

NOTES FROM UNDERGROUND

a screenplay by

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based on the novel by

Fyodor Dostoevsky

Draft 3C

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THE SCREEN IS BLACK.

A CAMCORDER IS TURNED ON - OFF (MAIN TITLE APPEARS) - ON -

1v A VIDEO IMAGE GLOWS TO LIFE

1v*

A hand blocks the lens, adjusting the camera, getting it set up. Then TED sits down in a chair, facing the camera.

He is intelligent, troubled, intense - both unconventional and charismatic. He wears a gray pull-over sweater and blue jeans.

TED

I am a sick man. I think it's my liver, but I refuse to see a doctor... from spite. I am a spiteful man. I've been living like this for a long time. I used to work in the building department, but I don't now. I was a bad civil servant. I was... uncivil...spiteful...

CUT TO:

2 INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

2*

A gloomy basement apartment. The basement window has burglar bars. A prismatic snowflake ornament hangs on the window. Five tiny cacti line the window sill. There is an antique day bed directly below the window. Sparsely furnished; it's the kind of room where someone could wait for Godot.

Ted sits in a chair; the video camera rests on a small table. His sense of style is idiosyncratic - he thinks that he has a sense of style, but no one else does.

3v VIDEO IMAGE - TED

3v*

As seen through the camcorder:

TED

Actually, I was lying when I said I was spiteful. I was lying from spite. I'm not spiteful - I'm not anything. But I am sick. I'm crippled - by too much introspection. Too much awareness is a disease. A crippling disease. Absolutely.

(pauses to think)

Tell me this: why have I done ugly things? Actions I took at the very moment I was most conscious of their ugliness?

Ted stands abruptly, entering and leaving the frame as he paces with ferocious nervous energy.

TED

And when I'd promise myself to change, to behave better, I immediately knew that I was lying. I can't change - because I think too much - that's my sickness.

(does an about-face)

It's better to do nothing!

(does another about-face)

I'm lying! Even now I'm lying!

Ted suddenly turns the camera off.

CUT TO:

4 VIDEO IMAGES DECAYS TO BLACK.

4

CUT TO:

5v VIDEO IMAGE - TED

5v*

No longer standing but now seated, Ted turns the camera back on and continues:

TED

Can I be entirely honest with myself? Can anyone? There are some memories so ugly that a man won't tell them to his friends. There are even uglier memories that a man fears to tell even himself, and the better the man, the more of these secrets he hides. I now want to remember. I got this camera because if I say it, if I see it, if I see myself say it, then maybe I can get rid of the secret. If I'm honest.

Ted glances out the window and hunches forward.

TED

Rain is falling today. It fell yesterday too...

A5 P.O.V. - TED'S WINDOW - NIGHT

A5*

Outside, rain is falling.

DISSOLVE TO:

6 CLOSE-UP - RAINDROPS - NIGHT

6*

GIANT - HYPNOTIC -
FALLING IN SLOW MOTION -

TED (V.O.)

The rain has triggered this memory that won't let me sleep...

DISSOLVE TO:

7 INT. BUILDING DEPT., CITY HALL - DAY

7*

An overcrowded office straight out of Charles Dickens. An oppressive and claustrophobic bureaucracy.

On one side of the central counter are Ted and TWO OTHER CLERKS, who all look sallow and overworked. On the other side of the counter are lines of ARCHITECTS AND CONTRACTORS, busy people whose lives have ground to a halt while they eke through the building permit process.

Ted is 15 years younger. He wears light blue tinted glasses, suspenders, white shirt, blue four button suit and polished combat boots.

TED (V.O.)

I was much younger...my life was already gloomy, disorderly and utterly solitary. I very often looked at myself with furious discontent.

HOWARD, a well-dressed developer who exudes confidence, watches Ted scrutinize his plans. Ted's working demeanor is fastidious in a way that reflects his intense nature. Ted glances up at Howard, but is afraid to meet his gaze.

TED (V.O.)

I was so self-conscious, I had trouble looking people in the eye.

Ted flips to the next page of plans with the dramatic flair of a symphony conductor. His attention focuses on a corner of the plans. Howard's smile curdles.

TED

Hmmm...this plumbing is centered.

Howard cranes his neck around to see what Ted is talking about.

HOWARD

(arrogant)

Right...the plumbing is centered in all the toilet stalls.

TED

But this is a handicap stall. The plumbing has to be eighteen inches off center to allow for the grab bar.

HOWARD

Oh, right, of course. The draftsman prepared these - that's very simple to change.

Ted pushes the plans back toward Howard.

TED

Then change them and come back.

HOWARD

(stunned)

You're not going to give me my permit?

TED

These plans don't meet the code.

HOWARD

(pleading)

One toilet has to be moved eighteen inches.

He thumps the thick sheaf of blueprints. Ted is impassive.

HOWARD

You mean I've got to spend another day down here waiting in line just to get this one minor correction approved?

Ted's confidence buoys as his dislike for Howard grows.

TED

It's the law.

HOWARD

(his anger builds)

It's a third floor toilet! I'm trying to start work on the foundation! It's only eighteen inches!

Ted finally looks Howard in the eye.

TED

An enormous distance...in the code.

HOWARD

Can I speak to your supervisor?

Ted points to his supervisor, ANTHONY, who sits in his wheelchair doing paperwork.

TED

(dryly)

He'd love to talk to you.

HOWARD

(fumes)

Ridiculous!

Ted triumphantly returns his fountain pen to his coat pocket as Howard noisily rolls up his plans and curses as he leaves. The next person in line, KATHY, an architect, steps up the counter and unrolls her blueprints.

KATHY

Hello.

She is an attractive brunette, smartly dressed. Ted shyly lowers his eyes to her blueprints, afraid to look at her.

CUT TO:

8v VIDEO IMAGE - TED'S CONFESSION (INT. APT.)

8v

Ted speaks both to himself and the camera:

TED

With attractive women, I always
dropped my eyes first. I even
made experiments. Could I endure
her glance?

CUT BACK TO:

9 INT. BUILDING DEPT. - DAY

9

P.O.V. SEQUENCE: Ted acts like he is intently studying her plans. He takes a deep breath and looks up at Kathy. She smiles back at him. He gets nervous and quickly drops his gaze back to the plans, hiding his confusion and embarrassment with busy-work.

This eye glance drama flusters Ted. He stares at her blueprints, too distracted to concentrate. The other clerks are processing more applicants.

ANTHONY, Ted's supervisor, rolls past in his wheelchair, looking annoyed. Anthony is a minor bureaucrat, strangely pale from years of servitude.

Ted becomes even more self-conscious, acutely aware that his boss is hovering nearby.

Ted abruptly stamps "APPROVED" across the blueprints. Kathy looks surprised.

KATHY

(smiles)

Thanks.

Ted offers her a timid smile and quickly lowers his eyes again. Kathy is puzzled by Ted's almost coquettish shyness and turns to leave.

When Ted gets the courage to look up at her again, a BURLY CONTRACTOR stands in her place. Ted's nervous smile deflates.

10 INT. APARTMENT - DAY

10*

The same basement apartment as in the opening scene.

Ted paces endlessly back and forth. The room is more confining than a prison cell because Ted's imprisonment is voluntary.

TED (V.O.)

For the most part, I preferred isolation...I'm not trying to justify myself.

CUT TO:

11v VIDEO IMAGE - TED'S CONFESSION (INT. APT.)

11v*

Ted's unhappiness escalates:

TED

No! That's a lie. That's exactly what I'm trying to do: justify myself. But I don't want to lie. I've given my word.

CUT BACK TO:

12 INT. APARTMENT - DAY

12*

Ted stops pacing and sits down with a book. But he is too agitated to read.

TED (V.O.)

Although I preferred being alone, every few months I felt like embracing humanity, in some manner, at least.

Ted walks over to the window.

13 EXT. APARTMENT WINDOW - DAY

13*

As seen from the street, Ted is like a prisoner inside his apartment.

CUT TO:

14v VIDEO IMAGE - P.O.V. - WINDOW (INT. APT.)

14v

Ted picks up the video camera - the image jostles around as Ted takes the camera and points it out of the same basement window. Pedestrians walk past, their shoes at eye level.

TED (V.O.)

I only had one acquaintance. Rather, I had several acquaintances, but only one who would still speak to me.

THE YOUNG TED appears outside the window in the "present tense" video confession, violating chronological time. He walks away from the apartment building, headed for adventure.

CUT TO:

15 EXT. STEPS - DAY (FILM)
15***

Ted trudges uphill, still in his suit, but wearing a Panama hat.

TED (V.O.)
Simon. I knew him from college.
His only free day was Sunday, so
I tried to time my need for
companionship so that it might
fall on a Sunday.

16 EXT. BERKELEY STREET - DAY
16***

Ted continues his trek, past a blue stucco wall.

17 EXT. SIMON'S HOUSE - DAY

17**

A nice house, the domain of a well-heeled bachelor.
Several flashy cars are parked in front that Ted has
trouble getting through.

TED (V.O.)
I suspected he disliked me and
it was a mistake to go see him.
But as always, those very doubts
compelled me on.

A17 INT. SIMON'S HOUSE - DAY

A17***

The front door is open. Ted stands outside looking in.

TED
Simon?

No answer. But he hears voices. After eavesdropping for a
moment, he steps inside. And walks tentatively toward the
back of the house.

18 EXT. SIMON'S POOL - DAY
18***

Ted looks outside where SIMON, JERRY AND TOM are relaxing by the swimming pool. Simon and Jerry are reclining in chairs. Tom is putting golf balls at the edge of the pool. They are all dressed casually.

TED

Simon?

SIMON

(surprised, displeased)

Ted.

TED

I was in the neighborhood.

SIMON

(without enthusiasm)

Come in.

TED (V.O.)

Simon was with two other friends, also from college.

Ted accepts the listless invitation and walks over. His visit surprises them all. None of them really likes Ted. Jerry openly frowns.

TOM

(mildly civil)

Well. Hello.

TED

(to everyone)

Hello.

(to Simon)

I thought you'd be alone.

SIMON

Well, I'm not.

There is an uncomfortable silence.

TED (V.O.)

They barely said hello, even though I hadn't seen them in years. I knew they looked down on me for my lack of success.

TED (OUT LOUD)

Well. Don't let me interrupt.

The others all exchange conspiratorial glances: how could Ted do anything but interrupt them? Jerry pointedly turns away from Ted and speaks to the others.

JERRY

I'll ride with Mr. Z, but we can't all fit in his Porsche...

They quickly return to their animated conversation. Ted takes a seat and tries to act like an interested observer, but his irritation at their failure to include him is ill-concealed.

TED (V.O.)

They were planning a farewell dinner for Philip Zerkov, yet another college friend, someone whom I particularly disliked.

CUT TO:

19v VIDEO IMAGE - TED'S CONFESSION (INT. APT.)

19v

TED

I hated Zerkov's handsome, foolish face, the way he dressed and spent money. I was always broke.

CUT TO:

20 TED'S FLASHBACK - EXT. CITY STREET
(HANDHELD P.O.V. SHOT - SLOW MOTION)

20*

Everyone is stylishly dressed - except Ted.

ZERKOV walks down a sidewalk carrying a briefcase and talking with a friend. He walks right past Ted without seeing him.

TED (V.O.)
He no longer greeted me in the
street.

But Zerkov simply did not see Ted.

CUT BACK TO:

21 EXT. SIMON'S POOL - DAY

21**

Ted listens intently to their conversation. He doesn't like being excluded from either the conversation or the plans.

SIMON
...it's a hundred dollars each,
including Zerkov, but we'll get
a great meal and Zerkov loves
the place.

JERRY
Can you imagine Zerkov letting
us pay? He'll accept to be
polite, but then buy some Dom or
Cristal.

TOM
(chuckles)
And who are we to refuse his
generosity? That's Zerkov!

JERRY
(laments)
Things will be a lot duller
around here after Mr. Z leaves.

SIMON
(concluding)
So the three of us, with Zerkov,
three hundred dollars, a private
room at the Cafe de Paris at
eight o'clock tomorrow.

TED
(agitated)
How three hundred dollars? If
you count me it will be four
hundred dollars.

Simon, Tom and Jerry all look stunned. FREEZE FRAME.

CUT TO:

22v VIDEO IMAGE - TED'S CONFESSION (INT. APT.)

22v

TED
I thought that inviting myself
so suddenly, so unexpectedly
would be a grand gesture. It
would win them over and raise
their low opinion of me.

CUT BACK TO:

23 EXT. SIMON'S POOL - DAY

23**

Simon tries to sound civil, but he avoids looking at Ted.

SIMON
(incredulous)
You want to join us for dinner?

TED
(agitated)
Why not? Zerkov's an old
classmate of mine too. And
frankly, I resent being left
out.

JERRY
(getting nasty)
You expected us to call you?

TOM
You always hated Zerkov.
Remember when you-

Ted's affected calm evaporates:

TED
(voice shakes)
You have no right to say that!
Maybe that's why I want to join
this soiree, because I haven't
been on good terms with him.

JERRY
(pissed off)
This is nuts. It's *our* party for
our friend.

TED
(obstinately)
I went to school with him too.

SIMON
(resigned)
Okay, I guess you can come too.
Eight o'clock tomorrow at the
Cafe de Paris.

Jerry leans close to Simon.

JERRY
(softly)
What about the money?

Tom re-enters the frame. The unpleasantness makes him uncomfortable.

TOM
That's enough, Jerry. If he
wants to come so much, then let
him.

JERRY
(seething)
But it's a private thing, just
Zerkov's best friends.

Simon shrugs helplessly. Ted tries to ignore Jerry's anger and the general tension he's created; he seems stoically proud of the irrational course he has chosen.

SIMON
(uncomfortable)
Can you pay your share now?

Ted flushes and looks embarrassed.

CUT TO:

24v VIDEO IMAGE - TED'S CONFESSION (INT. APT.)

24v

Ted looks unflinchingly into the camera as he speaks:

TED

Then I remembered that I'd owed Simon fifty dollars for two years. I hadn't forgotten, exactly, but I'd never paid him back.

CUT BACK TO:

25 EXT. SIMON'S POOL - DAY

25**

TED

I don't have any cash with me. And I haven't forgotten the fifty I owe you.

SIMON

All right, all right. You can pay tomorrow. But don't forget this time.

Simon breaks off, vexed. He glances at his watch.

SIMON

You know...we've already got plans for this evening.

TED

Am I keeping you from something?

SIMON

Yes. In fact...

Ted stands abruptly and grabs his hat.

TED

My God! Why didn't you say so?

JUMP CUT TO:

26 EXT. SIMON'S HOUSE - DAY

26**

Ted steps outside, with a look of self-directed fury.

TED (V.O.)
 What possessed me? What
 possessed me to force myself on
 them?

CUT TO:

27v VIDEO IMAGE - TED'S CONFESSION (INT. APT.)

27v

Ted paces in agitation as he speaks:

TED
 I knew I shouldn't go, but I was
 in a rage precisely because I
 knew that I would go, that I
 would make a point of going -
 out of spite. And the more
 tactless, the more awkward my
 going would be, the more sure I
 was to do it.

CUT BACK TO:

28 EXT. SIMON'S HOUSE - DAY
 28***

Ted hears laughter coming from the back yard. He turns and
 angrily walks away.

29 INT. APARTMENT - DAY

29*

Ted enters and aggressively paces the confining room, still
 in a rage.

CUT TO:

30v VIDEO IMAGE - TED'S CONFESSION (INT. APT.)

30v

TED
 When I returned home I'd had
 quite enough companionship.
 (stops pacing)
 But the next morning...

CUT TO:

31 INT. APARTMENT - MORNING 31

Ted vigorously throws off the blankets and gets out of bed.

TED (V.O.)
 ...I woke up excited. I had a party to go to! I found my enthusiasm appalling, but I couldn't help myself.

32 INT. BUILDING DEPT. - DAY 32

Ted drifts through his work, his mind elsewhere.

TED (V.O.)
 Because I was so unaccustomed to social interaction, I thought some radical change in my life might happen.

DISSOLVE TO:

33 EXT. SHAKESPEARE BRIDGE - TWILIGHT 33**

As night falls, Ted crosses the bridge, returning from work with a bundle in his arms.

34 INT. APARTMENT - TWILIGHT
34*

Ted enters with a freshly laundered shirt. He scurries around carefully putting together his wardrobe for the evening.

TED (V.O.)
 Of course I had doubts, but this was no time for thinking; I was in for the real thing, a taste of real life.

Ted constantly checks and re-checks his watch.

TED (V.O.)

I fretted over my wardrobe,
obsessed with my personal
appearance. While any idiot can
dress well - with money - I was
afraid that my modest clothes
would diminish my personal
dignity.

LOUD ROCK MUSIC FROM A NEIGHBOR'S APARTMENT irritates Ted,
momentarily distracting him from his fretting.

35 INT. BATHROOM

35

Ted finishes knotting his only tie and primps in front of
the mirror.

TED (V.O.)

(continues)

But I knew I was exaggerating.
I was well aware of my
propensity to blow things out of
proportion. (beat)

Of course, the smart
thing would have been not to go
at all...

CUT TO:

36 TED'S FANTASY - BANQUET ROOM (P.O.V. SHOT - SLOW MOTION)

36

Ted stands up and gestures grandly, lording it over Simon,
Tom, Jerry, and Zerkov.

NOTE: this is a fantasy, not a flash-forward to the banquet
room. It cannot look like the real (upcoming) dinner
party.

TED (V.O.)

...but I dreamed of getting the
upper hand, of dominating them,
seducing them with my wit. And
Zerkov! I'd crush him. Then
we'd forgive and forget and
drink to our everlasting
friendship.

CUT BACK TO:

37 INT. BATHROOM 37

Ted turns away from the mirror and checks his watch again.

CUT TO:

38 INT. BUS - MOVING - NIGHT
38*

Ted rides near the back of the empty bus, distractedly studying the streets outside. He pulls the cord and gets up as the bus gets to his stop.

A38 EXT. BUS STOP - NIGHT A38*

The bus lumbers to a stop. Ted gets off. He looks around to make sure he hasn't been observed, then crosses the street.

B38 EXT. CAFE DE PARIS - NIGHT B38*

An expensive restaurant.

Ted adjusts his tie and goes into the restaurant.

39 INT. CAFE DE PARIS - NIGHT 39*

Ted checks his watch: exactly 8 PM. He is pleased with his promptness.

The MAITRE D' appears: bald, elegant and officious. He frowns at Ted and stares at his jacket. Ted bristles at the inspection but sees that his fountain pen has leaked; there is an ink stain on his jacket.

TED

Oh, my God!

Ted tries to mop up the stain, to minimize the damage, but it's hopeless.

TED

I'm here for the Zerkov party.

The Maitre D' frowns without saying a word and checks his reservation book.

TED
(with some pride)
A private party. For eight
o'clock.

MAITRE D'
There is no Zerkov party.

TED
Then check under Simon. Simon
FitzGerald.

Ted tries to look over the Maitre D's shoulder. The Maitre D' scowls.

MAITRE D'
There is no reserva-

TED
(interrupts, points)
There - FitzGerald, party of 5,
for nine o'clock. Ahh, you see,
that should be eight o'clock.

MAITRE D'
No, sir, I took the reservation
myself. It's for nine o'clock.

TED
Oh. They must have changed the
time. Well, I'll just wait.

MAITRE D'
(halfhearted)
You can wait at the bar.

TED
(determined)
No. I'll wait in the room.
(caustically)
It is a private dining room,
correct, Monsieur?

MAITRE D'
(curtly)
Oui.

The Maitre D' beckons an underling WAITER, rattles off some brusque French, and waves Ted away without another word.

The waiter leads Ted past a pair of GLOOMY DINERS, who eat without speaking.

40 INT. PRIVATE DINING ROOM - NIGHT

40

An intimate room with antique mirrors. Across from the dining table is a grouping of couch and chairs for cocktails. The room is dark and the table has not yet been set. This could be a Left Bank restaurant in pre-war Paris.

The waiter deposits Ted in the room with a condescending wave. Ted scowls at the gloomy room and sits down in a huff.

CUT TO:

41v VIDEO IMAGE - TED'S CONFESSION (INT. APT.)

41v

Ted sits at his table, the unpleasant memory still vivid:

TED

When they changed the dinner
time they should have let me
know. They put me in an absurd
position...

(beat)

...I felt wretched...

CUT BACK TO:

42 INT. PRIVATE DINING ROOM - NIGHT

42

A BUSBOY comes in and begins setting the table. Ted feels self-conscious sitting there and tries to look busy by studying his surroundings.

P.O.V. SEQUENCE: Ted minutely examines the room - the wallpaper, the furniture, the china.

Ted finds a spot on his fork. He tells the busboy to replace it - the boy doesn't understand English, but takes the fork. He doesn't give Ted another one.

Time passes slowly.

DISSOLVE TO:

A42

A42

Ted paces the small room. He checks his appearance in one of the antique mirrors, is quickly bored and sits back down.

Ted overhears PEOPLE LAUGHING in the next room.

DISSOLVE TO:

B42

B42***

Ted has managed to acquire a glass of white wine. He checks his watch again.

Finally, proceeded by their BOISTEROUS VOICES AND LAUGHS, PHILIP ZERKOV leads Simon, Tom and Jerry into the room. They all have the ruddy glow of at least two drinks apiece.

Zerkov is robust, healthy as a horse, an extrovert untroubled by introspection, with the easy manner of someone who has always had money and gotten his way.

CUT TO:

43v VIDEO IMAGE - TED'S CONFESSION (INT. APT.)

43v

TED
When they finally did arrive -

CUT BACK TO:

44 INT. PRIVATE DINING ROOM - NIGHT

44

The foursome has filled the room with life and motion and bonhomie. Ted checks his watch.

CUT TO:

45v VIDEO IMAGE - TED'S CONFESSION (INT. APT.)

45v

TED
 (continues)
 - I was relieved to see them,
 and at first forgot to be
 offended.

CUT BACK TO:

46 INT. PRIVATE DINING ROOM - NIGHT

46

Zerkov sees Ted and stops laughing. He puffs himself up and shakes Ted's hand. The others stop to watch this reunion of college antagonists.

ZERKOV
 (friendly but reserved)
 It's been a long time.

TED
 (with forced joviality)
 Yes. Too long.
 (beat)
 Hello, Zerkov.

Like at Simon's town house, there is tremendous tension (both visual and emotional) between Ted and the others. The social lubricant is missing here; instead there are abrasive sparks that might ignite.

Zerkov glances down and notices the ink stain on Ted's jacket. Ted sees Zerkov notice this and blushes.

TOM
 Have you been waiting long?

TED
 (with irritation that
 threatens to explode)
 Since eight o'clock, like I was
 told.

TOM
 (reprovingly to Simon)
 You didn't let him know we
 changed the time?

Simon seems unconcerned with apologizing; he pointedly avoids looking at Ted.

SIMON
 No, I didn't. I forgot.
 (mumbles halfheartedly)
 Sorry.
 (looks around)
 Where are our appetizers and drinks?

Simon goes off for the waiter. Zerkov turns back to Ted, with exaggerated friendliness.

ZERKOV
 (ironic)
 You've been here for an hour?
 While we were having cocktails
 at the club? Poor fellow!
 Let's get you a fresh drink.
 Let's get us all another drink!

Jerry laughs at the situation.

TED
 (snaps at Jerry)
 It isn't at all funny!
 It's...it's...absurd.

TOM
 (takes up Ted's case)
 Simon should have let you
 know...
 (backpedals)
 ...but he's had a lot on his
 mind.

JERRY
 (goads Ted on)
 If I'd had to wait-

Simon hurries back into the room.

SIMON

Let's sit down, gentlemen, the first course is on the way.

(to Ted but without looking at him)

I couldn't call you because you don't have a phone.

Ted gives Simon a pointed look.

TED (V.O.)

He avoided looking at me. Evidently he had something against me, after yesterday.

SIMON

(with an edge)

I said I was sorry.

They sit down at the table. Zerkov takes off his jacket and hands it to the waiter.

The waiter moves around the table pouring red wine. The waiter hesitates when he sees Ted's glass of white wine, but Ted motions to an empty glass on the table and winds up with a glass of each. Zerkov leans toward Ted with patronizing friendliness.

ZERKOV

Frankly, I was astonished when I heard you wanted to join us.

TED

(dryly)

You always were easily astonished.

Zerkov lets this pass.

ZERKOV

So where do you work these days?

Ted is embarrassed and hesitates before replying:

TED

In the Building Department.

Zerkov sees Ted's discomfort and tries to put him at ease.

ZERKOV

That sounds interesting. In
City Hall, right?

(Ted nods)

What do you do in the Building
Department?

Ted's eyes narrow in irritation; he reaches for his wine
glass.

CUT TO:

47 TED'S FANTASY (P.O.V. - SLOW MOTION)

47

Ted hesitates for a moment, deciding between the red and
the white wine. He picks the red and throws it in Zerkov's
face. Ted and the others laugh at Zerkov spluttering.

FREEZE FRAME.

CUT TO:

48v VIDEO IMAGE - TED'S CONFESSION (INT. APT.)

48v*

Ted tries for a tone of reasonable impartiality, but the
bad memory impassions and embitters him:

TED

I never expected such
condescension. If he'd merely
wanted to offend me with his
superior attitude, that wouldn't
have been so bad. But what if,
without any desire to offend, he
simply thought he was superior
to me and could only be
patronizing? The very
possibility left me breathless.

CUT BACK TO:

49 INT. PRIVATE DINING ROOM - NIGHT

49

Ted shakily picks up his wine glass - the white -
and...takes a deep gulp. He starts drinking the red.

(We now realize that throwing wine at Zerkov was just Ted's
fantasy.)

The waiter serves caviar with all the trimmings (crackers, onions, eggs).***

TED

I'm an intermediate supervisor
in Plan Check.

ZERKOV

That sounds like a good job.

TED

(sarcastically imitates
Zerkov's tone of voice)
Yes, I have "a good job."

The others note Ted's nasty tone of voice; Tom stops drinking to look at Ted.

ZERKOV

I didn't mean anything by it.
(muses)
I've always wondered what made
you quit law school.

JERRY

He couldn't take the pressure
like the rest of us.

TOM

(takes Ted's side)
Hey, law's not for everybody.

TED

Kafka said that lawyers chew on
the sawdust of others.

JERRY

(caustic, but bragging)
And then laugh all the way to
the bank.

Zerkov tries to be a peacemaker but is unintentionally
condescending.

ZERKOV

So tell us what it's like in the
Building Department.

TED
(to Zerkov and Jerry)
When did you stop beating your
wife? Why are you cross-
examining me?

ZERKOV
Sorry, partner.

Ted drains his glass, and pours more wine, drinking too
much too fast.

TED
(very irritated)
Can we please talk about
something more intelligent?

JERRY
You intend to show off your
intelligence, I suppose?

TED
No, don't worry, that would be
quite out of place here.

SIMON
(condescending)
I'm sorry we're not as
intellectual as your colleagues
in the building department.

TOM
(the diplomat)
Enough, guys, enough!

SIMON
(muttering)
This is crazy!

JERRY

This is crazy.

(leans toward Ted)

We came here for a going away
dinner for Zerkov-

(tips his glass

toward Zerkov) -

the new General Counsel for
Santa Fe Silver-

(scowls back at Ted) -

and you start getting nasty.
You invited yourself, so don't
ruin the party.

ZERKOV

Enough, enough, let's just drop
the whole subject, and have
another drink and I'll tell you
something hysterical that
happened yesterday in the
office. (sips wine)
You remember Lois, the secretary
who just got divorced, the one
with the dark hair?

JERRY

And the delightful derrière?

ZERKOV

(guffaws)

Yes, delightful!

(takes another sip)

So here I was in my office,
after six, just finishing up
some routine depositions and
bullshit...

Although he's still fuming, Ted sits ignored as the others
enjoy Zerkov's spirited account of his latest ribald
adventure.

CUT TO:

50v VIDEO IMAGE - TED'S CONFESSION (INT. APT.)

50v*

Ted stands up, energized with anger, as if this all
happened yesterday. He walks in and out of the frame as he
angrily paces:

TED

I didn't even like these cretins! And I'd made a fool of myself! They thought they were doing me an honor letting me join them. I thought, "I don't care about the money. I must leave this very minute! Leave without a word. Out of contempt!"

CUT BACK TO:

51 INT. PRIVATE DINING ROOM - NIGHT

51*

Ted bristles with tension and...pours himself another glass of wine.

TOM

(continues)

...oh, my God, Z, what did she say?

ZERKOV

(sips wine and shrugs)

It's impolite to speak with your mouth full.

Tom, Jerry, and Simon burst into wild laughter at the punch line. Zerkov joins them, his laugh shrill and piercing.

SIMON

(choking with laughter)

Zerkov, I say a prayer for the poor babes of Santa Fe.

Their laughter makes Ted even gloomier. He keeps drinking.

TED (V.O.)

Of course I stayed. I wanted to insult them all, to seize the moment, so at least they'd see how clever I was, and then I'd just go away and leave them gaping. What fools!

Ted surveys his boisterous table mates, his eyes drowsy from too much wine and not enough food. Zerkov has already shifted his discourse to loftier topics.

ZERKOV

(continues)

...for my money, Vincent Van Gogh is immortal. He's the greatest artist who ever lived...I mean, the fucking colors...

JERRY

(nods)

Yes, his colors are great! Yes, Van Gogh's got to be the greatest.

ZERKOV

And the swirls of brush strokes - genius! I love all the Impressionists!

TED

(hostile)

What? You don't know a thing about painting!

JERRY

(sarcastic)

And what do you know about painting?

TED

At least I know that Van Gogh's a *Post-Impressionist*.

Ted's remark creates a tense, uncomfortable silence. Zerkov frowns at Ted, disappointed with Ted's unresponsiveness to his camaraderie.

TOM

(tries to be friendly)

Take it easy, big guy, get some food in your stomach.

JERRY

(surly)

He's drunk.

SIMON

But we're not.

(he fills everyone's wine
glasses, even Ted's)

A toast to Zerkov and all the
women he's leaving behind.

They all raise their glasses, except for Ted.

SIMON

To your health and good fortune
in the "Land of Enchantment!"

Everyone clinks their glasses and drinks with vigor -
except Ted.

JERRY

(loses patience with
Ted)

Aren't you going to drink our
toast?! I mean, all you've been
doing is drinking.

TED

I want to make my own toast.
Then I'll drink.

SIMON

(mutters)

What an asshole...

Ted stands up abruptly and sways drunkenly as he raises his
glass.

JERRY

(cries)

Silence! Now for a display of
sparkling wit!

Zerkov folds his arms gravely, expecting the worst.

TED

Let me first say that I hate
speechmakers, I hate people who
are in love with the sound of
their own voice. That's the
first point...

(momentarily at a loss)

...and there is a second
point...The second point is I
hate lewdness and lewd
talkers...The third point is I
love truth, beauty,
thought...and
friendship...friendship on an
equal basis, among equals...To
your health, Zerkov...may you
successfully seduce every woman
in New Mexico!

Ted tips his glass toward Zerkov and drinks. Alone.
Zerkov and the others look deeply offended.

ZERKOV

(dryly, with contempt)

Thank you for a...

(beat)

...memorable toast.

Ted sits down, thinking that he has acquitted himself well.
Zerkov is pale, speechless. Jerry HITS the table with his
fist.

JERRY

Damn you! You need a punch in
the face!

Ted gives Jerry a murderous stare.

TOM

He's just drunk.

SIMON

But he's an ugly drunk.

ZERKOV

Stop it guys! You don't take
what he said seriously, do you?

(to Ted)

You're drunk.

Ted isn't listening; he just stares at Jerry.

TED
Let's step outside you
egocentric little snot, so I can
beat the shit out of you.

Jerry immediately stands up, but Ted doesn't move.

JERRY
With pleasure.

Tom restrains Jerry.

TOM
Ignore him, Jerry. I told you
he's drunk.

SIMON
I'll never forgive myself for
letting him join us.

Ted pointedly ignores them all, trying to act as if he is
above the fray.

TED (V.O.)
Now is the time to throw a
bottle at their heads.

CUT TO:

52 TED'S FANTASY (SLOW MOTION)

52

He picks up the wine bottle...and SMASHES THEIR FACES!

CUT BACK TO:

53 INT. PRIVATE DINING ROOM - NIGHT

53

Ted picks up the bottle and...pours himself another glass
of wine. (The preceding image was Ted's vengeful fantasy.)

JERRY
Look at him, he's not even
listening to us.

Ted is, indeed, studiously disregarding them all.

CUT TO:

54v VIDEO IMAGE - TED'S CONFESSION (INT. APT.)

54v*

Ted relishes his words, enjoying the memory of how he irritated them:

TED
Of course they'd be delighted to see me go. But I kept sitting there and drinking-
(smiles) -
out of *spite*. Yes. Out of spite!

CUT BACK TO:

55 INT. PRIVATE DINING ROOM - NIGHT

55*

When Ted looks up from his drink he sees that the others have adjourned to the couch and chairs on the other side of the room. They are clipping and lighting cigars. Simon fusses with a pipe. A busboy clears away the table and Ted must grab back his wine glass to keep it from being whisked away.

The waiter serves brandy in snifters to Zerkov and his coterie. Ted watches them, but stoically remains seated across the room.

ZERKOV
...brandy makes me philosophical.

JERRY
Brandy makes me horny.

ZERKOV
Exactly! Descartes - the mind body problem.

The merry quartet laughs and clink snifters.

TED
(mutters)
Oh, Christ...

Ted angrily SCRAPES his chair as he stands up in disgust.

The others throw a dismissing glance Ted's way and then turn back to their revels. Ted starts to pace back and forth across the room, punctuating his turns with angry glances at the others.

DISSOLVE TO:

56 CLOSE-UP - TED'S SHOES 56

His scuffed loafers wear a groove into the carpet as we hear the laughter and jovial voices of the others.

DISSOLVE TO:

57 INT. PRIVATE DINING ROOM - NIGHT 57

In a SEQUENCE OF LAP DISSOLVES Ted paces endlessly back and forth, back and forth, back and forth. The others recline and drink, ignoring Ted like background noise.

CUT TO:

58v VIDEO IMAGE - TED'S CONFESSION (INT. APT.) 58v

TED

(softly)

I paced for over an hour, and they acted like I wasn't there. I could not have degraded myself more completely.

CUT BACK TO:

59 INT. PRIVATE DINING ROOM - NIGHT 59*

Wine has made Zerkov and his friends mellow and playful. Ted still paces back and forth, but he is haggard with exhaustion.

JERRY

(nods toward Ted)

One flew east and one flew west and one flew over the cuckoo's nest...

The others chuckle.

Ted notices their jest and he gives them a contemptuous, affected laugh. Jerry, Tom, Simon and Zerkov fall silent.

They quietly watch Ted's maniacal pacing. Now that he has their full attention, Ted pointedly ignores them. With a shrug they lose interest in Ted and turn back to their conversation.

The waiter brings in more wine, but stops and looks at Ted's strange behavior.

ZERKOV

(stands)

Friends, to paraphrase Caesar,
it's time for a little Vidi,
Vici, Veni: I saw, I conquered,
I came.

His troika of well-wishers laugh at the joke, and they exchange a special handshake.

ZERKOV

I propose a last visit to the
immortal, the ineffable House of
Blue Lights.

THE OTHERS

(cheering)

Yes, Z! Of course! Onward!
Lead on!

They all stand and drain off their drinks, adding a last blush to their alcoholic glow. Unbidden, the waiter brings over Zerkov's jacket and helps him put it back on. Ted turns sharply and walks up to Zerkov. Ted looks embarrassed, feverish, exhausted.

TED

(abruptly)

Zerkov, please...I apologize.
(gestures expansively)
Tom, Simon, Jerry, everyone, let
me apologize to all of you.
I've insulted you all and I feel
terrible.

JERRY
(sarcastic)
So we're not going to step
outside and fight?

Ted looks hurt.

TED
(to Jerry)
I'm not afraid of fighting you.
Just first forgive me.

TOM
(awkwardly)
I forgive you.

SIMON
(addresses everyone
but Ted)
He's just trying to make himself
feel better.

JERRY
He's just raving.

Although they are speaking about Ted in the third person,
he's blocking their path out the door.

ZERKOV
(irritated)
Just step aside and let us
leave, that's all I ask.

Ted doesn't move.

ZERKOV
(exasperated)
What can you possibly want from
us now? You wouldn't even speak
to us before.

Ted takes a deep breath and stands tall.

TED
(blurts out)
I want your friendship, Zerkov.
I know I behaved horribly and
insulted you but-

ZERKOV
(interrupts)
Insulted? Me? You've insulted
me?! You could never insult me!

JERRY
(steps forward)
And that's enough of this
bullshit. Out of the way!

Jerry physically moves Ted aside. Zerkov turns his back on Ted and addresses the others.

ZERKOV
The Blue Lights beckon! Julie
is mine!

They leave Ted behind as they exit, buoyed by the promise of sexual adventure.

JERRY
Go up Beverly Avenue, right?

ZERKOV
(gestures obscenely)
Go right up Beverly!

Only Simon lags behind to settle the bill with the waiter. Ted hurries over to him.

TED
(urgent)
Simon, please, loan me some cash
so I can go with you.

Simon is stunned. The waiter looks askance at Ted, thanks Simon, and discretely steps aside.

SIMON
(incredulous)
You want to come with us? After
this?

TED

(insistent)

Please, Simon, as a friend.
I'll pay you back tomorrow.

(beat)

This really means the world to
me.

SIMON

Wait. Where's the hundred
dollars you owe me for tonight?
And the other fifty you still
owe me?

TED

Can I give you a check?

(feels pocket, remembers)

Tomorrow. I don't have my check
book with me.

SIMON

(bitterly sarcastic)

Unbelievable!

Simon pulls on his coat and starts through the door. Ted
clutches at Simon's coat sleeve.

TED

Simon, you've got cash. I saw
it.

SIMON

(snaps)

Nothing for you.

TED

(urgent)

If you knew...if you knew why
I'm asking...my whole future
depends on this.

SIMON

(disbelieving)

You're mad. Truly mad.

Simon gives the waiter a tip. He leaves the room.

But he quickly returns and hands some money to Ted.

SIMON

Here's ten dollars. Do yourself
a favor, take a taxi home.

Simon turns abruptly and leaves.

Ted is left alone in the room.

In the background, the waiter looks questioningly at Ted.

Ted's eyes glitter with decision. He rushes out of the
room.

CUT TO:

60 EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT 60

A VINTAGE CHECKER CAB drives past.

61 INT. TAXI - MOVING - NIGHT 61

Ted rides in the back, his feverish eyes darting from the
fare meter to the cab's windows.

TED (V.O.)

So this is it, I thought. At
last, real life. Conflict!
Emotion! They'll get down on
their knees and beg for my
friendship.

62 P.O.V. SHOTS - MOVING 62*

Lights streak past, the abstracted world of memory that Ted
travels through.

TED (V.O.)

Then I thought, no, they won't
beg me for my friendship, no, so
I'll have to-

CUT TO:

63 TED'S FANTASY - A BORDELLO (SLOW MOTION) 63*

A strange whorehouse that could only exist in Ted's
imagination: dark, garish, abstract, threatening.

NOTE: this is a fantasy, not a flash-forward to the bordello. It cannot look like the real (upcoming) bordello scene.

TED
(continues)
-smash Zerkov's face!

Ted brutally claws at Zerkov's face.

Simon, Tom, Jerry and a gaggle of floozies watch and CHEER Ted on.

CUT BACK TO:

64 INT. TAXI - MOVING - NIGHT

64

Ted smiles at the fantasy, but his drunken smile dissolves to a frown. Outside, an expressionistic landscape of bleak film noir streets whizzes past.

TED
Hurry, driver!

The cabby looks annoyed, but doesn't say anything. Nor does he drive faster.

TED (V.O.)
(urgent)
It was my duty to slap him! I
had to slap him...
(doubtful)
But shouldn't I say a few words
first?

CUT TO:

65 TED'S FANTASY - BORDELLO

65

Ted enters the room and talks to Zerkov.

TED (V.O.)
...explain why I took offense at
his attitude toward me?

But Zerkov, Simon, Tom and Jerry BEAT TED UP, ending his speech.

CUT TO:

66v VIDEO IMAGE - TED'S CONFESSION (INT. APT.)

66v*

Ted's fury builds:

TED

I knew that wouldn't work. I
had to immediately attack
Zerkov. Fight him! Hurt him!

He pounds the table, knocking the video camera askew.

CUT BACK TO:

67 INT. TAXI CAB - MOVING

67

Ted's eyes are glazed, his thoughts turned inward,
oblivious to his surroundings.

WIPE TO:

68 TED'S FANTASY - A BRISK MONTAGE OF:

68*

NOTE: this sequence is very stylized and minimalist. To be
shot in stark, abstracted settings. A synthesis of Fritz
Lang, Edgar Ulmer, and Godard.

---BEATING-UP

Dramatic fists in close-up, Zerkov falls out of the frame.

A68 ---POLICE ARREST

A68*

Police car: blue lights flashing, Ted is backseat, cop in
foreground.

B68 ---COURTROOM TRIAL

B68*

Close-up: gavel comes down, Judge in soft focus.

C68 ---PRISON CELL

C68

Bars only - Ted behind them.

MATCH CUT:

D68 ---A PICTURESQUE SUBURBAN STREET

D68

A broken-down Ted trudges up the sidewalk of an elegant house.

TED (V.O.)
I imagined myself being
arrested, tried, convicted,
imprisoned for twenty
years...Then I go visit
Zerkov...He's happily married,
with a daughter and son...

Ted knocks on the door. Zerkov appears, along with his WIFE, DAUGHTER AND SON, the quintessential nuclear family.

TED(V.O.)
...and I tell him that I lost
everything because of him, but
nonetheless I forgive him...

Zerkov and his family look overwhelmed with guilt.

IRIS INTO BLACK.

IRIS OUT TO:

69v VIDEO IMAGE - TED'S CONFESSION (INT. APT.)

69v*

Ted's intensity fades as his fantasy concludes:

TED
...I still remember note for
note my elaborate vision of
suffering and redemption as I
took that drunken taxi ride...

CUT BACK TO:

70 INT. TAXI - MOVING

70

Ted stirs from his drunken reverie.

TED
Faster, driver! Hurry!

The cabby scowls at Ted in his rearview mirror but says nothing.

Ted rolls down the window and sticks his head out, desperate for fresh air.

71 EXT. HOUSE OF BLUE LIGHTS - NIGHT

71*

A blue elevator tower leads up to an unseen house.

The yellow Checker Cab pulls to a stop near a SILVER PORSCHE SPEEDSTER.

TAXI DRIVER (O.S.)

\$14.50.

Ted drunkenly fumbles with his wallet.

TED

Here's fifteen. Keep it.

The driver gives Ted a withering look and angrily SQUEALS away. Ted gets in the tiny elevator cab and rides up.

A71 EXT. HOUSE OF BLUE LIGHTS - UPPER LEVEL - NIGHT

A71***

Ted walks across the suspended walkway that leads from the elevator to the main house.

72 INT. BORDELLO - NIGHT

72***

The hallway opens into an octagonal room with dark velvet walls. Columns of blue light flank the walls.

In the middle of the room the MADAM sits in a black Hoffmann chair, wearing a yellow Mandarin dress. On a small table by her side is a telephone and a credit charger. A hallway leads off from the side.

As Ted approaches, the madam immediately sees the ink stain on his jacket. He looks like a suspicious customer to her practiced eye.

MADAM

(icily)

Good evening.

TED
I want to speak to Zerkov.

MADAM
(friendlier)
You're a friend of Zerkov's?

TED
(obsessed)
So he's here. And the others
too? Where are they?

MADAM
They're all quite busy at the
moment.

TED
(bristles)
Then I'm too late.

MADAM
Never too late. I'll give you
the group rate, since you're a
friend of Zerkov's.

TED
(whispers excitedly)
Where is he? I must speak to
him!

MADAM
Mr. Z is in a meeting and he
can't be disturbed.

TED
(moans)
Oh, God!

The madam eyes Ted coldly, calculating how much trouble he
might be.

CUT TO:

73v VIDEO IMAGE - TED'S CONFESSION (INT. APT.)

73v*

Ted paces furiously:

TED
I meant to slap him, to fight
him, to crush him! But he
wasn't available and
everything...

Ted stops pacing, his rage spent.

TED
(sits, slumps)
...vanished...

CUT BACK TO:

74 INT. BORDELLO - NIGHT
74***

Ted looks around and now sees that lingerie clad omen are sitting between the columns of blue light, waiting to be chosen. A smile breaks across his face.

TED
Of course! What a fool I've
been! This is wonderful. There
is no need to fight! Let's have
fun!

MADAM
There you go, that's the spirit.

Ted looks closely at the women.

TED
I can make love to any of these
women?

MADAM
Yes. Any of them.

TED
How much does it...?

She eyes the ink stain on jacket, notes his clothes.

MADAM
There's a hundred dollar
minimum.

TED
(blanches)
Oh...

MADAM
We take MasterCard, Visa,
American Express.

Ted nods absently. He turns around, staring at the available women, as if he is choosing his soul mate. He settles on a beautiful dark haired women. Her eyes are grave - she looks more serious than the other girls.

TED
(points)
Her.

MADAM
(both a statement and a
command)
Liza.

Liza steps out of her alcove and approaches Ted, frowning at him, unhappy about being chosen. As she steps forward, her red lips fill the frame.

CUT TO:

75v VIDEO IMAGE - TED'S CONFESSION (INT. APT.)

75v*

A HANDHELD P.O.V. SHOT as Ted wanders through his dismal apartment, into the bathroom:

TED (V.O.)
I liked her immediately. I
especially liked that she didn't
smile.

CUT BACK TO:

76 INT. BORDELLO - NIGHT

76*

Ted stares at Liza, entranced.

MADAM
Your credit card, please.

Ted fumbles with his wallet and hands her a MasterCard.

Liza steps into the hallway that leads toward the bedrooms without saying a word; Ted hesitates, uncertain.

CUT TO:

77v VIDEO IMAGE - TED'S CONFESSION (INT. APT.) 77v

The camcorder swings around and Ted studies his face in the bathroom mirror.

TED

I was glad I seemed repulsive to her. It fit my ugly mood.

CUT BACK TO:

78 INT. BORDELLO - NIGHT 78*

Liza waits listlessly for Ted to follow her. The madam is losing patience.

MADAM

(exasperated)

Run along, honey, she'll take good care of you.

Ted snaps out of it and follows after Liza.

MADAM (O.S.)

(to herself)

Some men just should not drink.

CUT TO:

79 HALLWAY - P.O.V. SHOT - HANDHELD (SLOW MOTION) 79

Following behind Liza as she leads him back to her room.

CUT TO:

80 INT. LIZA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 80*

White walls, white sheets, unlit white candles - everything white. Dimly lit by a bluish-white light.

Ted is on top of Liza, thrusting. The sex is relentless and harsh. They both have their hands balled into solitary fists. Ted's teeth are clenched in determination and displaced anger. Liza's teeth are clenched in endurance and denial.

It seems like their sexual coupling goes on forever, without any build toward climax or release, like sex in hell.

DISSOLVE TO:

81 INT. LIZA'S BEDROOM - LATER

81*

Ted is passed out; Liza lies in the darkness beside him.

She lights a cigarette and uses a match to light a candle. The warm candlelight gives some color to the white-on-white room.

Ted opens his eyes. He looks around, confused about where he is.

P.O.V. SEQUENCE: Ted looks around the strange room, trying to get his bearings in the white-on-white interior. He sees Liza's body beside his. He gradually remembers where he is.

TED (V.O.)

Misery and spite surged up in me, seeking an outlet, some release more satisfying than mere ejaculation.

Ted is startled to see Liza staring at him.

P.O.V. CLOSE-UP: LIZA'S EYES - huge, haunting, sullen.

CUT TO:

82v VIDEO IMAGE - TED'S CONFESSION (INT. APT.)

82v

Ted stares into the camera:

TED
 Then I saw her eyes.
 (beat)
 In the course of two hours we
 hadn't said a single word.

CUT BACK TO:

83 INT. LIZA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 83*

Ted sits up. Liza averts her eyes.

TED
 What's your name?

LIZA
 (whispers)
 Liza.

Ted glances at Liza, then stares ahead, lost in thought.

CUT TO:

84 TED'S DRUNKEN MEMORIES - MONTAGE 84

P.O.V. shots, looking directly into camera:

A84 BUILDING DEPARTMENT - P.O.V. CLOSE-UP: A84

The Lady Architect gives Ted a condescending look.

B84 SIMON'S POOL - P.O.V. CLOSE-UP: B84

Simon and Jerry frown at Ted.

C84 PRIVATE DINING ROOM - P.O.V. CLOSE-UPS: C84

Simon, Tom, Jerry and Zerkov watch in disgust as Ted makes his toast.

TED (V.O.)
 In the near darkness images of
 the previous day began to race
 through my drunken brain, the
 residue of my degradation...

D84 PRIVATE DINING ROOM - P.O.V. CLOSE-UP:

D84***

Simon gives Ted the money for the taxi.

CUT BACK TO:

85 INT. LIZA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

85*

Ted looks dizzy. He catches his breath and glances over at Liza. She pays him no attention, alone with her own thoughts.

TED

Where are you from?

LIZA

(reluctantly)

Minnesota.

TED

Have you been here long?

LIZA

In the city?

TED

No. Here.

LIZA

Two weeks.

TED

How old are you?

LIZA

(bored)

Twenty.

TED

(repeats, turning the
word over)

Twenty...twenty...twenty...

LIZA

(defensive, surly)

I'm not jail bait, if that's
what you're worried about.

Ted gives her an annoyed glance.

TED (V.O.)
(irritated but cunning)
I didn't like her tone, not at
all. But I stayed friendly.

TED (OUT LOUD)
Do you have a family? A mother
and father?

LIZA
Of course.

TED
Why did you leave home?

LIZA
What's it to you?

TED
Have you ever been engaged? To
be married?

LIZA
(hostile)
What's it to you?

Ted is irritated by her remark, but masters his irritation.
He sits up, his expression calculating and probing.

TED
It's nothing to me. I simply
felt sorry.

LIZA
(suspicious)
Sorry for who?

TED
Sorry for you.

LIZA
Save it.

Ted looks stung by her words.

CUT TO:

86v VIDEO IMAGE - TED'S CONFESSION (INT. APT.)

86v*

Ted gets excited as he remembers:

TED

That set me off. I was being so gentle with her.

CUT BACK TO:

87 INT. LIZA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

87*

When Ted speaks out loud his tone is deceptively soft.

TED

Do you think you're doing the right thing?

LIZA

I don't think anything.

TED

That's what's wrong. You don't think. Because if you thought you'd go mad. Working in this death house! Sure, you can practice "safe sex." But a thousand times? Two, three thousand? You're absolutely sure there won't ever be a mistake, the rubber won't break? Besides that, the odds are you'll wind up a junkie.

LIZA

I don't do drugs.

TED

Maybe not now. But wait until you've spread your legs for a couple of thousand men. Hell, I'd be tempted to take drugs, swimming in this lake of rancid semen. Don't you care if you live or die? Start thinking, while there's still time. You're young, you're pretty. You could fall in love...get married, be happy.

Liza stirs.

LIZA

(sullen)

Not everyone who's married is happy.

TED

Of course. But it's better than working here. Infinitely better. Besides, sometimes with love you can live without happiness. These unhappy husbands who come here to...

(searches for right word) ...come here to get laid...I bet some of them, maybe most of them, are in love even if they aren't happy.

Ted sees that despite herself, Liza is taking an interest in what he says.

CUT TO:

88v VIDEO IMAGE - TED'S CONFESSION (INT. APT.)

88v

Ted's expression mirrors all of the emotions he is reliving:

TED

She really did interest me... I was exhausted and provoked...I had to avoid sentimentality. Self-deprecation seemed the best tone to take.

CUT BACK TO:

89 INT. LIZA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

89*

Ted subtly adjusts his posture to improve his elocution.

TED

Of course, look at me, lying here with you. I'm worse than you are. We had sex just now and we didn't say one word the whole time. It's only now that we're talking. (passionately)
It's degrading that I can come here drunk and use a credit card to...to...*fuck* a stranger.
(with feeling)
It's hideous! It's shameful!

LIZA

(quickly agrees)

Yes!

Liza sits up and looks right at Ted. The sheet falls loose revealing her breasts, and she demurely pulls it back up.

CUT TO:

90v VIDEO IMAGE - TED'S CONFESSION (INT. APT.)

90v

The memory excites him:

TED

(excited)

I was thrilled how quickly she said "yes"!

CUT BACK TO:

91 INT. LIZA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

91*

Ted acts cagey, avoids looking at her, hiding his excitement:

TED (V.O.)
(calms down)
But I couldn't act too excited.

TED (OUT LOUD)
Why have you come here...to work?

LIZA
(embarrassed)
I don't know.

TED
Wouldn't it be nice to be back home?

LIZA
No.

Ted changes his tack:

TED
I'm sure your home was worse than this. Why else would a girl like you come here?

LIZA
(whispers)
A girl like me?

TED
You don't belong here. It's beneath you. That's obvious.

Ted waits, but when Liza doesn't say anything he continues:

TED
I come from a bad home too. Or rather I grew up without a home; maybe that's why I've become so...unfeeling.

Liza still doesn't speak for a moment, then leans closer and breaks her silence.

LIZA

No. You're not...unfeeling.

Ted glances shyly at her, then continues:

TED

Thank you, but...I am. I grew up without any love, without a mother or father, maybe that's why I've thought so much about love. Perhaps not all married people are happy. But there's more to marriage than happiness. If you get married you'll find that out for yourself.

CUT TO:

92v VIDEO IMAGE - TED'S CONFESSION (INT. APT.)

92v*

TED

I might have been manipulative, but I was also sincere.

CUT BACK TO:

93 INT. LIZA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

93*

Ted relishes the flow of his words, stirring Liza's dormant emotions:

TED

Seeing you here like this makes me sick. You're young and good looking, but you'll get old, or you'll get a disease and be dead in a year. You're young now, but let me tell you, as soon as I woke up after we...after we *fucked*, when I woke back up, I felt sick. Sick at being here with you! (beat)

But if I met you anyplace else, in a normal place, then I'd be attracted to you. Very attracted. Infatuated. I'd be thrilled if you looked at me. Here you give your love to be outraged by drunks - like I was drunk when I came here. (beat)

Love! That's everything. You're throwing it all away here - your health and beauty and hope, and in two years you'll look like you're forty...if you're still alive.

Ted has worked himself up to such a pitch that he starts to hyper-ventilate. He abruptly sits up and feels his heart. Liza is too upset to notice his hypochondria.

Liza starts to cry. She's embarrassed by her tears and buries her head into her pillow.

CUT TO:

94v VIDEO IMAGE - TED'S CONFESSION (INT. APT.)

94v

Ted hesitates; he has trouble getting this out:

TED

I'd attained my effect, I'd turned her feelings upside. From *spite*. But now I was panic stricken. Panic stricken! Forced to believe my own lies!

CUT BACK TO:

95 INT. LIZA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

95

Ted watches Liza, alarmed by her tears. His hands flutter near her but he can't bring himself to touch her.

TED

Liza...Liza...I...

He's at a loss for words.

Ted panics and fumbles in the dark for his clothes. Desperate to get dressed and leave, Ted turns on the bedside lamp.

Liza springs up from the pillow and sits up in bed, oblivious to her nakedness, her face reddened and tear swollen.

Ted holds his jumble of clothes clutched to his chest. He slowly sits back down on the bed. Like a shy schoolboy he takes hold of one of Liza's hands. In their mutual nakedness it's a chaste but emotional gesture.

Liza leans toward Ted to give him a hug. Ted scoots away, afraid to let her get hold of him.

Liza sees how Ted is putting distance between them. She bows her head. Ted is unnerved by the situation he has created.

TED

(his voice shaking)

Liza, dear Liza, I was
wrong...forgive me...God, Liza,
please forgive me...

She squeezes his hand so tightly that Ted winces. Ted pats her hand and gently loosens her grip. He fumbles for his wallet and takes out a card.

TED

(hands it to her)

Here. This is my address, Liza.

She examines the card.

TED
 I want you to leave here...
 (beat)
 ...and come to me.

She looks at Ted with new regard.

He hurriedly buttons his shirt, embarrassed to be naked in front of her, embarrassed by the emotions that have transpired between them.

LIZA
 (resolutely)
 I will come.

Ted stands up to put on his pants. Liza stands, too. She suddenly realizes that she is naked and puts on a robe. She watches Ted, making him nervous and clumsy as he finishes dressing.

Liza smiles at Ted, meekly, with affection. Ted blushes and averts his eyes.

TED
 I'm going now.

She moves forward to kiss him, but Ted deftly averts his face and gives her a chaste hug instead.

TED
 Good bye...

He pulls away from her.

LIZA
 (whispers with passion)
 Good bye.

Liza lovingly watches Ted leave.

96 INT. BORDELLO - NIGHT

96*

Ted comes back down the hallway.

The madam gives him an appraising smile. There are no women sitting between the columns of blue light - their stools are empty.

MADAM

You look like the cat that ate
the mouse.

Ted collects himself; he's slowly coming back to reality.
He just gulps and nods.

MADAM

Sign this, honey.

She hands him a little tray with his credit card and a
bill. The total is astronomical: \$600. Ted turns a whiter
shade of pale, but signs without protest.

MADAM

Come back any time.

Ted hurries away, without a word or a glance back.

97 EXT. HOUSE OF BLUE LIGHTS - DAWN
97***

Ted walks across the blue walkway, back to the elevator
cab.

A97 EXT. HOUSE OF BLUE LIGHTS - DAWN

A97***

Ted takes the elevator down. Ted shambles off down the
empty street; Zerkov's Porsche is long gone.

FADE OUT.

CUT TO:

98 CLOSE-UP - TED (INT. APT.)

98

His hair is matted and his eyelids flicker with troubled
dreams. Ted opens his eyes with a start, completely alert.

CUT TO:

99 TED'S FLASHBACK - LIZA 'S BEDROOM (P.O.V. - SLOW MOTION)

99

When Ted turns on the bedside lamp, Liza springs up from
the pillow, her face swollen with tears.

CUT BACK TO:

100 INT. APARTMENT - DAWN 100

Ted lies in bed, re-living it all.

CUT TO:

101v VIDEO IMAGE - TED'S CONFESSION (INT. APT.) 101v

The camera catches Ted at an odd angle:

TED

I was amazed at my
sentimentality with Liza...

(beat)

And why did I give her
my address? What if she came to
me? What then? What had I
done?!

CUT BACK TO:

102 INT. APARTMENT - DAWN 102

Ted looks around at his squalid room, seeing it through
Liza's eyes.

TED (V.O.)

Let her come...she's just a
whore...it doesn't matter...I'd
laugh at her, throw her out.

Ted gets out of bed and dresses for work. He frowns at the
ink-stained coat and puts on his only other suit, which is
identical.

TED (V.O.)

But I had to save face with
Zerkov and Simon and the others.
That was critical and it
required fast, decisive action.

103 EXT. BUILDING DEPT. - EARLY MORNING 103

A smoggy, gray morning. Ted hurries inside.

104 OMITTED

104

105 INT. BUILDING DEPARTMENT - DAY

105***

It's early and permit applicants are milling around in the perpetually gloomy hallway, eager for a place at the head of the line when the office opens for business. Ted ignores the crowd, using his pass key to get into the office.

TED (V.O.)

I was so pre-occupied with saving my reputation that I soon forgot all about Liza.

The dreary office is empty except for Anthony, Ted's handicapped supervisor.

ANTHONY

(smiles)

What a pleasant surprise.
You're here bright and early.

TED

Yes...good morning.

Ted hesitates, then comes over with a tense look on his face.

TED

Anthony, I've got a favor to ask.

ANTHONY

(suspicious)

Yes?

TED

(blurts it out)

Can I borrow a hundred? Rather, a hundred and fift - sixty dollars from you? It's very important, but it's a personal matter that I'd feel very uncomfortable trying to explain but...I'll pay you back when I get my next pay check if-

ANTHONY

(cuts in, unhappy)

Okay, I guess so. I'll loan it to you.

TED

(relieved)

Thank you.

ANTHONY

But you've got to promise me that you won't let this loan drag on like the last time.

TED

(quick to soothe him)

No, no, no, those were extenuating circumstances, very extenuating, if you know what I mean, because-

ANTHONY

(cuts in)

What I mean is no extenuating circumstances, okay?

TED

Yes, absolutely not, because-

ANTHONY

(with finality)

Just pay me back the hundred and sixty dollars next Thursday.

TED

Right. I'll pay you back next Thursday. Absolutely, absolutely.

Anthony gets out his checkbook.

ANTHONY

Make the check out to you?

TED

Well, to tell you the truth, I'd prefer cash.

ANTHONY
(starts to put
checkbook up)
Then it'll have to wait until
lunch.

TED
Couldn't you go to your cash
machine now?

ANTHONY
(irritated)
No. There isn't time.

Indeed, the other CLERKS are starting to file into the
office. Ted gets self-conscious about the loan.

TED
(lowers his voice)
Actually, a check is fine.

Anthony is irked that Ted has already complicated his act
of generosity. Anthony again starts to write the check.

TED
But could you make it out to a
third party?

Anthony stops writing, peeved by this additional twist.

TED
Ordinarily I wouldn't ask, but
it's critical, you see-

Anthony listens to Ted, doing a slow burn.

TED
(thinking)
No, wait. Actually, make the
check out to me, and I'll
deposit it and make my own check
out to him.
(beat)
Yes, that's the best way.

ANTHONY
(vexed)
Have you decided?

TED

Yes, make it out to me, just like you started, that'll be perfect.

Anthony resumes writing the check. Ted cranes around to look over Anthony's shoulder. This chafes Anthony even further.

TED

(lighthearted)

We had quite a time last night. A private dining room at the Cafe de Paris, a little fete with some old school friends.

ANTHONY

(dryly)

How nice.

He angrily hands the check to Ted.

TED

(flatly)

Thank you.

ANTHONY

(sarcastic)

Any time.

Ted studies the check closely as he walks over to his station at the counter.

TED (V.O.)

I must say I didn't care for Anthony's tone...it wouldn't have cost him anything extra to be gracious about the whole business.

All the clerks are at their stations.

ANTHONY (O.S.)

Let's greet the new day.

Anthony rolls his wheelchair to the door and unlocks it; ARCHITECTS AND CONTRACTORS hurry in, quickly separating into four lines, one per work station, that snake out the door and into the hallway.

Ted doesn't notice or pay attention to any of this, because he's busy writing.

A BEARDED ARCHITECT unrolls his blueprints on Ted's counter.

ARCHITECT

Good morning, sir. I am here with corrected plans for a parking variance for-

TED

(raises a finger)
Can't you see I'm busy?

ARCHITECT

Of course. I am sorry.

Satisfied with the man's apology, but still annoyed, Ted returns to his literary labors.

CUT TO:

106v VIDEO IMAGE - TED'S CONFESSION (INT. APT.)

106v

TED

I immediately set to work writing a note to Simon to accompany the check. With tact and taste and, above all, brevity, I blamed myself for all that had happened.

CUT BACK TO:

107 INT. BUILDING DEPT. - DAY
107

Ted pauses in the composition of his letter to ponder a turn of a phrase. The bearded architect and the many others in line behind him bristle with impatience as they see the other lines move forward while theirs remains immobile. Those at the back defect for more promising lines.

TED (V.O.)
 Even to this day I'm pleased by
 the tone of lightness,
 nonchalance, that I managed to
 project. That tone let Simon
 know that I wasn't too
 embarrassed by what had
 happened. (beat)
 I blamed my behavior
 on the wine.

Ted stops writing and admiringly re-reads his composition,
 making an occasional correction. Anthony watches Ted's
 self-absorbed efforts with increasing agitation.

TED (V.O.)
 And maybe it was all because of
 the wine I drank...

CUT TO:

108v VIDEO IMAGE - TED'S CONFESSION (INT. APT.)

108v

Ted gets quite angry with himself:

TED
 No, it wasn't the wine...I'd
 lied to Simon. I'd lied
 shamelessly. But I wasn't
 ashamed then, it felt great-

CUT BACK TO:

109 INT. BUILDING DEPT. - DAY
 109

Ted folds up his letter and makes out his own check to
 Simon.

TED (V.O.)
 (continues)
 -to be done with the whole
 business.

As Ted addresses an envelope, Anthony rolls his wheelchair
 over to Ted's work station.

ANTHONY
 What's the problem here?

TED
No problem here.

Ted tucks the envelope out of sight, a gesture that Anthony clearly sees.

ANTHONY
(nods)
Then why hasn't this gentleman
been helped?

Ted picks up the blueprints and tries to look busy with them. Anthony flushes with anger.

TED
He's being helped, he's being
helped.
(to architect)
Aren't you being helped?

The architect is too nervous to immediately reply. Ted hastily stamps his blueprints "APPROVED".

110 EXT. STEPS - TWILIGHT 110***

He trudges glumly up the steps.

111 EXT. BERKELEY STREET - EVENING 111***

Ted treks past the blue stucco wall.

TED (V.O.)
My head still ached and I was
dizzy from yesterday...

112 EXT. SIMON'S HOUSE - TWILIGHT 112*

Ted walks up the driveway, skittish as a thief, apprehensive about seeing Simon. He quickly leaves the envelope in Simon's mailbox and steals away.

TED (V.O.)
I had successfully apologized
and my debt was repaid - my
letter I thought solved it all.

113 EXT. PACIFIC DESIGN CENTER - TWILIGHT 113***

Ted wearily walks home.

TED (V.O.)
But now I was worried about
Liza, worried constantly that
she might come...

114 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT 114*

A P.O.V. SHOT roaming through the basement corridor to his apartment. AN AUSTRALIAN NERDSY BOY comes out of a neighboring apartment.

TED (V.O.)
...that she would see I lived in
a dump. But it wasn't just
that. There was something
worse, something viler...

The P.O.V. shot leads through the door and into Ted's apartment.

CUT TO:

115v VIDEO IMAGE - TED'S CONFESSION (INT. APT.) 115v

Ted looks into the camera, anguish in his face:

TED
(rages)
...the lies! I'd lie to her
again! I knew I would.

CUT TO:

116 INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT 116*

Ted paces the room like a caged animal, trapped with his thoughts and feelings:

TED (V.O.)

But I hadn't lied to her. What I said had truthfulness, some real feeling. What I wanted was to excite honorable feelings in her. And I did. Her crying was a good thing, and it would have a good effect on her.

Ted goes over to the window and looks out at the street.

117 P.O.V. - TED'S WINDOW - NIGHT 117

A FEW PEDESTRIANS go past the ground floor window. But no Liza.

118 CLOSE-UP - TED - NIGHT 118

He turns away from the window.

LOUD MUSIC comes from the neighboring apartment. Ted throws a dirty look at the wall, then checks his watch and looks out the window again.

TED (V.O.)

She haunted me all night.

CUT TO:

119 TED'S FLASHBACK - LIZA'S BEDROOM - (P.O.V. - SLOW MOTION) 119

Liza springs up from the pillow, her face swollen with tears. She looms into EXTREME CLOSE-UP, smiling beatifically at Ted (cf. Scene #95).

This image repeats and overlaps with other hallucinatory images of Liza.

CUT BACK TO:

120 CLOSE-UP - TED - NIGHT 120

He's drained by the recurring image, his nerves stretched taut, to the breaking point.

CUT TO:

121v VIDEO IMAGE - TED'S CONFESSION (INT. APT.)

121v

The memory anguishes him:

TED

I didn't know that 15 years
later I'd still see that look on
her face...that smile...that
look of torment...

CUT TO:

122 TED'S FLASHBACK - LIZA'S BEDROOM - REPEATS

122

The flashback repeats again and again: Liza springs up from
the pillow, smiling at Ted in EXTREME CLOSE-UP.

CUT TO:

123 CLOSE-UP - TED - DAWN

123*

He wakes up with a start and sees blue-gray daylight in the
window.

TED (V.O.)

The next morning I was ready to
dismiss it all as nonsense, bad
nerves, exaggeration.

CUT TO:

124v VIDEO IMAGE - TED'S CONFESSION (INT. APT.)

124v*

Ted stares ahead, obsessing:

TED

I kept telling myself: I'm
exaggerating, I'm exaggerating.
That's always been a fault of
mine: exaggeration. That's the
by-product of introspection.

CUT BACK TO:

125 INT. APARTMENT - MORNING

125

Ted gets out of bed, pulls on his frayed robe, and paces the room in great agitation.

TED (V.O.)

But I knew that Liza would come all the same, if not that day then the next...

A thought occurs to him and he suddenly stops.

TED (V.O.)

Another thought, a recurring thought, was to go to her, and beg her *not* to come to me. But this got me so angry! Why should I apologize to her?!

Ted stops pacing, consumed by his solitary rage.

TED (OUT LOUD)

Who does she think she is?!

Ted collapses into his armchair, a nervous wreck, completely drained.

CUT TO:

126v VIDEO IMAGE - TED'S CONFESSION (INT. APT.)

126v

His voice faint, his anger receding:

TED

(repeats)

Who did she think she was?

Ted stops, short of breath.

He reaches forward and shuts off the camera.

CUT TO:

127v VIDEO IMAGE DECAYS TO BLACK.

127v

CUT TO:

128 INT. BUILDING DEPARTMENT - TIME PASSAGE SEQUENCE - DAY

128*

The numbing working day seems to last forever.

TED (V.O.)
One day passed...

DISSOLVE TO:

129 INT. TED'S APARTMENT - TIME PASSAGE SEQUENCE - DAY/NIGHT

129***

Time stands still. Day turns to night-

TED (V.O.)
...passed quite slowly...

129A

129A

-and back to day, and once again to night, as we see a condensation of the claustrophobic repetitions that comprise Ted's life.

TED (V.O.)
...and another day...

DISSOLVE TO:

130 RAINDROPS - GIANT - HYPNOTIC -
FALLING IN SLOW MOTION -

130*

CUT TO:

131 INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

131*

Ted stares through his basement window at the rain for a moment then turns away from the window and checks his watch. He sits down in his armchair, but instead of picking up a book, he folds his arms behind his head and drifts into a daydream.

TED (V.O.)
 ...She didn't come and I began
 to grow calmer. I felt
 particularly cheerful late at
 night when I felt safe from her
 coming. (beat)
 I even daydreamed a
 bit that she'd come to me-

CUT TO:

132 TED'S FANTASY - INT. APARTMENT - DAY

132***

The unkempt rooms are more warmly lit. Ted is better
 dressed and groomed.

Liza appears at the door in a simple but provocative
 clothes, a classic ingenue.

Ted and Liza sit side by side in chairs, reading.

TED (V.O.)
 -and I'd talk to her, develop
 her mind, educate her...and
 finally I'd notice that she
 loved me, but I'd pretend not to
 see it. (I don't know why I'd
 pretend - I guess to make things
 more interesting).

Liza stops reading and looks lovingly at Ted. He slyly
 notices her looking at him. She strokes his shoulder but
 he pretends to ignore it.

A132 TED'S FANTASY - INT. APARTMENT KITCHEN - DAY

A132***

They sit at the table, eating caviar by candlelight.

TED (V.O.)
 ...then we'd begin living
 together...

B132 TED'S FANTASY - INT. WEDDING CHAPEL

B132***

She wears a white bridal veil. He is appropriately dressed
 to be married. Abstracted space, with some wedding chapel
 iconography in background.

TED (V.O.)
...we'd get married...

C132 TED'S FANTASY - EXT. MAJESTIC GRIFFITH PARK - DAY
C132***

Her arm around Ted, Liza points excitedly to some wonder of nature offscreen.

TED (V.O.)
...we'd go for a walk in the
country...I'd finally learn to
love nature...

D132 TED'S FANTASY - INT. APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

D132***

Liza sits on the day bed, blissful in repose after making love. Ted lies with his head in her lap, looking lovingly up at her.

TED (V.O.)
...et cetera, et cetera, et
cetera...

CUT BACK TO:

133 INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

133

Ted opens his eyes and stands up, irritated and anxious.

TED (V.O.)
I'd go on with this fantasy
until it made me nauseous. It
all seemed absurd.

Ted paces the room with nervous ferocity.

CUT TO:

134v VIDEO IMAGE - TED'S CONFESSION (INT. APT.)

134v

Ted is agitated and ambivalent:

TED

One minute I thought, "She's a
whore, they won't let her out."

(changes his mind)

Then I was sure she'd come.

(beat)

I hated her, but I wanted her to
come, more than anything in the
world.

135V VIDEO IMAGE - CLOSE-UP - RAINDROPS
135V*

The falling raindrops are ghostly video flickers.

CUT TO:

136 P.O.V. - TED'S WINDOW - NIGHT

136*

Rain falls on the alley; streetlights reflect on the wet
concrete.

137 INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

137

Ted turns away from the window, angry at the phantom Liza
and angry with himself for his conflicted emotions.

Ted hears SPEED METAL MUSIC coming through the wall. He
looks sharply toward the offending sound, re-directing his
irritation toward this new and quite specific target.

Ted goes over and POUNDS on his neighbor's wall. After a
moment, the VOLUME IS CRANKED UP LOUDER.

TED

(shouts)

Turn that syphilitic music down
you brain damaged moron! Turn
it down, God damn it!

Ted POUNDS furiously on the wall, and the music gets
cranked up to EAR SPLITTING VOLUME.

TED

(screams)

That's it! That's it!

Ted rushes into the hallway.

138 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

138*

Ted's bathrobe looks even shabbier in this public space. Ted furiously POUNDS on his offending neighbor's door.

THE AUSTRALIAN NERDSY BOY flings the door open, Foster's lager in hand. TWO NERDSY BOY BUDDIES and a BLOND NERDSY GIRL gather behind their host. The nerdsy boys all wear gray suit pants with suspenders, no shirts, tattoos, horn-rimmed glasses, blond dreadlocks.

NERDSY BOY

Yeah?

TED

Turn down the music.

NERDSY BOY

(snickers)

Stuff it.

His pals snicker too. Ted is unhinged with anger.

TED

You stuff it! I can't even hear myself think!

NERDSY BOY

Are you a fuckin' man or a bloody mouse?

TED

I'm calling the police! I'm-

Ted stops abruptly when he sees LIZA walking toward him.

Ted swoons against the wall, shocking the heavy metal nerdsy boy with this radical shift in his behavior.

Liza steps forward, her coat wet from the rain. Ted leans his head forlornly against the wall. It's his worst fear, having Liza see him in such a compromising situation.

NERDSY BOY

Geez...you alright, mate?

TED
 (contrite)
 I'm sorry. I'll never pound on
 the wall again. But I'd be
 eternally grateful if...
 (trails off)

Liza takes a tentative step toward Ted. Ted turns away from her, embarrassed, and rushes back into his apartment. His neighbor and the chorus of rowdies watch, baffled but intrigued, as Liza gravely follows after Ted.

139 INT. TED'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

139

Liza appears in the doorway. She is confused but concerned about Ted, so focused on him that at first she is oblivious to the shabbiness of the room.

Ted stands motionless, with his head against the wall. He finally turns to her:

TED
 (weakly)
 Do you want to come in?

Liza steps tentatively inside.

The loud music next door is turned off, leaving the room in a pocket of tense silence.

TED
 (lifelessly)
 Sit down. Please. Take your
 coat off.

Ted pulls up a chair from the card table. Liza obediently sits down and takes off her coat. Her clothes are modest, but she is inherently sensual. She looks up expectantly at Ted.

CUT TO:

140v VIDEO IMAGE - TED'S CONFESSION (INT. APT.)

140v

Ted sits in the very same chair, his voice intimate:

TED

She expected something from me.
And this naiveté enraged me.
But I restrained myself.

CUT BACK TO:

141 INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

141

Liza finally begins to look around. She sees Ted's apartment for what it is, the strange habitat of a loner. Liza's expression is transparent, reflecting her disappointment at how very different Ted's dwelling is from what she had expected.

Ted sees her direct, unmitigated reaction of letdown and confusion.

CUT TO:

142v VIDEO IMAGE - TED'S CONFESSION (INT. APT.)

142v

TED

She should have tried not to notice the shabbiness, to at least act as if things were normal.

CUT BACK TO:

143 INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

143

TED

(fumbling)

You've found me in an awkward position, Liza. No, no, don't imagine anything. I'm not ashamed that I'm broke. In fact, I'm proud of it...because...I'm poor but I'm...

Ted chokes up; he can't continue. Ted looks at her, ashamed that he is so upset, but unable to continue speaking. Liza looks worried and stands up.

LIZA

What's the matter? What's wrong?

She comes toward him. Ted collapses on his day bed, hyper-ventilating.

He stares up at Liza.

TED
(haltingly)
Liza...do you...despise me?

Liza is confused. She doesn't know what to say. She sits down on the day bed beside him.

They sit in a silence that is prolonged and uncomfortable.

Paradoxical emotions flicker across Ted's face as they sit without speaking. Liza looks at Ted with mournful perplexity. But he averts his eyes from her.

CUT TO:

144v VIDEO IMAGE - TED'S CONFESSION (INT. APT.)
144v*

He looks right into the camera:

TED
(clears his dry throat)
I, of course, suffered the most
from this endless silence. And
yet I could not speak.

CUT BACK TO:

145 INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

145

Liza finally gathers up her courage and breaks the silence:

LIZA
I want to...get away...from
there...where we met...

Ted finally looks over at her.

CUT TO:

146v VIDEO IMAGE - TED'S CONFESSION (INT. APT.)

146v***

An empty frame. Ted returns with a glass of water.

TED

(his anger building)

Even my heart ached with pity.
But something hideous in me
stifled all compassion; it even
provoked me to greater anger. I
didn't care what happened.

(beat)

I felt like I'd been skinned
alive and the very air hurt me.
I wanted to scream everything
out all at once, but I said
nothing. Five minutes passed.

CUT BACK TO:

147 INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

147*

Liza waits for Ted to speak in reply. But he doesn't.

The silence is uncomfortable - oppressive - unbearable.
Finally:

LIZA

(hurt)

I'm sorry...

Liza tentatively stands up. Ted's pent-up feelings finally
explode into spoken words:

TED

(bursts out)

Why have you come to me, tell me
that please!?

(gasps for breath)

Why have you come? Answer me!

(louder)

ANSWER ME!

Liza is too stunned and frightened to respond. Ted presses
on:

TED

I'll tell you why you've come.
Because I talked a lot of
sentimental nonsense to you and
now you're all sentimental and
want to hear that nonsense
again. So you may as well know
that I was laughing at you then.
And I'm laughing at you now.

Ted sees that he has again upset Liza. But his rage only intensifies:

TED

I was laughing at you because
I'd been insulted just before,
at dinner, humiliated, and I
came to that wretched House of
Blue Lights because I wanted to
beat the shit out of the bastard
who insulted me. But he was
already...

(chooses brutal words)

...fucking another whore, so I
took it out on you. I wanted to
show my power...That's what it
was. I wanted to show my power!

(beat)

And you thought I came there to
save you. Right? That's what
you thought?!

Liza pales. She tries to say something; her lips start to move, but no words will come out. She sits down in a chair like she's been felled by an ax.

Ted starts pacing, his words building to a maniacal intensity. Liza listens in rapt silence, riveted by Ted's words.

TED

Save you? Save you from what?!
I'm worse than you are! Why
didn't you tell me I was full of
shit when I delivered that half-
assed sermon? Why didn't you
say "Did you come here to preach
or to fuck?"

(beat)

Power! That's what I wanted!
Power! I wanted your tears,
your humiliation, your hysteria!

Liza's face reflects Ted's words. Her eyes glisten,
fervent and intense.

TED

(angry with himself)

Of course I couldn't keep it up
because I'm weak, I'm wretched,
I was frightened...and I don't
know why I gave you my address.
Even before I got home I was
cursing you because of that
address. I hated you already
because of the lies I told you.

(beat)

And here I've been
cringing for three solid days,
terrified at the thought that
you'd come.

Liza is no longer just listening to Ted, but feeling his
pain. Every damning word that Ted says just deepens Liza's
feelings for him.

TED

And you know what worried me the most? That you thought I was some kind of hero and then you'd see me here.

(beat)

And I'll never forgive you for hearing me confess to you like this! I hate you for being here, for listening to this! You have no right to hear this! What more do you want? How can you stay here? Why don't you go? Go. (louder)
GO!!

By now Liza's fright and hurt have transformed into sympathy for Ted. By the end of his rant she's not really listening to his words, but staring into his face, seeing his pain, feeling his loneliness and vulnerability.

Liza springs up from the chair and rushes at Ted, throwing her arms around him, tears in her eyes.

TED

(chokes out a few words)

I can't...be good...I can't...

Ted breaks apart from Liza and slumps down on the day bed, hiding his face in his hands. Liza comes over and puts her arms around him. She smooths Ted's hair, trying to comfort him.

TED (V.O.)

And as I sat there with my face buried in my hands, little by little I began to feel it would be awkward to raise my head and look Liza in the eyes. Now our roles had been reversed.

CUT TO:

148v VIDEO IMAGE - TED'S CONFESSION (INT. APT.)

148v

There is a forlorn tone in his voice quite the opposite of his torrential words to Liza:

TED
 All this came into my head while
 I still lay face down. My God,
 did I envy her?

CUT BACK TO:

149 INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT 149
 Ted slowly raises his head.

LIZA
 Are you okay?

Ted just nods, too embarrassed to speak. He moves away
 from Liza and hurries off to the bathroom.

150 INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT 150
 Ted looks at himself in the mirror, agitated by the
 situation, confused by the tumult of his feelings. He
 looks out the door and sees Liza sitting up, looking toward
 him.

Ted takes a deep breath and returns to Liza.

151 INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT 151*
 Ted tries to seem nonchalant, but he doesn't quite pull it
 off.

Liza looks at him expectantly.

TED
 Would you like something...to
 drink?

LIZA
 No, thank you.
 (concerned)
 Are you okay?

TED
 (continues, not
 listening)
 Because I don't think I've got
 anything...except water...

LIZA
I'm fine. I don't need
anything.

Ted starts pacing the room.

TED
(looks at watch)
God, it's past midnight. I've
got to go to work tomorrow, you
know.

Liza stands up; she looks embarrassed.

LIZA
Do you want me to go?

TED
No.

LIZA
Really? Are you sure? I don't
want to impose.

TED
(a little testy)
I said no. I can't let you go
back to that place...

Ted keeps pacing back and forth. Liza smiles sweetly and
steps into his path to give him a hug.

LIZA
Thank you.

He pats her on the back, a brotherly gesture, at a loss,
and steps away.

LIZA
Where do you work?

TED
At City Hall, in the Building
Department.

LIZA
(impressed)
Really?

TED
It's a very demanding job.

LIZA
(nods)
I bet.

Ted looks at his watch again.

LIZA
(doubtful)
You're sure it's okay, me
staying here tonight?

TED
(snappish)
I said it was, didn't I?

LIZA
(surprised by his tone,
chastened)
Yes. You must be very tired.

Liza takes her bag and goes into the bathroom. The warped door doesn't close all the way, and Ted catches glimpses of movement.

TED (V.O.)
A woman in my apartment. Who
would have ever thought?

CUT TO:

152v VIDEO IMAGE - TED'S CONFESSION (INT. APT.)

152v

Ted points the camera at the bathroom door, then pans over to the empty bed, a poignant image of his complete isolation:

TED (V.O.)
Someone actually wanted to spend
the night with me. But then I
thought, "she's just a whore"...
(changes his mind)
...though she came not for sex,
but for something else...as
someone in need...

CUT BACK TO:

153 INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

153

Liza steps out of the bathroom, wearing a nightie. When she sits down beside Ted on the day bed, he bolts up. She climbs under the covers.

TED(V.O.)
(perplexed)
...did that mean she was no
longer a whore?...

He tries to feign disinterest, but he looks smitten. And bewildered. Liza sees Ted looking at her. She smiles tenderly at him. Ted is embarrassed, like she can read his thoughts. He forces a little smile in return, then sits down in his battered armchair and picks up a book.

Liza watches him read, self-conscious about being in his bed. Ted stares blankly at the page.

LIZA
(timidly)
Aren't you tired?

TED
I always read before I go to
sleep.

LIZA
(uncertain)
Oh.

Ted is too distracted by her presence to read, but he's afraid of meeting her gaze. Liza looks fondly at Ted, then her eyes get heavy with sleep and slowly close.

Ted looks up, relieved to see that Liza is finally asleep; he puts the book down.

Ted tries to climb quietly into bed without disturbing Liza. Out of modesty he keeps his robe on. The bed groans with his weight. Ted's muscles are tense as he struggles to keep free of body contact. But Liza, only lightly asleep, rolls over and cuddles up against him. She snuggles closer.

TED (V.O.)

I wanted her...but I also hated her. Just for being there...

(beat)

I hated the things she was making me feel...love that I was incapable of.

Without a word being said, Liza passionately kisses Ted and they gradually glide into making love in a poetic silence.

Their love making is utterly silent.

It quickly reaches a rapturous peak and subsides. Liza smiles without opening her eyes.

TED (V.O.)

I was grateful that she didn't say a single word to break the perfection of the moment...

DISSOLVE TO:

154 INT. APARTMENT - LATER

154*

Ted lies uncomfortably with Liza's arms around him, his body rigid with tension.

TED (V.O.)

I was exhausted...I desperately wanted to sleep, to be released from my endlessly circular thoughts, but sleep was impossible with Liza lying beside me...breathing...

Ted finally disentangles himself and climbs quietly out of bed.

Liza stirs, wraps her arm around his warm pillow, and sleeps on.

Ted takes a pillow and a blanket and sleeps on the rug. He's relieved to be alone but he tosses and turns, still too excited to sleep.

CUT TO:

155v VIDEO IMAGE - TED'S CONFESSION (INT. APT.)
155v*

Ted now sits on the day bed, talking to his camera:

TED
I thought that night would never
end. How I hated her, hated
myself - even thought about
climbing back into my bed - my
own bed! - to be with her
again...

DISSOLVE TO:

156 INT. TED'S APARTMENT - DAWN

156***

Cold blue-gray light filters through the lone window. Liza is still asleep on the daybed. The pillow and blanket are on the floor where Ted slept.

A156 INT. BATHROOM, APARTMENT - DAWN

A156***

Ted stands in the bathroom, dressed but immobile. He doesn't know what to do.

LIZA (O.S.)
Ted?

Her voice startles him. He stirs into motion and, with trepidation, leaves the bathroom.

157 INT. TED'S APARTMENT - DAWN

157***

Liza is now sitting up in bed. Ted steps in front of the day bed, careful to keep his distance.

LIZA
(concerned)
You slept on the floor?

It takes him a moment to formulate a reply.

TED
I'm not used to sleeping with
someone else.

LIZA
(flustered, sits up)
I'm sorry, I feel terrible. I
could have slept on the floor.

TED
(the gallant host)
No, no, it's fine.

Ted is anxious to get out the door.

As Liza wakes up, she becomes more modest.

LIZA
I'll just lock the door behind
me when I leave.

Ted knows he should respond, but he's frozen.

LIZA
Thank you.
(beat)
For being so nice to me.

Finally:

TED
I think I've got an extra key.

He waits for her to politely decline. She doesn't.
Without an alternative, he leaves the frame and gets the
key.

TED
(re-appears)
Here.

He hands her the key and steps away before she can touch
him.

LIZA
(smiles uncertainly)
So I'll see you later?

TED
 (neutral)
 I suppose.
 (beat)
 I've got to go.

Liza, holding the key, steps forward to kiss Ted good-bye. Ted hesitates and then accepts her kiss. Liza's kiss is deep, grateful for the acceptance that the key implies. Ted is quick to end it, scared by the intimacy.

TED
 I've really got to run. Good
 bye.

LIZA
 (smiles fondly)
 Bye.

Liza follows Ted to the door, a soft smile lingering on her lips as she closes the door behind him.

TED (V.O.)
 I left thinking, "Why did I give
 her the key? What ever
 possessed me?"

NOTE: this shot is continuous, a dolly move that leads out into the hallway. The following video dialogue should also play in voice over the tail of Scene #157.

158V VIDEO IMAGE - TED'S CONFESSION (INT. APT.)
 158V***

TED
 (angry with himself)
 I had to play the hero. I had
 to make the grand gesture, give
 her the keys to the kingdom.

159 EXT. BUILDING DEPT. - DAY

159*

The streets look particularly dreary this morning. The sky is threatening rain.

Ted walks into the cold rain, hunched down in his overcoat, carrying an umbrella. He cuts a lonely figure in the gloomy morning light.

TED (V.O.)

What's next? Five days ago I go over to Simon's for a little conversation - where will it all end?

160 INT. BUILDING DEPT. - DAY
160

Ted viciously scrawls his objections on a blueprint as a CHARISMATIC ARCHITECT watches in horror.

TED (V.O.)

Never had I been so grateful to have my job.

Ted's pen falls idle as his thoughts distract him.

TED (V.O.)

...I hoped that Liza had the innate decency to go away and leave me in peace...

CUT TO:

161 TED'S FANTASY - SLOW MOTION - INT. APARTMENT - DAY

161***

Liza has left a vase of fresh flowers and a note beside Ted's extra key.

TED (V.O.)

...to maybe leave me a note of thanks for changing her life, before tactfully disappearing forever...

CUT BACK TO:

162 INT. BUILDING DEPARTMENT - DAY

162

Ted stares off into space, ignoring the architect.

ARCHITECT

Is that all?

Ted snaps out of it.

TED

What?

ARCHITECT

That's it?

TED

Let's hope so.

Ted absently stamps "Approved" on the plans, completely baffling the man.

ARCHITECT

Uhh...thanks.

He leaves before Ted can change his mind. The next person in line steps up to Ted's counter, not sure what to expect after witnessing Ted's schizophrenic display.

Ted looks drained, his thoughts elsewhere.

163 EXT. CITY STREET - TWILIGHT

163*

A bleak autumn dusk. Rain is falling.

Ted trudges up the street, under his umbrella, lost in thought.

TED (V.O.)

As I walked home, I dreaded that
Liza would still be there.

The rain gets heavier.

CUT TO:

164v VIDEO IMAGE - P.O.V. - WINDOW - NIGHT (INT. APT.)
164v***

A P.O.V. SHOT (maybe handheld), looking out of Ted's basement window. Pedestrians walk past, their shoes at eye level.

TED (V.O.)

...but I also dreaded that she
would be gone. Love is a bitter
struggle.

THE YOUNG TED appears in the video image, approaching the building, again violating chronological time, but creating a visual bridge into Ted's memories.

CUT TO:

165 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT (FILM)

165

Nervous and conflicted, Ted unlocks his door.

LIZA

Hi.

166 INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

166***

Ted immediately sees that things are different. Liza has tidied up his mess. She has placed her red flowered scarves over the window and the pole lamp, giving the room a warm glow.

She sits at the table, with the classified ads, filling out an apartment rental application. She looks up and smiles at Ted.

He is thrilled to see her. But he acts guarded, afraid to express his pleasure.

TED

(neutral)

Hello.

LIZA

I cleaned things up a little. I hope you don't mind.

TED

(flatly)

No. Thanks.

Ted skeptically looks around.

Liza takes a tentative step toward Ted. His behavior is making her feel uncertain, but she's eager to renew their intimacy.

LIZA

How was work?

TED
Horrible. It's always horrible.

LIZA
I'm sorry.

Liza comes over and gives Ted a hug and a kiss.

LIZA
Hello.

She is puzzled by Ted's lack of enthusiasm.

LIZA
I think I've found a job.
(beat)
A normal job. At a
department store.
(modestly)
And I found a little
studio apartment I can rent.
(brightly)
It's near here.

Ted wearily sits down on the day bed. He avoids looking at Liza. His reaction to her good news is sullen, at best. Liza walks over to the day bed and sits down beside him.

CUT TO:

167v VIDEO IMAGE - TED'S CONFESSION (INT. APT.)

167v

(The day bed/window are for the first time centered in the video frame.) Ted is both jealous and impressed:

TED
How could she be so cheery? In
one day...to change her whole
life...while I go on like
this...forever...

CUT BACK TO:

168 INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

168

They sit side-by-side. She keeps a respectful distance from him.

LIZA
Is something wrong?

TED
(annoyed)
Wrong? Why should anything be
wrong?

LIZA
(hurt)
I thought you'd be happy....at
least a little happy...that...

TED
You thought I'd be happy for
you?

LIZA
No...yes. After what you said.
After what I did...to change...
and after last night...

TED
(spiteful)
Did it ever occur to you that
there are other things in my
life? Other things that make me
unhappy? That maybe I even
enjoy being unhappy if that
means being honest?

LIZA
I'm sorry. I didn't mean...to
be selfish. You've been so nice
to me. And I don't want you to
think I'm a burden. I don't
have to stay here tonight.

TED
(sarcastic)
Of course you don't have to stay
here tonight.

LIZA
(stares at her hands)
That's not what I meant.

Ted looks at her, really looks at her, for the first time since he's come home.

He lowers his face and covers his eyes, deeply unhappy with himself. Liza looks up and is touched, like yesterday, by Ted's apparent grief.

She inches toward Ted and caresses him tenderly, but he averts his face.

CUT TO:

169v VIDEO IMAGE - TED'S CONFESSION (INT. APT.)

169v

He stares into the camera, confronting the painful memory:

TED

And because I was ashamed to
look at her, different feelings
flared up all at once...

(beat)

Feelings of domination.
Possession!

CUT BACK TO:

170 INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

170

Ted slowly turns toward Liza and transforms her caress into a hug.

Ted turns the hug into an embrace, climaxed by a violent kiss that surprises Liza.

At first Liza looks confused, even a little afraid. Then, rapturously, she embraces Ted and ecstatically kisses him.

Liza senses Ted's rising passion and, closing her eyes, takes it as an expression of love, of mutual compassion.

They fight their way out of their clothes, not fully undressing, but disrobing just enough to connect and begin making frenetic love.

TED V.O.)

And the sick thing is, the
tragedy is, the more tender she
was, the more furious and
spiteful I got, and with the
fury my passion soared again.
And she thought it was love...

Liza finally opens her eyes and sees the vindictiveness in Ted's face. For once Ted doesn't avert his eyes. Liza knows now that this is not an act of love.

She starts to cry silent tears. Ted sees these tears, but only grimaces and keeps thrusting, until at last he ejaculates in an unsatisfying orgasm.

Liza pushes away from Ted, but the couch is too narrow for her to avoid him on it, so she slides on to the floor, where she sits forlornly, too upset to fix her clothes.

Liza's tears are now accompanied by little sobs, until Liza becomes aware of the sound and stops crying, determined to keep her grief hidden from Ted.

She gets up and goes into the bathroom. The door is warped and she can't quite close it all the way.

Ted sits up, relieved to be alone. He pulls his pants back up and zips his fly.

Ted stares at the bathroom door and listens to the faucet. He thinks he hears muffled sobs.

CUT TO:

171v VIDEO IMAGE - TED'S CONFESSION (INT. APT.)

171v*

Ted avoids speaking directly into the lens, fighting against his shame:

TED

By this time she understood everything. I'd finally insulted her but...

(beat)

She knew that my outburst of passion was only revenge. She knew then that I was despicable, that I was incapable of loving her...

(beat)

...that I'm incapable of loving anyone. Love, for me, means tyrannizing. The struggle for domination. It's not a matter of reason. In fact, reason's the disease. Look at me.

Ted looks directly into the lens:

TED

Look at me! I'm a worm... ridiculous...petty...diseased... but other worms aren't ashamed or embarrassed. That's my curse.

CUT BACK TO:

172 INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

172*

Ted's eyes flit around the room as he stewes in his thoughts.

P.O.V. SEQUENCE: Ted looks at the bathroom door, at Liza's bag, at her red scarf on the window. Gradually Ted's expression looks meaner; he's getting spiteful again.

TED (V.O.)

I was appalled by how I'd treated her, her simple heart. Then spite welled up in me; my brain took over from my heart. I was trapped on a bad soap opera of my own devising. Real life was too much; it was much easier to think of Liza as a character in a trashy novel or TV show and not as a real person. I was too weak, too spiteful to deal with a real person. Spite drove me to perfect my cruelty. And so I did something ugly.

Liza comes out of the bathroom. She still looks upset, but she's a survivor, and it's time to move on.

Ted stands up. He picks up his wallet while Liza puts on her coat.

LIZA

(softly)

Good-bye.

Ted thrusts some money into Liza's hand and then hurries away, into the bathroom, out of her sight.

Liza is insulted and saddened by Ted's parting gesture. She lets the money drop to the floor.

With leaden steps Liza turns and leaves.

A172 INT. BATHROOM, APARTMENT - NIGHT

A172***

Standing in the bathroom, Ted hears the door close. He does nothing at first, but then he hurries to the front door.

B172 INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

B172***

Ted emerges from the bathroom - looks around - shell-shocked.

173 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

173

Ted steps out into the hallway and listens. He hears LIZA'S FOOTSTEPS. Ted calls out, but in a low voice:

TED
(softly)
Liza? Liza?
(a little louder)
Liza?

He hears the front door of the building SLAM VIOLENTLY.

Ted turns away, defeated.

174 INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

174

The room still has the powerful emotional charge of Ted's encounter with Liza.

Ted looks down and sees the crumpled money on the floor. He mobilizes into action: he rushes out the door without his overcoat.

175 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

175

Ted runs down the hallway like a man fleeing for his life and plunges outside.

176 OMITTED

176***

177 EXT. STREET CORNER - NIGHT

177

Ted runs through the falling rain. He slows down and stops, distraught, breathless: no sign of Liza.

TED (V.O.)
And why was I running after her?
Why? To beg her to forgive me!
I was desperate for forgiveness!

The street is empty; Ted is totally alone in the falling rain. Oblivious to the freezing rain, Ted stands motionless, getting soaked.

CUT TO:

178v VIDEO IMAGE - TED'S CONFESSION (INT. APT.)

178v

Looming into the camera, he painfully articulates his conclusive insight:

TED

But why? If I found her, if she forgave me, wouldn't I just start tormenting her again tomorrow?

179 EXT. STREET CORNER - NIGHT

179

Ted stares hopelessly into the darkness.

TED (V.O.)

(rationalizing)

It was much better that I let her get away. It was better for her to keep the resentment of my insult forever.

(beat)

It would give her something to feel superior to.

Ted turns around and starts walking slowly back home.

180 INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

180

Ted returns, as wet as a drowned rat. He sits down on the day bed, forlorn.

TED (V.O.)

I sat there without moving, almost dead with the pain in my heart...

(beat)

But didn't I know when I ran out after her that I would turn back halfway?

(beat)

I never saw Liza again.

CUT TO:

181v VIDEO IMAGE - TED'S CONFESSION (INT. APT.)

181v

TED

Even now, so many years later,
all this is very unpleasant to
remember, to confess...

(beat)

I have so many unpleasant
memories.

DISSOLVE TO:

182 INT. APARTMENT - PRESENT TENSE - DAWN (FILM)

182*

This is the first time since the opening scene that the
"present tense" has been on film, not video.

This eerie displacement in time transforms the room, making
it starker and gloomier. The sheer red fabric is gone.
The cactus are gone. There are a lot more books and a
newer model TV. Ted is noticeably older. Film gives the
room a startling sharpness of detail that it never had on
video.

Ted looks right into the camera, the first time that he has
directly addressed the "film" camera.

TED

Maybe this "confession" was a
mistake...I've felt ashamed the
whole time...It's not so much a
confession as a moral tale, to
show how I've ruined my
life...from spite.

Ted imagines that his confession is being broadcast live
and the whole world is now listening:

NOTE: the dialogue for 183, A183, and B183 is one
continuous clip, to be covered in all three locations.

CUT TO:

183 TED'S FANTASY - INT. ELECTRONICS STORE (VIDEO)

183***

Ted speaks on DOZENS OF TELEVISION SETS in the window.
PASSERS-BY stop to listen, spellbound by his words.

TED (ON TV)
 But we've all gotten out of the habit of living. Living is a chore - we all prefer watching life on TV. We're all more or less crippled.

A183 TED'S FANTASY - INT. UNIVERSITY LECTURE HALL (VIDEO)

A183***

STUDENTS take notes as they watch Ted's confession on a BIG SCREEN TV.

TED (ON TV)
 (proud)
 I've only carried to a logical conclusion in my life what you haven't dared to carry halfway in yours.

B183 TED'S FANTASY - EXT. SIMON'S POOL (VIDEO)
 B183***

Zerkov, Simon, Tom, and Jerry, drinks in hand, watch Ted on television.

TED (ON TV)
 You confuse your cowardice with good sense, you comfort yourself with self-deception.

CUT BACK TO:

184v VIDEO IMAGE - TED'S CONFESSION - (INT. APT.)

184v

Ted speaks to the camera, still imagining that the whole world is listening:

TED
 (impassioned)
 So maybe I'm more alive than you! (decisive)
 But enough; no more notes from underground-

Ted abruptly reaches forward and shuts off the camera.

CUT TO:

185 VIDEO IMAGE DECAYS TO BLACK.

185

DISSOLVE TO:

186 RAINDROPS - GIANT - HYPNOTIC -
FALLING IN SLOW MOTION -

186*

FADE OUT.

