N-no! He followed me! He followed me!

Steve turns the gun on Chad again.

STEVE

Then you can follow him to hell.

Steve pulls the trigger - CLICK. Nothing.

Steve and Chad stare at the gun. MARC'S PHONE RINGS. Steve tries again - CLICK, CLICK, CLICK....

Chad's eyes go wide and he bolts!

He almost makes it to the front door, but his bag of newspapers trips him up.

Steve tackles him hard and they hit the wall and the photo of Steve's dad falls and the GLASS BREAKS on Steve's head.

STEVE (cont'd)

Arrgh! Shit!

Chad wriggles away and crawls into the kitchen, dragging his bag behind him.

KITCHEN

He crawls under the card table but Steve's after him so he pushes the table up and over getting to his feet.

He tries to hold Steve off with the table, but Steve throws it to one side and attacks!

He leads with the gun, but Chad grabs the silencer and holds tight. They topple over and wrestle like two kids in a playground fight.

Eventually the silencer comes off in Chad's hand and Steve tries to hit him with the gun. Chad catches it in his bandaged hand and winces in pain.

Now, Steve's got Chad pinned, forearm on his neck.

STEVE (cont'd)

Well, I guess you didn't tell Daddy after all. Otherwise the cops'd be here already. What'd you want, Chad? Huh? Do his job for him? He get's to see you on the front page?

CHAD

(croaks)

N... no. I swear.

Glaring into Chad's red, pleading face, Steve's anger seems to subside. He takes some of his weight off Chad's throat.

Then a small sound breaks the silence. Far away, but growing louder. Then finally recognizable.

POLICE SIRENS?

STEVE

You mother....

Steve's leans on Chad's neck.

CHAD

No, no, no, no....

STEVE

I knew it.

Chad struggles, arms flailing. His hand finds Steve's plastic "laundry bag" in the corner. He can... barely... reach it. He claws at it desperately.

STEVE (cont'd)

Can't believe I even considered
letting you live, you mother--

The bag tears, spilling laundry detergent onto the floor. Chad shuts his eyes and throws a handful of the powdered soap in Steve's face.

STEVE (cont'd)

AAAARRGH!

CHAD

I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

Steve roils in pain as Chad scrambles out of the kitchen.

LIVING ROOM

Chad wants to go out the front door, but those damn POLICE SIRENS are so close.

So, he runs to the back of the house - to Steve's...

BEDROOM

Chad heaves a chair at the window blinds. GLASS SHATTERS.

He's about to crawl out, but bars block his way. The POLICE SIRENS grow ever louder.

Just then, METAL HINGES CREAK. Chad looks back at the cracked mirror above Steve's dresser....

IN THE MIRROR

Steve's in the hallway lifting his furnace grate. Face dripping wet, struggling to keep his eyes open.

STEVE
I'll kill you. Kill you....

Chad watches the big grate swing open and POUND the floor. Then he watches Steve release the clip from his gun. It RATTLES on the floor as Steve descends into...

INT. BASEMENT

Steve jams another clip into his gun. But as he turns to head back up the ladder...

A big canvas bag full of newspapers lands on top of him. POW! His gun goes off.

Before he can recover, Chad tackles him from above.

They wrestle like girls, knocking Steve's cigar box off the workbench. It tumbles to the floor and stuff spills out - Steve's seal, a jar of paste, an exacto knife....

Steve and Chad tumble to the floor, too. They wrestle some more and Steve just about has his gun leveled at Chad's face when Chad's hand finds the exacto knife...

And plunges it deep into Steve's thigh.

STEVE SCREAMS in pain. POW! - the gun goes off again.

Chad has the upper hand now. He pins Steve down and tries to talk some sense into him.

CHAD
I never told my dad. I never told anyone. Marc followed me, I swear!

STEVE
Yeah, right.

Chad's guard is down. Steve kicks him square in the balls with his good leg. Chad's eyes cross. He staggers back.

Steve levels the gun on Chad's chest - POW!

The impact knocks Chad back. He hits the wall and melts to the floor, limp as a rag doll.

Steve staggers to his feet and pulls the exacto out of his leg. He stares at Chad's still form....

And breaks down crying. A CAR SQUEALS outside, SIRENS WAILING. Whatever Steve's feeling, he snaps out of it.

STEVE (cont'd)
 Fuck. Fuck!

More SQUEALING CARS with SIRENS. Steve kicks the wall.
 Pounds on his bench. Flings a broken chair across the room.

STEVE (cont'd)
 Aaaaaaaarrrrrrrrggh!

Steve empties his gun into Chad's chest. POW! POW! POW!
 POW! CLICK. CLICK. CLICK.

STEVE (cont'd)
 (sobbing)
 I thought you were my friend.

SAM (O.S.)
 (through a megaphone)
 You in the house. We've got the place
 surrounded.

Steve releases the clip from his gun. It RATTLES on the
 floor next to his seat.

Steve replaces the spent clip and heads up the ladder.

Chad lies slumped against the wall, motionless.

HOLD on Chad.

SAM (O.S.) (cont'd)
 There's a dead body out here. We're
 giving you thirty seconds to come out
 and tell us where it came from.

A WINDOW BREAKS.

STEVE (O.S.)
 Hey! Ha, ha. What took you so long?!

SAM (O.S.)
 Twenty-five seconds.

STEVE (O.S.)
 Hey! I didn't kill that fuckin' cat. I
 don't kill cats. You hear me?

SAM (O.S.)
 Fifteen seconds.

STEVE(O.S.)
 I don't kill fuckin' pets, man! I'm
 the fuckin' Sorcerer!

SAM (O.S.)
Thanks for the confession. Ten seconds
and we're comin' in.

STEVE (O.S.)
Screw you, man! Screw that! I'm the
Sorcerer! Fuck you!

SAM (O.S.)
Fifteen seconds!

STEVE (O.S.)
Fuck you!

SAM (O.S.)
Look, kid: psychos like you are a dime
a dozen. You think we won't--

STEVE (O.S.)
Fuck you!

TWO GUNSHOTS!

SAM (O.S.)
AARGH!

Now a barrage of GUNSHOTS. GLASS SHATTERS. WOOD SPLINTERS.
PHZZZT - the light in the basement flickers and goes out.

As the room is plunged into DARKNESS:

SAM (O.S.) (cont'd)
Hold your fire! Hold it! I'm alright!
Hold it, goddammit!

The SHOOTING stops.

EXT. STEVE'S HOUSE - DAY

Seven police cars have formed a barricade in front of the
house. Guns drawn and smoking, a dozen Cops stare intently
at the house, waiting for the slightest movement.

Sam crouches behind his open car door with his megaphone.
He clutches a bloody gunshot wound on his shoulder. Kenny's
close by.

Johnson and Ritchey drive up and get out of their car.
Ritchey spies Sam's arm.

RITCHEY
Shit. I miss all the action.

INT. STEVE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Steve's sprawled out on the kitchen floor, covered with blood. His gun's still in his hand and his eyes are open.

HOLD on Steve as...

CRUNCH - WOOD SPLINTERS and the house RUMBLES.

TWO COPS rush into the kitchen, guns ready. One of them steps on Steve's arm while the other kicks his gun away.

EXT. STEVE'S HOUSE - DAY

Marc's body is sprawled out on the ground. Sam and Kenny stand over him. The Shifty-Eyed Cop is there, too.

SAM
Jesus Christ.

KENNY
Marc Kuykendall.

S.E.C.
How'd he get here so fast?

SAM
Maybe we should be asking you.

Sam walks away. Kenny glares at the S.E.C. then writes on his clipboard as he follows Sam.

The S.E.C. looks down at Marc's dead body.

S.E.C.
I wondered why you didn't answer your phone.

INT. STEVE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Sam and Kenny enter to find Johnson, Ritchey and some Cops standing over Steve's body.

SAM
Dead?

Johnson nods.

COP #1 (O.S.)
Sam! You might want to see this.

Everybody follows the COP's voice to the...

HALLWAY

The Cop's on his hands and knees, peering with a flashlight into Steve's basement.

COP #1 (cont'd)
Looks like some kinda basement, Sam.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

It's Chad's route. Familiar houses glide by - one, two....

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

CHUMPF. Newspapers. Headline:

CAUGHT! Reporter killed in Sorcerer
stand-off.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

More of Chad's route. Houses glide by, one after another.

A PHONE RINGS.

SAM (V.O.)
Moriarty. Mr. Mayor. Yes, sir.

CUT TO:

INT. SAM'S OFFICE - DAY

Sam's on the phone. He moves his arm around a little bit.

SAM
Oh, it's fine, fine. Still a little
stiff, but.... Thank you, sir. I
appreciate that.

Kenny walks in. Sam mouths to him: "It's the Mayor."

SAM (cont'd)
Yeah, we're sure it was the guy. You
shoulda seen the place.

CUT TO:

INT. STEVE'S BASEMENT

Sam and Kenny survey the room, amazed and repulsed.

Chad's body is nowhere to be seen.

SAM

Yeah, we're still roundin' it all up,
but we got the right guy. Blood and
bullets match previous evidence. We
just need to make sure he was acting
alone, before we--

Sam and Kenny shuffle around the little room. Their feet
make dust and dirt fall between the planks of the floor...

And land on Chad's face.

UNDER THE FLOOR

Chad tries to blink the dirt out of his eyes. It's the only
movement he can muster.

SAM (V.O.)(cont'd)

Oh, yeah, I think he was. But some of
the evidence we were expecting to find
hasn't shown up yet.

Chad watches the men walk around above him. Their shadows
interrupt the tiny shafts of light that reach him through
the cracks and bullet holes in the floor.

A rat sniffs at his ear.

CUT TO:

EXT. STEVE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The property is surrounded by yellow police tape. A police
car is parked out front. The COP inside is taking a nap.

Chad exits the house and limps into the darkness with his
canvas bag.

SAM (V.O.)

We're still looking for the stuff he
used to write those letters - specific
kind of stationery, the stylized seal.
We found remnants of the red wax, but--

CUT TO:

INT. CHAD'S ROOM - NIGHT

SAM (V.O.)
I'm not worried. It'll turn up.

Steve's cigar box lies open on Chad's bed - there's Steve's seal, his stationery, a stick of wax....

Chad unbuttons his lumberjack shirt in front of a mirror. In extreme pain, he opens the shirt to reveal a bullet-proof vest.

SAM (V.O.)(cont'd)
The feds? They seem to be satisfied. I tell you, Johnson wasn't too happy to find his book in the guy's basement.

Chad opens the vest. His chest is riddled with bruises.

SAM (V.O.)(cont'd)
Yeah, I read some of it. Too bad he used it against us. Yes, sir. No, we think the cat was something else altogether. Some sick kids or--

CUT TO:

INT. SAM'S OFFICE - DAY

Kenny's still watching Sam talk on the phone.

SAM
Heh. Yes, sir. I know it's an election year comin' up. You got my vote.
(rolls his eyes)
I wouldn't worry about it. As far as I'm concerned the case is closed. We'll have it wrapped up by New Years. Yes, sir. You take care.
(hangs up)
Bastard.

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

CHUMPF. Newspapers. Headline:

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

KENNY (V.O.)
You think he's satisfied?

SAM (V.O.)
Aw, the Mayor just wants to get
reelected.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

More of Chad's route. The houses glide by.

KENNY (V.O.)
Hm. Politicians and murderers don't
mix very well I guess.

SAM (V.O.)
Guess not. ...Politicians and burglars
maybe.

LAUGHTER.

EXT. MS. BASFORD'S HOUSE - DAY

As her house glides by, Ms. Basford shakes her finger at
the little kitten milling around in her flowers.

KENNY (V.O.)
I'm just glad it's all over.

SAM (V.O.)
You and me both, Kenny. You and
me both....

INT. DAILY NEW YORKER - MURRAY'S OFFICE - DAY

SAM (V.O.)
It's all over.

A perplexed Murray opens an envelope with a familiar red
seal on the back. He reads the message inside.

It's written in clipped-out letters from newspaper
headlines. It reads:

iT's NOT oVeR.

CUT TO:

EXT. YAPPY DOG'S HOUSE - DAY

The Yappy Dog is curiously absent from the first window.
And the second. All of them. As the last window glides by:

YOUNG GIRL (O.S.)
(SCREAMS bloody murder) Harley!

CUT TO:

EXT. STEVE'S HOUSE - DAY

The house is reflected in mirrored sunglasses, like Steve used to wear. Cigarette smoke curls up past them.

MAN (O.S.)
Well, that's that. Ask me, you got a great deal here.

The sunglasses are on Chad's face.

MAN (O.S.) (cont'd)
I guess it pays to have a father in such a... an influential position. He's a fine man.

Chad takes a drag off his cigarette.

The MAN he's talking to has a realtor's logo on his blue blazer. The same logo is on the For Sale sign stuck in the ground next to Chad. "SOLD" has been slapped across it.

MAN/REALTOR
Of course the, uh... history of the property had something to do with the, uh... the price... ease of purchase.

The Realtor almost gets in his car.

REALTOR
Almost forgot. You'll need these.

The Realtor tosses Chad some keys.

He catches them with confidence. Something he's never exhibited before.

REALTOR (cont'd)
The round one's for the front door. Tell your dad hello.

The Realtor's car pulls away. Chad watches it go.

He takes a last drag off his cigarette and flicks it into the street. Then he uproots his For Sale sign and starts toward the house.

A CAR HONKS.

Chad turns around.

He drags his sunglasses off.

A car pulls to the curb. Sam's car.

Sam eyes Chad. Gets out of the car. Looks over the house.

Chad stares.

SAM

Foreclosure's a beautiful thing.

Sam lumbers over and takes the For Sale sign from Chad.

Then he swings an arm around Chad's shoulders.

SAM (cont'd)

Let's check this baby out, huh? See if they cleaned it up worth a damn.

They walk toward the front door of the house. Together.

CHAD

Is Mom coming?

SAM

Not today. I got a stakeout tonight and she won't leave the house 'til she finds my vest. I coulda sworn it was in the back of the closet.

CHAD

Hm.

Chad unlocks the door.

SAM

Your mother's not quite ready to visit this place anyway. Thinks it might be haunted or something.

CHAD

Ha, ha. Haunted.

They disappear into the house just as a paperboy comes riding by on his bike.

He flings a paper into the yard.

FADE OUT.