

SAMARITAN

by
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FADE IN:

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S VOLVO - DAY

TITLE OVER:

"Wednesday".

MICHELLE and EVAN, a couple in their early 30's, drive along a busy downtown street. EVAN is the typical academic; MICHELLE, his wife, has her arms crossed over her abdomen and stares tight-lipped out the passenger side window. EVAN clutches the steering wheel tightly, watching the ebb and flow of the traffic as if it's the most important thing in the world. His window is down and the sounds of the TRAFFIC enter.

MICHELLE

It's not too late. I could get an abortion.

EVAN

No. We discussed it. I agreed.

MICHELLE

This isn't exactly the reaction I expected.

EVAN

It's a bit of shock, that's all.

MICHELLE

Shock?

EVAN

Surprise, then. I need to get used to the idea. I mean, yesterday we were talking about a getting a second car, maybe taking trip to New Zealand in the fall....

MICHELLE

Can't you even look at me?

EVAN

I'm trying to watch the road.

Ahead a car HONKS as it is cut off.

MICHELLE

You have doubts.

EVAN

We were going to plan it.

MICHELLE

Sometimes things just happen.

EVAN

All I'm saying is the timing isn't perfect. Your business is just starting to take off. We'll have to turn your massage studio into a nursery. Where would you work?

MICHELLE

We could get a bigger apartment. Or a house.

EVAN

We can't afford it yet. I'm still on contract. A tenured position is coming up next year--

MICHELLE

Why don't you just admit you don't want children?

EVAN

I do.

MICHELLE

Then what's the problem?

EVAN chews on this for a second.

EVAN

I'm scared.

(looks at MICHELLE)

I don't know if I have what it takes to be a good father.

MICHELLE

You're an honest, loving man.

You have a good heart.

(touches EVAN tenderly
on cheek)

I can't think of better qualifications.

EVAN

It's not just that. The world's going to hell. I'm worried about bringing a child into this mess....

MICHELLE

The world will always be shit.

EVAN

Things are getting worse.

Ahead, a Miata changes lane, cuts off an Escort, then brakes abruptly at a red light. The Miata comes to a stop, its nose jutting into the intersection, the Escort lightly nudges its back bumper. A stream of crossing PEDESTRIANS ease around the front of the Miata. The driver of the ESCORT leans on his horn. EVAN's Volvo is beside the ESCORT, one car back of the lights.

EVAN

See?

MICHELLE

You can't pass judgement on the world because of one asshole.

In the Escort an OLDER MAN rolls down his window.

OLDER MAN

(gives the Miata the
finger)

Idiot!

The OLDER MAN leans on his horn. A few of PEDESTRIANS look, but most ignore the commotion.

MICHELLE

I don't want to go into this alone.

The parking lights of the Miata go on. The door opens and a YOUNGER MAN exits. He walks towards the Escort. The OLDER MAN rolls up his window and locks his door.

EVAN

You won't be alone. I agreed.

MICHELLE

Good old reliable Evan.

MICHELLE's attention is split between EVAN and the YOUNGER MAN. EVAN is unaware of what is happening behind him.

EVAN

You don't have to be sarcastic.

The YOUNGER MAN bangs his fist on the driver's side window of the Escort, then steps back and kicks at the side mirror on the Escort, although it doesn't break. One or two PEDESTRIANS glance over, then hurry on.

MICHELLE

(shouting out window
to YOUNGER MAN)

Hey!

EVAN jerks back at her shout. Then he realizes the shout was intended for someone outside the car. He turns to see the YOUNGER MAN break off the Escort's side mirror.

EVAN

(to MICHELLE)

What are you doing?

MICHELLE

(to YOUNGER MAN)

Stop it!

EVAN

It's none of our business....

The OLDER MAN shifts across to the passenger's side, opens the door and pokes his head above the roof. The light changes and cars HONK. EVAN can't go because the car ahead of him is turning right and is blocked by a stream of pedestrians.

OLDER MAN
(to YOUNGER MAN)
I'll call the cops!

MICHELLE
(to EVAN)
Do something!

The YOUNGER MAN walks towards the passenger door.

EVAN
Do what?

MICHELLE
Help him!
(leans across EVAN
to shout at
YOUNGER MAN)
Leave him alone, you asshole!

EVAN
Don't antagonise him.

EVAN presses the button, and the window rises.

MICHELLE
(to EVAN)
What are you doing?

MICHELLE reaches for the window button but EVAN corrals her hand. The OLDER MAN ducks back inside the car and locks the passenger door. The YOUNGER MAN heads back towards his Miata. MICHELLE stops trying to get at the button. EVAN looks outside.

EVAN
It's over.
(angry, to MICHELLE)
Are you crazy? He could have
come after us!

MICHELLE stares at EVAN, her gaze accusatory.

EVAN

You're pregnant, for God's
sake.

The OLDER MAN opens the driver's side door of his Escort and gets out. He shouts at the YOUNGER MAN, who ignores him. The OLDER MAN turns to examine the damage to his car. The YOUNGER MAN opens the trunk of the Miata and pulls out a tire iron. HONKS of impatient drivers grow louder.

MICHELLE

He's coming back.

The OLDER MAN is unaware the YOUNGER MAN is advancing on him. MICHELLE hammers on EVAN's window. EVAN tries to hold her back, but she manages to push the window button and open it a crack.

MICHELLE

(to OLDER MAN)

Look out!

Hearing MICHELLE's warning, the OLDER MAN clambers back into his car and tries to pull the door shut, but his seatbelt hangs out. The YOUNGER MAN reaches the Escort, pulls the OLDER MAN out, and drags him in front of EVAN's Volvo, throwing him to the street.

MICHELLE

Oh my God!

EVAN

Your phone! Where's your
phone?

MICHELLE can't tear her eyes away from the scene. EVAN dumps the contents of her shoulder bag between them.

MICHELLE

No!

EVAN picks up her cell phone and turns as the tire iron descends. MICHELLE looks away, horrified. EVAN blanches.

EVAN

Jesus.

Cars HONK. The YOUNGER MAN drops the tire iron on EVAN's hood, strolls back to his Miata and drives away.

EVAN

Jesus.

The MOTORIST in front of EVAN exits his car, taking a tentative step towards the OLDER MAN. A PEDESTRIAN joins. MICHELLE clasps her arms around her chest; she stares at the dash, rocking slightly, and looks like she is going to be sick. EVAN puts a hand on her shoulder, but she flinches away. EVAN places his hands on the steering wheel. From the back seat of the car, we see the wide space between them as the crowd gathers.

FADE TO:

EXT. JUNK YARD - AFTERNOON

TITLE OVER:

"Thursday".

An empty minivan is parked in a deserted junk yard. In the back seat of the van is a boy's colourful knapsack from which an unclothed baby doll protrudes; next to it is an open shoebox containing half a dozen bullets scattered inside. Near the van stands MICHAEL WENTZALL, in his mid-40's, an affable-looking, fellow carrying a few extra pounds. Next to him is AARON WENTZALL, his son, a sullen-looking eight year old boy. AARON holds a hand gun and looks at his father dubiously. Both stand thirty feet away from a pop can on the hood of a wrecked car.

MICHAEL

Squeeze the trigger, don't
jerk.

AARON raises the gun. He closes one eye closed and sites along the barrel. As the hammer draws back, AARON screws his eyes shut. AARON fires; the shot goes wide, the can undisturbed. AARON looks up at MICHAEL.

MICHAEL

You didn't squeeze, you jerked.
Are you scared of the gun?

AARON shakes his head. MICHAEL crouches and grips AARON's arms.

MICHAEL

There are lots of things in the world that you should be scared of. But this gun isn't one of them. It's your friend. Remember that.

MICHAEL looks around the junk yard, spots an old paint can.

MICHAEL

Let's try a bigger target.

MICHAEL retrieves the paint can and carries it to the junked car. AARON raises the gun and points it at MICHAEL's back.

AARON

(whispers)

Bang.

AARON lowers the gun as MICHAEL replaces the pop can with the paint can. MICHAEL walks back.

MICHAEL

Okay, one more time.

AARON fires. The can spins across the hood and tumbles backwards to the ground. AARON still holds the gun, his eyes closed. MICHAEL's puts his hand on his son's shoulder.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, KITCHEN - LATE AFTERNOON

TITLE OVER:

"Saturday".

An empty kitchen. A pot sits on a gas stove, the flames from the burner HISSING around its bottom.

EXT. CONDO - LATE AFTERNOON

ESTABLISHING SHOT of the condo: a renovated warehouse. STAN, a young, muscular, security guard, sits in a glass booth just inside the front entrance watching something on a security monitor. A HOMELESS MAN shuffles past the entrance to the condo, STAN turning his attention to the MAN until he passes. STAN then looks back at the monitor: it's a scene of MICHELLE in the laundry room wearing tight jeans and tee-shirt with no bra. She bends over to put her laundry in a machine. She looks around to see if anyone else is in the laundry room, then reaches under her tee-shirt to scratch her breast. STAN rewinds the tape and watches the scene again.

EXT. CONDO - LATE AFTERNOON

The HOMELESS MAN accidentally bumps into EVAN who is walking briskly towards the entrance. One of EVAN's plastic bags tears, spilling its contents on the sidewalk. EVAN kneels to gather up the items and stuff them into his other bag.

HOMELESS MAN
Spare some change?

EVAN pauses to look at him.

HOMELESS MAN
It was an accident.

EVAN continues to pick up his groceries. STAN rises and walks to the front door of the condo.

STAN
(shouts)
I told you not to hang out
around here.

EVAN, finished packing, stands. STAN steps outside.

HOMELESS MAN
(to EVAN)
I used to live here.
(pauses)
Things change.

STAN

Beat it!

EVAN gives the HOMELESS MAN a five. The HOMELESS MAN crumples up the bill and drops it on the sidewalk at EVAN's feet. STAN takes a step towards them. The HOMELESS MAN hurries away. EVAN picks up the bill and stuffs it in his pocket. He walks to the front entrance where STAN holds the door open.

EVAN

He said he used to live here.

STAN

(shrugs)

Before my time.

EVAN walks to the elevator and pushes the button. The elevator descends; the doors open revealing AARON, wearing a colourful backpack and holding his eighteen month old sister, RACHEL. A large plastic doll pokes out of the backpack.

EVAN

Hi Aaron.

AARON says nothing.

EVAN

What are you doing?

AARON

Nothing.

EVAN

Do your parents know you're down here with your sister?

STAN (O.C.)

They do this sometimes.

STAN enters the elevator and takes AARON's hand.

STAN

I'll call their folks.

EVAN

I can take them up.

AARON

Rachel doesn't want to go up.

STAN

I'll call their parents.

EVAN

It's not a problem.

STAN

Their father gave me clear instructions on what to do when this happens.

AARON

Rachel wants to leave.

EVAN

The Wentzalls are friends of ours. We're having dinner with them tonight.

STAN

It's my job.

STAN leads the kids to the security booth and ushers them inside. When STAN picks up the phone, AARON looks forlornly through the glass door at EVAN.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, KITCHEN - NIGHT

A covered pot simmers on the stove in an empty kitchen. Seconds later the pot boils over, its lid rattling. The doorbell RINGS.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, BEDROOM - NIGHT

EVAN buttons his shirt.

EVAN

Michelle?

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, HALLWAY - NIGHT

EVAN walks down the hallway, poking his head into a room which contains a massage table. He continues down the hall.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, KITCHEN - NIGHT

EVAN, passing in the hall, catches sight of the pot boiling over. He enters and turns down the burner. Picking up a tea towel, he wipes at the mess on the stove. The bell RINGS again.

EVAN
(calling out)
They're here!

Annoyed, EVAN tosses the towel on the counter and exits.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, WASHROOM - NIGHT

MICHELLE, doubled up over the toilet, vomits. The doorbell RINGS again.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

EVAN looks through the peephole. Outside, SHARON carries a casserole; MICHAEL holds up a bottle of wine. SHARON, in her mid 20's, wears a low-cut, form-fitting dress just this side of tasteful. She's wound a little tight and is constantly fidgeting. EVAN undoes the deadbolts, and opens the door.

MICHAEL
Sorry we're late, Evan. Damn
sitter cancelled.

MICHAEL and SHARON enter, then move to the living room.

EVAN
No problem.

MICHAEL
Took a while to round up the
kids and lock them in the
freezer. They're slippery
little devils.

SHARON

Michael! He'll think we're
monsters.

(to EVAN)

It's not plugged in. And we
drilled breathing holes in the
side.

MICHAEL

Sharon insisted.

EVAN

When I was a kid we dreamed of
breathing holes.

SHARON

My step-parents always drilled
us holes. They were the
forward thinking sort.

MICHAEL

Did you know that infanticide
is twelve times as likely to
occur to adopted or foster
children?

SHARON

(annoyed)

Lovely.

SHARON hands EVAN the casserole dish.

EVAN

I'll put this in the oven to
keep it warm. You two open the
wine.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, KITCHEN - NIGHT

EVAN enters. He turns on the oven and puts in the casserole.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, HALLWAY - NIGHT

EVAN takes a step towards the living room, hesitates, then takes a step towards the bedroom, torn between his duty to his guests and concern for MICHELLE.

MICHAEL (O.C.)

Where do you keep your
corkscrew?

EVAN reluctantly moves towards the living room.

EVAN

It's not a screw top?

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The apartment is sparse, but very tastefully decorated. SHARON sits on a couch while MICHAEL pokes around in a china hutch. EVAN enters and pulls out the corkscrew from a sideboard. He hands it to MICHAEL.

MICHAEL

Thanks.

SHARON

(to EVAN)

Smells good.

MICHAEL

Speaking of locking people up,
where is Michelle? You chain
her to the bed again?

SHARON

(to EVAN)

Don't pay any attention. He's
trying to provoke you.

MICHAEL and EVAN sit and MICHAEL opens the bottle of wine.

EVAN

You know behavioural
anthropologists. We're always
looking for a reaction.

SHARON

I sometimes think Michael only married me to conduct an in situ study.

MICHAEL

I picked you because of your wide hips and ample bosom.

SHARON

I thought it was because all your other graduate students turned you down.

MICHAEL

Not true. There was a good-looking guy who was sweet on me. And, by all accounts, he was a great cook too.

MICHAEL pours wine for all three.

SHARON

Thanks very much.

MICHAEL

(to EVAN)

Sharon's useless in the kitchen.

EVAN

So am I.

MICHAEL

Guess who cooked the risotto?

SHARON

Guess who made me carry it down?

MICHAEL

It's unmanly to carry a casserole dish.

SHARON

You should see him in his apron.

EVAN

I didn't know you cooked.

MICHAEL

I had to learn when Sharon was pregnant --or I'd have starved. Couldn't stand to go into the kitchen. The smells made her nauseous.

SHARON

That's what I told him.

MICHAEL

I'm so gullible. But she's great in the sack.

SHARON

He's got a point.

EVAN

(calling out)

Michelle?

MICHAEL sips his wine.

MICHAEL

A healthy sex life is the best way to keep your man from straying.

SHARON

You're not going start with that biological imperative crap again?

MICHAEL

It's well documented that males are genetically programmed to spread their seed as widely as possible. And females are programmed to try to stop them.

(to EVAN)

Right, Evan?

SHARON

I don't have much time to think about your seed while changing diapers and powdering little wrinkled asses.

EVAN

You study squirrel monkeys, Michael. Not people.

MICHAEL

An eminently suitable species to serve as a model for our own behaviour.

EVAN

Squirrel monkeys have also been known to eat their young.

MICHAEL

I could nip back upstairs and get one of the kids for desert.

SHARON

Michael!

MICHAEL

(to SHARON)

Don't worry, it'd be the one that smells funny.

EVAN

Thanks, but we had kids for lunch.

MICHAEL laughs.

SHARON

I don't think that's funny.

MICHAEL

You wouldn't.

SHARON and MICHAEL stare at one another.

EVAN

So who did you get to sit?

SHARON

What?

MICHAEL

A new girl.

SHARON picks up her glass and takes a big drink.

MICHAEL

(to SHARON)

The kids are fine.

(points to ceiling)

They're in the apartment right
above us, ten feet away.

SHARON glances up.

MICHAEL

(to EVAN)

She always gets nervous with a
new sitter.

EVAN

As long as she's not an English
nanny.

No one laughs at EVAN's joke.

EVAN

You know, the one who killed
the kid.

MICHAEL

We got it.

SHARON

You don't know what sort of
people are out there.

MICHAEL

Same as the sort in here.

SHARON

(stands)

I'm going out to the balcony
for a smoke.

SHARON (CONT'D)

(to MICHELLE, who
is O.C.)

Michelle!

MICHELLE stands in the door. Her face is pale, her hair dishevelled and her skirt stained. SHARON stares at the stains. MICHELLE brushes ineffectually at the stain.

MICHAEL

(to MICHELLE)

You look like shit.

MICHELLE

The pot boiled over.

SHARON bustles over to her and takes her by the arm in a motherly manner, guiding her out of the room.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, HALLWAY - NIGHT

SHARON leads MICHELLE down the hallway. As they pass the kitchen MICHELLE gags at the smell and leans against the wall.

SHARON

Are you okay?

MICHELLE

I... I'm not feeling well. I
just need a minute to lie down.

SHARON guides MICHELLE into the massage studio.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, MASSAGE STUDIO - NIGHT

MICHELLE lies on the massage table. SHARON wets a facecloth and dabs at the stain on MICHELLE's dress. MICHELLE is uncomfortable at the other woman's ministrations.

SHARON

So this is where you work.

MICHELLE says nothing.

SHARON

I've never had a massage.
Michael says we can't afford
it, what with the kids and all.

(looks at MICHELLE
with concern)

Is everything okay?

MICHELLE

I just need a few minutes. Go
back and have a glass of wine.

SHARON

I meant is everything else
okay?

MICHELLE

(sharply)

Yes.

SHARON stops dabbing at the stain. They regard one another.

SHARON

I wasn't being nosy.

MICHELLE

I know.

SHARON

I'm concerned, that's all.

MICHELLE

It's been a long week.

SHARON

You don't like Michael.

MICHELLE stiffens.

MICHELLE

No. That's not--

SHARON

Anyone can see that. Well,
anyone except Michael....

SHARON stops dabbing and smiles ruefully at MICHELLE.

SHARON

You tolerate him because he's
Evan's friend. I know better
than anyone how annoying
Michael can be.

MICHELLE

He's not annoying.

SHARON

Of course he is. But he's
really not a bad guy. And,
hell, the kids seem to like
him.

SHARON smiles at her own joke.

MICHELLE

I... I'm sorry.

SHARON

No need to apologise. Just
remember, I'm not Michael.

MICHELLE

(smiles)

No, you're not.

SHARON

I know we're not close friends
or anything, but if you need
someone to talk to, I'm all
ears.

MICHELLE

I... no. Not right now.

SHARON

Any time.

SHARON

(examines stain)

I think I got most of it.

MICHELLE sits. SHARON brushes her hair back with her fingers.

SHARON

Better?

MICHELLE

Yes. Thank you.

SHARON

No problem.

MICHELLE

For everything.

SHARON

That's what friends are for.

With SHARON's help, MICHELLE gets to her feet.

MICHELLE

If....

SHARON

Yes?

MICHELLE

If you'd need to talk sometime,
I'd be happy to listen too.

SHARON

(laughs)

Thanks. But with the kids I
don't have time for my own
problems.

(looks at massage
table)

I could use a massage more than
a kind ear.

MICHELLE

Any time.

SHARON

Shall we get back to the boys?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, DINING ROOM - NIGHT

It's later and the meal is done; two empty wine bottles sit on the table. EVAN, MICHAEL and SHARON sip scotch from crystal tumblers. They're all a little drunk except for MICHELLE who doesn't have a glass. The condo is on the fifth floor and a balcony door is propped open, admitting the sounds of TRAFFIC.

MICHAEL

(to EVAN)

You did the right thing.

EVAN

Michelle doesn't think so.

MICHAEL

The city's dangerous, Michelle.

EVAN

The world's dangerous.

MICHAEL

My point exactly.

As if to underscore their words, a siren WAILS, then fades.

MICHELLE

So we shouldn't help one another?

MICHAEL

I didn't say that.

MICHELLE

If we don't help our neighbours then we've only ourselves to blame when things go to hell.

MICHAEL

Your responsibility to your neighbours extends only so far. And it doesn't include getting the shit kicked out of you because some guy mouthed off to another guy.

SHARON

Can't we talk about something else?

EVAN

Piercy. His name was Piercy. The police told me.

MICHAEL

Whatever.

SHARON

Jesus, you're a heartless bastard.

MICHAEL shrugs off SHARON's comment.

MICHAEL

Sometimes you've got to be to live in this city.

SHARON

Or to get ahead at work.

MICHAEL

Or at work.

(looks at EVAN)

Survival of the fittest, and all that.

EVAN

(embarrassed)

We're hardly in competition.

MICHAEL

(smiles)

Don't fool yourself. We may be pretend to be civilised academics, but the laws of the jungle still apply when it comes to tenure track positions.

EVAN

I meant that no one's interested in my lizards. You're a shoe in for the position.

MICHAEL

(bitterly)

They savaged my last paper.

EVAN

Oh, no. That's not--

MICHELLE

(to MICHAEL)

What's the limit of our responsibility?

MICHAEL

Responsibility?

MICHELLE

To one another. You said it extends only so far.

MICHAEL

You mean my responsibility to you?

MICHELLE

You to me. You to Sharon. You to everyone else.

MICHAEL

If you're asking, "Would I have helped you?", the answer is yes. But if you're asking, "Would I have helped a stranger?" the answer is no.

MICHELLE

Don't we have a responsibility to other people?

MICHAEL

No. Let strangers fend for themselves. We're friends. We look out for one another. Protect each other. Watch each other's back.

EVAN

Sounds like a tribe.

SHARON

Or a gang.

MICHAEL

I'd prefer tribe over gang, but I suppose both are true to a degree.

EVAN raises his glass.

EVAN

To our gang.

SHARON

We don't have to get tattoos or anything, do we?

MICHAEL

(to MICHELLE)

I'll drink to that if Michelle joins us.

MICHELLE

Gangs are another way people can abdicate responsibility for their behaviour.

EVAN

She's not drinking tonight.

MICHAEL

(to MICHELLE)

Why not?

SHARON

I'm with Michelle. I mean about the toast.

MICHAEL
(to MICHELLE)
Are you pregnant?

SHARON
Michael!

MICHAEL
(to MICHELLE)
I think you'd make a great
mother.
(to EVAN)
And I know you'd make a great
father.

SHARON
(to MICHELLE)
You don't have to answer.
(smiles)
But he's right.

EVAN looks at MICHELLE, waits for her to respond.

MICHELLE
(rises)
I'll put on some coffee.

MICHELLE exits.

SHARON
Jesus, Michael!
(throws her napkin
at MICHAEL)
Do you always have to say
whatever pops into your head?

MICHAEL
It's my only character flaw.

SHARON
I wish.

EVAN
Don't worry about it.

SHARON
 (slips on her
 shoulder bag)
 I'm going for a smoke.

MICHAEL
 Again?

SHARON EXITS to the balcony. EVAN picks up his glass and the bottle of scotch. He rises.

EVAN
 Let's move into the living
 room.

MICHAEL
 Well? Is she?

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, KITCHEN - NIGHT

MICHELLE fills a coffee maker. She stares at the wall blankly.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

EVAN and MICHAEL sit. EVAN pours MICHAEL a tumbler of scotch. EVAN stares at the tumbler.

DISSOLVE TO FLASHBACK:

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Behind the tumbler, out of focus, a couple makes love on the couch where MICHAEL now sits.

MICHAEL (V.O.)
 So what do you think?

RETURN TO SCENE:

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

EVAN looks up to see MICHAEL holding a hand gun.

MICHAEL
(quietly)
Nice, eh?

EVAN
You bought a gun?

MICHAEL
Never know when you'll need it.

EVAN
Michelle and I don't believe in
guns.

MICHAEL
It's a dangerous world.

EVAN
I've never even held a gun.

MICHAEL
Try it.

EVAN looks around, then takes it. He weighs it in his palm.

EVAN
Its heavier than I thought.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, DINING ROOM - NIGHT

MICHELLE enters. The room is empty. She gathers a few plates, then pauses when she nears the balcony door. SHARON's hushed VOICE can be heard from outside, along with a STATIC-FILLED VOICE whose words we cannot distinguish. MICHELLE steps towards the balcony door to listen.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, BALCONY - NIGHT

On a large balcony, SHARON sits in a wrought iron chair, a clown walkie-talkie to her ear, having a conversation. SHARON wears her emotions on her sleeve in drunken concern.

SHARON

You sure everything's all
right, Aaron honey?

(pause)

Check Rachel again. One more
time.

(pause)

That's a good boy.

(pause)

Can you see her? Is she
sleeping?

(pause)

Good boy. Mummy will be home
soon.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, DINING ROOM - NIGHT

MICHELLE exits.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

MICHAEL and EVAN are huddled together. MICHELLE enters and
MICHAEL slips the gun into his jacket pocket. MICHELLE sits.

MICHAEL

(to MICHELLE)

I hear congratulations are in
order.

MICHELLE

(to EVAN)

You shouldn't have said
anything.

MICHAEL

I forced him to admit it.

MICHELLE

Evan doesn't want to keep it.

EVAN

I... I never said that.

MICHELLE

You think it. You just don't have the courage to say it out loud.

EVAN

Couldn't we talk about this some other time?

MICHELLE

We could. But we won't.

An awkward moment of silence.

MICHAEL

(insincerely)

Ooops. Jesus, Michelle, I'm sorry.

MICHELLE

It's not your fault. Evan shouldn't have said anything.

MICHAEL

I'd like to apologise --

MICHELLE

Not to worry.

SHARON enters and slumps in an arm chair next to MICHELLE. MICHELLE watches her. EVAN leans to pour SHARON a drink.

MICHAEL

I make an ass of myself when I drink.

SHARON

If it were only when you drink.

MICHAEL shoots a look at SHARON who stiffens.

MICHELLE

It's fine.

MICHAEL

No, really.

MICHELLE

Apology accepted.

MICHAEL

Really?

SHARON

Christ, it's not like you beat her with a tire iron!

SHARON's face colors as she realizes what she's said.

EVAN

I didn't do anything. I just watched.

SHARON

It's only natural.

SHARON pours EVAN another shot.

MICHAEL

If you'd intervened, you'd have been the one lying in a pool of blood.

SHARON

Christ, Michael.

EVAN

Maybe....

MICHAEL

Look, you're feeling guilty. That's understandable. But it's about failing to meet Michelle's expectations, not your own.

MICHELLE

My expectations?

MICHAEL

Sure. That's why you're mad at him.

MICHELLE

I'm not mad.

SHARON

Wasn't it lovely out today?

MICHAEL

The hell you're not.

EVAN

My expectations too.

Everyone looks at EVAN.

EVAN

I didn't do anything because I
was scared.

EVAN downs his shot. SHARON touches him on the arm. MICHAEL's
mouth tics up as he watches.

SHARON

Anyone would have been scared.

MICHAEL

(angry)

Fear is the correct response.

EVAN

(looks at MICHELLE)

Michelle wasn't afraid.

MICHELLE

I don't know what I was.

EVAN

Maybe I should have helped.

MICHAEL

No, you shouldn't.

(looks at MICHELLE)

What if this guy attacked
Michelle?

(looks at EVAN)

How would you feel then?

EVAN

Like I did the right thing.

MICHAEL

God, what an egoist! You're more concerned about Michelle's image of you than of her well-being.

MICHAEL downs his drink, and pours himself another.

MICHELLE

I can take care of myself.

EVAN's hand trembles as he lifts the bottle.

MICHELLE

(to MICHAEL)

You've got all the answers. What would you have done?

MICHAEL

Locked the doors and called the cops.

MICHELLE

We did. And it didn't help that man.

EVAN

His name was Piercy.

MICHAEL

Nevertheless, that's what I would have done. And it's what the police would have wanted me to do.

MICHELLE

I don't believe that.

MICHAEL

It's true. The cops have enough problems without having to worry about good Samaritans getting in the way.

MICHELLE

I suppose they've told you
this.

MICHAEL

As a matter of fact, yes.
(to SHARON)
Isn't that right?

SHARON looks away.

MICHAEL

A few years ago we lived on
Madison.

SHARON

Must you tell this story?

MICHAEL

We got a great deal on an old
house with loads of character.
And it was a real
neighbourhood, where the
neighbours knew one another and
cared about one another.

DISSOLVE TO FLASHBACK:

EXT. MICHAEL AND SHARON'S OLD HOUSE, FRONT YARD - DAY

ESTABLISHING SHOT of a Victorian house. There is no sound except
for MICHAEL's V.O. in the following scenes.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

Only we found out it wasn't
such a great deal.

INT. MICHAEL AND SHARON'S OLD HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

MICHAEL sits at the kitchen table reading a paper.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

There was a housing project at
the end of the street.

SHARON enters, leading AARON, who is five, by the hand. She says something to MICHAEL.

EXT. MICHAEL AND SHARON'S OLD HOUSE, FRONT YARD - DAY

MICHAEL exits the house, SHARON following, and stands on the porch watching a couple on the sidewalk in front of the house. The MAN has long greasy hair, wears stained jeans and a biker jacket; the WOMAN wears too much makeup, and has on tight jeans and a fuzzy sweater. She holds a BABY. The MAN blocks her way.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

There was a couple having some sort of argument. She was carrying a baby.

MICHAEL steps onto the front lawn while SHARON watches.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

They were screaming at each other. Then he made a grab for the baby. I thought they were going to pull the kid apart.

The MAN tries to wrestle the BABY out of the WOMAN's arms; the BABY is perilously close to being dropped.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

So I told him to leave her alone.

The MAN turns and shouts at MICHAEL with the same vehemence. He grabs MICHAEL's sweater. The WOMAN yells at MICHAEL.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

They both turned on me.

MICHAEL backs away, his sweater stretching. They dance around the yard this way, the MAN now taking wild swings which MICHAEL manages to avoid. On the porch, SHARON is frantic. AARON, who stands behind her, cries. The WOMAN puts the BABY down on the ground and tries to get at MICHAEL.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

Then the woman attacked me. It was bizarre, almost surreal.

MICHAEL swings the MAN around on the end of his sweater until the MAN stumbles and loses his balance. MICHAEL lets his sweater be pulled off over his head and runs, while the WOMAN tries to help the MAN. The MAN shoves her away, regains his feet and follows, but by this time MICHAEL and SHARON have retreated inside and locked the front door. The MAN grabs the screen door, kicks out the screen and bends the frame.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

He totalled my screen door,
screaming threats the whole
time. He said,

(the MAN's mouth moves
in synch with MICHAEL's
words although MICHAEL
says them without
inflection, while the
MAN is enraged)

"I know where you live. I'm
going to come back and burn
down your fucking house and
kill you all."

DISSOLVE TO SCENE:

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

MICHAEL is lost in the memory.

MICHAEL

I loved that house.

EVAN (O.C.)

What did you do?

EVAN's words snap MICHAEL out of his reverie.

MICHAEL

I called the police, naturally.
But that delightful couple was
long gone before the police
arrived. And the cops told me
there was nothing they could
do. That it was best to let
them handle such things in the
future.

EVAN

What about the threat?

MICHAEL

They said to call if I saw the
guy again. Or if I smelled
smoke.

EVAN

Unbelievable.

MICHAEL

Aaron started acting up,
wetting his bed. Christ, I can
still smell it.

SHARON

Enough, already.

MICHAEL

And Sharon was afraid to go
out. Even during the day.

SHARON

(to MICHELLE)

It's different, when you have
children.

MICHAEL

Hell, we had planned on having
another kid. But after that
Sharon refused. At least while
we lived in that neighbourhood.

EVAN

Jesus.

MICHAEL raises his glass.

MICHAEL

So we sold the house at a big
loss and moved here.

INT. CONDO, VARIOUS - NIGHT

Various scenes through security camera: STAN, the SECURITY GUARD; lobby; dumpster out back; laundry room; fitness room; hallway on EVAN and MICHELLE's floor.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Everyone is contemplative for a moment.

MICHAEL

(distantly)

And now we have Rachel.

MICHELLE

Aaron seems fine now.

MICHAEL

He's not. He carries around a doll, for Chrissakes!

EVAN

It's a phase. All kids go through phases like that.

MICHAEL

Did you carry around a naked doll?

SHARON

(to MICHAEL)

Maybe we should be going.

MICHAEL

(annoyed)

The kids are fine.

(to MICHELLE)

She still frets. New sitter.

MICHELLE

(to SHARON)

Who did you get to sit?

SHARON

(hesitant)

New girl in the building.

MICHAEL frowns.

MICHELLE
(to SHARON)
What's her name?

SHARON is confused.

MICHAEL
Emily.
(to SHARON)
It was Emily wasn't it?

SHARON
Yes.

MICHELLE
When did they move in?

SHARON
Last month, I think.

MICHELLE
Third floor?

MICHAEL
(trying to hide
his annoyance)
Why all the questions?

SHARON
I think so.

MICHAEL
Sharon worries about
everything.

MICHELLE
Have you met her family?

SHARON
No... uh, yes. In the
elevator. When they were
moving in.

MICHELLE

I don't remember anyone moving
onto the third floor recently.

EVAN

Michelle....

MICHELLE stares at EVAN.

MICHELLE

Yes?

EVAN looks away.

SHARON

We should go.

MICHAEL

Jesus, Michelle, you're
worrying Sharon sick.

EVAN

What about the coffee?

MICHELLE

Coffee maker is broken.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, KITCHEN - NIGHT

A coffee maker drips.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

SHARON

Michael?

MICHAEL

Okay, okay. We'll go.

SHARON rises and picks up her shoulder bag. The clown walkie-talkie falls out. SHARON stuffs it back in her bag. MICHELLE looks at SHARON whose face colors. SHARON hurries from the room. EVAN shoots a look at MICHELLE, who returns his gaze defiantly. EVAN follows SHARON. MICHAEL swirls his scotch.

MICHAEL
She's a good mother.

MICHELLE
You shouldn't have come
tonight.

MICHAEL
Because Sharon was a little
nervous about the new sitter?

MICHELLE
Sharon wasn't up to it.

MICHAEL
She's fine. She wanted to.

MICHAEL downs his drink; he picks up the bottle of scotch.

MICHELLE
Shouldn't you be going?

MICHAEL holds the bottle mid-air, about to pour.

MICHAEL
You despise me, don't you?

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

SHARON tries to unlatch one of the locks on the front door. EVAN takes her by the shoulders and gently turns her around.

EVAN
Is everything okay?

SHARON
No...yes.... It's the kids.
New sitter, you know.

SHARON and EVAN lock gazes. SHARON seems to calm.

EVAN
I'm sure they're fine.

SHARON touches EVAN's face tenderly. EVAN corrals her hand and lowers it, looking around nervously. SHARON is embarrassed.

SHARON

Sorry.

EVAN

It's okay.

SHARON

I've got to go.

EVAN opens a lock and SHARON squeezes past him out the door. Through the hall security camera we see SHARON leaving. EVAN stares after her a moment. MICHAEL enters the front hallway.

EVAN

She couldn't wait.

MICHAEL

Tell me about it.

EVAN

Jesus, Michael, I feel bad...

MICHAEL

She'll be fine as soon as she sees the kids are safe and sound.

EVAN

Michelle had no right--

MICHAEL

Blame it on raging hormones.

EVAN

You've given up completely on political correctness, haven't you?

MICHAEL

It was a fad.

EVAN

It has its place.

MICHAEL

Only for morons who don't understand that human nature can't be corrected. There's only one way to correct behaviour.

MICHAEL makes a gun shape with his hand, pointing it at EVAN.

MICHAEL

Pow.

MICHAEL exits. EVAN shuts the door.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, DINING ROOM - NIGHT

MICHELLE gathers dirty dishes from the table. EVAN enters and watches her for a moment, then moves on to the kitchen.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, KITCHEN - NIGHT

EVAN walks over to the coffee maker, its pot almost full.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, DINING ROOM - NIGHT

MICHELLE stacks dirty dishes. EVAN enters, holding the pot of coffee. MICHELLE looks at the pot, then continues cleaning.

EVAN

Everyone could smell the coffee.

MICHELLE walks over to the balcony door and closes it.

MICHELLE

(quietly)
They didn't have a sitter.

EVAN

What?

MICHELLE

I saw Sharon on the balcony.
She was talking to Aaron on his
walkie-talkie.

EVAN

Maybe she was playing a game.

MICHELLE

She was asking him to check on
Rachel.

EVAN

She was worried.

MICHELLE

Why wasn't she talking to the
sitter?

EVAN

How do I know?

MICHELLE

You saw the way she acted. How
many times she went out there
for a "smoke".

EVAN

You're imagining things.

MICHELLE

As far as I know, no one's
moved into the building in
months.

EVAN puts the pot on the table. MICHELLE starts cleaning again.

EVAN

She was confused. You know
Sharon can't hold her liquor.

MICHELLE

Did you see how annoyed Michael
was?

EVAN

I was getting annoyed too.

MICHELLE

He was annoyed because there is no new girl. They left their kids alone. And he was afraid Sharon was going to give it away.

EVAN

You're nuts.

MICHELLE

Don't you feel the slightest bit responsible?

EVAN

For what? We didn't leave their kids alone! Christ, Michelle, they're our friends. They got us into this condo, remember?

MICHELLE looks at the balcony door.

MICHELLE

They'll hear you.

EVAN

Look, even if they did leave their kids alone, which I don't believe they did, what could we do about it? It's none of our business.

MICHELLE

So let's ignore it.

EVAN

That's not what I said.

MICHELLE stops cleaning.

MICHELLE

Why do you think she was using the walkie-talkie?

EVAN looks at MICHELLE, but doesn't answer.

MICHELLE

Because the cellular is in Michael's name. He'd get a record of all her calls. He'd find out she'd been talking to the kids when she was supposed to be pretending nothing was wrong. She used the walkie-talkie because she's afraid of Michael.

EVAN

You're mad at me. Fine. But you've got no call to antagonise Michael and Sharon.

MICHELLE

Like you didn't want me to antagonise that guy with the tire iron?

EVAN

Is that what this is all about?

MICHELLE

Don't be naive.

MICHELLE picks up a stack of plates and walks towards the kitchen. As she walks past EVAN she says,

MICHELLE

Michael threatened me.

EVAN grabs her arm; a plate slides off and smashes on the floor.

EVAN

I don't believe it.

MICHELLE

Of course not! That way you won't have to do anything about it

EVAN

For God's sake, Michelle, they're our friends!

MICHELLE

Let go of my arm.

EVAN looks at his grip on her arm as if he's surprised he's holding her; he lets go. There are red fingerprints on her arm.

MICHELLE

I accused him of not having a sitter. He called me a nosy bitch, and said people who make false accusations get hurt.

EVAN

Michael's an ass when he's drunk. He'll apologise tomorrow.

MICHELLE

He meant it.

EVAN pours shots into two glasses and holds one out to MICHELLE.

EVAN

It's been a long week.

MICHELLE

All the weeks seem long.

EVAN lowers the shot he was holding out to MICHELLE.

EVAN

What's that supposed to mean?

MICHELLE

I'm tired, Evan. Tired of being afraid. Tired of being uncertain.

EVAN

Uncertain?

MICHELLE

About everything. About this baby. About you.

EVAN

Me?

MICHELLE puts the plates back on the table and sits opposite EVAN. She takes the other glass of scotch from his hand.

MICHELLE

I need you to be here for me.
I need you to love me.

EVAN

I do.

MICHELLE

But you don't believe me.

EVAN

Maybe you misunderstood
Michael.

MICHELLE

You're making excuses for him.

EVAN

Look, I'll talk to him.

MICHELLE

Why can't you just believe me?
Don't you love me enough for
that?

EVAN says nothing.

MICHELLE

I don't want to have this baby
with you if you're scared.

EVAN

I have reservations, that's
all.

MICHELLE

I'm having this baby. By
myself if necessary.

EVAN stares at her, incredulous.

EVAN

You're leaving me? Because I
don't have the right amount of
enthusiasm?

MICHELLE

I didn't say that.
(sarcastic)
Maybe you misunderstood.

MICHAEL and MICHELLE hold their glasses but don't drink. On the
floor between them lies the broken plate. EVAN is deflated.

EVAN

So what now?

MICHELLE

I wish to God I knew.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, BEDROOM - MORNING

TITLE OVER:

"Monday."

EVAN finishes dressing while MICHELLE lies in bed asleep. EVAN
picks up his briefcase and exits. MICHELLE, who has been
feigning sleep, opens her eyes and sits up. She winces as the
front door SLAMS shut. MICHELLE stares off into space.

INT. CONDO HALLWAY - MORNING

EVAN steps onto the elevator.

INT. CONDO ELEVATOR - MORNING

EVAN presses the button for the parking level. As the doors
close, EVAN changes his mind and presses the lobby button.

INT. CONDO, LOBBY - MORNING

EVAN steps off the elevator and walks to the security cubicle. JERRY, a security guard, sits behind the desk of monitors; he is overweight and in his mid-40s. STAN stands behind JERRY. They talk animatedly about something. As EVAN approaches they laugh, but as soon as they spot EVAN, they stop laughing. EVAN raps on the glass. JERRY presses a button to activate a speaker.

JERRY

Yes, sir?

EVAN

I was wondering if you could help me.

JERRY

That's what they pay me for.

EVAN

I have a friend who desperately needs a sitter. I heard there's a teenager in the building who sits. I don't know her phone number or the family name. But I do know they just moved in.

JERRY

You must have heard wrong. We've had no new residents in the last two month.

EVAN

Her name is Emily, I think. Third floor....

JERRY

It's been almost two years since anyone moved onto the third.

EVAN

Sorry to bother you.

JERRY

Not a bother.

JERRY releases the button and says something to STAN, who laughs.

EVAN

What?

JERRY and STAN stare at him. EVAN raps on the glass again. JERRY presses the button.

JERRY

Yes, sir?

EVAN

What did you say?

JERRY

I was talking to Stan.

EVAN

You said something about me.

JERRY

No, sir.

EVAN

I heard you.

JERRY

You're mistaken, sir. It's the glass. Changes the way things sound.

JERRY and STAN stare at EVAN.

JERRY

Is there anything else?

EVAN turns and walks back to the elevator. He glances back to see JERRY say something to STAN; both stare at EVAN. The elevator door opens and EVAN enters.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, PARKING GARAGE - DAY

EVAN exit the elevator and enters the garage. His FOOTSTEPS echo. He walks to his VOLVO and puts the key in the door.

MICHAEL (O.C.)

Evan.

EVAN startles; he turns. MICHAEL stands a few feet away.

EVAN

You startled me.

(checks his watch)

What are doing here? Don't you have a graduate seminar?

MICHAEL

I called in sick. I wanted to talk to you. About Saturday night.

EVAN

Emotions were running high.

MICHAEL

I said some things to Michelle.

EVAN

She mentioned--

MICHAEL

I don't want to jeopardise our friendship.

EVAN

You were drunk. We were all a little drunk.

MICHAEL

Michelle wasn't.

EVAN

No, she wasn't.

(shrugs)

She can be provocative sometimes.

MICHAEL

She was acting a little crazy.

EVAN stiffens.

MICHAEL

Don't get me wrong! Sharon was like that when she was pregnant. Paranoia and cravings. They go with the territory. But I know none of that excuses my behaviour.

EVAN

No.

MICHAEL

So I want to apologise. I'm sorry.

(extends his hand)

Can you forgive me?

EVAN hesitates.

MICHAEL

Your friendship is important to me.

They shake, MICHAEL squeezes EVAN's hand tightly, then releases it. Distant FOOTSTEPS echo in the garage. EVAN looks.

MICHAEL

Forgiveness -- that's what friendship is about.

JERRY approaches them. EVAN opens his car door.

EVAN

I've got to go. I've a lecture at eleven.

MICHAEL

I'd have forgiven you.

EVAN

I know.

JERRY gets closer.

MICHAEL

If, for instance, you fucked Sharon, I'd forgive you.

EVAN

(rattled)

What... what the hell are you talking about?

MICHAEL

Friendship.

JERRY (O.C.)

(to MICHAEL)

Everything all right here, Mr Wentzall?

JERRY stands a few yards away.

MICHAEL

Sure, Jerry. Couldn't be better.

JERRY

Mrs. McKinnon said she spotted some guy hanging around the garage.

MICHAEL

Haven't seen anyone.

JERRY

I was just going off shift, so I thought I'd have a look around.

JERRY looks at EVAN expectantly.

EVAN

No. No, I haven't seen anyone.

JERRY

Okay. Have a nice day.

MICHAEL

Wait a sec, Jerry. I'd like to talk to you.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

(to EVAN)
By the way, congratulations. I
know you'll be a great dad.

MICHAEL walks away with the JERRY. MICHAEL says something that is inaudible. They laugh. EVAN climbs in his Volvo.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S VOLVO - DAY

EVAN drives towards the garage door.

INT. CONDO, GARAGE DOOR - DAY

Through a security camera we see the Volvo approach.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S VOLVO - DAY

EVAN pulls up and punches a button to open the door. MICHAEL and JERRY confer at the side of the garage door. The door opens and EVAN drives through. MICHAEL waves as he passes. In his rear view mirror, EVAN can see the MICHAEL slipping JERRY what looks like folded bills. MICHAEL nods in the direction of the Volvo. JERRY stares after the Volvo as it drives away.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, HALLWAY - DAY

The bathroom door is open a crack; through the crack we see MICHELLE doubled over the toilet, vomiting.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, BEDROOM - DAY

MICHELLE, looking bedraggled, enters the bedroom in her bathrobe. She takes off the robe and starts dressing.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, KITCHEN - DAY

The coffee maker is full, but unplugged. MICHELLE enters. In the sink are the pieces of the broken plate. She picks up a jagged piece and the doorbell RINGS. Startled, she drops it.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, FRONT DOOR - DAY

MICHELLE enters and opens the door revealing CRYSTAL, MICHELLE's client, a middle-aged woman. MICHELLE smiles.

MICHELLE

Good morning.

CRYSTAL

I feel like shit.

CRYSTAL takes off her coat, drops it in MICHELLE's hand.

MICHELLE

I'll have you feeling better in no time.

CRYSTAL

There are some things you can't massage away.

MICHELLE

Maybe I can help you forget about them for a while.

CRYSTAL

It'll be tough.

(eyes MICHELLE)

I hope you're up to it.

CRYSTAL walks past MICHELLE and exits, leaving MICHELLE standing in the front hall holding her coat. On a table is an appointment book with a long list of names.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S VOLVO - MORNING

EVAN stares out the window of the Volvo as he drives, his state abstracted. He picks up his cellular and speed dials a number.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, MASSAGE STUDIO - MORNING

MICHELLE is massaging CRYSTAL when the phone RINGS. She continues the massage. The machine picks up.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S VOLVO - MORNING

EVAN stares at the phone as the answering machine message plays.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, FRONT DOOR - DAY

MICHELLE closes the front door as CRYSTAL exits. MICHELLE picks up the pen and crosses CRYSTAL's name off the list.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, KITCHEN - DAY

MICHELLE enters and plugs in the coffee maker. She begins picking the pieces of broken plate out of the sink and puts them in the trash can. The doorbell RINGS.

INT. COLLEGE LECTURE HALL - DAY

EVAN stands at the front of a tiered lecture theatre that holds several hundred STUDENTS. The lights are dim and he's showing slides of jungle scenes. EVAN changes slides as he talks.

EVAN

Last year I had the privilege
to accompany my colleague, Dr.
Wentzall, on a primate study to
Peru.

SHARON, wearing a fake leopard skin coat and sunglasses, enters the lecture hall and stands near the door. She lights a cigarette, and takes short nervous puffs. A STUDENT in the back row glares at her. SHARON stubs out her cigarette on the wall.

EVAN

Prior studies had confirmed the
obvious: in environments in
which food is scarce, male
primate aggression rises.
Conventional wisdom has it that
this is countered by female
alliances. However, our study
of squirrel monkeys confirmed

(MORE)

EVAN (CONT'D)

that this model may be too simplistic, that there is an unexpected range in these behaviours, regardless of the relative abundance of food.

EVAN turns on the lights and sees SHARON at the back. She gives him a small wave. He nods back. Several STUDENTS observe the exchange.

EVAN

In... in our studies of three closely related, um, species of squirrel monkeys, completely different social behaviours emerged.

SHARON exits. EVAN stops talking and stares after SHARON.

STUDENT

Does this suggest that we might have overestimated the aggressiveness of early Homo species?

EVAN

(distracted)

Sorry. What was the question?

INT. COLLEGE BUILDING, HALLWAY - DAY

EVAN and SHARON stand outside the lecture hall in a corridor, students bustling past them. She still wears the sunglasses.

SHARON

Those pictures.... Michael never told me how beautiful it was out there.

EVAN

There's a spider whose bite will kill you in less than ten minutes. There's no antidote. Each morning you have to check your shoes before you put them on in case one's crawled in during the night.

SHARON

It kind of puts things in perspective, doesn't it?

EVAN

What do you mean?

SHARON

It makes the things that happen between two people seem insignificant.

EVAN

Let's go somewhere quieter.

INT. FACULTY CAFETERIA - DAY

EVAN puts two coffees on a table and sits. SHARON sits opposite, her coat and sunglasses still on, more agitated than usual. Various FACULTY MEMBERS eye them. SHARON pulls a cup to herself almost spilling it. EVAN stares at the cup.

DISSOLVE TO FLASHBACK:

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

EVAN and SHARON are on the couch, EVAN drunkenly tearing at SHARON's clothes. SHARON responds vigorously, and they accidentally knock over a tumbler with scotch on the coffee table, spilling it onto the carpet.

DISSOLVE TO SCENE:

INT. FACULTY CAFETERIA - DAY

SHARON lights up a cigarette.

EVAN

You've come to tell me Michael knows about what happened.

SHARON
How... how did you know?

EVAN
I saw him this morning. In the garage.

SHARON tenses.

SHARON
What did he say?

EVAN
That he forgave me.

SHARON
(relieved)
That's good.

SHARON smokes furiously, EVAN watching her closely.

EVAN
Why did you tell him?

SHARON
I didn't.

EVAN
Who else would have told him?

SHARON
I swear I didn't tell him.

EVAN
It was nearly two years ago.

SHARON
There's no statute of limitation on infidelity.

EVAN stares at his coffee.

EVAN

What if he tells Michelle?

SHARON

You never said anything to her?

EVAN

We were going through a rough patch. I didn't want to make things worse.

SHARON

Maybe you should tell her now.

EVAN

Perhaps if I talk to Michael--

SHARON

No. It... it's wouldn't be smart.

EVAN

He's got a temper. But he's not irrational.

SHARON

You know that story he told last night? About the couple? That wasn't exactly the way it happened.

DISSOLVE TO FLASHBACK:

EXT. MICHAEL AND SHARON'S OLD HOUSE, FRONT YARD - DAY

As before, SHARON stands on the porch with AARON. However, this time the WOMAN is sitting on the lawn breast-feeding her BABY and the MAN is standing beside her. Both are now dressed like latter-day hippies. MICHAEL strides towards them.

SHARON (V.O.)

It had nothing to do with their baby. He wanted them off the lawn. He'd just seeded it.

Michael comes up behind the MAN and shoves him. The MAN turns and they grapple, nearly falling atop the WOMAN and BABY. MICHAEL lands atop the MAN and swings wildly.

SHARON (V.O.)
He was the one who went ape
shit.

The WOMAN puts her baby down and attacks MICHAEL from behind.
The MAN frees himself, although MICHAEL hangs onto his
sweatshirt, pulling it off.

SHARON (V.O.)
They grabbed their kid and took
off. But one of our neighbours
must have called the police,
cause they showed up a few
minutes later. The story
Michael told you was the one he
told the cops.

DISSOLVE TO SCENE:

INT. FACULTY CAFETERIA - DAY

EVAN stares at the floor.

EVAN
(to himself)
It was all a mistake.

SHARON
Thanks a lot.

EVAN
I didn't mean it that way.

SHARON
What did you mean?

EVAN
I... I was confused.

SHARON
You were drunk.

EVAN runs his hands through his hair in agitation.

EVAN
Christ, what a mess.

SHARON

You're not the one who did anything wrong. Michelle left you, remember?

DISSOLVE TO FLASHBACK:

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, BEDROOM - DAY

EVAN morosely watches MICHELLE pack. The bedroom window is open. MICHELLE closes her suitcase and picks it up.

EVAN

What do you want from me?

MICHELLE

I want a commitment.

EVAN

A commitment?

MICHELLE

I'm thirty-three. I can't wait much longer. A year. Maybe two. Then children become problematic. I want you to give me a time frame. Right now.

INT. MICHAEL AND SHARON'S CONDO, BALCONY - DAY

SHARON, wearing sweats and holding a drink, leans on the railing, listening avidly to their argument.

EVAN (O.C.)

Things are unsettled at work. We may be on strike next fall.

MICHELLE (O.C.)

More excuses.

EVAN (O.C.)

We need to sit down and think this through. Consider all the variables.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, BEDROOM - DAY

MICHELLE

I have.

EVAN

Please, Michelle. I love you.

MICHELLE's expression tightens.

MICHELLE

I know. And I love you. But if I stay, you'll find more excuses for not making up your mind.

MICHELLE walks past EVAN into the hallway.

EVAN

Michelle?

EVAN follows her.

EVAN

I don't even know where you're going!

MICHELLE

I want you to make a decision. To evaluate all your "variables".

EVAN

How will I get in touch with you?

MICHELLE

I'll call.

EVAN

When?

MICHELLE

A couple of days. A week. I
don't know.

With her hand on the door MICHELLE turns to face EVAN.

MICHELLE

I'm giving you this time to
think. To decide. No more
excuses. When I call I want a
yes or no.

EVAN says nothing. MICHELLE exits.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, HALLWAY OUTSIDE APARTMENT - DAY

Through a security camera: MICHELLE leaves the apartment.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, LOBBY - DAY

Through a security camera: MICHELLE enters the lobby, then exits
the building.

EXT. MICHAEL AND SHARON'S CONDO, BALCONY - DAY

SHARON watches MICHELLE exit the condo building and walk down the
street.

EXT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, BALCONY - DAY

EVAN, on his balcony, watches MICHELLE walk away.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, DINING ROOM - NIGHT

EVAN morosely stares off into space. His clothes are rumped and
he is drunk. He finishes off the last finger of scotch in his
glass and pours himself another sizeable shot. Before he can
drink it the doorbell RINGS. EVAN staggers out of the shot.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

EVAN enters and opens the door, revealing SHARON, who's changed into a low cut dress.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

EVAN and SHARON sit on the couch, thigh to thigh, SHARON consoling EVAN. There are two glasses of scotch on the table and the bottle is empty. They hug, pull apart and lock gazes.

DISSOLVE TO SCENE:

INT. FACULTY CAFETERIA - DAY

EVAN looks directly at SHARON.

EVAN

If you didn't tell him, how did Michael find out?

SHARON

I don't know. I was very careful. I didn't see anyone in the halls.

EVAN frowns and chews on his lower lip.

DISSOLVE TO FLASHBACK:

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, BEDROOM - DAY

The bed is ruffled. EVAN and SHARON dress awkwardly, their backs to one another.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, FRONT DOOR - DAY

EVAN opens the door for SHARON, who steps out into the hall. She carries her shoes in her hand. SHARON leans forward and gives EVAN a long, passionate kiss. While still kissing, the P.O.V. changes to the security camera in the hallway.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S VOLVO - DAY

EVAN watches in his rear view mirror as Michael passes Jerry, the security guard, folded bills.

DISSOLVE TO SCENE:

INT. FACULTY CAFETERIA - DAY

EVAN

The security camera.

SHARON

What?

EVAN

They have us on tape.

SHARON

I don't understand.

EVAN

We were in the hallway. In front of the security camera.

SHARON

They don't save those tapes for two years.

EVAN

Not unless there's something on the tape they want to save.

SHARON

Why on earth would someone do that?

EVAN

For kicks, maybe. The antics of the people in the building. Or as leverage in case there's a problem with one of the residents.

SHARON

It still doesn't make sense.
Why would he give Michael the
tape now?

EVAN

He didn't. Michael asked for
it. Or at least he was asking
questions, and then they gave
it to him.

(looks at SHARON)

Something made him suspicious.

SHARON

(uncomfortable)

You sound like a cheap
detective.

SHARON's takes a long, nervous drag on her cigarette.

EVAN

What made him suspicious?

SHARON stubs out her unfinished cigarette.

EVAN

What aren't you telling me?

SHARON

Can't you at least come up with
original lines?

EVAN

Has anything happened in the
last few weeks that might make
Michael look for evidence?

SHARON lights another cigarette while EVAN scrutinises her.

SHARON

Remember when Rachel was sick a
couple of weeks ago? She was
running a high fever, so we
gave her some aspirin. She had
an allergic reaction. We had
to take her to the hospital.

EVAN

What does that have to do with anything?

SHARON

The Doctor did blood tests. He came out to talk to Michael when I was in the washroom. Showed him the results. Michael had to have seen Rachel's blood type. And you can be sure he knows his own.

DISSOLVE TO FLASHBACK:

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

SHARON pulls open the door to the washroom. In the distance MICHAEL is in a rage, shouting at a DOCTOR. Another NURSE is on the phone calling security. SHARON backs into the washroom.

DISSOLVE TO SCENE:

INT. FACULTY CAFETERIA - DAY

EVAN

I still don't--
(gets it)
Oh, Jesus! He thinks I'm Rachel's father.

SHARON

You never considered that possibility?

EVAN

I couldn't be! The timing is all wrong. I remember working it out. You had to already have been pregnant.

SHARON

Rachel was premature.

EVAN puts his heads in his hands. He looks sick.

EVAN

We only did it once.

SHARON
That's plenty.

EVAN
Is Rachel mine?

SHARON
I don't know.

EVAN sits up.

EVAN
I've got to talk to Michael.

SHARON
No.

EVAN
If I explained to him--

SHARON
You're feeling guilty. You
want Michael to see how
contrite you are. It's like an
itch you want to scratch, but
you can't get at it.

EVAN
It's beyond that. Rachel
changes everything.

SHARON
She's not your responsibility.

EVAN
But if I'm the father--

SHARON
You'll just make things worse.

EVAN
How can they possibly get
worse?

SHARON

Not for you.

SHARON removes her sunglasses, revealing a black eye. EVAN is shocked.

SHARON

For me.

A WOMAN passing stares at SHARON and then at EVAN. SHARON slips her glasses back on.

SHARON

You don't know Michael like I do.

EVAN

I don't believe it.

SHARON

(smiles bitterly)

You think maybe I fell down?

EVAN

I... I'm sorry.

SHARON

It's not your fault.

EVAN stares off into space; SHARON smokes her cigarette.

EVAN

If there's anything--

SHARON

Don't you get it? I didn't come to you looking for help. I came here to tell you to keep your nose out of our business.

EVAN

There are shelters. You could take the kids --

(stops)

Where are the kids now?

SHARON

I've got to be going.

SHARON rises.

EVAN
They're not alone?

SHARON stares at EVAN for a moment.

SHARON
Michael took the day off.

EVAN
He's alone with Rachel?

SHARON
Stay away from Michael. And
from me.

SHARON exits. The WOMAN who stared at them earlier passes by EVAN's table and glares at him, then follows SHARON. EVAN hesitates, rises, following SHARON too. The WOMAN stands with SHARON at the end of the hall, her arm around SHARON's shoulder.

WOMAN
...needn't be scared. There's
safe places--

The WOMAN quiets when she spots EVAN. She propels SHARON forward, steering her into a women's washroom.

GRAD STUDENT (O.C.)
Professor Bailey?

EVAN startles. A GRAD STUDENT stands beside him.

GRAD STUDENT
You okay?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, FRONT DOOR - AFTERNOON

MICHELLE ushers out another CLIENT. She shuts the door wearily and crosses out the last name on her appointment list.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

MICHELLE enters and pours herself a coffee.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, BALCONY - AFTERNOON

MICHELLE enters, holding her coffee. She sits on a chair next to the railing, and sips gratefully. For a moment all is quiet.

MICHAEL (O.C.)

(makes an airplane
sound)

Brrrrrrr.

MICHELLE looks up. RACHEL's feet flash over the edge of the balcony above. In a panic, MICHELLE rises and leans out.

MICHAEL (O.C.)

The plane's coming in for a
landing!

MICHAEL swings the baby over the edge of the balcony.

MICHAEL (CONT'D, O.C.)

Oh, no! Turbulence!

MICHAEL jiggles RACHEL vigorously while making airplane sounds and swinging her around. MICHELLE gasps and drops her cup, which tumbles down to the street and smashes. At the sound, MICHAEL pulls RACHEL back and peers over the edge.

MICHELLE

(shouts)

Are you crazy?

MICHAEL holds RACHEL out.

MICHAEL

Catch.

MICHELLE

Stop it!

MICHAEL pretends to drop RACHEL. MICHELLE reaches out to catch her. MICHAEL smiles and looks at RACHEL.

MICHAEL
 (to RACHEL)
 Who's a good girl? Who's
 daddy's girl?

RACHEL laughs. MICHAEL looks down at MICHELLE, then he pulls RACHEL back and disappears from view. MICHELLE continues to lean over the balcony, but MICHAEL doesn't reappear.

MICHELLE
 Michael!

MICHELLE runs into the apartment.

INT. CONDO, HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

MICHELLE exits the apartment and hurries up the stairwell. She goes to MICHAEL and SHARON's door and pounds on it.

MICHAEL
 (in a sing song
 voice)
 Who is it?

MICHELLE
 Open the door, Michael!

MICHAEL
 Nobody's home.

MICHELLE
 Open the door or I'll call the
 police!

MICHAEL opens door; he holds RACHEL. Behind him stands AARON fiercely clutching the large plastic doll.

MICHAEL
 No need to get pissy.

MICHELLE
 You stupid asshole!

MICHAEL

Such language. And around a child.

MICHELLE

What the hell were you doing?

He takes a step towards MICHELLE, looming over her.

MICHAEL

I was fucking around with you.

(to RACHEL)

Say hi to Aunty Michelle.

(waves RACHEL's hand)

MICHELLE

Jesus, Michael, you could have dropped her.

MICHAEL

I wouldn't have done that.

(to RACHEL in baby talk)

Would I?

(snuggles RACHEL)

I was just playing with my kid.

(holds RACHEL out at arms' length)

Well, with someone's kid, anyway.

MICHAEL examines RACHEL like she's an inanimate object.

MICHAEL

You know about cuckoos?

MICHELLE

I don't give a damn about cuckoos.

MICHAEL

They sneak their eggs into the nests of other birds. The foster parents then raise the parasitic eggs along with their own. The baby cuckoos hatch first, and wriggle backwards

(MORE)

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

against the unhatched eggs,
pushing them over the edge of
the nest.

(mimics dropping an
egg to the floor)
Goodbye egg.

MICHELLE
What are you talking about?

MICHAEL
(to RACHEL)
How's my little cuckoo?

MICHAEL looks from MICHELLE to RACHEL and back.

MICHELLE
Are you saying Rachel isn't
your baby?

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, WASHROOM - AFTERNOON

MICHELLE vomits into the toilet. Rising, she makes a half-
hearted attempt to fix her hair in the mirror, then exits.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

MICHELLE enters, pulls a suitcase from the closet, throws it on
the bed, and starts packing. She stops and sits on the bed. She
puts a hand on her stomach.

EXT. CONDO, FRONT DOOR - AFTERNOON

MICHELLE exits the condo. STAN picks up bits of her broken
coffee cup from the sidewalk. When he sees MICHELLE, he rises
and stares at her breasts.

STAN
Did you drop this?

MICHELLE ignores him.

STAN

There's a condo bylaw that prohibits throwing anything from the balcony.

MICHELLE brushes past him and flags a cab. STAN stares at her ass.

STAN

You could be evicted!
(quietly, as the
cab drives away)
Stupid bitch.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

A suitcase is on the bed, still open and half-packed.

EXT. POLICE STATION - AFTERNOON

MICHELLE's cab pulls up in front of the police station. She gets out and heads for the front entrance.

INT. POLICE STATION - AFTERNOON

MICHELLE sits in a wooden chair in front of a DETECTIVE's desk.

DETECTIVE

We can't arrest someone who hasn't done anything. Being a bad parent isn't a crime.

MICHELLE

But you'll be happy to arrest him after he kills a child?

DETECTIVE

I ran him through the computer and the only thing that came up was one report in which he was the victim of an assault. And in that report he tried to protect a child.

MICHELLE

You won't do anything?

DETECTIVE

I can send someone around to ask him a few questions.

MICHELLE

That's it?

DETECTIVE

There's nothing else I can do.

MICHELLE

Then maybe I'll do something.

DETECTIVE

That wouldn't be a good idea. Look, I've worked hundreds of domestic cases. Trust me, interfering in other people's family matters usually only makes things worse.

MICHELLE

Thanks for nothing.

MICHELLE exits, the DETECTIVE watching her.

EXT. CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY - AFTERNOON

MICHELLE hurries to the door as EMPLOYEES stream out for the day.

INT. CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY, RECEPTION - AFTERNOON

MICHELLE walks up to a RECEPTIONIST, packing up for the day.

MICHELLE

I need to talk to someone.

The RECEPTIONIST considers, then picks up the phone.

RECEPTIONIST

I'll see if any of the case workers are still in.

INT. CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY, OFFICE - AFTERNOON

MICHELLE sits in a cubicle with a CASE WORKER, a harried, middle-aged woman. The cubicle is a mess, with teetering stacks of files everywhere. The CASE WORKER takes out a form.

CASE WORKER

We can only pull children out of a home if there's a demonstrable pattern of violence and imminence of future violence. Did you notice if there was anyone else still here?

MICHELLE

What?

CASE WORKER

You see anyone else when you walked through the office?

MICHELLE

I think everyone's gone home.

The CASE WORKER takes an ashtray, with a half-smoked cigarette in it, out of a desk drawer. She lights up the half-cigarette.

MICHELLE

What do you mean, demonstrable?

The CASE WORKER takes a long drag.

CASE WORKER

(to herself)

Ah, that's good.

(to MICHELLE)

Restraining orders, police reports, doctor's reports. That sort of thing.

MICHELLE

I went to the police. They told me they had nothing on file.

CASE WORKER

We have to have documentation. Otherwise we'd be facing a major lawsuit.

MICHELLE

He dangled her over the edge of a sixth floor balcony!

CASE WORKER

You said he was playing with her. So, technically, that's not abuse. It's just bad judgement. Look, do you still want me to file a report? Then at least you'd be on record.... in case anything happens.

MICHELLE

To salve my conscience for not doing anything?

CASE WORKER

There's no need to get snippy.

MICHELLE

Jesus, what's wrong with you people? He did it deliberately!

CASE WORKER

That's the whole thing. If he was shaking her, or threatening her, maybe punishing her for something, then we could act. But playing airplane....

MICHELLE

I heard him threaten her.

The CASE WORKER looks at MICHELLE dubiously.

CASE WORKER

You didn't say that before.

MICHELLE
My husband heard it too.

CASE WORKER
Your husband was there?

MICHELLE
Yes.

CASE WORKER
If you can substantiate your
claim, I'd recommend an
investigation.

MICHELLE
Substantiate?

CASE WORKER
Come back tomorrow with your
husband.

The CASE WORKER stubs out her cigarette. She opens a drawer,
takes out a pack of cigarettes. She shakes the pack, but it's
empty. She crushes and throws it at an overflowing waste basket.

CASE WORKER
You don't happen to have a
smoke on you?

MICHELLE rises and exits.

CASE WORKER
Didn't think so.

The CASE WORKER balls up the piece of paper and throws it at the
overflowing trash can, missing the can.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MADISON STREET, SIDEWALK - LATE AFTERNOON

MICHELLE walks up to a house and knocks on the door. A MAN opens
the door a crack and peers out suspiciously at her.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CONDO, LOBBY - NIGHT

The security booth is empty. On a monitor EVAN's Volvo pulls into the garage. EVAN parks, exits the car.

INT. CONDO, HALL - NIGHT

Through the security camera: EVAN exits the elevator and walks to the apartment. EVAN pauses in front of his door. The door is ajar, and the SOUNDS of a muffled CONVERSATION, then LAUGHTER, are audible. EVAN opens the door and quietly enters.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

The voices are louder. EVAN puts his briefcase down. He moves down the hall cautiously, then pauses to listen.

STAN (O.C.)
 ...really tight tee-shirts
 without a bra. Man, oh, man, I
 could go for a bit of that.

O.C. BERT, a plumber, laughs. EVAN looks around the corner.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Plumber's tools are scattered on the floor and counter. BERT leans against one counter, smoking. STAN, who is also smoking, leans against the opposite counter.

BERT
 Tell me about it.

EVAN
 What's going on here?

STAN and BERT look at EVAN.

STAN
 Leaky pipe, sir.

EVAN
 It wasn't leaky this morning.

BERT
There's a leak downstairs.
It's coming through the
ceiling.

EVAN
(to STAN)
What are you doing here?

STAN
No one was home. I had to let
him in.

EVAN
Without notice?

BERT
In emergencies.

STAN
As long as I accompany him.
It's in your condo agreement.

BERT
If your ceiling was leaking,
wouldn't you want us to fix it
right away?

EVAN
(to BERT)
How long will all this take?

BERT
Hard to say. The leak may be
in the wall behind the cabinet.
If that's the case, then I'll
have to rip the whole counter
out. May be a couple of days
to finish the job.

EVAN
Terrific.

EVAN looks at both STAN and BERT.

EVAN

It's not going to get done any
faster if you stand around
talking, is it?

BERT
You're right there, sir.

EVAN
(to STAN)
You don't have to be here now
that I'm home.

STAN
Yes, sir.

EVAN
And this is a non-smoking
apartment.

EVAN exits. BERT stubs out his cigarette in the sink. STAN
stubs out his cigarette in a flowerpot on the counter.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, BEDROOM - NIGHT

EVAN enters, then stops dead when he sees MICHELLE's open
suitcase. SOUND FX: the phone RINGS. EVAN, still staring at
the suitcase, picks up the phone.

EVAN
(absently)
Yes?

MICHELLE (O.C.)
We need to talk.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. DINER - NIGHT

MICHELLE, in a booth in a diner, talks on her cellular.

EVAN
Where are you?

MICHELLE

I'm at the diner on the corner
of Richmond and Madison. You
know the one?

EVAN

Yes.

MICHELLE

How soon can you get here?

EVAN

Why can't we talk here?

MICHELLE

No. Not at the condo. I don't
feel.... comfortable talking
there.

BERT (O.C.)

I need to shut off the water.

EVAN stares at BERT, who stands in the doorway holding a large
pipe wrench.

BERT

Okay?

EVAN

I'm on the phone.

BERT leaves. EVAN stares at the suitcase.

MICHELLE (O.C., CONT'D)

Evan?

O.C., the WHINE of a jig saw.

MICHELLE

What's that noise?

EVAN

I'll be there in ten minutes.

EVAN hangs up and exits.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, KITCHEN - NIGHT

BERT, cutting the wall under the sink, looks up as EVAN passes.

BERT
The water's off. Okay?

EVAN
Just finish up what you can
tonight and get out.

EVAN exits. BERT gives him the finger.

EXT. DINER - NIGHT

EVAN drives the Volvo into the lot in front of the diner.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

MICHELLE sits at a table, a coffee in front of her. EVAN enters and sits opposite. They regard one another in silence.

EVAN
I saw the suitcase.

MICHELLE
That's not important.

EVAN
You're leaving me and that's
not important?

MICHELLE
We have unfinished business.

EVAN
Is it someone else?

MICHELLE
That's rich, considering you
fucked Sharon.

EVAN
(weakly)
You left me....

MICHELLE

Grow up.

EVAN stares at the table.

EVAN

I'm... I'm sorry.

MICHELLE

Michael threatened to hurt Rachel.

EVAN

(alarmed)

What? What did he say?

MICHELLE

He talked about cuckoos.

EVAN

Cuckoos?

MICHELLE

About how they sneak their eggs into other birds' nests.

EVAN pales.

MICHELLE

Then he said that in some primate species the alpha male kills the offspring of competing males.

EVAN

I... I don't see the connection.

MICHELLE

You don't? He dangled Rachel over the edge of the balcony to illustrate his point.

EVAN

He's not going hurt his...
 (hesitates)
 ...his own child.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FACULTY CAFETERIA - AFTERNOON

SHARON takes off her sunglasses to reveal her black eye.

RETURN TO SCENE:

INT. DINER - NIGHT

MICHELLE

He doesn't think Rachel is his
 child.

EVAN

Oh, God.

MICHELLE

I went to the police today.

EVAN

Jesus, Michelle! They'll send
 someone around. He'll know it
 was you.

Other PATRONS in the diner look around at EVAN's outburst.

MICHELLE

I'm not scared of him.

EVAN

I didn't say you were.

MICHELLE

The police won't do anything
 anyway. They'll be happy to
 investigate after he kills her.

EVAN

Kills her? You can't seriously
 believe Michael would kill a
 child.

MICHELLE looks at EVAN, who can't meet her gaze.

MICHELLE

I found his old house. Madison
isn't that long a street.

EXT. MADISON STREET, SIDEWALK - LATE AFTERNOON

MICHELLE stands on the porch as a MAN opens the door a crack and
peers out suspiciously at her.

INT. MADISON STREET HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

MICHELLE sits at a kitchen table. The MAN who looked out the
door at her puts a coffee in front of her. She nods her thanks.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

MICHELLE

And, like Michael said, it's an
old fashioned neighbourhood.
Everyone knows everyone else.

DISSOLVE TO FLASHBACK:

EXT. MICHAEL AND SHARON'S OLD HOUSE, FRONT YARD - DAY

The scene is the same as before. SHARON exits the house, tightly
clutching baby AARON, who is crying.

MICHELLE (V.O.)

Michael and Sharon were the
ones fighting.

MICHAEL follows and catches up with SHARON on the neighbour's
lawn. They argue. Their NEIGHBOUR steps out onto his porch just
as MICHAEL makes a grab for AARON. The NEIGHBOUR hurries down
from his porch towards MICHAEL.

MICHELLE

And when the neighbour tried to
intervene, Michael attacked
him.

MICHAEL turns his attention to the NEIGHBOUR, taking wild swings at him. The scene evolves exactly as the first time the story was recounted by MICHAEL, except this time it is MICHAEL who attacks the NEIGHBOUR and pulls his sweater off. The neighbour breaks free and runs inside his house. MICHAEL follows and hammers his fist on door.

MICHELLE (O.C.)

Michael was the one who
threatened his neighbour.

(MICHAEL's mouth
moves in synch
with MICHELLE's
words)

"I'm going to burn down your
fucking house and kill you
all."

MICHAEL retreats from his neighbor's porch; SHARON, on their own porch with AARON behind her, backs into the house as MICHAEL approaches. She closes and locks the door as MICHAEL steps up onto the porch. Enraged, MICHAEL grabs the screen door, kicking out the screen and bending the frame.

MICHELLE (O.C., CONT'D)

God knows what he would have
done had the police not
arrived.

MICHAEL, still holding the screen door, pauses. A distant police SIREN. MICHAEL fights down his rage.

DISSOLVE TO SCENE:

INT. DINER - NIGHT

EVAN

Why didn't the police arrest
him?

MICHELLE

Michael scared the shit out of
his neighbour. He was afraid
for his own family. Of what
Michael might do after the cops

(MORE)

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

left.
(reaches across
table and puts a
hand on EVAN's arm)
We've got to do something,
Evan. No one else will.

EVAN
Rachel isn't your child. She's
not your responsibility.

MICHELLE
You didn't say she's not "our"
child.

EVAN's face colors; he stares at the table.

EVAN
There's nothing we can do.

MICHELLE
Michael wants us to watch it
happening. He wants us to
blame ourselves for not
stopping him.

EVAN
Why should you care? There's
no chance Rachel's your child.

MICHELLE rises and then sits next to EVAN. She picks up his hand
and puts it on her stomach.

MICHELLE
Someone has to care.

A moment of silence passes. MICHELLE puts EVAN's hand on the
table. EVAN stares at his hand and flexes it.

EVAN
What can we do?

MICHELLE

I've convinced the neighbour to go back to the police tomorrow to file charges against Michael. After that I want you to come with me to Children's Aid and file a joint complaint.

EVAN

I didn't see him dangle Rachel over the balcony.

MICHELLE

Yes. You did. And you heard him threaten to drop her.

EVAN

But I was in class. There were a hundred and fifty witnesses--

MICHELLE

We'll change the time. It's his word against ours.

EVAN

He could sue us. We could lose everything. You want that?

MICHELLE

I want you to act like a father.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CONDO, HALLWAY - NIGHT

EVAN and MICHELLE approach their apartment door. EVAN fumbles for his keys, but MICHELLE notices the door is open a crack and pushes. It swings wide open. MICHELLE looks at EVAN.

EVAN

They sent a plumber to fix a leak.

MICHELLE

What leak?

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

MICHELLE enters, then EVAN.

MICHELLE

Hello?

When there is no answer, MICHELLE turns on the lights.

EVAN

He left the door open on
purpose.

MICHELLE makes her way cautiously to the kitchen. She turns on the lights revealing a huge mess: the plumber has pulled out the entire cabinet; bits of the cupboard and his tools are scattered everywhere. Water gleams on the floor and stains the lip of the hall carpet. The sound of a slow steady DRIP is audible.

MICHELLE

Shit.

An exposed pipe leaks. EVAN steps into the mess and slips on the slick floor going down on one knee, soaking his pant leg and cutting one palm on a broken piece of tile. He grabs a garbage can and puts it under the drip, then wraps his hand in a dish cloth. As he's doing this, MICHELLE exits. EVAN follows her to the bedroom. He stops in the doorway. MICHELLE stands next to the dresser, staring at her underwear drawer, which is open. Her panties have been scattered around the dresser.

MICHELLE

Those fuckers went through my
underwear.

EVAN

I'll have the plumber fired.

MICHELLE

The door was open. Anyone
walking by could have done it.

EVAN

Then we could have him fired
for leaving the door open.

MICHELLE

I doubt it. And I think he left the door open on purpose, so we couldn't prove anything.

EVAN

It's hard to believe he's that smart.

MICHELLE

Or it could have been Stan. He has pass keys.

EVAN

There's nothing we can do now.

MICHELLE

Why am I not surprised to hear you say that?

EVAN

Let's worry about it in the morning.

EVAN takes a step into the bedroom but MICHELLE blocks his way.

MICHELLE

No.

EVAN

No?

MICHELLE

I need to be alone tonight.

EVAN

You're leaving me, aren't you?

MICHELLE moves forward and EVAN backs into the hall. She closes the door, shutting EVAN out in the hall.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, HALLWAY - NIGHT

EVAN pulls a blanket out of a hall closet.

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

EVAN is in his underwear; he sits on the couch. He unwraps the dish towel and examines the cut, which wells with blood. On the coffee table is a tumbler of scotch; EVAN picks it up and raises it, but doesn't drink. He stares at it.

DISSOLVE TO FLASHBACK:

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

EVAN and SHARON are on the couch, EVAN drunkenly tearing at SHARON's clothes as before. They accidentally knock over a tumbler with scotch, spilling it onto the carpet. As SHARON turns her head, we can see she has a black eye. When EVAN notices it, he abruptly stops kissing SHARON and pulls back. Then he notices the bloodied dish towel wrapped around his hand.

DISSOLVE TO SCENE:

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

EVAN stares at the tumbler.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. EVAN & MICHELLE'S CONDO, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The tumbler of scotch on the coffee table is untouched. EVAN lies awake staring off into space, the blanket twisted around him. The balcony door is open and the distant sounds of night TRAFFIC drift in. Muffled VOICES become audible: MICHAEL and SHARON arguing. The voices rise in intensity and EVAN sits up. A heavy object THUMPS against the ceiling near the balcony, and SHARON shouts something urgently. EVAN rises and goes to the balcony door. The voices become clearer.

MICHAEL (O.C.)

Don't tell me what to do you
stupid slut!

SHARON (O.C.)

Let go!

AARON (O.C.)

Stop!

EVAN steps out on the balcony and leans as far as he can over the railing. Three figures move in and out of view. SHARON clutches something; MICHAEL tries to catch hold of SHARON's shoulders; AARON also pulls at SHARON's arms. They struggle. A naked infant slips from SHARON's grasp and tumbles over the edge of the balcony. EVAN reaches out to grab it but misses.

EVAN

No!

EVAN watches in horror as the baby falls. When it hits the sidewalk an arm breaks off. It's the plastic doll AARON carried earlier. EVAN looks up to see MICHAEL staring at him. Next to him AARON peers forlornly over the railing at his broken doll.

MICHAEL

(to EVAN)

Mind your own fucking business.

MICHAEL moves out of sight and AARON is jerked away from the railing. The balcony door above SLAMS shut. EVAN looks down to the sidewalk, where STAN, the security guard crouches over the pieces of the doll. STAN looks up and stares at EVAN. EVAN backs away from the balcony, until he leans against a wall.

MICHELLE (O.C.)

What the hell was that?

EVAN startles; MICHELLE stands in the doorway, wearing panties and a tee-shirt.

EVAN

Jesus, you scared me!

Overhead, the ARGUMENT resumes, although the words are muffled. EVAN moves inside. There are several heavy FOOTSTEPS and loud THUMPS. MICHELLE stares at the ceiling.

MICHELLE

He's going to kill her.

SHARON cries out. A loud THUMP is followed by silence.

EVAN

Jesus.

No sound comes from the apartment above. EVAN looks around wildly.

MICHELLE

We've got to go up.

EVAN

The police. We should call the police.

MICHELLE

Do what you want. I'm going up.

EVAN

He's got a gun!

MICHELLE

I'm not afraid.

MICHELLE exits. EVAN picks up the phone and dials frantically while following MICHELLE.

INT. CONDO LOBBY, SECURITY BOOTH - NIGHT

On a monitor: MICHELLE leaves the apartment and climbs the stairs, emerging on the floor above. PULL back to show a pair of panties on the console and the security booth is empty.

INT. CONDO, HALLWAY OUTSIDE EVAN AND MICHELLE'S CONDO - NIGHT

MICHELLE moves up to MICHAEL and SHARON's door and hammers on it. EVAN enters, in his underwear, holding the phone.

MICHELLE

Open up, Michael!

EVAN

The police are on their way.

MICHELLE

(shouts at door)

You coward!

MICHELLE presses her ear to the door. Further down the hallway an ELDERLY MAN in his pajamas opens his door. MICHELLE ignores him; EVAN darts glances from the man to the door and back.

EVAN
(to MICHELLE)
He's got a gun.

MICHELLE
He'll kill her with or without
a gun.

ELDERLY MAN
(shouts)
Who has a gun?

MICHELLE pushes against the door.

MICHELLE
You want to let him kill
Rachel?

ELDERLY MAN
(shouts)
Who's Rachel?

EVAN
(to MICHELLE)
Let's call security. They'll
be here in a minute.

MICHELLE pulls back from the door.

MICHELLE
Fuck security.

MICHELLE then kicks at it with her bare foot. She looks around and spots a fire station with an axe. She grabs the axe.

EVAN
Shit, Michelle--

MICHELLE takes a swing at the lock, but barely makes a dent. A YOUNG MAN and YOUNG WOMAN open their door down the hall and stare. EVAN grabs the axe, stopping her next stroke.

EVAN
(to MICHELLE)
Stop it!

MICHELLE glares at EVAN.

YOUNG MAN
(to ELDERLY MAN)
What's going on?

YOUNG WOMAN
Maybe we should call the
police.

OLDER MAN
(to YOUNG COUPLE)
He's got a gun!

EVAN
(to OLDER MAN)
Shut up!

The YOUNGER COUPLE retreat to their apartment and lock the door.

MICHELLE
I heard him dragging something
heavy.

EVAN
What the hell would he be
dragging?

MICHELLE
Sharon's body.

EVAN
You don't know that.

MICHELLE
He'll push her over the
balcony. Claim it was an
accident.

EVAN
He's not stupid. He knows the
police are on their way.

MICHELLE

You wait if you like.

MICHELLE pulls the axe free and takes another ineffectual swing at the door. EVAN drops the phone, grabs the axe and swings, smashing at the lock. Through the security camera: EVAN's second swing breaks the latch open and the door swings open.

INT. MICHAEL AND SHARON'S CONDO, FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

EVAN, still holding the axe, looks cautiously into the apartment. MICHELLE pushes past him. She disappears into the living room. EVAN follows.

INT. MICHAEL AND SHARON'S CONDO, LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

A chair has been overturned and a trail of blood leads to the balcony. MICHELLE hurries to the door, EVAN following.

EXT. MICHAEL AND SHARON'S CONDO, BALCONY - NIGHT

MICHELLE and EVAN step out onto the balcony to find MICHAEL has SHARON pinned to the railing, forcing her to lean way out. His back is to them. SHARON is dazed and has a large welt on her cheek. AARON huddles in the corner behind them, holding RACHEL.

MICHAEL

(to SHARON)

See what you've done?

MICHELLE

Stop it, Michael.

MICHAEL

(ignores MICHELLE)

You've broken his doll. My son's doll.

EVAN steps in front of MICHELLE.

EVAN

Let her go.

MICHAEL turns, letting SHARON sag against the railing. He has a large gash on his forehead, blood trickling into his eyes.

MICHAEL

(calm)

Don't you have any respect for other people's privacy?

EVAN

Come on Michael, let her go.

MICHAEL

You have no idea what's going on here.

EVAN

I called the police.

MICHAEL holds up a bloody knife that was hidden from view.

MICHAEL

The bitch slashed me.

EVAN

Let's all just calm down.

MICHAEL

(looks at knife
sadly)

I gave her this for her birthday. Never needs sharpening.

MICHELLE

(steps forward)

Let the kids go.

MICHAEL

(looks at axe)

Or else you're going to chop me up? I'm not the big bad wolf, you know.

MICHAEL drops the knife and snatches RACHEL from AARON's grasp. He swings her out over the edge of the railing.

EVAN

Michael!

MICHAEL

You want me to let the kids go
now?

SHARON tries to take RACHEL. AARON shouts and grabs at MICHAEL's arms. MICHAEL is distracted; MICHELLE lunges forward, seizing RACHEL. MICHAEL and MICHELLE struggle, MICHELLE managing to pull RACHEL back from the railing. They smash into the balcony door and it shatters. EVAN takes a short swing at MICHAEL's leg with the axe, opening a cut on his thigh. MICHAEL GASPS, relinquishing his grip on RACHEL and falls to one knee.

SHARON stares in horror at MICHAEL's wound. She grabs the knife and, shrieking, she stabs EVAN in the chest, embedding the knife. She's horrified at what she's done, and backs away. EVAN looks in incredulity at the protruding knife handle. He drops the axe staggers back into the far corner of the balcony, at the juncture of wall and railing.

MICHELLE stands between EVAN at one end of the balcony and SHARON, MICHAEL and AARON near the door at the other. MICHELLE stares at the knife too. Like the eye at the centre of a storm, there is a moment in which no one speaks or moves.

MICHELLE

Jesus.

SHARON

Oh, God!
(to EVAN)
I... I'm sorry.

MICHAEL

Well, this isn't going very
well.

EVAN's forehead beads with sweat. He stares at the hilt of the blade. Blood seeps from the wound and tiny air bubbles rise and pop around the blade with each of EVAN's breaths. MICHELLE reaches out, her hand shaking, to touch the knife. EVAN sucks in his breath sharply, a wet strangled sound, and shudders.

SHARON

Don't touch it!

EVAN's P.O.V.: through a haze, EVAN sees MICHAEL eyeing the axe.

EVAN
 (raspy, to MICHELLE)
 Get the axe.

MICHELLE turns to see MICHAEL struggling to his feet.

EVAN
 Give me... give me Sharon.

MICHELLE hesitates. MICHAEL hobbles forward a step.

EVAN
 Now!

MICHELLE hands EVAN the baby, then turns and grabs the axe, barring MICHAEL's way. EVAN clutches RACHEL as best he can, blood seeping from his wound and running over RACHEL's foot. MICHAEL eyes the axe. SHARON tries to push past MICHAEL, but he shoves her back roughly, knocking her off her feet. She falls, cutting her palms on bits of broken glass. MICHELLE takes a step towards MICHAEL, raising the axe.

MICHAEL
 I wouldn't. We'll struggle.
 You'll lose.

MICHELLE
 Maybe.

MICHAEL
 Don't forget about your baby.
 One sharp blow and it's gone.

MICHELLE is a few feet from MICHAEL. Behind her, EVAN slides down until he is sitting on the ground. SHARON pushes herself into a sitting position next to AARON and puts an arm around him. AARON seems oblivious to her.

MICHELLE
 (to MICHAEL)
 Why are you doing this?

MICHAEL
 (incredulous)
Me? Me? What are you doing
 here? On my balcony.
 Threatening me with an axe.

MICHELLE
 You were going to kill Sharon
 and Rachel.

MICHAEL
 I beg your pardon?
 (turns to SHARON)
 Was I going to kill you, honey?

SHARON avoids his gaze, but shakes her head.

MICHAEL
 See?

MICHELLE
 You're crazy.

MICHAEL
 I'm not the one holding the
 axe.

In the distance a police siren WAILS. MICHAEL feints forward and
 MICHELLE raises the axe readying to strike.

MICHAEL
 (over his shoulder
 to SHARON)
 Would you get me the gun,
 honey? Before these nice
 people kill me?

MICHELLE
 Don't do it, Sharon.

MICHAEL
 Honey?

SHARON
 No.

MICHAEL glares at her, then says to AARON,

MICHAEL

Aaron, there's a shoebox in
daddy's closet. Can you bring
it here?

AARON stares at MICHAEL but doesn't move.

MICHAEL

(angry)

Aaron!

AARON lowers his gaze. SHARON clutches him more tightly.
MICHAEL grabs AARON's arm and jerks him free of SHARON's grasp.

MICHAEL

Daddy won't ask again!

MICHAEL propels AARON toward the door.

MICHAEL

Hurry!

EVAN's P.O.V.: struggling to stay conscious, EVAN watches AARON
exit.

SHARON

Stop it, Michael!

EVAN

(barely audible)

Kill him.

MICHELLE glances back at EVAN.

MICHAEL

That's nice.

EVAN

(raspy)

Do... do it.

MICHELLE shifts her grip on the axe, but doesn't move.

EVAN

(raspy)

He... he'll kill us.

MICHAEL

Kill you? I'm just trying to
protect my family.

EVAN

Kill him...

MICHAEL

I don't think she can.

AARON returns to the balcony holding a shoebox. MICHAEL snatches the box from his hands; at the same time SHARON rises and tries to pin MICHAEL's arms. MICHAEL shoves her back. Her momentum carries her to the railing and, without a sound, she tumbles over. Dumbfounded, both MICHELLE and MICHAEL stare at the empty spot where she'd just been; they move to the railing and look over. SHARON lies sprawled on the ground, one leg bent at an unnatural angle. She stirs, managing to partially rise; her broken leg swings freely, but she seems unaware of her injury. She tries to put her weight on her broken leg, but it collapses under her and she falls. Blood pools around her head.

MICHAEL

Oh, God.

MICHAEL turns to MICHELLE. He still clutches the box.

MICHAEL

It was an accident.

MICHELLE backs away.

MICHAEL

You saw! You both saw!

MICHAEL drops the box and a pair of shoes fall out. He stares at them, then looks up. AARON stands in the doorway, pointing the hand gun at him. MICHAEL holds out his hand.

MICHAEL

Give daddy the gun, Aaron.

The gun trembles in AARON's hand; he shakes his head. MICHAEL stares at the gun and then his son. Resignation sets in.

MICHAEL
Squeeze, don't jerk.

AARON aims, closes his eyes and pulls the trigger.

EXT. JUNK YARD - AFTERNOON

The paint can from the earlier scene spins across the hood of the junked car and tumbles to the ground.

EXT. MICHAEL AND SHARON'S CONDO, BALCONY - NIGHT

Smoke fills the screen; it drifts away until we can see AARON's face, his eyes screwed shut, still squeezing the trigger. AARON sways. Then his eyes snap open. MICHELLE moves over to EVAN.

EVAN
(raspy)
D...don't leave me.

EVAN closes his eyes.

FADE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL, DELIVERY ROOM - AFTERNOON

TITLE OVER:

"Eight Months Later".

MICHELLE is wearing a hospital gown; her face is red with exertion and she's huffing and puffing, delivering her baby. Next to her stands EVAN in a gown, cap and mask, holding her hand. For a moment their eyes lock, then a contraction seizes her and she winces in pain.

OBSTETRICIAN
That's it. Push.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - AFTERNOON

AARON sits on a chair, swinging his legs back and forth. A NANNY sits next to AARON holding RACHEL. EVAN enters, still wearing the gown but without the cap and mask.

EVAN
(to AARON)
Want to meet your new sister?

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - AFTERNOON

MICHELLE is in bed, cradling her new BABY. EVAN, holding RACHEL, enters, followed by AARON and the NANNY who stands near the door. MICHELLE and EVAN smile at one another. AARON moves to the side of the bed and grabs the rails, lowering his head until he looks at the BABY through the rails. Unnoticed, AARON makes a gun shape with his hand and points it at the BABY.

AARON
(whispers)
Squeeze, don't jerk.

FADE TO BLACK.

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