

Beauty
and
the
Beast



"STICKS AND STONES"

#029

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BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

"Sticks And Stones"

Written by
Howard Gordon & Alex Gansa

Directed by
Bruce Malmuth

NUMBERED HOUSE DRAFT
November 4, 1988

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

"Sticks and Stones"

CHARACTERS

VINCENT
CATHERINE
FATHER

LAURA
JERRY
JOE MAXWELL
MOUSE
JAMIE
MARY
WILLIAM
ZACH

SGT. GREG McQUEENEY
LT. ERIC PARKER
BLANCA
MARIA
WILLIS
RICO
MANNY
WILLIE
BIG BETH
JOSE
MIGUEL
LINCOLN

BITS AND EXTRAS

TUNNEL PEOPLE
NEWSTAND CUSTOMERS
PEDESTRIANS
WOMAN
MAN (2)
YOUTH GANG TASK FORCE
SUN BATHERS
SECRETARIES
BICYCLISTS
BUMS
STREET KIDS
SWAT OFFICERS
SECOND SWAT OFFICER
OFFICER

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

"Sticks and Stones"

SETS

INTERIOR

TUNNELS

-Tunnel Junction

DRAINAGE DUCT

FATHER'S CHAMBER

VINCENT'S CHAMBER

ND SEDAN (N)

THRESHOLD

CATHY'S SUB-BASEMENT

VAN (N)

PRECINCT 52

-Conference room
-Desk

NYPD PRECINCT

-Squadroom
-Deposition room

GANG TENEMENT

-Second floor
-Large room
-Doorway
-Small room
-Window
-Lobby
-Stairwell

SQUAD CAR (N)

PHONE BOOTH (N)

POLICE CHOPPER (N)

LOW RENT APARTMENT BUILDING

-Stairway
-Apartment 1F

EXTERIOR

TIMES SQUARE - STOCK (D)

NEWSTAND (D)

CENTRAL PARK (D)

ALPHABET CITY - STREET (D)

CITY STREETS

-Streets (d)
-Side street (n)
-Parked van (n)
-long shot (d)
-Telephone booth (d)

WAREHOUSE COURTYARD (N)

-Loading bays
-Stairs
-Elevated platform
-Ladder
-Rooftop
-Skylights

LOT (N)

-Chevy junker
-Around the corner

GANG TENEMENT - EST. (D) (N)

BUILDING

-Brick wall
-Second Landing

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

"Sticks And Stones"

ACT ONE

- 1 OVER BLACK 1
CITY SOUNDS bleed in, white noise crescendoing louder and louder, until:
- 2 SHUTTER OPENS FAST ON TIMES SQUARE (STOCK) - DAY 2
Rush hour. Choked traffic, pedestrians swarming.
SEVERAL QUICK SHOTS OF SAME, then:
- 3 ANGLE NEWSTAND 3
People pushing and shoving for The Times, a pack of gum, a lottery ticket...
- 4 CLOSER 4
until we see LAURA through the parting shoulders of the customers she helps. Right away it is evident that some transformation has occurred within her, a hardening of the spirit. She takes dollar bills, gives change, both hands working like pistons to satisfy the relentless human wave. Beside her is WILLIS, the owner of the newstand -- also working the crowd, but with a patient speed he's developed over thirty years of doing this. A WOMAN impatiently thrusts a dollar bill at Laura...
- WOMAN
(to Laura, snapping)
Can I please have change?
- Willis dips into his own change apron, coming out with four quarters which he exchanges one-handed for the dollar. He shoots a concerned glance over at Laura, whose patience is wearing dangerously thin.
- 5 LAURA'S POV - MOS 5
The silence provides a jarring counterpoint to the movement and to the impinging crowd.

6 RESUME SCENE

6

As Laura seems to lose track of what she's doing, falling out of rhythm.

A gruff MAN leans toward Laura now, waving a magazine before her.

MAN

I asked for a goddamn Sports Illustrated.

But Laura doesn't respond, dragging a forearm across her brow, feeling a creeping vertigo. Then she notices the man...

MAN

Hey! What are you, deaf??

7 LAURA'S POV - MOS (SLIGHT OVERCRANK)

7

The man's face contorted into an ugly mask of anger, his mouth forming the words...

MAN

What are you, deaf??

8 RESUME SCENE

8

as Laura leans toward the man and unleashes a guttural cry -- a loud and sustained eruption from the depths of her soul. Willis turns to her as the man and the other customers back off from this crazy young woman. Laura's eyes are filled with fire and tears as she throws off her change apron and bolts from the newstand...

WILLIS

Laura!

(to crowd of customers)

Gimme some room here, okay? I'm closing. Come on now, back off!

Willis quickly rolls down the metal shutter, fumbling for the keys to lock up, before going after Laura.

CUT TO:

9 EXT. STREET - DAY

9

Laura walking through the crowd, trying to stifle her tears and her anger. She stops at an intersection for a red light, wipes the tears from her eyes... as Willis catches up, breathing hard, stopping her with a firm hand on her shoulder.

WILLIS

(signing and speaking)
What happened back there?

LAURA

(signing)
You saw. Same thing.

WILLIS

(signing and speaking)
You gotta have patience, Laura.

LAURA

(signing)
What about them?

WILLIS

(signing and speaking)
They don't know better... but you do.
(off her silence)
I know it's hard.

Just then, the light changes, and Laura pushes past Willis to cross the street, losing herself in the throng... leaving Willis alone at the curb, despondent, past the point of chasing after her.

CUT TO:

10 EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

10

Some force is drawing Laura toward the tunnel entrance. She moves as if by instinct -- past the shirtless men on grassy slopes catching some sun, past the secretaries eating lunch, the bicyclists, the bums...

She approaches the tunnel entrance, and it sucks her inside.

CUT TO:

11 INT. TUNNEL JUNCTION - SAME TIME

11

Laura stands before the iron gate. The proximity of her old world, her old life, now exerts a contrary force. She seems hesitant, tentative. Thoughts and memories wash over her. A moment of life-choice. She reaches through the bars and lays her flat palms against the sweating concrete. She presses herself up against the gate, closing her eyes, remembering another time... another place...

DISSOLVE TO:

(FLASHBACK)

12 INT. SUB-BASEMENT OF CATHY'S APARTMENT - DAY

12

Laura and Vincent arrive at the transition point -- the place of migration from one world to the next. They stop and share a moment of the silence that is with Laura always -- both of them understanding the significance of her next few steps. After a beat, Vincent gestures to the opening:

VINCENT

This is where you go out...

Laura seems unsure.

VINCENT

You can still change your mind...

Determined, Laura shakes her head.

VINCENT

Try not to worry, you'll be safe, I'll be near... The woman I told you about is waiting...

LAURA

(signing)

Catherine...

VINCENT

Yes, Catherine...

Long beat. Then:

LAURA

(signing)

Vincent, there's so much I have to thank you for.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED:

12

VINCENT

You have yourself to thank...
yourself to be proud of...

(beat)

Sometimes... events in our lives
can show us what we've known all
along. This last year... I felt
in you a need to see beyond these
tunnels and chambers.

(then)

You've known inside yourself that
it was time.

LAURA

(signing)

Until we see each other again,
I will miss you.

VINCENT

Until we see each other again,
I will miss you, as well.

Laura is grateful for the understanding. Vincent looks up
when he hears FOOTSTEPS descending from above.

13 VINCENT'S POV

13

Cathy appears at the far end of the sub-basement.

14 RESUME SCENE

14

Laura also sees Cathy, and then turns back to Vincent. And
they embrace. Then, Laura pulls back.

15 VINCENT'S POV - LAURA

15

walking away, across the threshold, toward Cathy. She puts
her hand behind her back and signs: "I love you."

16 ON VINCENT

16

Watching her go.

VINCENT

I love you too.

17 VINCENT'S POV 17

as Laura reaches Cathy and together they start up the stairs.

(END OF FLASHBACK)

DISSOLVE TO:

18 INT. TUNNEL JUNCTION - CONTINUOUS 18

The promise of that moment past saddens Laura, and she opens her eyes slowly to her present reality and trouble. Part of her is ashamed of her defeat, and part of her is too proud to carry that defeat down to Vincent and Father -- to burden them with it. The decision is made. She turns away from the iron gate, and again goes out into the world. Alone.

CUT TO:

19 EXT. ALPHABET CITY - STREET - DAY 19

A very different part of town, strangely quiet, like some urban graveyard. Low buildings, many of them burnt out shells. A young man (JERRY) barely out of his teens sits on the front stoop of a tenement, sipping beer from a can in a bag, just hanging out, watching. Something o.s. draws his attention: he puts the bag down and stands...

20 ANGLE 20

Laura is walking toward him... the weight of her afternoon still heavy on her shoulders.

JERRY

(signing)

-- What? What is it?

But Laura doesn't want to talk about it. She just shakes her head, smiling with a sweet sadness, finding solace in his arms. And Jerry complies, holding her close...

CUT TO:

21 BRILLIANT WHITE 21

The sound of SLIDE PROJECTOR changing: then appears the grainy, unposed PHOTOGRAPH of a mean-looking twenty-three year old hispanic, crossing the street.

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED:

21

JOE (O.S.)
Nice shot...

CATHY (O.S.)
His name's Rinaldo Guttierrez.
Calls himself Lincoln, because
he wears a penny in each ear...

And we are:

22 INT. PRECINCT 52 - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

22

CATHY is at the helm of a slide projector. In the shadows we see the half-dozen people culled from the NYPD and from the D.A.'s Office who comprise this Mayor-appointed Youth Gang Joint Task Force. The group includes SGT. GREG MCQUEENEY, 45, LT. ERIC PARKER, Columbia University '79, black, and JOE MAXWELL.

MCQUEENEY
So he's the head poncho...

PARKER
(to McQueeney)
Think we can do without that kinda
stuff? You know, just for one
day.

CATHY
Here, here...

MCQUEENEY
Why you getting bent outta shape
over some punk who whacked a
security guard?

PARKER
(shakes his head,
disgusted)
Not the point, McQueeney.

McQueeney sits back heavy in his seat, grousing, while Cathy moves to turn on the overhead, flips off the projector, then sits.

JOE
(to Cathy)
So you're sure this Lincoln guy's
the one?

CATHY
According to Detective D'Nelly...

(CONTINUED)

JOE
(realizing)
Where is D'Nelly?

CATHY
(shrugs)
I spoke to him this morning. He
said he'd be here.

MCQUEENEY
But we still don't have enough
on Lincoln for an arrest...

CATHY
Not unless rumors have suddenly
become admissible.

MCQUEENEY
How come they're not making a
move, Chandler? Last week you
said there'd be some...

CATHY
(overriding, flashing)
I know what I said.

JOE
Look: maybe McQueeney's right
for once. Maybe we should just
let Social Services go in...

CATHY
(shaking her head)
It won't work, Joe, believe me.
There's a reason these deaf gangs
are so violent.

MCQUEENEY
They're animals like all the rest.

CATHY
(ignoring him)
Nobody wanted these kids. They
were kicked out on the street.
A lot of them were abused, so all
they know is anger. Lincoln is
using that. If we don't get him
out of there first, you can forget
about Social Services.

Cathy feels the pressure as she looks around, senses the
growing doubt. She takes a breath before appealing to the
entire group...

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED: (2)

22

CATHY

One more week. Just give me one more week to do it my way... make it an even month before you write it off.

(to Joe)

Can you live with that?

It's almost palpable as Joe's resistance falls away.

JOE

Do I have a choice?

Off McQueeney's grief, and on Cathy's great relief, we:

CUT TO:

23 EXT. ABANDONED TENEMENT - TO ESTABLISH - NIGHT 23

The only standing building in a square block of rubble. Boarded up front doors, hollow windows like eye sockets, etc. Loud SALSA MUSIC pours out into the street; and we are:

24 INT. TENEMENT - SECOND FLOOR - NIGHT 24

A couple of revamped stereos and a radio with a wire antenna BLAST out the music to TEN STREET KIDS of various ages. The irony of the sound becomes evident, as the CAMERA FINDS a five year old girl, MARIA, communicating with her mother, BLANCA, 19, in sign language. NOTE: this scene is to subtitled.

25 REVERSE ANGLE - LAURA 25

watches the little girl sitting in her mother's lap. She turns to Jerry who's leaning on the paint-splintered window sill, staring out into the night. She touches his hands to get his attention. She points to the little girl. Jerry looks there.

LAURA

(signing)

So beautiful.

Jerry smiles and nods and goes back to staring out the glassless window. Laura's eyes wander the room.

26 HER POV

26

This is home to the gang. A large room, furnished and decorated with cast-offs from the world outside. Two gang members (RICO and MANNY) sleep on the torn couches pushed up against the walls; another couple, WILLIE and his girl, BIG BETH, play a game of subway checkers on the rug, using a chess set, signing and laughing. In the corner, JOSE, naked from the waist up, is bench pressing two hundred pounds under a torn poster of James Dean.

27 RESUME SCENE

27

A loud rhythmic RAPPING at the door is audible over the music. No one notices, except for the little girl, Maria -- the only hearing person in the room. She runs to the door, unlocks the three sets of crude locks. The door pushes open to reveal MIGUEL, 17, the lieutenant, small and tough, wearing his colors: a gang jacket and a black and red bandanna on his head. He glances down at Maria, doesn't offer a smile, and crosses urgently into the bedroom. Blanca watches him go, while Maria closes and locks the front door behind him.

Ten seconds later, Miguel reappears with LINCOLN -- so called because of the shiny pennies he wears in each ear. He's the leader, older than the rest, with eyes like a caged animal. His movements are easy and confident, but understated by violence. He switches the overhead light off and then on again to get everyone's attention.

Miguel goes to rouse those asleep. Jose comes over, a grey towel draped over his naked shoulder. Jerry leads Laura to the couch. All the gang gathers close. Lincoln's signing is economical, controlled, without wasted motion or flourishes.

LINCOLN

(signing)

Miguel saw tonight. The drug store. Easy. Perfect. We do it tomorrow.

JOSE

(signing)

When?

LINCOLN

(signing)

Late. Sleep before.

(then)

Blanca and Laura go first. The eyes. Lookouts. Ladder to the roof.

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED:

27

When Lincoln signs Laura's name, he regards her intensely. She tries to hold his stare but cannot. Her eyes dart away... but then return to him. Jerry takes this all in.

WILLIE
(signing)
Who goes inside?

LINCOLN
(signing)
You, me, Jerry, and Miguel. Jose watches our back. Three buildings. One guard.

MIGUEL
(signing)
Gun.

There's some worried reaction among the gang members.

LINCOLN
(signing)
Don't worry. Old and slow.

Jerry stomps his foot to get Lincoln's attention. His signing is broader, more emotional.

JERRY
(signing)
Laura stays here.

LINCOLN
(signing)
What?

JERRY
(signing)
I want... Laura to stay here.

LINCOLN
(signing; moving closer to him)
Why?

JERRY
(signing)
She's new. Mistakes. She doesn't know.

Lincoln eyes Jerry and then shifts his gaze to Laura. After a beat:

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED: (2)

27

LINCOLN
 (signing to Jerry, but
 staring at Laura)
 She's one of us now. Right?

Laura manages a tiny nod.

LINCOLN
 (signing)
 She does what we do.

ON Laura, fear and resolve battling in her face... as the consequences of her action begin to be clear.

DISSOLVE TO:

28 EXT. WAREHOUSE COMPLEX - NIGHT

28

MOVING with Laura and Blanca along the shiny streets. It's cold, and Laura tugs her coat close around her. She also wears a wool cap. Two headlights steer toward them, and the girls duck into the shadows... as the car passes. For a moment, Laura's eyes are cast in a swath of light. Tight. Nervous. She and Blanca resume walking. Up ahead, there's a van parked down a side street.

PARKER (V.O.)
 (futzied)
 We got a visual. Get ready
 people.

CUT TO:

29 INT. VAN - NIGHT

29

Parker's wearing high-tech earphones and an operator's microphone, sitting on a stool before a PTP control console. McQueeney holds a pair of INFRARED NIGHT GLASSES up to his eyes. Beside him, a video camera silently whirrs, a red light pulsing.

30 HIS POV - THROUGH ONE WAY GLASS - (MATTE)

30

Laura and Blanca -- colored by the red iridescence of the night scope -- continue walking... and turn a corner.

31 RESUME SCENE

31

McQueeney lowers the glasses.

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED:

31

MCQUEENEY
 Definite make on Blanca Estoban.
 The other chick I don't know...

Parker punches a button on his console.

PARKER
 (into microphone)
 Number four...

CUT TO:

32 INT. ND SEDAN - NIGHT

32

Joe in the driver's seat. Cathy beside him. The car is parked deep in the shadows all the way across the warehouse courtyard. Their PTP radio squawks.

PARKER (O.S.)
 (futzd)
 Coming your way. See if you can
 ID the one in the cap.

CATHY
 (into mike)
 You got it.

Cathy replaces the mike in its cradle on the dash. Looks out the windshield.

CATHY
 Anything?

JOE
 Not yet.

Joe adjusts his position on the seat, squirming -- clearly uncomfortable.

CATHY
 What is it, Joe? You all right?

JOE
 You really wanna know?

Cathy is concerned. Joe looks away before answering.
 Then:

JOE
 I gotta pee.

Cathy breaks into a grin.

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED:

32

JOE
You believe that?

CATHY
Bad?

JOE
Yeah, pretty bad.

Cathy unhooks the molded plastic trash container from her dash...

CATHY
Here. I promise I won't look.

Cathy's gaze wanders back outside, and what she sees erases the smile from her face...

CATHY
(low; urgent)
On second thought, hold it in.

Joe follows her look.

33 THEIR POV - THROUGH WINDSHIELD (RACK FOCUS)

33

Laura and Blanca. Small figures as they enter the darkened courtyard.

CUT TO:

34 EXT. WAREHOUSE COURTYARD - CLOSER ANGLE - NIGHT

34

Staying low and in the shadows, Blanca leads Laura along the loading bays. Stopping, Blanca peers up over the lip at a white sign illuminated by a single spot: "GIBBONS PHARMACEUTICAL, INC." They move further along the bays and ascend a short flight of stairs onto the elevated platform. A metal ladder leads to the roof. Without a moment's hesitation, Blanca begins climbing. Hunkered in the shadows, Laura watches her go, one hand clenching the ladder's steel rungs.

35 ON THE ROOF - BLANCA

35

scanning the vicinity with her keen eyes. Nothing unusual. From her pocket, she pulls a smooth stone and taps three times on the ladder.

36 RESUME SCENE 36

Laura receives the all clear. With her free hand, she balances a flashlight in the crook of her arm, and sends three bursts of light across the courtyard.

37 REVERSE ANGLE - LONG SHOT 37

Three tiny flashes of light... and then Lincoln, Miguel, Jose, Willie, and Jerry emerge like spirits INTO FRAME, backs to the CAMERA. All in black. Lincoln rhythmically swings his nunchaks as they spread out into the courtyard.

CUT TO:

38 INT. ND SEDAN 38

Cathy and Joe watch as the gang materializes in the courtyard, crossing slowly toward the warehouse. Cathy's got the mike in her hand.

CATHY
(into mike)
They're here. They're moving.

JOE
(impatient)
Come on, come on.

CUT TO:

39 INT. VAN 39

Parker and McQueeney huddle at the console.

PARKER
(into microphone)
Here we go people. T-minus...

CUT TO:

EXT. WAREHOUSE COMPLEX - SERIES OF SHOTS - NIGHT

40 A) Two cop cars around the block turn on their ignitions, idling, ready to move. 40

41 B) A SWAT OFFICER on the ground lifts a hand to his earphone to make sure it's functioning properly. He peers around a corner at: 41

- 42 C) The gang -- halfway across the courtyard. 42
- 43 D) Cathy and Joe watch intently. 43
- 44 E) A SECOND SWAT OFFICER, on the roof, squatting back 44
against a skylight, hugs his rifle closer to his body, the
barrel extending up over his head.
- 45 ANGLE - BLANCA 45
still on the roof, turning as if by some sixth sense,
looking...
- 46 HER POV 46
Scanning the rows of skylights. Something metal glints in
the moonlight. She narrows her eyes. It's the barrel of
the rifle.
- 47 RESUME BLANCA 47
reacting. She backs slowly to the ladder. Taps out a
distress code. Two quick bangs repeated twice.
- 48 NEW ANGLE - LAURA 48
Near panic, as she fumbles for the flashlight. Two quick
bursts of light. Repeated.
- 49 CLOSE ON LINCOLN 49
stopping dead in his tracks. His eyes read the situation
instantly. CAMERA PULLS QUICKLY BACK AND UP, as Lincoln
raises his fist... and like pool balls, the gang breaks for
all corners of the courtyard, escaping.
- 50 BLANCA 50
flees over the rooftops. But:
- 51 LAURA 51
is frozen, clutching onto the ladder, terrified.

CUT TO:

- 52 INT. ND SEDAN 52
- Cathy reacts, turning to Joe, when:
- PARKER (O.S.)
(futzed)
Everybody, stand down. Repeat.
Stand down. Hold your positions.
- Cathy slams the dash with her open palm.
- CATHY
Damn!
- CUT TO:
- 53 EXT. WAREHOUSE COURTYARD - ON LAURA 53
- Only now rising shakily to her feet. She steps out of the shadows onto the loading platform. Frightened, she looks around her.
- CUT TO:
- 54 INT. ND SEDAN 54
- JOE
(pointing)
Look.
- Cathy does.
- 55 HER POV - LONG SHOT 55
- Laura descends the stairs and slowly makes her way out into the middle of the:
- 56 EXT. COURTYARD - LAURA 56
- Standing there for a moment, turning on her heels, confused, disoriented... the panic resurfacing... before bolting directly towards the CAMERA.
- 57 INT. ND SEDAN - CATHY'S POV 57
- Laura running straight for them.

58 CATHY

58

reaches for the door handle... opens the door... and steps outside. Laura almost rushes straight into her, before pulling up short. Their eyes connect. A tight, vibrating line.

CATHY

Laura..?

But Laura barrels right past her, and is swallowed by the darkness. Cathy looks after her, profoundly troubled and shocked.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

59 EXT. CENTRAL PARK - NIGHT - FOLLOWING 59

a MAN walks his dog over the grassy knoll above the drainage duct...

VINCENT (O.S.)
It's been difficult for her above.
We've known that for some time.

As the CAMERA PANS DOWN and PUSHES INTO the darkness of the drainage duct...

60 INT. DRAINAGE DUCT - TUNNEL JUNCTION 60

closer and closer toward the two figures... until we are right with Catherine and Vincent, both clearly distraught over the reason for their tryst.

VINCENT
Little by little, she began to shed her duties as a helper. Until last week, when she disappeared.

CATHY
Why didn't you tell me? I might have helped.

VINCENT
(helpless, ashamed)
Because... somehow, I still think of the tunnels as Laura's home. I was certain that if she ever needed sanctuary, for whatever reasons, she would seek it among us.

CATHY
She's found it, Vincent... but in a dangerous place, among people who live by violence.
(beat)
One of them, we think, killed a security guard.

VINCENT
(nearly choked)
And this is her new home?

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED:

60

Cathy sees and feels how painful this is for him...

CATHY

I'm sorry...

VINCENT

I know...

CATHY

(tentative)

-- Vincent...

She pauses, until Vincent's look begs her to continue.

CATHY

Laura herself may have broken the law. I'm not sure... but you should prepare yourself for that possibility.

VINCENT

Catherine... we have our laws as well, and Laura must still answer to them. Until the Council and the others determine otherwise, she remains a part our community.

CATHY

I can't promise how much longer...

VINCENT

I understand, Catherine.
(resolute)
But I must see her tonight.
Please...

ON Vincent's determination...

DISSOLVE TO:

61 INT. ABANDONED TENEMENT - A SMALL ROOM - NIGHT

61

where Laura lies asleep in Jerry's arms, spoon-fashion, on a mattress on the floor, their peaceful bliss illuminated by the moon...

62 ARM AROUND SLOWLY

62

to find a large open window in b.g., through which a gossamer curtain blows in with the moonlight... and, where Vincent's silhouette now appears.

63 VINCENT'S POV 63
of the young lovers.

64 OUTSIDE - VINCENT 64
cannot help but be taken aback by what he sees. Laura,
no longer a girl, in the arms of a lover. An emotional,
bittersweet vision.

65 RESUME LAURA 65
who seems to sense Vincent's presence: fidgeting in her
sleep, stirring, opening her eyes a crack... then seeing
the figure framed in the window. She regards Vincent for
a long moment, her mind racing... finally deciding. She
rolls her head to look at Jerry before she carefully slides
back the sheets and gets out of bed. She stands in her
t-shirt, barelegged, once again checks on Jerry, whose
breathing is still regular. She bends down and pulls the
sheet over his bare shoulder; then, crosses toward:

66 THE WINDOW 66
Vincent steps back on the fire escape, as Laura steps
through the window to face him. Laura hugs herself against
the cool breeze, which blows over the uneasy silence
between them. Vincent cannot hide his pain and concern,
and though Laura is aware of this, she is at once defiant
and ashamed. At length... Vincent signs and speaks.

VINCENT
It's good to see you...

LAURA
(signing)
Is it?

VINCENT
Yes, it is.
(then)
It is painful as well.

LAURA
(signing)
I won't apologize for my life.

VINCENT
I would never ask you to
apologize...

(CONTINUED)

66 CONTINUED:

66

LAURA
(signing)
Then why are you here?

VINCENT
I'm here... because I care.
Because... I love you. And
because I know that you have been
unhappy.

Laura regards him, her face reflecting the truth of his words.

VINCENT
You could have come to me.

Laura looks away from him. Vincent reaches out to her.

VINCENT
I would have understood.

Laura is slowly shaking her head.

LAURA
(signing)
I couldn't.

VINCENT
You couldn't. Why not?

After a beat.

LAURA
(signing)
I had to know if I could do it
on my own.

VINCENT
You had to know if you could
survive on your own.

LAURA
(signing)
Yes, I had to see if I had the
courage... if I was strong
enough...

VINCENT
You are strong enough... Nothing
can ever change that.

(CONTINUED)

66 CONTINUED: (2)

66

LAURA

(signing)

No. You're wrong. I couldn't
make it. The world choked me.

VINCENT

The world choked you...

LAURA

(signing)

Made me angry...

VINCENT

Made you angry.

LAURA

(signing; bitterly)

Taught me that I was different.

VINCENT

Taught you that you were
different. Laura...

LAURA

(signing)

Vincent, please.

(indicating her new
home)

You see where I am. I've found
my place.

VINCENT

But is this the right place for
you? Are you sure you're happy
here?

Beat. Laura notices as Vincent glances past her, at the
still-sleeping Jerry.

VINCENT

Do you love him?

For the first time, Laura's defensiveness gives way to a
little smile.

LAURA

(signing)

Very much.

Vincent nods, the situation suddenly much clearer to him.
And for a moment there is something of the connection these
two once shared.

(CONTINUED)

66 CONTINUED: (3)

66

VINCENT

You've become... a woman.

Laura smiles, proud of Vincent's observation/compliment. But their high feeling is brought down by the gravity and purpose of Vincent's visit.

VINCENT

And I wish the circumstances were different, but...

(then)

You know the message I bring...

As Laura regards Vincent: yes, she knows...

DISSOLVE TO:

67 INT. FATHER'S CHAMBER - DAY

67

Laura passionately defends herself in front of a full session of the Council. Informed by his own conflicting emotions, Vincent acts as her voice and interpreter for those who can't sign. FATHER and Willis are seated to one side. PASCAL hovers near the door, his pipe sticks clutched in one hand. The children form the first ragged concentric circle around Laura. Other tunnel denizens as necessary: MOUSE, JAMIE, MARY, WILLIAM, ZACH etc. Laura's hands slice the air, her rage and indignation building...

LAURA

(signing)

None of you... None of you have a right to judge me.

Vincent's translation is nearly simultaneous. A general CHORUS OF DISMAY AND SYMPATHY from the crowded chamber. As the reaction fades, Father slowly rises to his feet. NOTE: Throughout this scene Vincent will continue to voice Laura's words, and to interpret for her.

FATHER

Laura... our purpose here is not to judge you.

LAURA

(signing)

You can stand there... with straight eyes... and tell me that?

FATHER

Laura, please. Remember, we are your friends.

(CONTINUED)

67 CONTINUED:

67

Laura's manner is defiant, contentious.

FATHER

You know our rules as well as anyone. You have forsaken your responsibilities as a Helper. That is your right. But if you want to continue to be a part of us, you must, at the very least, abide by the moral principles according to which we all live.

LAURA

(signing)

What principles?

FATHER

Love... Trust...

LAURA

(signing)

Those are just words. What use are they to me in the world above? Yes I love. Yes I trust. But I also hate. I also distrust. There are other, more complex rules I must follow to survive.

FATHER

You are always free to return here. We would welcome you.

For Laura, this is a painful alternative. Also, she remembers Jerry and the love they share. She softens, her signing reflecting this.

LAURA

(signing)

I have another family now.

FATHER

Catherine tells us that some in your "family" are suspected of murder.

At the mention of Catherine's name, Laura shoots an hurtful and betrayed glance at Vincent. Then to Father:

LAURA

(signing; forcefully)

I know of no murders.

William steps forward from under the spiral staircase.

(CONTINUED)

67 CONTINUED: (2)

67

WILLIAM

But they live by violence... we
do know that.

LAURA

(signing)

We live... as we must. The only
way we can. We live as all of
you do. We've made the same
choice: to exist outside society.

There's a BUZZ in the chamber. Some agreeing with Laura's
point. Others dissenting. Frustrated, Father steps
closer.

FATHER

But surely you can see the
difference...

LAURA

(signing)

The only difference I see is that
you have chosen to live down
here... and that we have chosen
to live bound by our silence...
by our deafness.

Father bows his head...

WILLIAM

No handicap - whatever it is - can
excuse stealing and robbing.
That's a fact.

LAURA

(signing)

I am not handicapped. Some call
me that. Others call me
defective... or retarded.

MARY

You know William didn't mean it
like that.

LAURA

(signing)

It doesn't matter. I'm used to
it now. Up above, I carry that
feeling with me everywhere. And
none of you will ever know what
that's like. None of you.

(CONTINUED)

67 CONTINUED: (3)

67

Laura surveys her jury, eyes travelling over them, one by one. There's a moment of awkward silence. Father's pain is plain on his face.

LAURA

(signing)

So if you want, you can vote.
But I reject your vote. I reject
your judgement. I banish myself.

Laura's exit is dramatic, as she parts the crowd before her. Vincent and Father exchange a significant look, and then Vincent goes after Laura.

CUT TO:

68 INT. TUNNELS - SAME TIME

68

Vincent catches Laura, putting a gentle hand on her shoulder. She wheels around, eyes flashing. Vincent signs and speaks.

VINCENT

(signing and speaking)

Laura, please. Consider what you--

Laura muffles Vincent's hands with her own, thereby silencing him. She withdraws her hands, regarding him intensely for a long beat, the resolve and the pain all there in her face. Finally:

LAURA

(signing)

Goodbye, Vincent.

And she turns to leave... All Vincent can do is watch her go, and this time no hand appears behind her back, signalling "I love you."

DISSOLVE TO:

69 INT. NYPD PRECINCT - SQUAD ROOM - DAY

69

CLOSE ON CATHY

leaning forward, fists on a desk, laying heavily into someone sitting behind the desk, o.c. We've never seen her so pissed.

(CONTINUED)

69 CONTINUED:

69

CATHY

It doesn't matter how I found out!
You crossed the line, and you know
it. What the hell were you
thinking?!

Suddenly, a man rises quickly INTO FRAME, his back to us,
before he turns to confront Cathy: it's Jerry. He wears
his badge on a plastic flap outside his shirt pocket, and
his anger on his sleeve.

JERRY

I don't have to take this from
you.

As he turns and walks away from Cathy.

70 FOLLOWING

70

as Cathy keeps pace with him through the crowded, bustling
squad room...

CATHY

You're not walking away from it,
Jerry.

JERRY

I just about giftwrapped Lincoln
for you! You're the ones who
screwed up. Not me.

CATHY

That's something different. Don't
confuse it.

JERRY

I'm not the one confusing
things...

Cathy thrusts out her hand and physically stops Jerry's
momentum, turning him toward her.

CATHY

Let me tell you something,
detective. It's worse than you
think. You broke the law. I'm
talking entrapment, endangerment.
If anything happens to that girl,
God forbid -- legally it's on your
head. Do you understand?

As the hot anger drains from her...

(CONTINUED)

70 CONTINUED:

70

CATHY

You've been lying to us. To her.
And lying to yourself.

... replaced by the cold sobering truth.

CATHY

It's over.

Jerry looks up, regarding Cathy closely. The look that passes between them says they are beyond the bullshit. But he can't deal with this out here, so he moves past Cathy, into:

71 DEPOSITION ROOM

71

Cathy follows him inside, closes the door. Jerry moves to a window, staring through the venetian blinds into the darkening rain, thrumming steadily against the window. Something makes him laugh in a small, ironic way.

JERRY

Boy, it's funny...

CATHY

What's that?

JERRY

How I feel. I mean, I'm kind of relieved you found out. I feel a lot... lighter.

CATHY

Secrets can get pretty heavy...
and they only get heavier.

JERRY

The worst part was keeping it from
Laura...

(then, with painful
sincerity)

I love her, Cathy. I didn't want
to... I don't want to. But I do.

Jerry can barely speak through the swelling lump in his throat. And Cathy sympathizes with him, with the honesty and helplessness of his situation.

JERRY

I know. I know I'm in major
trouble...

(CONTINUED)

71 CONTINUED:

71

He shakes his head, feeling the full emotional weight of his dilemma.

CATHY

I'll do my best to help you,
Jerry, but I can't keep this from
the others. I'm sorry. And until
we all decide what do, I don't
want you anywhere near that
gang... and that includes Laura.

Jerry regards her for a long moment before he nods. And on Cathy's worry, reflected in her eyes, and in the relentless beating of the rain, we:

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

72 INT. VINCENT CHAMBER - NIGHT

72

Vincent huddles at his desk, a beautiful earth-toned quilt draped around his shoulders. An elegant candleabra burns, fighting back the darkness, as Vincent writes in a worn leather-bound diary.

VINCENT'S VOICE

It's late... yet I cannot sleep.
I'm thinking of Laura. It's cold
up there tonight. I can feel
it... the chill, down through the
layers of pipe and earth that
protect us. Insulate us.
(then; with gravity)
What's happening to her?

Vincent lifts his eyes from the page, considering his silent question. He continues writing.

VINCENT'S VOICE

Can there be anything so painful
as watching a child you love
falter in the world? Refuse your
help? At what point do you draw
quietly away from their lives?
At what point do you say, "I am
no longer responsible?" We taught
Laura to depend on herself, to
think her own thoughts. Do we
now tell her to disregard those
lessons? To doubt herself? To
change? She is a woman now. No
longer a child. What is happening
to her up there?

CAMERA PULLS BACK, framing the solitary scene.

DISSOLVE TO:

73 INT. ABANDONED TENEMENT - CLOSE ON LAURA - DAY

73

A frightened face, backing away. ANGLE WIDENS to reveal Lincoln, standing before her -- accusing, angry. They're alone in the room. (Note: This scene to be subtitled.)

LINCOLN

(signing)

Rat.

(CONTINUED)

73 CONTINUED:

73

Vehemently, Laura shakes her head.

LINCOLN
(signing)
You lie.

LAURA
(signing)
Please...

LINCOLN
(signing)
Rico saw. You and the woman.
The cop. She spoke. To you.

LAURA
(signing)
Mistake. She thinks she knows.
I run.

LINCOLN
(signing)
You sold us!

LAURA
(signing; forceful)
No! Never!

Laura's response is so visceral and passionate that it stems Lincoln's attack.

LAURA
(signing)
This is my home now.

LINCOLN
(signing)
Someone then. Who?

LAURA
(signing)
I don't know.

Lincoln now steps closer. Changes tack.

LINCOLN
(signing)
You hearing?

This confuses Laura. She shrugs, not understanding.

(CONTINUED)

73 CONTINUED: (2)

73

LINCOLN
 (signing)
 You deaf?

LAURA
 (signing)
 I'm deaf.

LINCOLN
 (signing)
 You trust hearing?

Laura studies him. Then:

LAURA
 (signing)
 No.

LINCOLN
 (signing)
 You hate hearing?

Laura doesn't answer him. They're standing very close now.

LINCOLN
 (signing)
 You hate hearing...

Laura manages a tiny nod.

LINCOLN
 (signing)
 Sign it.

After a beat:

LAURA
 (signing)
 I hate hearing.

Lincoln smiles at her and raises his hand to cup the side of her face, a sexual gesture... when somebody grips him by the shoulder and spins him around. It's Jerry, and he seems ready to unload on Lincoln. An intense beat... before Lincoln raises his palms, backing off, smiling -- saving it for another time. Jerry extends his hand to Laura, who takes it... and they exit.

CUT TO:

74 EXT. LOT - NIGHT

74

Beside the tenement, empty but for a scattering of worn tires, trash barrels, and a stripped Chevy junker, its tireless rims embedded in the dirt. Laura and Jerry approach the car, hand in hand. NOTE: their signed conversation is to be subtitled. Laura sits on the hood of the car, Jerry facing her. He sees that she's distracted by what just happened...

JERRY
(signing)
Forget about him.

But Laura is still worried...

JERRY
(signing)
Okay?

After a moment, Laura nods. Jerry smiles assuringly.

JERRY
(signing)
You know what?

LAURA
(signing)
What?

JERRY
(signing)
We don't need Lincoln and the others...

Laura regards him with curiosity.

JERRY
(signing)
We should go away from here. Just you and me. Maybe go upstate. Maybe Canada. No people. Lots of trees...

Laura smiles at the fantasy, fueling Jerry -- who takes her hands now, and pulls her playfully from the hood, leading her to the passenger side of the junker... like some regal valet, presenting the doorless passenger seat for her to take. Laura laughs as Jerry runs around to the driver side, taking the wheel beside her, pretending to drive, breathing in the cold fresh air, imagining for both of them the passing scenery...

(CONTINUED)

74 CONTINUED:

74

JERRY
 (pointing, then signing)
 Look! There's a waterfall!

Laura plays along, swept up in the fantasy...

LAURA
 (pointing, then signing)
 And the mountains!

Jerry regards her tenderly, smiling...

JERRY
 (signing)
 Why not? I'm serious...

This high moment, so close to the scene with Lincoln, has left her emotional.

LAURA
 (signing)
 I love you...

Laura's honest declaration is a painful and powerful reminder of the lie he's been living.

JERRY
 (signing)
 I love you...

They are very close now, and as Jerry touches her face, Laura senses his internal struggle.

LAURA
 (signing)
 What are you thinking?

JERRY
 (signing)
 I want us to go.

LAURA
 (signing)
 Me too...

JERRY
 (signing)
 But there are things I have to tell you first... Difficult things.

(CONTINUED)

74 CONTINUED: (2)

74

LAURA
 (signing)
 Like what?

After a moment that seems to Jerry like forever...

JERRY
 (signing, point blank)
 I'm not deaf. I can hear.

Laura is blown away, paralyzed by this confession...

JERRY
 (signing)
 I'm a cop. I've been working
 undercover... because Lincoln
 killed a man.

Laura's hand trembles as she raises it slowly to Jerry's lips, not touching them, but feeling the warm breath of his words...

JERRY
 (signing and speaking)
 I can speak.

Laura withdraws, shakes her head with a dawning sense of betrayal and incredulity...

JERRY
 (signing and speaking)
 Please... understand...

But Laura's reaction crystalizes into a vigorous anger. She pushes herself out of the car, and starts to run. Jerry goes after her, blocking her path, imploring...but Laura turns her head away, closes her eyes, shutting him out. Jerry takes her head with both hands, forcing her to face him, to at least listen... and when she finally opens her eyes, they glisten with tears and distrust.

JERRY
 (signing and speaking)
 I wanted to tell you...
 (then)
 If it made a difference, if you
 wanted me to, I would plug my
 ears... cut out my tongue...

But Laura's resolve hardens. She shakes her head, backing away...

(CONTINUED)

74 CONTINUED: (3)

74

JERRY
 (signing and speaking)
 You can't go back there. You're
 not one of them.

Laura's anger is suddenly explosive.

LAURA
 (signing)
 No: You're not one of us...

As she turns and runs, disappearing into the shadows...
 leaving Jerry alone and utterly devastated by the knowledge
 that she is lost to him.

75 AROUND THE CORNER - FOLLOWING

75

Laura running as fast as she can, finally stopping, sagging
 against the side of a brick building, breathless from
 running and from the great heaving sobs that have now
 seized her. And as she sinks to the ground...

DISSOLVE TO:

76 EXT. STREETS - LONG SHOT - NIGHT

76

A street corner telephone booth. A figure inside, leaning
 against the glass, the receiver pressed tight to his ear.

77 CLOSER ANGLE

77

It's Jerry, and he looks as though he's about to lose it.

JERRY
 (into phone)
 I couldn't just leave her there.
 (then)
 I told her everything. I had to.

CUT TO:

78 INT. PRECINCT 52 - SIMULTANEOUS

78

Cathy perched on the edge of a desk, listening, squeezing
 her eyes shut, trying to get pragmatic, to contain her own
 rising anger.

(CONTINUED)

78 CONTINUED:

78

CATHY
 (into phone)
 Is she with you now?

A beat. Then:

JERRY (OVER)
 (filtered)
 No. She...

He trails off, as we:

CUT TO:

79 INT. PHONE BOOTH

79

JERRY
 God, I feel miserable...

INTERCUT AS NECESSARY

CATHY
 Where is she, Jerry?

JERRY
 I don't know. Back with the
 others.

CATHY
 Tell me what happened...

Just then, Cathy hears a LOUD FILTERED CRASH over the
 phone.

80 IN THE PHONE BOOTH

80

Jerry wheels around at the sound.

81 HIS POV

81

Lincoln holding up two garbage can lids, like cymbals.
 Miguel beside him, clutching a baseball bat that suddenly
 fills the FRAME, as:

- 82 RESUME SCENE 82
- The glass shatters all around Jerry... who is thrown back against the phone, dropping the receiver. He protects his face with his arms, as another LOUD SHATTERING sends him to his knees in a shower of glass.
- 83 VARIOUS ANGLES (QUICK CUTS) 83
- Jose and Rico, each with baseball bats, repeatedly smashing the rear and side of the phone booth... joined now by Miguel.
- 84 INSIDE PHONE BOOTH 84
- it's a relentless nightmare in here. And as Jerry slumps to the ground, unconscious and bloody.
- CUT TO:
- 85 INT. PRECINCT 52 85
- Cathy reacting to the carnage.
- CATHY
(into phone)
Jerry... Jerry!
- She slams down the phone and rushes down the corridor.
- CUT TO:
- 86 EXT. PHONE BOOTH 86
- Jerry lies, surrounded by glass, half in and half out of the phone booth around which Lincoln, Miguel, Jose, and Rico now stand. And in the strange, gruesome silence of the bloody aftermath, we:

FADE OUT

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

87 INT. GANG TENEMENT - NIGHT 87

Jerry is cut and bruised from the ambush, his hands bound behind his back, propped against a huge stereo speaker, semi-conscious. The gang is gathered around, as Miguel twists the volume knob of the stereo receiver, sending a tidal wave of SALSA MUSIC crashing against Jerry's skull. He cringes, stirs, regaining consciousness, focusing...

88 JERRY'S POV 88

the faces: masks of condemnation. Miguel cuts the music.

89 RESUME SCENE 89

as Lincoln steps forward, points accusingly at Jerry, then addresses the group. NOTE: scene to be subtitled.

LINCOLN

(signing)

He is the traitor. The enemy.
He would separate us. Destroy
us.

(to Blanca)

Steal your daughter from you...

Blanca holds Maria close, shooting Jerry a look of fear and loathing. Jerry's hands are tied; so, to these people, he is gagged, unable to defend himself. He can only shake his head.

LINCOLN

(signing)

Now we decide what to do with him.

90 ANGLE - DOORWAY 90

as Laura enters, head bowed, looking like a ghost from her break up with Jerry. Then she sees the assembled group across the room... and Jerry, who looks past his inquisitors to her. His expression is neutral, but his eyes plead for her forgiveness and help. As she steps closer, among them...

(CONTINUED)

90 CONTINUED:

90

LINCOLN
 (signing)
 We are family. We decide
 together.

JOSE
 (signing)
 Only one choice...

Miguel nods...

MIGUEL
 (signing)
 Sticks and stones...

Lincoln nods his agreement.

LINCOLN
 (signing)
 Sticks and stones...

Lincoln repeats the sign over and over, slow and ominous,
 its meaning clear.

91 JERRY'S POV - PANNING

91

as one by one, the others join in the percussive chorus, a
 rhythmic death sentence. All except for Laura, who is
 horrified by this, aware for the first time of the depth of
 the gang's violence and hatred... aware for the first time
 of her own denial.

92 RESUME SCENE

92

Lincoln watches Laura, almost amused by her awakening. She
 regards Jerry once more: and makes the split second
 decision to run. Jose starts after her, but Lincoln raises
 a hand: let her go...

CUT TO:

93 EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT

93

A pair of black and whites cruise the dark, deserted
 streets of Alphabetland, a half block apart, pulling up to:

94 GANG TENEMENT

94

Cathy and McQueeney emerging from the first car, Parker and another OFFICER recognizable from the Task Force emerging from the second car. As the four of them start toward the entrance, McQueeney turns to Cathy...

MCQUEENEY
(to Cathy)
You stay here.

CATHY
Give me a break, McQueeney.

McQueeney sees her determination, doesn't like it, but knows he can do nothing to stop her. He nods grudgingly as he turns and pushes through the front door, followed by Parker and the other Officer...

95 INT. GANG TENEMENT - LOBBY

95

The cops make their way up the stairwell, McQueeney first, the other two covering. As they leapfrog upward, alternating point and cover positions.

96 ANGLE - CATHY

96

entering the dark and silent tenement, watching the cops' upward progress.

CUT TO:

97 INT. TENEMENT - SECOND FLOOR LANDING

97

The door is ajar. Parker enters first, gun drawn and ready.

98 HIS POV

98

sweeping the empty room.

99 RESUME

99

as McQueeney and the Officer follow. They exchange looks at the sound they hear: a television turned way up, droning some cartoon with explosions (perhaps "Road Runner" or something equally violent). McQueeney moves toward the sound, turning a corner, gun drawn and suddenly pointed at:

100 BLANCA AND MARIA

100

watching the blaring cartoon. McQueeney holsters his gun and is right on Blanca, spinning her around. She is terrified as McQueeney takes her by the shoulders, shaking her, his face inches from hers.

MCQUEENEY

Where are they? Come on! Where
the hell are they?!

Maria strikes McQueeney's leg over and over, screaming at the top of her lungs.

MARIA

Leave her alone! She can't hear
you! She don't understand! Leave
her alone!

Suddenly aware of his own pointless violence, McQueeney releases Blanca, who swoops up her little girl at once, comforting her as she sobs. McQueeney's taken aback, ashamed, as Cathy comes upon the scene along with Parker and the Officer...

CUT TO:

101 EXT. GANG TENEMENT - NIGHT

101

Parker's car pulls away.

102 INT. SQUAD CAR

102

Cathy is on the radio, as McQueeney gets in behind the wheel.

CATHY

(into mike)

The place is empty. We're heading
north on Avenue D from here, and
Parker is running parallel on A.
Over.

103 INT. POLICE CHOPPER - NIGHT

103

Joe is on the mike, almost shouting over the thwacking blades of the helicopter...

(CONTINUED)

103 CONTINUED:

103

JOE
 (into mike)
 We'll run up the middle. From
 up here, we can cover B and D
 pretty well. Over.

And as Joe replaces the mike in its cradle...

CUT TO:

104 INT. LOW RENT APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

104

Using the handrail, Laura yanks herself up the narrow stairway. On the first landing she bolts down the dim corridor... stopping in front of Apartment 1F. She pounds on the door. Waits. Pounds again.

Finally, the door cracks open on a chain to reveal Willis. Seeing her, he immediately opens the door wide. Willis signs and speaks.

WILLIS
 Come in, come in.

Laura shakes her head.

LAURA
 (signing)
 You must contact Vincent.

WILLIS
 Contact Vincent? You know I can't
 do that, Laura.

LAURA
 (signing)
 Somebody's going to die.

WILLIS
 Who's gonna get killed? One of
 the gang? You can't expect
 Vincent to help them, Laura.

LAURA
 (signing)
 No! A Policeman.

WILLIS
 A cop?

Laura nods vigorously.

(CONTINUED)

104 CONTINUED:

104

LAURA
(signing)
Please, hurry.

WILLIS
Okay, Laura... but you come in
here where it's safe...

But instead Laura rushes off.

WILLIS
(calling after her)
Laura...

Of course, she doesn't respond, and Willis can only watch her go... before hurriedly reentering his apartment.

CUT TO:

105 EXT. BUILDING - NIGHT

105

Outside the crumbling walls of this half-destroyed building, the ground blanketed with rubble. Jerry stands against a brick wall, his hands still bound behind him. He faces the gang, now formed in a semi-circle. Lincoln stoops to pick up a broken brick, weighing it in his palm as he regards Jerry with laser intensity. The executioner. The others follow suit, arming themselves with cement shards and broken bricks.

106 JERRY

106

trying to hide his fear and horror and disbelief, but he's so scared that his quivering is almost visible.

107 ANOTHER ANGLE

107

A tense moment: then Lincoln hurls the first brick at Jerry, striking him in the chest, sending him hard against the wall.

Miguel and Jose exchange looks, hefting their weapons uncertainly. Off their tentativeness, Lincoln picks up a hunk of cement and throws it, this one glancing off the side of Jerry's head, laying open the flesh. Miguel swallows hard -- this is nasty business, but necessary -- as in a determined grunt he hurls his brick toward Jerry, missing his head by inches. Then Jose lets loose, hitting Jerry in the leg. The others start throwing, each reaching that point of uncertainty and passing it much easier because they're all part of it now.

Jerry turns away, hunching his shoulders against the projectiles. One hits him in back of the head, staggering him, so that he can barely stand, as:

108 LAURA

108

comes upon them. She runs to catch Lincoln's cocked arm mid-throw, wheeling him around, trying to stop him. But Lincoln just throws her to the ground. She appeals to Miguel, then Jose, but they each shove her away. Jerry is on his knees now, slumped against the wall, bruised and bloodied. Unable to stop them, Laura breaks through the encroaching line, shielding Jerry with her own body, absorbing the attack, ready to die beside him...

109 ANGLE - VINCENT

109

at the edge of the exposed second landing, stepping from the jagged shadows cast by the decimated building. He's about to intercede, when a thundering NOISE and a BRIGHT SWEEPING SEARCHLIGHT force him back into the shadows. The police chopper materializes overhead suddenly, casting the horrific scene in a white, almost surreal circle of light.

110 INT. POLICE CHOPPER - JOE'S POV

110

descending, as half the gang begins to scatter...

111 JOE

111

on the horn.

(CONTINUED)

111 CONTINUED:

111

JOE
 (into mike)
 We got 'em. They're at
 Fourteenth, between B and C. All
 cars in vicinity please respond.
 Over.

CUT TO:

112 INT. POLICE CAR - MOVING

112

McQueeney hits the cherrytop, sounds the klaxons.

MCQUEENEY
 Hold on, sweetheart.

as he accelerates...

CUT TO:

113 EXT. BUILDING - SIMULTANEOUS

113

The sound of approaching SIRENS. Pandemonium as the fleeing gang members are cut off by the first of the arriving squad cars... followed moments later by a second then a third car. Cops emerge, start the round-up.

Miguel and Jose are the last to jump ship, leaving Lincoln alone at the wall to finish. Filled with murder, he finds a cement block, hoists it high overhead, approaching Laura and Jerry, about to smash them -- when Vincent bounds ROARING INTO FRAME, dispatching Lincoln with a powerful swipe across the neck. Laura looks up, exchanging a look with Vincent for the second before he disappears once again into the shadows, undetected.

From the malaise in b.g., Cathy now approaches Lincoln's lifeless body. She stoops to pick up something...a shiny penny. She closes her hand over the penny, then looks to Laura, who is cradling Jerry in her arms, stroking his face. And as the cherrytops throw red light everywhere, and the police radios squawk and fill the air with disembodied voices, CAMERA PULLS AWAY SLOWLY, framing the scene...

DISSOLVE TO:

114 INT. THRESHOLD - DAY

114

Vincent and Laura work towards a new understanding, while Cathy watches their reconciliation in b.g. Vincent signs and speaks.

LAURA
(signing)
I feel ashamed.

VINCENT
Don't be ashamed...

LAURA
(signing)
I let hate and rage overtake me.

VINCENT
Hate and rage are powerful forces
in all of us. You can't punish
yourself for feeling them.

LAURA
(signing)
They scare me.

VINCENT
They frighten me too. They're the
part of us we understand least.
And yet... they're the part of
us we must try and understand
most.

LAURA
(signing)
By remembering the love that binds
all of us together...

VINCENT
Yes. By remembering love... the
one human heart we all share...

Laura seems distracted, almost as if she wants to sign something...

VINCENT
What is it, Laura?

LAURA
(signing)
I was just hoping for something.

VINCENT
What were you hoping for?

(CONTINUED)

LAURA
(signing)
About Jerry.

VINCENT
Jerry...

LAURA
(signing)
I was hoping that someday you
could meet him.

VINCENT
I also hope to meet him. Perhaps
someday...

Laura looks deeply into his eyes, with gratitude and admiration and love. He opens his arms, and she moves into his embrace...

Then she moves to Cathy. They hold each other by the arms.

LAURA
(signing)
Thank you.

Laura backs away, a wave goodbye to both of them. Cathy moves beside Vincent, as Laura signs "I love you" to both of them. Cathy and Vincent return the sign, watching her leave. After she has disappeared into the light, Cathy turns to Vincent.

CATHY
She's been through so much.

VINCENT
The world has tested her...

CATHY
And yet she chooses to remain
above...

VINCENT
She is in love. Her fate lies
there.

CATHY
You can let go of her so easily?

(CONTINUED)

114 CONTINUED: (2)

114

VINCENT

(beat; smiling)

No, not so easily. But her life is her own. She knows better what she's facing now. Success and failure. Joy and disappointment. She'll take risks. She'll make mistakes.

(then)

She'll continue to discover what it means to be alive.

Vincent offers his hand to Cathy. She accepts it, and they move away from the threshold, into the golden light of the tunnel world...

FADE OUT:

THE END