

INT. OLD MAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT.

It is dark. Candles may be flickering.

An aged hand reaches for an old telephone, picks up a receiver. Fingers slowly dial, number by number, on a rotary style telephone.

INT. DOMINIC SPOSETO'S OFFICE - NIGHT.

A more modern telephone. Multiple buttons indicate several lines. ONE BUTTON LIGHTS UP.

A hand picks up the receiver, it leaves frame as we stay focussed on the telephone and notice stationery that reads DOMINIC SPOSETO LAW OFFICES.

DOMINIC (V.O.)
Sposeto.

OLD MAN (V.O.)
*Del male non fare e paura non
avere.*

THESE WORDS IMMEDIATELY GRAB DOMINIC'S ATTENTION.

DOMINIC (V.O.)
Who is this?

OLD MAN (V.O.)
Do no evil, have no fear.

We now reveal, a 30-something, well dressed, handsome man at his desk. This is DOMINIC SPOSETO. His desk is very tidy. Items perfectly placed. He peers forward...

DOMINIC
I asked who is this?

OLD MAN (V.O.)
773 Courtland Drive. You come to
my home. Then I will tell you who
I am. I may even tell you who you
are.

THE LINE GOES DEAD.

A bit unnerved, Dominic opens the top desk drawer. We see lots of CASH. He pushes items around until he finds a RUSTED OLD KNIFE. He lifts the knife. It clearly has meaning. He twirls it around his fingers, wondering...

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY.

It is the 1960's. Cars dot the streets. An OLDER SUDAN pulls up curb side. Dominic sits in the passenger seat. His DRIVER parks.

DRIVER
773 Courtland Drive.

Dominic sighs.

DRIVER
Do you want me to go in with you?

DOMINIC
No. Might be awhile. You be okay waiting here?

The driver lifts a THICK BOOK, pats the cover.

DRIVER
Should take me a couple hours.

The driver exits, races around and opens the passenger door for Dominic. We now realize DOMINIC IS BLIND, but largely independent and self reliant.

DRIVER
Three steps.

Dominic grabs his cane and walks up a pathway to the house, shifting the cane from side to side.

Finally he hits a step. Stops. Measures his way. And up he climbs ONE, TWO, THREE steps and arrives at the front door. He reaches out, rubs the stucco walls, searching for

THE DOORBELL. He rings it.

THE DOOR OPENS and we see

AN OLD WOMAN, gray hair up in a bun, wearing a smock splattered with spaghetti sauce.

OLD WOMAN
Mr. Sposeto?

DOMINIC
You hardly sound like the mystery voice.

OLD WOMAN
That wasn't me. Won't you come
in?...

The Old Woman welcomes him inside, clearing his path.

OLD WOMAN
Do you need me to tell you where
the furniture is?

DOMINIC
Only if I'm about to run into
something bigger than me...

Dominic inhales the powerful aromas.

DOMINIC
Fan of the garlic...

OLD WOMAN
What Italian isn't.

INSIDE.

It's a warm and cozy home. Old Italian. Crocheted blankets. Trinkets dot the tops of the dated furniture. Framed family photographs sit a top a classic black and white television with a broken antenna.

As Dominic moves inside we see a dining room table, the focal point in a large living room. A beautiful chandelier hangs.

Dark stained, high back chairs align the table which is covered in an antique hand made knitted tablecloth. Crystal glassware and exquisite china settings.

Seated at the head of the table is THE OLD MAN, 80's, handle bar mustache, well dressed as if it's a ritual for dinner. HE WEARS A PROMINENT GOLD ITALIAN HORN CHAIN AROUND HIS NECK.

OLD MAN
First we eat. Then we talk.

As Dominic reaches the table we notice several religious figurines adorning pieces of furniture, Saint Christopher, Santa Lucy and a large painting of the Sacred Heart.

DOMINIC
Aren't you going to tell me what
this is about?

OLD MAN
Not yet.

Dominic fidgets with the chair and finally, takes a seat.

On the table are well prepared Italian fixtures: antipasto, olives, peppers, salami, cheeses.

The Old Woman arrives with pasta dishes for the gentlemen. Steam rises from the spaghetti.

DOMINIC
Pasta lenticchia?

OLD MAN
The best.

DOMINIC
Distinctive aroma.

Dominic inhales, taking in all the wonderful Italian scents.

DOMINIC
My grandmother used to make this...

The Old Woman picks up the carafe of wine and pours Dominic a glass and then her husband.

OLD MAN
Deigo red. From the old country.
You know the old country, Sposeto?

DOMINIC
I was born in Des Moines.

Dominic sets his fork down, adjusts his napkin, sits upright.

OLD MAN
And baptized in St. Anthony's
Catholic Church.

DOMINIC
How do you know that?

The Old Woman leaves the two men to eat.

OLD MAN
The important things to us Italians
are the church, our food, our drink
and our family.

DOMINIC
Who are you and why am I here?

OLD MAN
Eat. Enjoy. Then we talk.

And they do. No one says anything. Pasta twirling on forks.
The Old Woman delivers plates of meatballs and sausage.

OLD WOMAN
Meatballs. Sausage. Antipasto
directly in front of you...

DOMINIC
Aren't you going to join us?

OLD WOMAN
This is business.

Dominic, thoroughly confused, returns to his meal.

DISSOLVE TO:

LATER. MEAL FINISHED.

OLD MAN
Material success...so infectious.

Dominic sets his fork down. Finally, the point to the meeting.

OLD MAN
Most of us have worked very hard to
get what we have. We came here
with nothing but the clothes on our
backs.

DOMINIC
Sir, if you're trying to lobby a
cause for my political ticket...

OLD MAN
I'm not interested in your
politics, Mr. Sposeto.

DOMINIC
Then what is it you want? "Do no
evil, have no fear?" Those are my
grandmother's words...

OLD MAN
Are they?

Dominic wipes his face with his napkin. Agitated, he stands
at the table. Gathers himself up...

DOMINIC

I can see this is going nowhere.

Dominic turns to leave and knocks over a pitcher of water...it falls to the ground, SHATTERS ON IMPACT.

THE OLD WOMAN rushes beside him.

OLD WOMAN

Watch your step, Mr. Sposeto. Let me help you.

DOMINIC

(really agitated)

No thank you. I can help myself. Send a bill for the damages to my office.

OLD MAN

Arrogant. Uptight. Rebellious.

Still agitated, Dominic makes his way back through the living room. Remarkably, he does no other damage.

OLD MAN

Just like your great-great-grandfather...

Dominic stops just before the door.

OLD MAN

Prosperous gentleman. Inherited much of his wealth from family estates. He, like you, made a fortune as an attorney. But not here...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MINISCARCHI HOME - CATANIA, ITALY - NIGHT.

FLASHBACK. The Old Man's flashbacks appear in SEPIA TONES...with a relic and antique look.

Late 1870's. Old Italy. Inside a well decorated home. DOMENICO MINISCARCHI, older patriarch, sits behind his desk with an abacus.

He lifts his eyeglasses, dabs his pen into a bottle of ink. Peruses documents before him.

KNOCK AT THE DOOR.

Miniscarchi removes his glasses. His sigh tells us he is not looking forward to this meeting.

MINISCARCHI
(in Italian)
Come in.

Entering, PASQUALE, 40, classically handsome, hair slicked back, well dressed.

PASQUALE
Papa...you called for me.

Miniscarchi gestures for Pasquale to take a seat on the nearby bench. Pasquale does.

MINISCARCHI
We have a duty in our family to
uphold the traditions of those who
have come before us.

Pasquale seems a bit confused, suddenly uneasy.

PASQUALE
For what are you talking, Papa?

INSTANTLY MINISCARCHI slams his hand FAST ON THE DESK.
LOUD. STARTLING.

MINISCARCHI
Do not make a fool of me!

Pasquale attempts to rise, but is quickly shoved back to his seat.

MINISCARCHI
Do you think I am a tired old man
who does not pay attention to the
wayward ways of my sons?

Pasquale attempts to defend himself...

PASQUALE
But...

MINISCARCHI
I want you to stop courting that
servant girl at once!

PASQUALE
But, Papa, I love her.

Miniscarchi raises a fist in Pasquale's face.

MINISCARCHI

You are too old for love. I demand
that you stop this insulting tryst.
What do you think God makes of you?

Pasquale stands again. Now infuriated.

PASQUALE

You cannot tell me what to do! I
love Carina and I plan to ask for
her hand!

MINISCARCHI

You do and you will find yourself
disowned by this family. Without
end.

A long moment. Eyes bulge. Veins pop. Intense.

PASQUALE

You speak to me like you do the
judge...

Disparagingly, Pasquale removes A RING from his hand. Must
be a family heirloom. He glares his father down. But then
respectfully, Pasquale sets the ring on the desk. Stares one
last time at his father. And leaves.

OLD MAN (V.O.)

From that day forward, Pasquale
would use the last name Esposito.
He would have no past to look back
on.

INT. PASQUALE'S HOME - DAY.

YEARS LATER. Pasquale, still classically handsome with his
slicked back hair, sits at the dinner table with his three
children. The oldest, DOMENICO (16), ambitious, ready to
take on the world, reads a BOOK while he waits to eat.

CARINA, pretty, but looking worn around the edges, enters the
room with a bowl of steaming hot spaghetti and meatballs.

FRANCESCO (12) and ROSA (7) watch on as their mother dishes
out the meal.

PASQUALE

Domenico, you like the reading?

DOMENICO

I want to go to school. I want to
learn much more.

Pasquale looks admiringly at his son. Sacrifice. Dream.
He's had his own.

Domenico removes a piece of paper from the book he reads. He
begins unfolding it, somewhat nervously.

Carina takes her seat. The rest of the family eats.

CARINA

Eat... Mangia

Pasquale admires the taste of food. Perfection.

PASQUALE

Glorious. As usual.

Domenico slides the piece of paper in front of Pasquale.

AN ADVERTISEMENT THAT READS "PASSAGE TO AMERICA" "YOUNG
MEN" "STUDY OVERSEAS" "GOVERNMENT PAID".

Pasquale sees the words on the flyer in front of him.

PASQUALE

NO!

DOMENICO

It is the only way I can learn,
Papa...

PASQUALE

You are far too young to be on your
own in a strange land.

Carina appears worried. Caught. Sacrifice. Dreams.

DOMENICO

If I am allowed to go to America, I
will find work. They say there is
great opportunity in this new
country. I can go to school, Papa.

CARINA

Listen to your father, Domenico.
You are too young.

DOMENICO

I am sixteen. Mr. Valenti will
take me there. It's Mafia
approved.

Pasquale SLAMS HIS FIST on the table.

PASQUALE

I said NO!

DOMENICO

Mr. Valenti will teach me to be a
tailor.

Pasquale is caught. Domenico stands...

DOMENICO

There is nothing for me here!

That alone stings Pasquale.

EXT. STEAMLINER - DAY.

A massive ocean liner. PEOPLE BOARDING. LUGGAGE. GOOD-
BYES. HUSTLE AND BUSTLE.

Carina kisses Domenico. Tearful. She cannot bear it and
moves to the side, consoled by FRANKIE and ROSA, who marvel
at the ship.

DOMENICO

As soon as I make enough money, I
will send for you all...

Pasquale hugs Domenico farewell as the big ocean liner BLARES
ITS HORN.

DOMENICO

America...she is our beginning,
Papa.

Pasquale looks into his son's eyes. That determination he
once knew.

Pasquale kisses Domenico on the forehead. He won't let go.

THE OCEAN LINER blows its horn ONCE MORE. And then...

PASQUALE

Go...

Domenico grabs his ONE KNAPSACK, looks back at his parents and races to board the ship.

FRANKIE

Domenico! Wait! I want to go with you!

Frankie runs to Domenico. They embrace.

DOMENICO

(repeating his father)

Frankie you are far too young to be alone in a strange land.

Domenico leaves for the ship.

Pasquale doesn't watch him board.

Frankie does. Heartbroken.

EXT. TOP DECK OCEAN LINER - DAY.

Domenico leans over the side of the ocean liner. Big smile. Excited. Other PASSENGERS wave. So does Domenico...

PASQUALE and CARINA force the smiles.

ANGELO VALENTI, late 50's, stalwart, regal to a certain degree, early Mafia, nestles his way next to Domenico.

Angelo puts his arm around Domenico, indicating safe keeping and an eventual bond.

Domenico waves one last time at his family as

THE OCEAN LINER LEAVES THE DOCK AS THE SMOKESTACKS ERUPT AND THE HORN BLARES.

INT. LOWER DECK - NIGHT.

This is steerage. Smoke filled room. Lots of people move about. Loud. Laughter. Chaos. It is an unsupervised, somewhat uncivilized party.

Drinks are passed about. Domenico and Angelo play cards with TWO OTHER GENTLEMEN. Italian Poker. Chips on the table. Cards in hands.

Angelo studies his hand. Impatience grows.

CARD PLAYER
You gonna play or sit there?

ANGELO VALENTI
Aspette!

Angelo shoots an intimidating glance their way.

ANGELO VALENTI
I give you guys a fresh start in
America and this is the thanks I
get?

CARD PLAYER 2
Either raise or fold...

ANGELO VALENTI
(in regards to plenty of
time)
America...she is two weeks away.

Domenico laughs, liking his "new guardian"...

ANGELO VALENTI
If you don't want to play the
game...go practice your stitching.

The party continues. More drinks. Children race around.
From within the noise emerges

A POWERFUL SINGING VOICE...an ARIA, "O PATRIA MIA". Deep,
poetic, instantly worthy of attention. Within moments, the
children stop racing. Drinks are set down. And the CROWD
settles as all eyes are on

FRANCESCA, 16, beautiful, long dark hair, probably the most
engaging woman in the room. She sings, mesmerizing everyone

INCLUDING DOMENICO, who looks at her, mouth agape, captivated
by her operatic voice.

Angelo, ignoring Francesca, finally drops some chips and
plays. He sees Domenico's gaze. After a couple moments, he
nudges him HARD.

ANGELO VALENTI
Aspette! It's your turn.

But Domenico would rather set his cards down and peer at
Francesca.

ANGELO VALENTI
Why are you looking at her like
that?

DOMENICO
Just listen to her... Who is she?

ANGELO VALENTI
(intimidatingly)
My daughter.

Angelo's disapproving look gets Domenico's mind back on the card game.

Francesca's powerful rendition carries us out.

EXT. NEW JERSEY SHORELINE - DAY.

Domenico and SEVERAL OTHER ITALIAN transplants work the docks along the New Jersey coastline. It's grungy work. Sweat. Grease. Hard labor.

Domenico finishes up a task, lowering a sledge hammer to the ground. He wipes his brow. Lifts a canteen to his mouth and polishes off the water inside.

Peering across the dock he sees

A YOUNG LAD, 15-ish. He's draped in an oversized raincoat and almost as dirty as the hard laborers.

DOMENICO
(marveling)
Frankie?

Domenico races from the laborers, leaps across the pipes on the dock.

FRANKIE
This is America?

Domenico, overjoyed to see him, hugs him tight.

DOMENICO
How did you get here?

FRANKIE
I stowed away. Except I got caught. I thought they were going to throw me overboard. I told them I knew Angelo Valenti.

DOMENICO
Does Papa know?

FRANKIE
I'm sure he does by now.

DOMENICO
You didn't tell him you were coming
here?

Domenico slaps Frankie behind his head (as Italians do) and then grabs him again and hugs him tight.

FRANKIE
I thought you were going to be a
tailor?

Domenico wipes his greasy, filthy hands on his clothes.

DOMENICO
We'll send Papa a wire. Let's go
see Angelo.

INT. GARMENT WAREHOUSE - DAY.

Domenico and Frankie, both dirty in their respective ways, approach a large warehouse. A FEW MEN stand outside smoking cigarettes, carousing.

Domenico enters first, Frankie follows. The men snicker.

INSIDE

Numerous TAILORS make clothes. Sewing. Cutting fabric. Measuring. It's a factory of working Italian immigrants.

FRANKIE
You're too filthy to work here...

DOMENICO
I can't sew. Bad eyes.

One by one, the tailors notice the dirty misfits as they weave their way through the factory.

Up ahead, Domenico spots

FRANCESCA and her MOTHER working tediously on a dress, stitching up the sides.

Domenico's interruption eventually catches Francesca's attention, who peers up from her work, immediately disgusted with Domenico's appearance.

Domenico, big smile and excited to see her, waves.
Francesca's repulsed and returns to her work.

A HAND SLAPS DOMENICO BEHIND THE HEAD, just as Domenico did to Frankie.

ANGELO VALENTI
Stop leering at my daughter! And
what are you doing here dressed
like that? They have no bath where
you stay?

DOMENICO
Angelo...you remember my brother,
Frankie?

Angelo spins himself into a little frenzy.

ANGELO VALENTI
Where'd he come from!!!

FRANKIE
Italia.

ANGELO VALENTI
I know that. How did you get here?
Who approved it? Does your Papa
know?

FRANKIE
I stowed away. I did. And no.

Francesca eyes the commotion...her MOTHER smacks her arm to continue sewing.

Domenico smiles again at her. Angelo catches him.

ANGELO VALENTI
Aspette!

INT. CHURCH - DAY.

Elaborate wedding. A PRIEST places a holy water blessing on
DOMENICO and FRANCESCA, the bride and groom.

Frankie stands next to Domenico as his BEST MAN.

PRIEST

You may kiss the bride.

Domenico kisses Francesca proudly. Francesca seems less thrilled, going through the motions. They turn and face an applauding AUDIENCE of fellow Italians.

As the couple exit, Angelo kisses his daughter.

ANGELO VALENTI

You will be happy, my dear.

FRANCESCA

I was happy in Italia.

ANGELO VALENTI

This is America. You're a wife.
Make the best of this.

Angelo turns to Domenico...

ANGELO VALENTI

We still have a deal?

DOMENICO

Tomorrow I change my last name to
Sposeto.

Angelo leans into Francesca, whispering.

ANGELO VALENTI

No daughter of mine will have the
name Esposito...means bastard.

They continue to greet their GUESTS.

EXT. ELLIS ISLAND - DAY.

Angelo and a nervous Domenico stand at the receiving dock, ushering NUMEROUS IMMIGRANTS toward the long lines of PEOPLE ENTERING THE STATES.

It is a dank hall. American flags drape from the ceiling. IMMIGRATION WORKERS sit at the heads of several tables, checking identification, orchestrating medical exams, clearing MEN, WOMEN and CHILDREN for a new life in America.

ANGELO VALENTI

Domenico lead them all to the south
line...it's quicker. That guard
won't slaughter their last names.

Domenico rushes a MAN up in the line, peering ahead as if looking for someone...

TONY
(worried)
They cannot make me change my name,
no? I am Tony Antonellis.

DOMENICO
So you become Antonelli. What's
the big deal? Look around.
Everyone here wants to walk through
those doors into New York City.

A COMMOTION at the front of line concerns Domenico who's
nerves peak as he approaches

HIS FATHER, MOTHER (CARINA) AND SISTER (ROSA) stopped by the
GUARDS.

DOMENICO
What's the problem?

GUARD
They cannot enter.

DOMENICO
What? Why? This is my family.

IMMIGRATION WORKER
The lady has tuberculosis.

Domenico understands this severity.

DOMENICO
Mama...are you sick?

CARINA
No. But she says I am.

DOMENICO
Let me find Angelo. He'll get this
straightened out.

PASQUALE
No. I don't go where I am not
welcome.

Devastated, Domenico pleads one last time with the
immigration worker.

DOMENICO

I have worked very hard to bring
Italian immigrants over here to
work in the garment district. To
help your country. Please...

IMMIGRATION WORKER

Sir, the line is getting longer.
If they do not board the ship to
return to their homeland, I will
have to call upon the authorities.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. OLD MAN'S HOUSE - DAY.

PRESENT DAY. Dominic returns a CANNOLI he was about to taste
to a pretty china plate.

The Old Man watches him intently, measuring the impact this
information has.

OLD MAN

He was true to his word. He
brought them here, but they
couldn't stay. Young Rosa became
ill on the way back and died at
sea. She was sixteen.

Dominic lifts his napkin to his face, dries his lips, clears
his throat. Something about all of this strikes a chord...

OLD MAN

When was the last time you spoke to
your father?

DOMINIC

Do you know my father?

OLD MAN

You seem to have gotten yourself
caught up in a world of greed.
Your nightclubs, booking acts,
making money hand over fist...

DOMINIC

Are you accusing me of...

The Old Man's temper flares...

OLD MAN

Nothing is so sacred as man's
reputation! Your father taught you
that!

A long beat. Dominic reflects on his past life for the first
time in years.

DOMINIC

My father wasn't always around...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SWIMMING POOL - DAY.

FLASHBACK. DOMINIC, 13, heads to the pool alongside FATHER
JACK, 30's, the priest collar clearly visible.

Other BOYS swim in the pool.

DOMINIC

I'm gonna be a champion, Father
Jack.

FATHER JACK

You'll be anything you put your
mind to, Dominic. Do the work and
make yourself the best you can
possibly be. And then anything is
possible.

Dominic tosses his towel to the side of the pool. He smiles
at Father Jack, who looks at his watch, ready to start
timing.

FATHER JACK

Ready...Set....

Dominic stands poised to dive into the water...

FATHER JACK

Go!

Dominic flies into the pool with gusto. Impeccable form.

MARY SPOSETO, Dominic's mother, 30's, attractive, all smiles,
the positive influence in Dominic's life, enters the pool
area. She immediately notices Father Jack and approaches...

MARY

Thank you so much Father for
getting Dom here today.

(MORE)

MARY (cont'd)
I can't tell you what a busy
morning I've had.

FATHER JACK
No worries, Mary. You know I take
a special interest in Dominic's
well being.

DOMINIC swims with Olympic potential. He reaches the end of
the pool and kicks underneath the water, somersaults and
explodes back like a torpedo.

Father Jack peers at his watch, raises his eyebrow.

MARY
He loves the water.

FATHER JACK
He loves anything he thinks he can
conquer.

MARY
What if he can't cut it?

They both watch...a perfect swimmer, a young boy gliding
effortlessly through water as if he was a fish.

FATHER JACK
Supreme.

MARY
(excitedly)
He is good isn't he?

DISSOLVE TO:

The clock ticks. Dominic continues his swim. Strong.
Father Jack paces the side of the pool. Mary watches.

FATHER JACK
Come on, Dominic! Keep it going.
Keep kicking. It's all about the
legs.

Father Jack peers at his watch, his own legs bouncing up and
down as if he's hurrying Dominic along.

FATHER JACK
Last lap...come on, Dominic! You
can do this!

Dominic, determined and fierce, kicks for the wall.

TIGHT we see his breathing, arm over arm, swimming the final lengths of the pool. Far from breathless.

Mary roots him on...quietly fidgeting.

Father Jack watches the time clock.

THE LAST TWO STRIDES.

AND DOMINIC SPLASHES INTO THE WALL.

He immediately peers up at Father Jack, who sternly glares.

Dominic sees Father Jack's expression. Instantly dejected. Dominic splashes the water, irritated with himself.

DOMINIC

Shit.

Mary intervenes...

MARY

Dominic Sposeto! Watch your mouth!

And then Father Jack smiles.

FATHER JACK

That'll be two Hail Mary's young man...and when you're done I'll tell you HOW FANTASTIC YOU DID!!!

Dominic is elated, splashing water all around.

DOMINIC

How much? How much!!!

MARY

Dominic wait till I tell your father...

DOMINIC

You tell him how well I did.

MARY

I'm going to tell him how you use such horrible language...and in front of Father.

DOMINIC

He don't care. How much, Father Jack...how much?

FATHER JACK

Two seconds.

Dominic hauls himself out of the pool. Grabs his towel.
Wipes off his face.

DOMINIC

Only two damn seconds?

Mary's aghast again with the language.

FATHER JACK

Two seconds is a lot of time.

DOMINIC

Two damn seconds. Crap.

MARY

Again with the words! We don't
teach him these words, Father...

DOMINIC

Ma...we're passed that already.

Dominic drops the towel and walks away from Father and Mary.

DOMINIC

One dive before we go.

Dominic heads across the pool area for the diving board.

MARY

Dominic, no diving. The pool is
closing. We have to go.

DOMINIC

Two damn seconds is worth one
crappy dive.

FATHER JACK

Dominic, your body is too tired.
Dive tomorrow.

DOMINIC

You turning into my Ma, Father?

Dominic makes his way to the diving board.

MARY

Have a solution for that "I'm gonna
rule the nest" attitude he's
adopted?

FATHER JACK

He's a growing boy, who's on the
brink of manhood. Brace yourself.

Dominic stands at the end of the HIGH DIVE. Peers down at
the water. Looks at Mary and Father Jack, thumbs up!

FATHER JACK

I think the Lord has something
special in mind for him, Mary.

Dominic races to the end of the diving board, jumps up and
catapults himself into the air, he somersaults and as he
comes back down

HE HITS HIS HEAD ON THE END OF THE DIVING BOARD.

Dominic falls lifelessly into the pool.

MARY SCREAMS.

Blood dances through the water.

Father Jack dives in.

Mary cries out. OTHER SWIMMERS GATHER AROUND. Father Jack
envelopes Dominic in his arms, they break the surface. Blood
pours out of from Dominic's head.

SEVERAL MEN help Father Jack get Dominic out of the water.

Mary is inconsolable.

MARY

Why did he do that? Why didn't I
stop him! Dom! Dom...speak to me.

Father Jack tends to Dominic's aid.

Dominic lies at the side of the pool. Surrounded.
Unconscious. Blood trickles down his neck.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY.

Dominic lies in a bed. Mary and his father, ANGELO, stand
beside the bed.

DR. RICHARDS, 50's, graying, overweight, family doctor stands
above Dominic shining a light into his eyes.

Once finished, he guides the parents to the side for a
private chat.

Dominic watches them intently. He reads Dr. Richards seriousness as he explains things to his parents, whose reactions Dominic cannot see.

Mary's shoulders quiver.

DOMINIC

You guys want to tell me what the hell is going on?

They turn. Mary can't help but be agitated with his cursing, though tears fall from her eyes, mascara traveling down her cheek.

Dr. Richards arrives bedside.

DOMINIC

Why did you upset my mother, Doc?

MARY

I'm fine, Dominic.

DOMINIC

Then what is it? Dad? Someone tell me what's going on?

DR. RICHARDS

You're going blind, Dominic.

DOMINIC

Blind?

DR. RICHARDS

Sometime in the next few years you won't be able to see anymore.

DOMINIC

Will it get better?

Dr. Richards looks to Angelo. Mary fights back tears. Angelo hugs his son.

ANGELO

No, son. You're going to be blind for the rest of your life.

Dominic stares blankly at them. No words.

EXT. LAKE - DAY.

Neighborhood picnic. Lots of families. Food. Blankets. Dogs chasing sticks.

The Sposeto's share a blanket with The Winslow's, American, 30's, happy couple, somewhat controlling of

THEIR DAUGHTER, EILEEN, pretty, blonde and who has a crush on

Dominic who grabs Eileen's hand and leads her and his sisters TOOTSIE and TOPSY and his closest friend ANDY GRANT, to the giant lake which lays before them.

KATHY WINSLOW

It must not be an easy transition
to go from the seeing world...

Unmistakable uneasiness from the Winslows.

MARY

He's coping.

KATHY WINSLOW

It's just that...

MARY

(ever protective)
It's just that what...

KATHY WINSLOW

Do you think it's wise for him to
spend so much time with our Eileen?

ANGELO

(pointedly)
He's not contagious.

MARK WINSLOW

It's just that...well, what kind of
future could they have?

Their eyes on the kids.

KATHY WINSLOW

What if he gets hurt? Or gets her
hurt?

MARY

He'll figure out his way in life.

Dominic reaches the lake first. Removes his shirt. Time to swim. Andy joins him.

MARY

Just like the veterans I drive
around. They've rebuilt their
lives.

Eileen leans in and kisses Dominic smack on the lips.

The Winslow's have serious concerns.

Dominic dives into the water. The others follow, but without the intensity of Dominic's swim.

Dominic swims like a torpedo. This is his world.

INT. STEAMTRAIN - DAY.

Many of the PICNIC ATTENDEES ride the old steam train as it winds its way through the lush park. Picturesque.

Andy sits beside Topsy and Tootsie.

Dominic slides his arm around Eileen. Across the aisle, Eileen's parents keep a watchful eye.

EILEEN

Can you believe we'll be graduating
in two weeks?

DOMINIC

Summer! More time to do all the
things we want to do.

EILEEN

Like what?

DOMINIC

I can think of a few things...

They share a laugh and then a kiss.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY.

ANDY and SEVERAL OTHER BOYS play TACKLE FOOTBALL.

Dominic finds himself in the midst of the field, listening, sensing, yet struggling to see what's happening.

Andy gets the ball.

ANDY

Dom...go left and deep for a pass.

Dominic takes the direction and breaks for the pass.

THE FOOTBALL FLIES THROUGH THE AIR and smacks Dominic directly in the face. And then he's tackled from all sides.

INT. SPOSETO HOME - BATHROOM - DAY.

Mary holds a bloody tissue to Dominic's nose. We can see her image in the mirror. Concern. Andy stands off to the side.

MARY

I suppose you thought you'd catch
the ball and run it for a
touchdown?

DOMINIC

That's how you play the game.

ANDY

I think you lost it in the sun.

Mary continues to wipe away blood.

MARY

Dom...you have to start realizing
you are going to be different than
your friends. You cannot play like
Andy.

DOMINIC

I can do anything the other guys
can do...Ma...hurry up. I'm taking
Eileen to the movies tonight.

MARY

(exasperated)

The movies?

DOMINIC

I don't need perfect vision to make
out.

Andy and Dominic slap five as they share a laugh.

EXT. WINSLOW HOME - DAY.

Dominic approaches the Winslow home. Dressed well, but taped gauze covers his nose. He RINGS THE DOORBELL.

Dominic fixes his shirt, fluffs his hair.

Mark answers the door.

MARK WINSLOW

Hello, Dominic.

DOMINIC
Hey there, Mr. Winslow.

Mark sees the dangling bandage. Doesn't say anything.

DOMINIC
Is Eileen ready? Tuesdays are
movie night.

Mark's awkward. Kathy peeks around the door to join him.

KATHY WINSLOW
Dominic, what happened to your
nose?

DOMINIC
Oh hey, Mrs. Winslow...football.
You should see the other guy.

The Winslows, now both uneasy. And then...

KATHY WINSLOW
Dominic...Eileen is not here.

DOMINIC
What do you mean?

MARK WINSLOW
She left.

DOMINIC
Left? Left where?

Dominic's concern mounts.

KATHY WINSLOW
She's in Europe.

MARK WINSLOW
She went away to study.

DOMINIC
Without saying goodbye?

KATHY WINSLOW
It was just easier this way.

DOMINIC
You two did this, didn't you? You
sent her there to get her away from
me. "The going blind kid."

KATHY WINSLOW

Dominic, no. That's not how...

Dominic, disgusted, turns away quickly and trips down the stairs, tumbling as he goes. Crashing into the cement.

The Winslow's race out the front door to help him. Mark reaches for Dominic...

DOMINIC

NO! Don't touch me. I don't want
your sympathy! I don't want
anything from you!

Dominic dusts himself off, his nose bleeds again and leaves the Winslows behind.

DOMINIC

(disgusted)
Europe...

EXT. INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND - DAY.

Mary pulls the car curb side. Dominic squints at the sign

CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND.

A moment. Mary sighs. Dominic stares.

MARY

It may be the best thing you ever
do for yourself.

DOMINIC

Aren't you coming in with me?

Mary grabs the steering wheel. Tough love. Looks straight ahead and then peers over at Dominic.

MARY

They're waiting for you, Dom.

Dejected, Dominic gets out of the car. Mary so wants to park and go with him, but she knows she can't.

MARY

Listen to them. And remember... I
love you.

Dominic slams the car door shut. It stings Mary. Chin up, she drives away. Dominic halfheartedly walks inside the front door.

INSIDE

Dominic notices numerous BLIND ELDERLY PEOPLE. Some walk with canes. Others are led by DOGS. Some sit lazily on the couch staring ahead at oblivion.

ONE ELDERLY MAN, CHARLIE, passes singing a repetitive tune...

CHARLIE

La-la. La, la, la, la! La-la.

Dominic quizzically watches him pass, somewhat annoyed, somewhat afraid of what these halls might hold.

CHARLIE

La-la. La, la, la, la! La-la.

Dominic follows Charlie down the hall when he hears

ARTHUR JONES

Dominic Sposeto!

Dominic turns around to meet the handshake of the Director of the Institute, stern, tall man, ARTHUR JONES.

ARTHUR JONES

I've been expecting you. Come into my office.

Arthur guides Dominic inside the standard office. Behind a secretarial desk is DESMOND BAILEY, Arthur's assistant, early 20's, also blind.

ARTHUR JONES

This is my assistant, Desmond Bailey. He's also our physical education supervisor.

Dominic extends his hand, but Desmond doesn't move, just peers forward.

ARTHUR JONES

He's blind. You need to communicate through sound.

Desmond now offers his hand.

DESMOND

Arthur tells me you trump me in age! And I hear you're quite an athlete...

Dominic's not buying the sales pitch. But he grabs Desmond's hand and they shake.

DOMINIC

Nice to meet you, Desmond.

Dominic looks up at Arthur's stern face and they enter his private office.

ARTHUR JONES

During your time with us, we will equip you with tools needed to survive in the big city with your affliction.

DOMINIC

I was doing okay.

ARTHUR JONES

Denial is a big boulder that gets in the way. Best advice is to not pretend everything is okay.

DOMINIC

Look, Mr. Jones, I'm here for my mother.

ARTHUR JONES

Hopefully you will realize you are here for you. The real problem with blindness is not the blindness, it's the way it is perceived by those who are sighted.

Arthur hands Dominic A PAIR OF DARK GLASSES.

ARTHUR JONES

Put these on.

Dominic reluctantly does.

DOMINIC

Hey...now I can't see anything.

ARTHUR JONES

From this point forward, you are blind. It's a waste of time to salvage something you're going to lose anyway.

Dominic defiantly removes the glasses.

DOMINIC

But I can still make my way around.
Why are you doing this to me?

ARTHUR JONES

I'm speeding up nature's course for
your own good. You have to learn
what it's going to be like. That
light perception...

A beat as Dominic takes it all in...

ARTHUR JONES

...it is going to leave you.

Dominic stares at the glasses, finally puts them back on...

DOMINIC

What will my friends think?

ARTHUR JONES

Oh...and it is best to discontinue
all of your relationships, other
than your family, with the sighted
world.

Dominic, in protest, stands immediately.

DOMINIC

Are you crazy? This place is
dreadful. I didn't sign up for
cruel and unusual punishment.

ARTHUR JONES

It's only temporary, Dominic. Once
you emerge with the skills we'll
teach you, you can be friends with
whoever you choose.

Dominic detests Arthur's tone and demeanor.

DOMINIC

Mr. Jones, does that sign on your
door say "taskmaster"?

Dominic adjusts his new glasses, boiling inside.

INT. INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND - DOMINIC'S BEDROOM - DAY

Dominic lies on his bed, clearly in an uncomfortable
environment. Bland. White walls. Bare necessities. Simple
navigation for the blind.

DOMINIC
They can't make me stay.

A BOOK ABOUT BRAILLE sits on a night stand almost calling out for Dominic to pick it up. He stares it, it stares back.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
La-la. La, la, la, la! La-la.

Dominic notices the familiar voice.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
La-la. La, la, la, la! La-la.

DOMINIC
Does this pest sing anything else?

Dominic picks up the BRAILLE BOOK, opens it, inspects it, runs his fingers over the bumps...

CHARLIE
La-la. La, la, la, la! La-la.

Charlie enters and delivers some snacks on Dominic's table...

DOMINIC
Rubbed any good books lately?

Charlie doesn't respond, but continues on his way.

DOMINIC
Is that so?

CHARLIE
La-la. La, la, la, la! La-la.

Dominic, displeased with everything, throws the BRAILLE BOOK across the room.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY.

SEVERAL BLIND STUDENTS sit at desks, including Dominic.

MR. CLARK, the Braille Instructor, 30's, tall and thin, stands at the front of the room HOLDING UP THE SAME BOOK Dominic just discarded.

MR. CLARK
Respect this book. This is your key to future understanding. It is how you will thrive in this ever progressing world.

Dominic could care less.

MR. CLARK

Today we're going to work with the
stylus and slate to write your full
name in Braille.

DOMINIC

(to himself)

And I have to have the longest damn
name here...

MR. CLARK

What was that, Mr. Sposeto?

DOMINIC

(unconvincing)

Nothing...said I love it here.

INT. INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND - DOMINIC'S BEDROOM - DAY.

The sunlight peeks its way into the room highlighting the
backboard behind Dominic's head...almost angelic.

Dominic tosses a bit as he awakens. He rubs his eyes,
stretches out a bit, twists his neck and then

OPENS HIS EYES.

A moment. He slowly closes his eye lids. And then opens
them again and we see

DOMINIC'S POV.

PITCH BLACK. We hear things fumbling around on his night
stand as if he searches for something. And then silence.
It's very loud.

We see Dominic lying in his bed, staring upward as the
sunlight basks above his head.

OUTSIDE THE ROOM Charlie passes by...

CHARLIE

La-la. La, la, la, la! La-la.

...and his singing trails off as he goes.

Dominic continues to stare upward. The moment has come. A
tear falls from his NOW BLIND EYES.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. OLD MAN'S HOUSE - DAY.

PRESENT DAY.

Dominic rests his coffee cup back down on the table. The Old Man watches intently.

DOMINIC

I haven't thought about that moment
in a very long time.

OLD MAN

Maybe if you thought more about
your past you might be more
inclined to do something truly
productive in the future.

DOMINIC

I still don't know anything about
you. You seem to know everything
about me. And you taunt me like
you're holding me over the side of
a cliff.

OLD MAN

This kind of reflection is good for
the inner soul...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SALOON - NIGHT.

FLASHBACK 1911. Smoke filled saloon. PATRONS sit at the bar, carousing. LADIES parade around flaunting themselves to MALE PATRONS. The BARTENDER makes drinks.

One COCKTAIL WAITRESS with booming cleavage carries a tray of DRINKS over to

Domenico, cigar in mouth, and Angelo as they engage in a CARD GAME with TWO BURLY MEN.

BURLY MAN

Don't trust you Wops. Come over on
the ship and think you're in your
own country.

DOMENICO

I have papers.

Domenico SHRUGS ONE SHOULDER as he verbally vollies with the burly man.

ANGELO takes note, looks UPWARD.

BURLY MAN #2
Papers mean crap. Let's clean out
your wallets and get you two Wops
on the next cruise back.

Domenico COMPLETES his CHEAT SIGNALS to Angelo by REVEALING
THE TIP OF HIS TONGUE.

BURLY MAN
(catching on)
You're giving him signals aren't
you?

Domenico shrugs his shoulders again. Drops his cards on the
table...

DOMENICO
How you say...GIN!

As Domenico reaches for the winning pot...

BURLY MAN #2
Not so fast, Paisan!

Burly Man stands, removes A GUN from his holster and SHOOTs
Domenico almost point blank!

Immediate chaos! Screams. Bar room brawl breaks out.

Domenico's hands cover his wounded neck.

Angelo, in one fell swoop, stands, reveals his own gun and
SHOOTs BOTH BURLY MEN straight through the heart.

THE BURLY MAN WHO FIRED LANDS ON TOP OF THE TABLE, dropping
his gun, which FIRES AGAIN causing more panic.

Angelo grabs the MONEY and the wounded Domenico.

Burly Man #2 staggers to his feet, holding his heart.

Angelo leads Domenico through the bar. Fighting occurs
around them.

Burly Man #2 follows.

Angelo reaches the saloon's exit. Domenico's blood covers his clothing as it oozes in and around his fingers as he holds his neck.

DOMENICO
Angelo, stop.

ANGELO VALENTI
No...keep moving. Gotta get you to a doctor.

DOMENICO
We won...

Just then the town SHERIFF arrives. Draws his gun.

SHERIFF
Hold it right there!

Burly Man #2 emerges from the saloon, staggering with his wound, AIMING HIS GUN AT ANGELO AND DOMENICO.

BANG! HE FIRES AGAIN, BUT MISSES.

The Sheriff spins around and SHOOTS AT

THE BURLY MAN, his eyes grow wide as his feet wobble until he cannot sustain his own weight. He falls to his knees, drops his gun and his hands reach for the ground. He THUMPS INTO THE DIRT.

INT. DOMENICO'S HOUSE - DAY.

A frenzy inside. Domenico's neck is bandaged. Boxes are being packed. Francesca slams things in a storage box.

DOMENICO
Des Moines is a fantastic city.

FRANCESCA
(angry)
Catania is a fantastic city!

DOMENICO
Once we get settled, we'll make a trip to the old country. I promise.

FRANCESCA
Why are we running? The sheriff said it was not your fault! The two bums are dead.
(MORE)

FRANCESCA (cont'd)
For once my Father did something
noble and saved your life.

DOMENICO
Cesca...your father is a good man.
Look at all the families he brought
to America...

FRANCESCA
He robbed me of my life in Italia.
To come here.

DOMENICO
But you found me.

FRANCESCA
I wasn't looking.

They pack. THE YOUNG CHILDREN race through the house.

EXT. DES MOINES, IOWA - DAY.

The Sposeto family arrive in Des Moines. Farmlands. Corn
fields. Sprawling.

DOMENICO
This is what we come here for.

More and more...corn fields.

FRANCESCA
My lucky day.

INT. BOOTLEGGING PLANT - DAY.

Angelo and Domenico scour the machinery inside the warehouse.
Bootlegging system. Distillery machines. Large stills that
emit steam as they make WHISKEY.

ANGELO VALENTI
And when the government bans
alcohol we'll be ready to deal...on
the sly of course.

DOMENICO
You think we'll get deals in
Michigan and Illinois?

ANGELO VALENTI
Absolutely. In no time, you'll
control the bootlegging business.
(MORE)

ANGELO VALENTI (cont'd)
And I will have built the
nightclubs...

DOMENICO
Where we'll serve our goods to
paying customers.

ANGELO VALENTI
Shh! Word gets out and we'll have
leaches coming from the smallest
nooks for their share. Tell no
one. Trust no one.

Domenico demonstrates how the distillation process begins.

DOMENICO
Frankie's land deal is about to
close.

ANGELO VALENTI
Good. Your brother coming here is
finally paying dividends. He'll
raise the corn. We'll make the
whiskey and we'll bury the goods on
his land.

DOMENICO
What about the families nearby?
Good Italians, Angelo...no?

ANGELO VALENTI
These are local Italians. They are
not our kind of Italians.

EXT. DES MOINES TOWN HALL MEETING - NIGHT.

Domenico and his son, PATRICK (16) arrive in a horse drawn
buggy. Patrick jumps out and ties the horse to the post.

INT. DES MOINES SICILIAN MEETING - NIGHT.

Domenico and Patrick enter a room where TEN LOCAL SICILIANS
sit "Godfather" style around the room. Cigars and booze.
Food. Women.

SICILIAN BOSS
Domenico!

Domenico approaches, Patrick right behind him.

DOMENICO
My son, Patrick...

The Boss pats Patrick on the shoulder.

SICILIAN BOSS
He's as big you now. Thanks for
taking the time.

ALL EYES ON DOMENICO. Cigars lowered. Chewing stops.

SICILIAN BOSS
Take a seat.

They grab an extra chair for Patrick.

SICILIAN BOSS
Didn't know you were bringing your
bodyguard...

Domenico half smiles. They sit.

SICILIAN BOSS
How's business in Detroit?

DOMENICO
Detroit?

SICILIAN BOSS
Don't play stupid with me.

DOMENICO
I don't know what it is you're
talking about.

SICILIAN BOSS
Bootlegging. Whiskey. That
Detroit. We know you're
dispatching to Michigan. It's no
problem. Cut us in, no one gets
hurt.

Patrick looks around the room, absorbing all the threatening
glares. Intimidating.

DOMENICO
Do I owe you something?

The Boss takes a deep drag off his cigar. Blows smoke rings
in Domenico's face.

SICILIAN BOSS
Territory, my friend.
(MORE)

SICILIAN BOSS (cont'd)
You move here and think you and
Angelo can conduct business however
you choose? Des Moines don't work
that way.

Domenico holds his ground. Patrick watches. The Boss
stands. SO DOES DOMINIC. FACE TO FACE.

SICILIAN BOSS
Cut us in on the fucking deal or...

DOMENICO
The hell with you.

Domenico grabs Patrick and they storm for the exit.

SICILIAN BOSS
Mr. Sposeto...

Domenico stops and turns back...

SICILIAN BOSS
Don't spit in the wind, it might
hit you in your face.

The Boss takes another drag from his cigar, eerily chuckles
to himself.

Domenico and Patrick exit.

EXT. DOMENICO'S HOUSE - DES MOINES - DAY.

Early. Domenico and his THREE SONS; PATRICK (16), FRANK (13)
and ALBERT (12) prepare to go to market in the buggy.

The boys lift bags of corn and vegetables into the carriage.

Albert offers the HORSE some water from a bucket.

FRANCESCA carries BASKETS OF EGGS for their trip. YOUNG
ANGELO (8) plays with a ball by the door.

FRANCESCA
Mrs. Morielli will buy these.

PATRICK
She makes the best pastries.

FRANCESCA
And what's wrong with my pastries?

PATRICK
Nothing, Mama. I love your
pastries more.

DOMENICO approaches them...clearly disturbed.

DOMENICO
Come on, come on...we have a long
day ahead. The longer you hem and
haw...the longer...

PATRICK
We're packed and ready, Papa.

And they are. Domenico can't be upset about that.

ANGELO
I want to go, too!

DOMENICO
Scat, Angelo!

Angelo kicks the dirt.

RALPH STANTON, 30's, burly but handsome, arrives in another
buggy.

DOMENICO
You're late! I said seven thirty!

Ralph looks at his watch.

RALPH
It is seven thirty.

DOMENICO
Then let's move...

Francesca approaches.

FRANCESCA
You wanted to come to Des Moines.

Francesca kisses Domenico good bye, but he clearly has other
things on his mind.

They divide into the two buggy's. Domenico, Patrick and
Frank in one. Ralph and Albert in the other.

Francesca waves them off.

The buggy's travel down the roadway, creating smoke clouds as
the horses lead them away.

INT. DOMENICO'S HOUSE - DAY.

Francesca enters the modest home. Simple furniture. She moves to the kitchen, begins cleaning the breakfast dishes.

She spots a COUPLE DOLLAR BILLS on the kitchen table.

FRANCESCA

How they gonna eat lunch! Now
they'll be twice as hungry when
they get home.

Francesca takes the bills and goes to the SPARE BEDROOM, which doubles as a room for THE THREE BOYS as well as Domenico's office.

Clothes strewn about. Unmade beds. A mess.

FRANCESCA

God couldn't give me girls?

Francesca opens the top desk drawer. Removes a file. Opens it. Cash sits inside. So does another piece of paper which

GRABS HER ATTENTION.

THE NOTE reads

MAKE YOUR PEACE WITH GOD. YOUR TIME HAS COME.

EXT. MARKETPLACE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The two buggies approach the General Store. It's early, but several PEOPLE move about. Horses. A couple DOGS.

AN ASSASSIN watches them from hedges.

ASSASSIN'S POV...he emerges walks toward the buggies.

Ralph disembarks, busily tying up his horse to a post.

WE CANNOT SEE THE ASSASSIN'S FACE, it appears covered. He SWIFTLY DRAWS HIS GUN and FIRES ONE SHOT hitting

DOMENICO near the heart.

The horses WHINNY. BOTH SONS, still sitting beside Domenico, react.

Domenico grabs his chest.

Ralph unhesitatingly scrambles to Domenico.

THE ASSASSIN raises the gun again.

WE SEE DOMENICO'S EYES locked in the BULLET'S PATH.

ASSASSIN

Take this you son of a bitch!

He fires POINT BLANK. BETWEEN DOMENICO'S EYES.

Patrick leaps out of the buggy to tackle the assassin, but falls into the ground. The assassin takes ONE SHOT at Patrick, but misses.

FRANK FLIES OUT OF THE BUGGY TO PROTECT HIS BROTHER.

THE ASSASSIN FLEES.

RALPH

Albert, run and get help!

Albert bursts away from the incident.

Patrick tends to Domenico, who's DEAD BULGING EYES are tough to look at.

PATRICK

Papa...Papa...

INT. SHERIFF'S STATION - DAY.

The TOWN SHERIFF, older, wiser-type, sits next to a nervous RALPH, who wipes a wet rag over his forehead.

FRANCESCA, controlling her grief, stands a few feet away with Patrick, Frank, Albert and ANGELO.

RALPH

He came out of nowhere.

TOWN SHERIFF

What did he look like?

RALPH

I don't remember. I think his face was covered. But he might have had light hair. I really don't know.

TOWN SHERIFF

You said he shouted at Domenico.

Patrick breaks away from his mother...

PATRICK

He said, "take that you son of a bitch."

TOWN SHERIFF

Did he sound American?

RALPH

Pretty sure. It came so quick.

TOWN SHERIFF

You witness a brutal murder and none of you sees anything?

Francesca walks toward the sheriff. She reaches into her dress pocket, removes THE NOTE and hands it to the sheriff.

FRANCESCA

Not sure when he received it.

The sheriff looks at the note. Ralph lifts his head, wondering what it is. As do the boys.

INT. SHERIFF'S STATION - LATER.

MONTAGE OF THE SHERIFF'S INVESTIGATION. VARIOUS CLOSE-UPS.

The TOWNSFOLK seem unwilling to assist.

TOWNSPERSON

(broken English)

Me know nothing. See nothing.

INVESTIGATING OFFICER

We found a box containing rifle shells near a clump of weeds. A bottle of water and some footprints confirm he fled South.

NEIGHBOR

I've seen someone late at night shining a flashlight inside the Sposeto home. I thought it was one of the boys...they're always outside.

OFFICER

Got info that there was a Mafia like incident involving a card game some time ago back east.

We recognize the Sicilian Boss from the Town Hall meeting.

SICILIAN BOSS

I liked the guy. Can't imagine why
anyone would want to hurt him or
his family...

The Sheriff raises an eyebrow.

OFFICER #2

Sources tell us Sposeto ordered the
hit on three men in Philly.

TOWN SHERIFF

Motive...vendetta.

TOWNSPERSON #2

The Mafia...they always send a
note. Then a man sent to do the
deed. Like an agent. He doesn't
even know his victim.

TOWNSPERSON

I take me familia. Leave town. No
good to stay. They come back.

TOWN SHERIFF

I have a witness who claims
Domenico was friendly with your
wife...

A disturbed SOLDIER scowls at the Sheriff.

SOLDIER

Wish I could say I did it, Sheriff.
But I was no where near the town
market. And my wife is my
business, not yours.

TOWN SHERIFF

Where is Angelo Valenti!

FRANCESCA

(bittersweet)

They called him back to Italy
yesterday. He loved Domenico as if
he was his own flesh and blood.

TOWN SHERIFF

The Italians are on the lam...

The Sheriff rubs his forehead. Frustrating.

EXT. CEMETARY GROUNDS - DAY.

Domenico's casket sits atop a grave, covered in a blanket of flowers. A PRIEST sprays holy water and concludes his PRAYERS.

As we turn, we're surprised to find ONLY ABOUT TEN PEOPLE attending the funeral.

FRANCESCA sits in the front row with PATRICK. The other boys are not present. In fact, we recognize no one.

PRIEST

In company with Christ, who died
and now lives, may they rejoice in
Your kingdom, where all our tears
are wiped away. Unite us together
again in one family, to sing your
praise forever and ever.

Patrick places his arm around Francesca's shoulder.

THE SHERIFF approaches to pay his respects. Removes his hat.

DOMINIC (V.O.)

Was Valenti really called back to
Italy?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. OLD MAN'S HOUSE - DAY.

Dominic and the Old Man continue their conversation.

OLD MAN

No one ever saw Angelo Valenti
again.

DOMINIC

Ever?

OLD MAN

Shady business gets you in trouble.
You break the rules and the Black
Hand finds you.

Dominic laments. Sips his coffee. Those words ring true.

OLD MAN

Thinking about something?

DOMINIC
Rules.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND - NIGHT.

FLASHBACK. Dominic, cane in hand, easily negotiates the steps in front of the building.

A CAR HORN BLARES nearby.

Dominic reacts, expecting this, he makes his way to the curb.

THE HORN BLARES AGAIN.

DOMINIC
Okay! I'm blind, not deaf.

Dominic reaches the car. Opens the door.

DOMINIC
You trying to wake the dead? If
they catch me...

INSIDE IS

SHERRY, 20, attractive, red head, vivacious personality,
lights up a room...

SHERRY
No one even knows I'm here.

DOMINIC
You didn't tell your mom? Or my
sister?

SHERRY
Why would I do that? Just get us
both in trouble.

DOMINIC
Thanks, Sherry. You're the best.
I just can't be around blind people
all day and all night.

Sherry pulls away from the curb.

SHERRY
(playfully)
Yeah...blind people can be so
annoying.

DOMINIC
Where are we going?

SHERRY
It's a surprise.

This attraction builds.

DOMINIC
Can I drive?

They both laugh as the car shoots down the road...

INT. SWEET'S BALLROOM - NIGHT.

A JAZZ CLUB in full swing. Tons of PATRONS. Hip and vibrant. AN ELDER SAX SOLOIST plays his heart out.

Dominic sips a cocktail. Sherry sits next to him. Both are enthralled by the music.

DOMINIC
He's an old dude, huh?

SHERRY
How can you tell?

DOMINIC
He sounds old. You can tell if you listen to the way the notes flow from him.

Dominic inhales, taking in the room, the positive energy.

DOMINIC
There's about fifty people in here.

Looks about right.

SHERRY
Very good...

DOMINIC
Mr. Clark's got me painting pictures in my mind. All the sounds and smells I can take in.

SHERRY
Seeing without seeing.

Sherry's smitten with Dominic. She smiles wide.

DOMINIC

Thank you for bringing me here.

Dominic leans over and finds Sherry's lips and
KISSES HER.

DOMINIC

Don't tell my sister.

SHERRY

You don't think she'd fancy us
dating?

DOMINIC

Look...you're her friend in her
mind. For now...

THE BAND BEGINS PLAYING A NEW SNAZZY JAZZ TUNE. It's an
infectious rhythm as SEVERAL COUPLES GET UP TO DANCE.

DOMINIC

Come on! Let's show these amateurs
how it's done!

Dominic grabs Sherry's hand and navigates them to the dance
floor where they begin to dazzle the packed ballroom.

SWINGING AROUND THE FLOOR IN PERFECT FORMATION. EITHER
THEY'VE DONE THIS BEFORE OR THEY'RE MEANT TO DANCE TOGETHER.

Smiles and laughter...a couple falling in love.

INT. INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND - NIGHT.

It's really late. Dominic inches his way back inside the
Institute. He knows the path perfectly. It's dark, as if it
matters. But we're suddenly surprised when

ALL THE LIGHTS COME ON.

ARTHUR JONES

Welcome home, Mr. Sposeto!!!

The BOOMING VOICE startles Dominic who spins around
instinctively with his CANE and KNOCKS OVER A VASE on the
nearby table SHATTERING IT WHEN IT HITS THE FLOOR.

DOMINIC

Shit!

ARTHUR JONES
No respect for rules or
regulations...

DOMINIC
I was in the cafeteria.

ARTHUR JONES
...or for telling the truth.

DOMINIC
Mr. Jones, can we talk about this
in the morning?

ARTHUR JONES
You were out again with your
sighted friends, weren't you?

DOMINIC
I had a date. I'm not in prison.
I can't be expected to be a saint
my whole life.

Arthur grabs Dominic, smelling his smoky clothes.

ARTHUR JONES
You've been in a bar haven't you?

DOMINIC
I was in the cafeteria.

ARTHUR JONES
Chasing girls is unacceptable.
Skipping your classes to go
swimming is unacceptable.
Everything you do, Mr. Sposeto, is
unacceptable.

DOMINIC
But you still take my father's
money...

ARTHUR JONES
The Institute's rules are simple.
Live by them or live somewhere
else.

Jones shuts the lights, heads away. Dominic stands alone in
the entry lobby.

DOMINIC
(to himself, muttering)
Sure...leave me with the vase.

INT. INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND - DOMINIC'S BEDROOM - DAY.

Mary sits next to Dominic on his bed. She's brought him some new things, shaving cream, razors, toothpaste, NECESSITIES.

DOMINIC
Couldn't you have brought me a
girly magazine?

Mary reacts, smacks Dominic on the side of the head.

MARY
Dom, you better pay attention to
the guidelines here or you're going
to get kicked out.

DOMINIC
It's not like I'm learning anything
here.

MARY
You could always work for your
father's cement company.

DOMINIC
That shovel just doesn't fit my
hand.

MARY
Your father would love to have you
work with him.

DOMINIC
Right. How'd you get in here?
(mocking) No sighted people
allowed.

MARY
I'm your mother.

DOMINIC
Where is Pop anyway?

MARY
You know your father, Dominic. He
has his work. Has to make the
money to afford keeping you here.

Dominic's somewhat dejected, disappointed.

DOMINIC
You're a good cover, Ma. I'm his
liability.

MARY
Dominic don't you ever say that.
You are no one's liability.

DOMINIC
Tell that to Mr. Jones.

Charlie passes outside the hall...

CHARLIE (V.O.)
La-la. La, la, la, la! La-la.

Mary reacts, not used to the singing.

MARY
Who's that?

DOMINIC
Nat King Cole.

Mary's use to his sarcasm.

DOMINIC
Ma...I gotta get out of here.

Mary rubs Dominic's hair, nestles him close to her heart.

EXT. SWIMMING POOL - DAY.

Dominic glides through the water, stroke after stroke.

FATHER JACK stands at the end of the lane, watching.

Dominic pumps his way through his freestyle swim. Three,
two, one more length and he reaches the lane's end.

FATHER JACK
Still got it, Dom.

Dominic recognizes the voice immediately.

DOMINIC
Father Jack!

Dominic climbs out of the pool, grabs a towel, dries himself.

FATHER JACK
No students today?

DOMINIC
Trained a couple this morning. But
you know, Father, they're not
focussed. It's like I'm talking to
a wall.

Father Jack's eyebrow raises.

FATHER JACK
Kinda like your teacher's at the
Institute?

DOMINIC
My mother has a big mouth!

FATHER JACK
She only wants what's best for you.

DOMINIC
This was God's plan, right Father?

FATHER JACK
None of us knows what the Lord has
in store for us. But there is a
plan.

DOMINIC
And I'm not so sure mine is staying
at the Institute. Maybe I should
join the monastery. What do you
think?

FATHER JACK
I think you like girls way too
much...

They both share a laugh. Then it subsides and Dominic
becomes thoughtful...

DOMINIC
Do you really think God has a plan
for me, Father Jack?

A moment.

FATHER JACK
Don't give up on him just yet.

INT. SHERRY'S CAR - NIGHT.

Sherry lies against Dominic's chest inside her car.

DOMINIC
How about we figure out a way to
make you blind, too?

Sherry laughs and then after a moment, doesn't like the idea.

SHERRY
Why should we do that?

DOMINIC
Well, for starters, we wouldn't
have to sneak around Arthur Jones
anymore... I just don't like...

Sherry puts her finger over Dom's lips.

SHERRY
Not tonight. No complaining, okay?
Let's just enjoy our time together.

DOMINIC
It's a pretty night out there isn't
it?

Sherry peers outside.

SHERRY
Gorgeous.

DOMINIC
Is it in the trunk?

SHERRY
It is.

Dominic lifts Sherry up, gets out of the car.

DOMINIC
Come on...I want to hear you.

OUTSIDE IT IS A GLORIOUS NIGHT. TWINKLING LIGHTS. DOMINIC
PEERS OUT OVER THE HIGH CLIFF DOWN AT THE CITY LIGHTS BELOW.

SHERRY APPEARS WITH HER VIOLIN IN HAND.

THEY BOTH SIT ON THE EDGE OF THE HILL.

SHERRY BEGINS PLAYING.

THE TWINKLING LIGHTS.

THE MUSIC.

DOMINIC SMILES. CONTENT.

SHERRY SLIDES HER BOW ACROSS THE VIOLIN.

THE MUSIC TAKES US OUT.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY.

Sherry's Plymouth flies past a road sign that reads
RENO 60 MILES.

SHERRY
But I don't have proper ID!

DOMINIC
I don't care! Let's do this!

INT. ANGEL'S REST WEDDING CHAPEL - DAY.

Dominic and Sherry stand before a PREACHER. Sherry holds
fake flowers. Wedding music crackles from the cheap speaker
system. TWO IMPROMPTU GUESTS stand as witnesses.

PREACHER
Marco will be your best man.

Dominic extends his hand for a shake.

DOMINIC
At least you're Italian.

MARCO shakes his hand. Sherry's MAID OF HONOR, who she just
met, smiles.

PREACHER
Do you Sherry Kelly take this man
Dominic Sposeto to be your lawfully
wedded husband?

SHERRY
(glowingly)
I do.

PREACHER
For richer or poorer, in sickness
and in health for as long as you
both shall live?

SHERRY
I do.

PREACHER

Then by the power vested in me by
the state of Nevada, I now
pronounce you man and wife. You
may kiss your bride.

Dominic softly kisses Sherry and then embraces her with a
life long hug.

DOMINIC

You won't regret this.

INT. INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND - DAY.

Arthur Jones stands above Dominic at his desk...

ARTHUR JONES

You did what?

DOMINIC

I love her.

ARTHUR JONES

Did you even think this through
before you decided to do this very
irresponsible, selfish act of
marrying a sighted person?

DOMINIC

I can do anything I put my mind to,
Mr. Jones.

ARTHUR JONES

You can't even read or write.

DOMINIC

That's why I'm here. To learn.

ARTHUR JONES

How are you going to provide for
her?

DOMINIC

I'm ready to apply myself.

ARTHUR JONES

Wrong. Pack your bags. I want you
out of this facility by the week's
end.

INT. INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND - DOMINIC'S BEDROOM - DAY.

Dominic packs his bags. Now that he has to leave, he fears facing the real world.

DOMINIC
I'll teach myself.

Dominic gets increasingly frustrated...finally throwing several pieces of clothing onto the floor. He collapses on his bed. Beaten.

Charlie passes by...

CHARLIE
La-la. La, la, la, la! La-la.

DOMINIC
I'm leaving Charlie!

Charlie inches inside. Reaches the bed. Clothes strewn.

CHARLIE
Good luck, Dominic. Make us proud.

Stunned that Charlie spoke...

DOMINIC
You speak?

CHARLIE
Never judge a book by its cover.

Charlie turns and leaves...

CHARLIE
La-la. La, la, la, la! La-la.

Penetrating words, Dominic begins picking up his clothes...

DOMINIC
Well I'll be a son of a...

MR. CLARK
Dominic!

MR. CLARK, the Braille instructor appears bedside.

DOMINIC
Mr. Clark?

MR. CLARK
Excellent. I think you've mastered
voice recognition.

DOMINIC
You're a good teacher, Mr. Clark.

Mr. Clark picks up the remaining tossed clothes and places
them inside Dominic's case.

MR. CLARK
I'm sorry to see you go.

DOMINIC
I got married. Apparently that's a
crime.

Mr. Clark laughs...then it subsides. This is serious.

MR. CLARK
What are you going to do?

DOMINIC
Haven't a clue. I can't hold down
a job. Maybe try to teach swim
full time...you know Arthur Jones
is an arrogant son of a...

MR. CLARK
Listen, there is someone I want you
to meet. If you're willing.

Dominic takes this in, twisting the wedding ring on his
finger, no doubt realizing the impact of responsibility.

EXT. TENBROEK'S HOUSE - DAY.

Dominic and Mr. Clark stand at the front door of a very
elaborate home. Mr. Clark knocks.

DOMINIC
I can tell by the scent of the
flowers, this is a nice place.

An older woman, HAZEL TENBROEK, answers the door.

HAZEL
Ah, Donald...

MR. CLARK
Hazel...Nice to see you.

HAZEL

And this must be Dominic.

Dominic extends his hand, which Hazel accepts and shakes.

DOMINIC

Nice to meet you, ma'am.

HAZEL

My husband is expecting you.

They move inside and walk a long corridor. Rich furniture. Expensive paintings. Large vases. Fresh flowers.

INT. TENBROEK'S HOUSE - STUDY - DAY.

Hazel drops them off at the study. Bookshelves galore. Massive desk covered with documents, reading material.

Behind the desk on the phone is DR. JACOBUS TENBROEK, 50's, red hair, goatee. He is blind, but Dominic has no idea.

TENBROEK

(on the phone)

Pity is a dreadful trait. I don't like it and never have. If we don't rise above our flaws and learn from the mistakes which have needled their way into our lives, we cannot possibly reach our goals. Stay thirsty for knowledge.

We notice the plaques and certificates dotting the walls. This is an established professional.

DOMINIC

(whispering back)

Does he know I'm blind?

CLARK

(whispering)

That's why we're here.

TENBROEK

Individually we are scattered and inarticulate, subject to oppression. But collectively, as one unit, we are the masters of our domain. Let's speak again at the week's end. Good day.

Tenbroek hangs up the phone. Hazel approaches the desk.

HAZEL

Honey...your guests are here.

Tenbroek's happy to see an old friend. Energized. Eager.

TENBROEK

Donald!

Mr. Clark rises and handshakes Tenbroek.

MR. CLARK

Thank you for taking the time,
Jacobus.

TENBROEK

Well aren't you going to shake my
hand, too, Dominic?

Dominic fidgets. Intimidated.

DOMINIC

Sorry, sir. I've yet to acclimate
myself in this office. I'm blind.

TENBROEK

That makes two of us.

DOMINIC

(surprised)
You're blind?

TENBROEK

Long as I can remember. How about
we meet our hands in the middle of
my desk? Let me see what you're
made of...

Dominic rises toward the desk. Fumbles his way to the
center. Awkwardly finds Tenbroek's hand. They shake.

TENBROEK

Man's man. Firm. Must have a mind
of your own, huh?

DOMINIC

I'm Italian.

Tenbroek laughs.

TENBROEK

So you were removed from the
Institute?

DOMINIC

I guess. I can't speak freely in front of Mr. Clark...he has been a friend, to have brought me here.

TENBROEK

Loyal. I can hear it in your voice.

DOMINIC

Excuse me?

TENBROEK

Loyalty. You stand by it. I will train you to listen for character traits in people's voices. It's amazing what you can see when you can't see at all.

Dominic settles back in his seat. Sighs. He's immediately comfortable. So is Mr. Clark.

TENBROEK

Now...without fear of crucifying Mr. Clark or the Institute...What happened?

DOMINIC

I broke their rules. I refused to cut off the sighted world. I snuck out to see my girl. We eloped. They kicked me out.

TENBROEK

Fantastic! What are you, about twenty one?

Dominic's eyes widen...bull's-eye.

DOMINIC

Exactly.

TENBROEK

How are you with Braille?

DOMINIC

Awful.

TENBROEK

From this day forward...I want you to think of your blindness as a gift.

DOMINIC

A gift?

TENBROEK

A person who loses his clothes is denuded, a man who loses his sight is delighted.

Mr. Clark watches the two men click. Mission accomplished.

DOMINIC

Denuded? Is that even a word?

Tenbroek laughs again.

TENBROEK

You have an instinctive argumentative quality about you.

DOMINIC

I mean you no disrespect.

TENBROEK

None taken. Have you ever considered law?

Dominic laughs aloud.

DOMINIC

My family were bootleggers! We ran from the law.

Tenbroek laughs.

TENBROEK

Dominic, what was my wife's name?

DOMINIC

Hazel.

TENBROEK

Do you remember what I said on the phone?

DOMINIC

You were talking about pity. Being a dreadful trait.

A moment.

TENBROEK

Go on...

Another moment...a mini epiphany.

DOMINIC

Sorry, sir. I was just realizing how your words in some ways sum up my very existence.

TENBROEK

Well...let's change that, huh? You have a sharp memory. A fiery demeanor. The blind could use a lawyer like you.

DOMINIC

I couldn't even keep a job making brooms...

TENBROEK

Society treats blind people as second class citizens. My goal is for them to finally see us. Differently.

Tenbroek rises from his desk and retrieves a book from the shelf behind him and hands it to Dominic.

TENBROEK

Have your new wife read this to you. I wrote it. It's called Prejudice, War and The Constitution. The parallels are staggering.

Dominic opens the book as if he can see it.

TENBROEK

I look forward to the day when you call blindness a gift, Counselor.

The last word resonates with Dominic. Perhaps finally a passion.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY.

Tenbroek sits with Dominic at the back of a packed courthouse as they listen to

LEO SULLIVAN, 50's, graying, three piece suit, slicked back hair, holds a POINTER in his hand as he strides around the courtroom finishing his closing argument to A WIDE EYED JURY.

LEO

Ladies and Gentlemen, I implore you to absorb the facts in this case. The prosecution has done a remarkable job demonstrating how a murder may have taken place. May have! No one has admitted any wrong doing in this case. They want you to believe Mr. Wynn was at the scene of the crime. But did they prove that to you? They want you to believe Mr. Wynn, in a fit of rage, flew off the handle and brutally beat his wife to death. But did they prove that to you?

Dominic noticeably inches forward...absorbing the powerful words. Intrigued.

LEO

He's lost his wife. His children have been taken away. Fired from his job. Friends gone with the wind! Hasn't he lost enough? His freedom...that you can save. No one has listened to him, yet. Won't you be the first ones to answer his call?...I am innocent.

Dominic's hooked.

INT. DOMINIC AND SHERRY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT.

SHERRY

A what?!

Sherry and Dom enjoy a simple dinner.

DOMINIC

I'm going to go to law school.

Sherry smiles wide.

SHERRY

Dom...I think that's fantastic.

DOMINIC

(worried)

Do you? Really?

SHERRY

I do.

DOMINIC
I'll need your help.

Sherry leans in and lightly kisses Dominic on the lips.

SHERRY
When do we start?

The kiss grows more passionate. A couple in love. And now a man with a goal. Before long, their kiss leads them away from the table and headed for the bedroom.

INT. DOMINIC AND SHERRY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

AN OLD FASHIONED TAPE RECORDER MOVES REEL TO REEL. Two glasses of wine sit at both ends of the table. Dominic finishes the last bites of a spaghetti dinner.

DOMINIC
I don't think Grandma Francesca
will ever doubt your culinary
abilities.

Sherry absorbs that, but focusses on an OPEN LAW BOOK.

SHERRY
She hates me, Dom. Let's get back
to work...Torts.

DOMINIC
Ah...dessert.

Sherry stops the tape recorder.

SHERRY
Dom...be serious.

Dominic sits upright. Lifts his wine glass to his lips...
Sherry hits the RECORD button again.

SHERRY
A tort is a negligent or civil
wrong not arising out of a contract
or statute. A tort is an act that
injures someone in some way and for
which the injured person may sue
for damages.

DOMINIC
Dessert's better, no?

Sherry frowns, exasperated with Dominic's games.

SHERRY

Example?

Dominic savors the wine...thinks a bit.

DOMINIC

My grandmother does not hate you.

Sherry slaps Dominic's knee...

DOMINIC

There are four kinds...assault.

Dominic thinks aloud...searching the table for the wine bottle and refilling his glass.

DOMINIC

...battery. False imprisonment.
And...

SHERRY

One more.

Dominic rubs his forehead.

DOMINIC

Napoleon?

SHERRY

Negligence!

DOMINIC

I knew it was an "N".

Sherry leans over and takes the wine away. And the bottle.

SHERRY

Dom...focus. You know this stuff.
If you don't pass the test, no law
school.

Dominic fumbles around for the wine glass...

SHERRY

It's gone. Either study and study
hard. Or...

DOMINIC

I am studying hard.

Sherry is silent. The tape recorder continues to record.
SILENCE. Just as she's about to stop it AGAIN...

DOMINIC

Torts may be committed with force,
as trespasses, which may be an
injury to the person...such as
assault, battery or imprisonment.

Dominic knows it. Sherry's happy, but doesn't let on and
retracts her finger from the stop button.

DOMINIC

I'm not this tough on my swim
students.

Sherry won't let up, but secretly smiles at Dominic.

INT. TENBROEK'S HOUSE - STUDY

Dominic sits opposite Tenbroek, who smokes his pipe.

TENBROEK

If the party does not fulfill his
contractual promise, or has given
information to the party that he
will not perform his duty as
mentioned in the contract or if by
his action and conduct he seems to
be unable to perform the contract,
he is said to be in breach.
Example?

DOMINIC

One of my student's parents decide
to drop my swimming lessons without
probable cause and renege on our
deal...

INT. SWIMMING POOL - DAY.

Dominic swims alongside one of his STUDENTS.

DOMINIC

If I can't hear you breathing,
you're not working hard. Kick it
out...a few more strokes.

THE TWO OF THEM SWIM FOR THE WALL.

DOMINIC

Do the last lap on your own...

Dominic stops at the wall. Lifts his head to hear

SHERRY
Defamation.

Dominic sighs. Sherry, sitting poolside, relentless as she refers to a law book for accuracy.

SHERRY
Not going away. Defamation.

Dominic slaps at the water...

DOMINIC
...the act of making untrue
statements about another which
damages his or her reputation.

SHERRY
(not done...)
If the defamatory statement is...

Another slap at the water...

DOMINIC
...printed or broadcast over the
media it is libel and if only oral,
it is slander.

THE STUDENT arrives back at the wall from his swim.

STUDENT
How'd I do, Coach?

DOMINIC
As well as I did.

Dominic splashes some water at Sherry.

SHERRY
Slander?

She's not letting up.

INT. LA SALLE CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL - EXAM ROOM - DAY.

NUMEROUS STUDENTS take the law entry exam. Quiet. The
MODERATOR walks the room and then we see

DOMINIC and SHERRY isolated in the corner. Sherry quietly
reads the questions to Dominic who noticeably fidgets.

SHERRY
Name four different kinds of torts.

Dominic's mischievous smirk says he might answer NAPOLEON, but then he gets serious, easily answering the question.

INT. DOMINIC AND SHERRY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT.

Sherry hustles around the dining room, plates of meatballs in one hand, chicken drumsticks in the other.

Seated at the table are ANGELO, MARY and FRANCESCA (GRANDMA). Dominic sits at the head.

Mary twirls some pasta onto a fork.

MARY

Your sauce is almost as good as mine, Sherry.

Francesca COUGHS inappropriately, obviously disapproving.

DOMINIC

What's a matter, Grandma?

ANGELO

Come on, Mom...it's not that bad.

Francesca has no problem speaking her mind...

FRANCESCA

Americana's.

Mary tries to save the situation...

MARY

(to Sherry)

Took her ten years to like my sauce. Her recipe.

Sherry gets it. She's tough. She places the chicken directly in front of Francesca.

SHERRY

Chicken Marsala, Grandma?

Francesca snarls, returns to her meal...opts for the salad.

THE DOORBELL rings. Sherry places the dishes down and heads for the door.

MARY

I love what you guys have done to the place, Dom.

DOMINIC
It looks great, don't it!

Sherry returns with a TELEGRAM.

DOMINIC
Who was it, darling?

SHERRY
Later, Dom.

DOMINIC
What is it?

Francesca nudges Angelo...

FRANCESCA
(under her breath)
Hides things from the husband...

ANGELO
Ma...stop.

Dominic senses the TELEGRAM.

DOMINIC
Well open it. Everyone can find
out at once that I was rejected...

Sherry opens the telegram...

SHERRY
You passed! You're in!

EVERYONE APPLAUDS as Sherry kisses Dominic and then steps
into the kitchen.

MARY
My son's gonna be a lawyer!

DOMINIC
I'm a long way from there, Ma.

MARY
I've always told you...you can do
anything.

FRANCESCA
(under her breath)
Except find a wife who can cook.

Francesca snarls at the DRIED CHICKEN.

ANGELO
Ma...aspette! Congratulations,
son.

Sherry returns to the room holding a plate of TORTES.

MARY
Napoleon Tortes...

Dominic smiles and laughs a little.

SHERRY
Dom loves them.

Sherry sets the tortes in the middle of the table and moves to Dominic, kisses him, elated.

DOMINIC
Ever so poetic...

SHERRY
Now let me go make the coffee...

FRANCESCA
Oh God...

A TOAST and the celebration continues despite Francesca's unwillingness.

INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH - NIGHT.

Christmas Eve. Gloriously decorated Catholic Church. Poinsettias dress the elaborate altar. ALTAR BOYS wear special robes. The PRIEST wears a GOLD VESTMENT. Candles flicker EVERYWHERE.

In the FRONT PEW are DOMINIC, MARY, ANGELO and GRANDMA FRANCESCA. Behind them, TOPSY, TOOTSIE and their HUSBANDS.

A PRETTY YOUNG WOMAN on the altar BEGINS SINGING

CHOIR SINGER
Silent night...holy night. All is
calm...All is bright.

Dominic appears exhausted from studying.

A VIOLIN DRONES and we see SHERRY beside the CHOIR SINGER, playing beautifully.

Dominic places his hand on MARY'S HAND, proud.

The candles flicker in the background.

CHOIR SINGER
Round yon virgin, mother and child.
Holy infant so tender and mild.

Sherry plays, gratified in her musical world.

Other PARISHIONERS listen. Heart warming. Christmas love.

CHOIR SINGER
Sleep in heavenly peace...

The STAR ATOP THE DECORATED CHRISTMAS TREE SHINES BRIGHT...

THE FAMILY...Dominic, Mary, Angelo, Francesca, Topsy and Toostie.

Sherry slides her bow across the violin...

FRANCESCA mumbles the words to herself...

CHOIR SINGER/FRANCESCA
Sleep in heavenly peace...

TIGHT ON FRANCESCA'S EYES and we

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ST. ANTHONY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH - NIGHT.

TIGHT ON FRANCESCA'S EYES, only younger.

FLASHBACK. Christmas Eve. Des Moines. Packed church. It's the late 1930's and Francesca sings the same song on the altar in front of the congregation.

FRANCESCA (V.O.)
Silent night, holy night...

Francesca's powerful voice reverberates through the church.

FRANCESCA
Shepherds quake at the sight...

In the FRONT PEWS are her sons PATRICK, ALBERT, FRANK and ANGELO. They wear frayed clothes and appear poor.

FRANCESCA
Glorious streams from heaven afar.
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia!...

FRANCESCA'S NEW HUSBAND, JOE BENEVUTO, stout, rugged type, stands beside the boys.

FRANCESCA
Christ, the Saviour is born...

JOE places his arm around ANGELO, but Angelo winces away. They exchange a glare. No love loss here.

FRANCESCA
Christ, the Savior is born...

Francesca finishes the song, bows to the PRIEST and returns to her family. Joe puts his arm around her.

She smiles at her boys.

INT. FRANCESCA'S HOME - NIGHT.

A KNOCK at the door. Francesca drops her rag on the counter and heads for the door to find

A SHERIFF with teenage FRANK clutched in his grasp.

SHERIFF
This is the third time I've caught your boy stealing. This time it was coal from the boxcars traveling through town.

FRANK
(defiant)
Just trying to take care of my family...

Francesca wastes no time SLAPPING FRANK across his face.

FRANCESCA
Thank you, Sheriff. I'll be sure it won't happen again.

SHERIFF
I'm afraid this time a judge will have to decide.

Francesca takes Frank from his grasp, her glare alone enough to scare some kids straight.

The Sheriff tips his cap and Francesca closes the door.

Angelo and Albert, doing homework, vacate the coming storm.

FRANCESCA
Were you stealing, Frank?

Frank won't answer. Francesca shakes him from side to side.

FRANCESCA
I asked you a question!

FRANK
What if I was?

Francesca again swings A SLAP DIRECTLY ACROSS FRANK'S FACE.

FRANCESCA
Wait til your father...

FRANK
That bastard ain't my father. He
don't hold a candle to Papa...

Francesca grabs Frank by the shirt and practically drags him across the room. Tough as nails.

FRANCESCA
Don't you ever talk to me like
that! Do you hear me? I hope that
judge sends you away!

INT. BASEMENT - DAY.

Albert opens a set of curtains in the basement concealing numerous CASES OF WHISKEY BOTTLES. He finishes counting.

We also see TWO LARGE STILLs. Steam rises from the larger still, a hundred gallon tank, currently cooking a batch of whiskey. Albert sniffs the concoction. He moves to a table where he makes notes on a pad of paper.

JOE inches his way down the stairs, marvelling at what he's discovered and then catches Albert off guard.

JOE
I had no idea...

Albert panics as if his secret's been exposed.

ALBERT
You're not allowed down here...

Joe sizes up the room...

JOE
So this is where the money comes
from...

ALBERT
This is none of your business.

JOE
Ain't your house. It's your
mother's. And she's my business.

DISSOLVE TO:

LATER.

ALBERT
The first time it's cooked, the
whiskey has too much fusel oil in
it.

Joe's amazed by Albert knowledge...

JOE
So you cook it a second time?

Albert points at the second still, smaller fifty gallon size.

ALBERT
In the smaller one. It's really
the difference between corn whiskey
and moonshine. We get more money
for the corn whiskey. I work down
here while you guys are at the
diner.

Joe puts all the pieces together...

JOE
That's why you go to Detroit?

ALBERT
Patrick and I take turns. We have
to be careful because we're under
the watchful eye of the locals.
They've got it in for us as it is.

Joe nods, taking it all in...

ALBERT
I make deliveries when I go visit
Frank at the reform center.

Albert peers at Joe, unsure where his loyalties lie.

ALBERT
You won't tell anyone, right?

Joe nods.

INT. MA'S PLACE - DAY.

Basic diner Francesca and Joe run with SEVERAL CUSTOMERS sitting at both the counter and a few tables. ANGELO works as a bus boy, cleaning off dirty dishes. JOE hovers over the stove tossing hamburgers.

Francesca cuts a slice of cake from the dessert cart and delivers it to a CUSTOMER.

CUSTOMER
Home made, Francesca?

FRANCESCA
(offended)
I should charge you double.

THE SAME TOWN SHERIFF enters the diner, removes his hat...

FRANCESCA
What can I get you, Sheriff?

TOWN SHERIFF
Not here to eat, ma'am.

FRANCESCA
Well Frank can't be the problem...

TOWN SHERIFF
This is awkward...

FRANCESCA
Well what is it, Sheriff? I can't answer you if I don't know...

SHERIFF
(interrupting)
Whiskey. Want to do you know about whiskey? Perhaps you're selling it here at the diner...

Francesca rubs her hands on her apron, digesting his accusations, her prowess as a formidable woman clear.

FRANCESCA

I will have you know I run a legitimate business here. Search the place if you must, but don't come into my establishment and in front of my patrons accuse me of doing something illegal. Ever.

Joe hears the discussion and moves to the front of the diner.

JOE

Everything alright?

Francesca's deep glare paralyzing.

FRANCESCA

The sheriff was just leaving.

INT. FRANCESCA'S HOME - NIGHT.

Angelo sits at the kitchen table working on his homework. Albert bursts through the front door...

ALBERT

Where is he?!

Francesca rushes into the living room.

FRANCESCA

Who?

ALBERT

Your traitor!

Albert searches the place for Joe, frantically and hastily.

FRANCESCA

Albert what's gotten into you?!

Joe enters from the rear door. Tired, he unloads a bag onto the kitchen counter. Within beats, Albert attacks. The two men wrestle to the ground. AN ALL OUT FIGHT.

Angelo tries to separate them. Francesca grabs a BROOM and whacks Albert, trying to get him to stop.

ALBERT

You son of a bitch!

Joe gains control over Albert, getting him into a headlock.

JOE
Who's the big man, now? Huh?

Albert turns his head and spits in JOE'S FACE.

ALBERT
Satan.

With that, Albert manages to jab Joe directly into the gut, which causes him to release Albert.

ALBERT
Watch your back...

Albert bursts away...

FRANCESCA
Albert...you come back here!

INT. DETROIT BAR - DAY.

Albert, SCRATCHES ON HIS FACE, unloads the last of NUMEROUS CASES OF WHISKEY he's delivered to a bar in Detroit. The husky bar owner, cigar in mouth, is eager for more...

BAR OWNER
Put me in for double next
month...holidays round the corner.

The owner hands Albert a stack on money. Albert tips his cap and leaves the establishment.

INT. REFORM SCHOOL - DAY.

Albert waits inside a bare room, almost prison like.

The side door opens and FRANK enters. He's happy to see Albert. The brothers hug.

FRANK
How's Mama?

Albert says nothing. Frank notices Albert's SCRATCHES.

FRANK
What happened to you? What's going
on? Is Mama alright?

EXT. PRAIRIE FIELDS - NIGHT.

It's dark. Quiet. Crickets. And then HUFFING AND PUFFING. Someone is running. Fast. Trying to get away.

Whoever it is, they keep turning and looking back. Running faster and faster.

Finally the moonlight catches a glimpse of JOE'S FACE. Running for his life.

EXT. PRAIRIE FIELDS - NIGHT.

Albert's horse buggy races across the empty plains.

EXT. FRANCESCA'S HOME - NIGHT.

A SUITED MAN knocks at the front door. Albert and the buggy arrive home. Francesca answers. The suited man enters. Albert ties up the horse and rushes inside...

FRANCESCA and THE SUITED MAN sit on the sofa. ANGELO stands nearby.

SUITED MAN

He was involved in your husband's
assassination. That much we know.
He may have even done it himself.

Albert interrupts the conversation...

ALBERT

Who are you? What are you...

The suited man blatantly ignores Albert.

FRANCESCA

Albert...stay out of this.

SUITED MAN

The boys back home did not realize
you married him. They would not
have allowed it.

FRANCESCA

They don't control me.

SUITED MAN

They protect you.

Francesca rolls her eyes as if that's absurd.

SUITED MAN

Do not mourn. Do not wear black.

FRANCESCA

Where is he?

SUITED MAN

In the Detroit River.

Francesca looks at Albert who stands guard over the entry to the basement.

OLD MAN (V.O.)

Joe Benevuto was a plant.

INT. OLD MAN'S HOUSE - DAY.

The Old Man slowly relays the rest of the information...

OLD MAN

He was there to spy on your grandmother by the people who assassinated your grandfather.

DOMINIC

And the Mafia found out?

The Old Man is coy...careful how he reveals the truth.

OLD MAN

Joe tipped off the police about Albert's business. The Mafia, in turn, got a tip from the Sheriff's office. It was an incestuous web of deceit...all the way around.

DOMINIC

My father never told me any of this...

OLD MAN

He was young. He was thirsty to get involved himself. He had good teachers in front of him. Patrick had left to box. Frank eventually went into the army. And Albert taught him how to make money. He was ambitious when he started out. Like you.

Dominic, mesmerized by all this information, sips an empty ANISETTE GLASS.

OLD MAN
More anisette?

Dominic leans his glass forward accepting...

DOMINIC
My life was nothing out of the
wild, wild west...

EXT. SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY - MORNING.

FLASHBACK. Sherry drives Dominic through the entrance of
SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY

She drops Dominic off for class, gets out and races to help him carry the TAPE RECORDER, his books and a packed lunch.

SHERRY
Don't hesitate to call me if you
need anything...

DOMINIC
We've done the dry run walk. I
know the steps. What's for lunch?

SHERRY
Peanut butter and jelly.

DOMINIC
Peanut butter!!!

SHERRY
Knock 'em dead. Love you.

Sherry returns to the drivers side. She watches Dominic lug his stuff, use his cane and navigate his way to class.

INT. LECTURE HALL - DAY.

DEAN MCKINNEY, 40's, professor-like, suit, bow tie, dark rimmed glasses, addresses COUNTLESS LAW STUDENTS in a stadium seating classroom.

DEAN MCKINNEY
You are about to engage in the most
intense learning experience of your
life. Most of you will fail.
(MORE)

DEAN MCKINNEY (cont'd)
But the best of you, will be our
future lawyers.

DOMINIC sits at an aisle seat. MITCH MADSEN, handsome,
rugged and intently listening, sits next to Dominic.

DEAN MCKINNEY
Over eighty percent of you scored
in the upper six hundreds of your
law school aptitude tests...

Dominic nudges Mitch.

DOMINIC
Not me.

MITCH
Me either.

DOMINIC
My wife did better than I did!

MITCH
Maybe we're in the wrong class.

DOMINIC
This is Cooking 101?

Mitch laughs aloud, creating a disturbance that McKinney
notices.

DEAN MCKINNEY
Mr. Sposeto...I'd like to see you
in my office after class.

Dominic slides in his seat as if to hide.

MITCH
(under his breath)
Buy you a drink later...in case I
got you suspended.

INT. DEAN MCKINNEY'S OFFICE - DAY.

Dominic enters McKinney's office as if he's a third grader
sent to the principal's office.

DEAN MCKINNEY
Ah...Sposeto...come on in. Three
steps to the right and two forward
and you'll find a chair...

Dominic disregards the instructions, instead he capably finds his way around with his cane.

DEAN MCKINNEY
I wanted to talk to you about something...

DOMINIC
I'm sorry for the disturbance, Sir.

DEAN MCKINNEY
You are no disturbance.

Dominic realizes this isn't about the commotion...

DEAN MCKINNEY
I understand you have an allowance to hire readers.

Dominic's surprised, suddenly

DOMINIC
Yes...but my wife will be able to do most of it.

DEAN MCKINNEY
You are Santa Clara's first blind student. I want to see you succeed.

SIMON AND GARFUNKALS "THE SOUND OF SILENCE" CARRIES US THROUGH A MONTAGE OF DOMINIC'S LAW SCHOOL YEARS...

INT. LECTURE HALL - DAY.

COUNTLESS STUDENTS listen to a lecture from Dean McKinney. All take notes, except Dominic who listens as his recorder tapes the lecture. Mitch feverishly writes until Dominic nudges him and points at the recorder as if to say, "Relax, I'll share this with you." Mitch's writing slows.

SONG
*Hello darkness, my old friend.
I've come to talk with you again.
Because a vision softly creeping.
Left its seeds while I was
sleeping.*

INT. DOMINIC AND SHERRY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT.

Dominic opens a SECOND BOTTLE OF WINE. Sherry finishes clearing dishes. The sink is already overloaded. Dominic opens another LAW BOOK. Sherry returns to the study session and though exhausted, regroups to work with Dominic.

SONG

*And the vision that was planted in
my brain. Still remains. Within
in the sound of silence. In
restless dreams I walked alone.*

EXT. SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY - PARKING LOT - DAY.

Rain pours down. A CAR RACES INTO THE PARKING LOT passed Mitch and Dominic who dance their way through the puddles, running late. Another car ZOOMS PASSED THEM drenching Dominic. Mitch can help but laugh.

SONG

*Narrow streets of cobblestone.
'Neath the halo of a street lamp.
I turned my collar to the cold and
damp. When my eyes were stabbed by
the flash of neon light.*

INT. ANOTHER LECTURE HALL - DAY.

The class, NOW FEWER, take an exam. THE PROFESSOR administers the test one on one to Dominic in hushed tones.

SONG

*That split the night. And touched
the sound of silence. And in the
naked light I saw Ten thousand
people, maybe more.*

INT. TENBROEK'S HOUSE - STUDY - DAY.

Dominic and Tenbroek sit opposite each other in his office. Law books scatter the desk. Tenbroek teaches Dominic Braille. It's a struggle as Dominic would rather just listen to a tape. But Tenbroek reaches for his hand and MAKES HIM USE THE BRAILLE SYSTEM.

SONG

*People talking without speaking.
People hearing without listening.
(MORE)*

SONG (cont'd)
*People writing songs that voices
 never share. And no one dared...*

INT. SWIMMING POOL - NIGHT.

Dominic and Mitch swim at the school pool. Stress relief. Dominic surges ahead by almost a body length. Mitch fights to keep up. Dominic now leads by two lengths. He hits the wall first, Mitch finally finishes and SPLASHES WATER at Dominic. Mitch is exhausted, Dominic could go again.

SONG
*...disturb the sound of silence.
 "Fools", said I, "You do not know
 Silence like a cancer grows.*

INT. MARY AND ANGELO'S HOME - DAY.

SUNDAY ITALIAN FAMILY GATHERING. Angelo and Dominic share a laugh about something. TOOTSIE and TOPSY, and their HUSBANDS are also seated. Francesca, in a wheelchair, looks ill. Mary and Sherry serve the meal, including a steaming dish of lasagna. Francesca rolls her eyes. Angelo pours wine.

SONG
*Hear my words that I might teach
 you. Take my arms that I might
 reach you"*

INT. LECTURE HALL - DAY.

Dominic addresses the classroom delivering a BRIEF. Dean McKinney watches. NOTICEABLY EVEN FEWER STUDENTS REMAIN. Dominic struggles. Mitch leans forward from the first row...

MITCH
 It's the one about the carrot case.

Dominic settles back down, comfortable again and continues.

SONG
*But my words, like silent raindrops
 fell and echoed in the wells of
 silence.*

INT. MORTUARY ROSARY ROOM - NIGHT.

MOURNERS. Flower arrangements. A open casket. DOMINIC AND SHERRY make their way up to say their good-byes to

FRANCESCA, who looks peaceful in the coffin. Sherry helps Dominic place his hand on Francesca's. ANGELO and MARY follow. Angelo fights to maintain his composure.

SONG

*And the people bowed and prayed to
the neon God they made. And the
sign flashed out its warning. In
the words that it was forming...*

INT. DOMINIC AND SHERRY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT.

Dominic battles to stay awake. A THICK BOOK "CONTRACTS" sits before him. Sherry reads from another CONTRACTS book. She fights her own yawns. She dips her hand in a glass and splashes water in Dominic's face. She then leans over and kisses him. Again. Romance blooms. The CONTRACT book falls off the table and they head for the bedroom.

SONG

*And the sign said, "The words of
the prophets are written on the
subway walls...and tenement halls."
And whispered in the sounds of
silence.*

INT. MITCH'S CAR - DAY.

A car travels down a street. As the headlights pass us, we're inside.

MITCH

Slow down! You're going thirty!
Slow down!

Mitch sits in his GRADUATION GOWN.

MITCH

Car coming up on the right.
Steady. The sign says slow.

DOMINIC

Not good with signs...

Dominic DRIVES! Both hands clutch the steering wheel.

DOMINIC

This is a cinch!

MITCH
Okay...slow down...you're gonna
pass the parking lot. Twenty
feet...Easy...

Dominic extends his arm out the window as if he's done this a million times, looking ever so cool.

MITCH
Brakes...slow...

THE PARKING LOT IS ON THE RIGHT. We see NUMEROUS ARRIVALS, LOTS OF CARS. THEY BEGIN TO SPOT DOMINIC DRIVING. A COUPLE ACTUALLY SCATTER AWAY.

MITCH
Right turn...just like we
practiced.

Dominic turns right with amazing precision.

DOMINIC
Are there people around?

Dominic makes it into the parking lot.

MITCH
Everywhere...don't kill anyone.

CAPS AND GOWNS dominate. Family. Dominic laughs out loud.

MITCH
Concentrate!

An OPEN PARKING SPACE appears. AND SO DOES DEAN MCKINNEY, who cannot believe his eyes.

MITCH
Oh shit...

DOMINIC
What is it?

MORE GRADUATES POINT AT DOMINIC. CHEER HIM ON. "GO DOM!" A CHANT..."DOM! DOM! DOM!".

MITCH
Just concentrate. Parking space.
Start your turn into it. Shit.

DOMINIC
What is it?

Dominic inches his way into the spot.

MITCH
Just park the damn car!

He does. They park.

DOMINIC
Piece of cake.

DEAN MCKINNEY
Have you no regard for human life,
Sposeto?

Dominic turns the ignition off.

EXT. SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY - GRADUATION - DAY.

The GRADUATES receive diplomas. What started as a HUGE CLASS has dwindled considerably.

Dean McKinney sits next to SEVERAL PROFESSORS.

DOMINIC sits beside Sherry and Tenbroek. Directly behind him we see MITCH and his PARENTS.

Up on the dais is GOVERNOR PAT BROWN conducting the ceremony and passing out diplomas.

GOVERNOR BROWN
Dominic Sposeto.

Dominic and Sherry rise and she leads him to the dais.

WE SEE MARY and ANGELO sitting proud in the audience.

Dominic's big moment. Brown presses the diploma into his hands.

GOVERNOR BROWN
Congratulations, Mr. Sposeto. You
inspire anyone who says they can't.
Do big things in your career...

The ENTIRE CLASS stands in an ovation, honoring Dominic's commitment...no one more proud than SHERRY.

INT. LEO SULLIVAN'S OFFICE - DAY.

Leo smokes furiously as he mentors Dominic, who listens intently as if committing his words to memory.

The ashtray overflows. Their two glasses of SCOTCH are empty. Leo refills both as he pontificates.

LEO

First and foremost...you are a criminal defense attorney. Your job is to defend criminals. The majority of the time they will be guilty. You cannot allow that guilt to influence you in any way.

Leo takes a swig from his scotch glass.

DOMINIC

They can't all be guilty.

LEO

They got arrested. They're in trouble because they found trouble. Trouble does not come looking for them. Drink up, boy.

Dominic does as he's told...enthusiastically.

LEO

People's appearance can many times affect the way they are viewed. High fashion translates money. Dirty clothes can mean welfare. For you, pointless. But you can see with your ears. And the truth always lies in the speech patterns. Remember that.

Leo refills Dominic's scotch AGAIN.

DOMINIC

I'm good, thanks.

LEO

Don't be so uptight. See how you listened to me adding scotch to your glass? Do that in the courtroom. Listen for details. You have sympathy on your side because you're blind. The jury will automatically side with you.

DOMINIC

But...

LEO
(adamantly)
Use it.

Leo polishes off his Scotch. Adds more.

LEO
Insist your clients always tell you the truth. Guilty or innocent, you need the facts. Don't listen to this bullshit that "as long as I don't know my clients are guilty, I can work with them." Screw that. You need to know the whole truth so that you can be ready to react. You might be able to get a case dismissed on a technicality. Maybe the police screw something up. Happens. They withhold evidence. A witness bails. Anything can happen. Say it.

Dominic's speech is slightly slurred.

DOMINIC
"Anything can happen."

LEO
But if I don't know the whole truth I can't react. Say it.

DOMINIC
"But if I don't know the whole truth I can't react."

Dominic burps. Leo lights up another smoke.

INT. DOMINIC AND SHERRY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT.

Dominic and Sherry lie on the couch. The television is on.

DOMINIC
I'm gonna open a Legal Aid and Public Defender Office in Santa Clara.

SHERRY
That's wonderful, Dom. Much rather hear you talk like that.

Dominic's silence speaks volumes.

SHERRY

I hear your phone conversations. I know the boys from the neighborhood want you to help them.

DOMINIC

I can't turn my back on my people.

SHERRY

They're not your people. They're unscrupulous. Just be smart. Think about the future...our future.

DOMINIC

I have nine months to prepare for the bar. Nine months...

SHERRY

A lot's gonna change in nine months...

These words trip Dominic. A moment.

DOMINIC

You mean...

SHERRY

Yes, Dom. You're going to be a father.

They hug. Sherry rubs Dominic's hair. A joyous moment.

INT. TENBROEK'S HOUSE - STUDY - NIGHT.

Tenbroek prepares Dominic for the bar.

TENBROEK

Everyone, even the guilty man...especially the guilty man, needs someone to stand with him.

DOMINIC

Even my kind, right?

TENBROEK

You mean the blind?

DOMINIC

No, the Italians.

TENBROEK

The Christian lawyer does not ask himself "how do I get this guilty person off?" Instead, the real question is "Will I stand by this flawed human being and speak a word on his behalf?" Blind. Italian. Black. Homosexual. Perverted.

INT. DOMINIC AND SHERRY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT.

A VERY PREGNANT SHERRY and Dominic paint the baby's room a bright yellow. Dominic sits off to the side while Sherry does most of the work.

SHERRY

Okay...so John is fired from his job. Too proud to apply for unemployment benefits, he used all the family savings to feed them and pay the bills he could.

Sherry dips the paint roller back into the paint and continues painting.

SHERRY

One of the kids gets sick, but John cannot afford to get him medical attention and won't go to the state clinic because he won't accept charity.

DOMINIC

And of course...the kid dies.

SHERRY

Tell me what crime was committed and what your defense would be...

Dominic sighs...Sherry paints.

DOMINIC

Well the crime is Voluntary Manslaughter and my defense...

MUSIC overplays as we leave them. Sherry stops painting listening intently to Dominic's convincing words...

INT. STATE BAR EXAM - DAY.

Dominic sits opposite a BAR EXAM TESTER who facilitates the bar. Sherry waits outside, anxious and ready to deliver.

INT. MATERNITY WARD - DAY.

CLOSE UP on the EYES OF BABY MICHAEL. We pull back to reveal Dominic leaning over him, all smiles.

DOMINIC
Welcome to the Sposeto family,
Michael. I'm your father.

Dominic reaches down and lifts Michael up and holds him against his chest. Dominic turns and walks a few steps to

SHERRY who lies comfortably in bed.

SHERRY
Careful, Dom. Watch the neck...

DOMINIC
I got him.

Dominic hands the baby to Sherry and sits on the edge of the bed. A new beginning.

EXT. SAN DAMIANO RETREAT HOUSE - DANVILLE - DAY.

Dominic strolls the grounds with BROTHER JOACHIM (FORMERLY HIS CHILDHOOD FRIEND ANDY).

BROTHER JOACHIM
High school was a long time ago.

DOMINIC
Who'd ever thought I'd end up blind
and you'd end up a Franciscan,
Andy?

BROTHER JOACHIM
I remember how you wanted to play
football with us and always wound
up with a bloody nose.

The two share a laugh.

DOMINIC
Do you regret not playing pro ball?

BROTHER JOACHIM
Sometimes...to be honest. But I
like this life. It's peaceful.
I'm close to God.

DOMINIC
I gotta get used to calling you
Brother Joachim...

BROTHER JOACHIM
You still going to mass these days?

DOMINIC
I paid my dues. I'll leave that to
you.

BROTHER JOACHIM
The Lord always has time for us,
Dom. We should make time for him.

DOMINIC
I didn't come to this retreat to
get a lecture. I have a busy
career. I just passed the bar. I
have a wife and a child.

BROTHER JOACHIM
Don't lose your faith. It will
provide an anchor for your success.

INT. LEGAL AID OFFICE - DAY.

THE SIGN READS **DOMINIC SPOSETO -- ATTORNEY AT LAW**

INT. DOMINIC'S LAW OFFICE - DAY.

DOMINIC'S ASSISTANT enters his office and carries an envelope
in her hand. Dominic finishes a phone call.

DOMINIC
...I'll take the case. Pay the
retainer and I think I can get the
charges reduced if not dropped.

Dominic hangs up.

DOMINIC'S ASSISTANT
Mr. Sposeto, a man just dropped
this off for you and told me not to
open it.

Dominic accepts the envelope and she leaves. He opens it and finds A STACK OF CRISP HUNDRED DOLLAR BILLS. He picks up the phone and dials.

DOMINIC

You guys already paid my fees.

MAN'S VOICE

Aspette! You win, we win. We need guys like you on our side.

DOMINIC

I was happy to help.

MAN'S VOICE

First of many...

Dominic hangs up the phone and flips his fingers through the stack of hundreds.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY.

Dominic, in a suit, folds up his cane and places it at his desk, moves to the jury box and instructs...

DOMINIC

Evidence is like a jigsaw puzzle.
You can't see the whole picture
until it's completed.

THE JURY LISTENS ATTENTIVELY.

DOMINIC

And there are pieces of this puzzle
that just don't seem to be part of
it. I can't see it, but you will
be able to see everything. And
I'll prove it to you.

INT. COURTHOUSE HALLWAY - DAY.

Dominic strolls down the hallway, cane in hand. He's already rather adept at handling his business.

A FELLOW PROSECUTOR approaches.

PROSECUTOR

Hey Sposeto!

Dominic stops.

DOMINIC
Yes...Mr. Calhoun.

PROSECUTOR
How'd you know it was me?

DOMINIC
I know voices. Are you ready to
take the deal on the Musili's case?

PROSECUTOR
Look...I know you're doing it pro
bono.

DOMINIC
And that's your business because...

PROSECUTOR
Mrs. Musili has two new Cadillacs
and a second home in Reno.

The Prosecutor moves on, leaving Dominic stumped.

DOMINIC
I'll be a son of a bitch...

INT. DOMINIC SPOSETO'S OFFICE - DAY.

Another envelope FILLED WITH MONEY. Dominic smells the
bills. He picks up the phone.

DOMINIC
This is excessive...Really. It's
my job...Seriously? What time?

EXT. SANTA CLARA AIRPORT - DAY.

A car pulls up on the tarmac. A SMALL PRIVATE JET sits on
the runway, propellers turning as it prepares for flight.

DOMINIC'S DRIVER parks and rushes around to let Dominic out.
He grabs his luggage and leads him up the ramp into the jet.

INT. PRIVATE JET - DAY.

AN ITALIAN FIGUREHEAD sits in one seat, cocktail in hand.
Dominic takes a seat across the aisle from him. A BEAUTIFUL
STEWARDESS approaches with Dominic's cocktail.

STEWARDESS

Now if there is anything else I can get you during the flight, don't hesitate to ask, Mr. Sposeto.

DOMINIC

Thank you very much.

Dominic takes the drink. Sips.

ITALIAN FIGUREHEAD

We travel in style.

Dominic spits up his cocktail.

DOMINIC

I didn't know you were even here.

ITALIAN FIGUREHEAD

I keep a low profile.

Dominic settles back in his seat. Sips his cocktail. He's snake bitten.

INT. DOMINIC AND SHERRY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT.

Sherry changes Michael's diaper. The phone rings. She answers it, multi-tasking.

SHERRY

(gets agitated)

No...I'm sorry. He's out of town on business...Reno...He's with a client. I'll give him the message...I really don't know when...Look Mister, crime doesn't pay, does it?

INT. RENO CASINO - NIGHT.

Dominic sits with THE ITALIAN FIGUREHEAD at a BLACKJACK TABLE. A MASSIVE STACK OF CHIPS sits in front of him. So do several cocktail glasses.

ITALIAN FIGUREHEAD

Don't be taking advantage of my friend here just because he can't see you.

DEALER

I have an eight showing, Mr.
Sposeto.

DOMINIC

Hit me.

The dealer takes a card from the deck and exposes an "8".

ITALIAN FIGUREHEAD

You got a fucking eight. Another
twenty one.

DOMINIC

I like this game.

The dealer busts and pays the table.

TWO GORGEOUS WOMEN approach and greet the Italian Man.

GORGEOUS WOMAN

Who's your good looking friend?

SUITED ITALIAN MAN

That's Mr. Sposeto to you girls.
And hands off, he's married.

But the lure alone tempts Dominic who lowers his drink and
perks up.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY.

Dominic stands at his defense table addressing the court.

DOMINIC

Your Honor, my client here is
prepared to answer to the
prostitution charges.

But there is no one seated in the defendant's chair.

JUDGE

Where is she?

Dominic reaches around, but finds only an empty chair.

DOMINIC

Where did she go?

SMASH CUT:

INT. COURTROOM - DAY.

Another trial. Dominic addresses the jury.

DOMINIC

This is the era of civil rights! I
beg you to listen to my defendant.
Why should any man be reduced to a
one word racial slur?

Dominic points to a BLACK DEFENDANT, handcuffed and shackled.

DOMINIC

Look at him. Would we do this to a
white man accused of petty theft?

SMASH CUT:

INT. COURTROOM - DAY.

Dominic stands beside THREE YOUNG COLLEGE STUDENTS.

DOMINIC

...but Your Honor, we must
recognize the severity of police
officers breaking into a
fraternity house...or any
house...without cause and search
for contraband without first
knocking and announcing their
presence. Privacy is still
inestimable.

INT. DOMINIC AND SHERRY'S APARTMENT - DAY.

Dominic returns home from a day at the office. Eager.
Sherry appears from the back room.

SHERRY

I saw you on TV!

DOMINIC

They listened! I did it!

SHERRY

See you're changing the world, Dom.

DOMINIC

Well I don't know about that, but
from now on cops have rules, too!

SHERRY
And those boy's futures are
unblemished.

DOMINIC
Hey...Mitch is coming over for
dinner...is that okay?

Sherry looks disappointed.

SHERRY
Dom...I thought we were going to
spend a quiet evening together.

DOMINIC
Ah...I'm sorry, darling. It's just
that my business is exploding. I
want to ask Mitch to partner with
me. I could use the extra hand.

SHERRY
How about this weekend then?

DOMINIC
Reno...

SHERRY
Dom...you've been going there every
weekend...

DOMINIC
So what...now you're keeping tabs
on me?

This is not how Sherry wanted to do it, but...

SHERRY
I just thought you'd like to know
you're going to be a father again.

THE DOORBELL RINGS.

DOMINIC
(caught off guard)
What did you say?

SHERRY
I have to get the door.

Dominic reaches for Sherry, but she's gone.

SHERRY
Hi Mitch...come on in.

Mitch enters the room. Dominic greets him.

MITCH

Can I get your autograph?!

DOMINIC

I just found out we're having
another baby...

Mitch reacts with excitement. Sherry can't help but be excited, even though she's harboring disappointment.

MITCH

That's fantastic news!

Dominic reaches for her. Big kiss. And a hug.

DOMINIC

That is the best news I've heard
today. I have an idea. Let's all
three go out and celebrate!

SHERRY

And who's gonna watch Michael?

DOMINIC

We'll take him with us... This is
a great night and I want to share
it with my two favorite people.

INT. CLASSY RESTAURANT - NIGHT.

BABY SQUALLING. LOUD CRYING overwhelms the room.

Dominic, Mitch and Sherry sit in a large booth. Michael lays in a stroller next to the table. Sherry tries to comfort him with a RATTLE. HE ONLY CRIES LOUDER.

DOMINIC

Darling, can you do anything?

SHERRY

I knew this was a bad idea.

AS THE CRYING PERSISTS, DIRTY LOOKS ARRIVE FROM OTHER TABLES.

MITCH

Babies will be babies.

SHERRY

Listen, you two stay. I'm gonna take Michael home and try to put him to sleep.

DOMINIC

But honey, this is our night to celebrate.

SHERRY

Dom...I'm sorry. We have a responsibility here. (tersely) In case you forgot.

MITCH

Why don't we all just leave? We can get the food to go...

DOMINIC

Not from this place. They gave us their best table. You don't want them to think we...

SHERRY

(interrupting)

I said...you two stay. I'll be at home. With Michael. And...

Sherry rubs her stomach...

SHERRY

...our new angel.

Sherry looks at Dominic, part of her clearly wishes he'd get up from the table and join her.

INT. JUDGES CHAMBERS - DAY.

Dominic sits in front of JUDGE REYNOLDS in a closed door meeting. THE PROSECUTOR, SIMMONS, sits next to Dominic.

SIMMONS

No deal. We have witnesses who will place your client at the scene of the crime.

DOMINIC

Your honor, with all due respect to Mr. Simmons here...my client is an upstanding businessman...

JUDGE REYNOLDS

Businessman? Your client is a gangster, Counselor. And you know it. He burned a nightclub to the ground. This county will not put up with underworld activities. If he's convicted, I intend to make an example of him.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Packed courtroom. Press. Photographers. NOISY. Tenbroek's there. So is Leo Sullivan.

THE ITALIAN FIGUREHEAD sits in the front row surrounded by SUPPORTERS. Dominic sits beside the ITALIAN DEFENDANT, 20, slicked back hair, confident in his attorney.

Simmons stirs. Judge Reynolds slams his gavel.

JUDGE REYNOLDS

Quiet! Proceed, Mr. Sposeto...

Dominic pats the defendant on the hand, gets up and moves to the jury box.

DOMINIC

I want you to consider the three principles of law. The presumption of innocence, the government's burden of proof and the prosecution's burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

The jury intently listens.

DOMINIC

What that means is that if you think it's possible that my client committed this crime, you must find him not guilty. If you think it's probable that he committed this crime, you must find him not guilty.

The Italian Figurehead and his supporters cling to Dominic's every word.

DOMINIC

If you think it's highly likely that he committed this crime, you must find him not guilty.

Simmons fidgets at his desk.

SIMMONS
(under his breath)
Nauseating...

DOMINIC
The government said they would
supply three witnesses in this
case. Only one showed up. Why?
Perhaps the others never existed.

SIMMONS
Your honor!

Reynolds waves his hand for Simmons to keep quiet.

DOMINIC
And as to the last witness who so
dramatically pointed out my client
here earlier...come now. It's not
hard to figure out who to point to
in this courtroom. Why, I think I
could even do it.

THE JURY CHUCKLES.

DOMINIC
But ask yourself this. Why
couldn't he point him out in a line
up?

Dominic takes a moment. Quiet. Photographers wait. The
Italian Figurehead. Supporters. And Simmons. And then
Dominic drives it home...

DOMINIC
The fact is that the prosecution's
case does not add up!!! For that
reason and that reason alone...YOU
MUST ACQUIT!

TENBROEK's impressed. So is LEO SULLIVAN.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. OLD MAN'S HOUSE - DAY.

The Old Man rises from the table.

OLD MAN

You'd made quite a name for yourself that day. When that boy walked out of there a free man, you wrote your own ticket, didn't you?

DOMINIC

I worked my ass off for many different clients.

The Old Man paces the living room.

OLD MAN

The higher you climbed up the ladder, the further you got from your roots.

DOMINIC

That's not true.

He switches sides now on Dominic's right.

OLD MAN

Mr. Sposeto...we've all seen you on television. With reporters. Traveling the country. Defending the masses.

The Old Man moves back to his left ear...

OLD MAN

And now you're running for Congress? Politicians are snakes. Some more poisonous than others.

DOMINIC

I can make a difference.

The Old Man leans in, whispering in Dominic's ear...

OLD MAN

The Black Hand still reaches across the ocean, doesn't it? Don't ever forget it. Your father hasn't.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BAL-KONI NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT.

FLASHBACK. Outside the family establishment. Bright lights. A huge sign reading BAL KONI welcomes GUESTS AS THEY ARRIVE.

INT. BAL-KONI NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT.

Angelo, now a young adult, runs the popular nightclub hosting innumerable GUESTS. Music plays. Dancing in the center of the room. RICO, the BARTENDER, serves cocktails discreetly to a YOUNG COUPLE sitting at the bar.

ANGELO
(he winks)
Take good care of my guests
tonight, Rico.

RICO
You know it, boss.

ANGELO
Especially the pretty brunette at
the end there...

ON A YOUNG MARY, sitting with FRIENDS taking in the sights
and sounds.

RICO
Mary Jaquinta?

ANGELO
You know her?

Angelo's eyes light up confirming love at first sight.

RICO
Shall I send her a glass with
compliments from the owner?

INT. BAL-KONI NIGHTCLUB - LATER.

The nightclub thrives with a fun energy. Angelo leads Mary
to a quiet corner. They have to talk loud over the MUSIC.

ANGELO
Anytime you and your friends want
to come in...just call. I'll save
the best table for you.

MARY
You confirm the rumors.

ANGELO
What's that?

MARY

The Sposeto boys are charmers.

ANGELO

You pretty up the place...

Angelo's flirtations unsettle Mary.

MARY

My uncle don't like your kind.

ANGELO

My kind is your kind, no?

MARY

My kind don't have your reputation.

Angelo's charm supersedes any rumors. Mary cannot resist it.

ANGELO

Come on! Do I look like
threatening?

Mary chooses to sway the subject...

MARY

I lost my father when I was young,
too.

ANGELO

What happened?

MARY

Mine accident. Explosion. Mom
died not too long after that. I
live with my aunt and uncle.

Angelo cannot resist her beauty.

ANGELO

How about dinner sometime?

MARY

Didn't you ever read Romeo and
Juliet?

ANGELO

Might have. What about them?

MARY

Forbidden by their families to even
communicate, much less have a
relationship.

ANGELO

I own three nightclubs. We'll have dinner at the one furthest away from your uncle's house. It will be our Shakespearean secret. Who knows where it will lead...

INT. UNCLE SAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT.

UNCLE SAM, 50's, obstinate, old school Italian man argues with Mary at the dinner table. AUNT MARIA remains quiet.

MARY

You cannot tell me who I can and cannot marry!

Mary's temper flares, so does Sam's.

UNCLE SAM

I will not have you involved with Mafia people!

MARY

Don't be ridiculous. They are not Mafia.

UNCLE SAM

They own nightclubs. Do you know what goes on inside those houses of ill repute?

MARY

Do you? You don't know what you are talking about! Aunt Maria...

Mary raises her hands up in the classic Italian manner, looking to her aunt for support.

AUNT MARIA

You should listen to your uncle, Mary. He knows what's best.

Mary gasps...

UNCLE SAM

My brother is turning over in his grave. Right now.

Mary rolls her eyes.

UNCLE SAM

You disgrace his name.

Mary unloads...

MARY

Disgrace his name? I have news for you, Uncle Sam. The era of prearranged Italian marriages is over. I will not let you or anyone else tell me what I can and cannot do with my life.

Uncle Sam rises, slamming his hand on the table...

UNCLE SAM

They are a corrupt people!

MARY

If you're not there, I'll know where we stand.

Mary gets up, she leans down and respectfully kisses her aunt. She glares at her uncle, turns and leaves. Aunt Maria glares at Sam.

UNCLE SAM

What did I say?

INT. ST. ANTHONY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH - DAY.

A wedding of weddings. Packed filled church.

Mary, a stunning bride, approaches the altar escorted by
UNCLE SAM.

ANGELO, in a tuxedo, eagerly awaits her arrival. Sam begrudgingly gives Mary's hand to Angelo. Mary reverently kisses her uncle.

STANDING BESIDE ANGELO are ushers PATRICK, FRANK and ALBERT.

In the first pew is FRANCESCA.

MARY AND ANGELO LOOK DEEPLY INTO EACH OTHER'S EYES.

PRIEST

We are gathered here today...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BAL-KONI NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT.

WEDDING RECEPTION. Dancing. Celebrating. Champagne flows.

Mary and Angelo enjoy their first dance.

Francesca watches them and then moves to Sam and Maria.

FRANCESCA

I hope your niece proves good
enough for my son.

Sam would like to attack but Maria pinches him under the arm to keep control.

Sam looks around the joint, sizing it up...

UNCLE SAM

Let's hope so. This is a lovely...

FRANCESCA

...house of ill repute?

Sam really wants to attack now. Maria grabs his hand tight.

FRANCESCA

My son keeps nothing from me.

Sam forces an awkward smile. Francesca moves on to other guests, passed a mountain of wedding gifts displayed next to a three tier wedding cake where she spots

TWO NEW GUESTS, just arriving.

FRANCESCA

Look what the Iowa winds blew in...

IT IS THE OLD MAN and THE OLD WOMAN, BUT IN THEIR MUCH YOUNGER YEARS. The ITALIAN GOLD HORN he wears confirms it.

OLD MAN

*Del male non fare e paura non
avere...*

FRANCESCA

Do no evil and have no fear.

They hug. A moment.

OLD MAN

How you holding up, Cesca?

FRANCESCA

I still miss the old country.

OLD MAN

Domenico should be here with us.

FRANCESCA
Tell that to God.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT.

Mary ZOOMS DOWN THE HIGHWAY in a station wagon late at night.
She passes a freeway sign which leads to

MICHIGAN.

Mary's noticeably nervous. She takes a few deep breaths.
Checks her makeup in the mirror. Dabs her lipstick to make
sure it has not smeared.

MARY
(to herself)
I'm not cut out for this. What if
they stop me? Okay...Mary...be
calm. They are not going to stop
you. Just smile. You're pretty.

Mary sighs again. She looks over her shoulder to the back
seat, where cases of whiskey are strategically masked.

MARY
(to herself)
If they want to see in the
trunk...Angelo said tell them it's
stuck and you can't get it open.
(convincing herself)...They won't
stop you.

MARY APPROACHES THE "WELCOME TO MICHIGAN" BORDER SIGN.

Mary's speed slows. SEVERAL CARS IN FRONT OF HER. Brake
lights. The longer it takes, the more nervous she becomes.

MARY
(to herself)
I can't do this anymore. I won't.
I'll just tell Angelo. No more.

TWO CARS TO GO.

MARY APPROACHES THE BORDER PATROL. One last deep breath.

She pulls up to the BORDER OFFICER.

BORDER OFFICER
Evening, ma'am.

MARY
Good evening.

BORDER OFFICER
Where are you headed?

MARY
Detroit.

MARY'S HEART THUMPS FASTER, ALMOST LOUDER.

BORDER OFFICER
Kinda late to be driving out here
alone, no?

MARY
Going there to surprise my family.

The officer looks inside the windows of the car. It seems like forever.

Mary looks into the rear view mirror.

The officer returns to her gaze.

BORDER OFFICER
Have a good night...

MARY
You, too.

Mary pulls through the border. She did it. She looks in the mirror again. Nervously laughs.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY.

A BABY'S CRY.

Mary, draped in hospital wear, holds newborn baby DOMINIC in her arms. She beams with delight. Angelo sits bedside.

MARY
All things change today, Angelo.

Angelo gets up and moves to the window, peers outside.

MARY
I have a baby to take care of now.

Angelo, seemingly preoccupied, moves back bedside, looks lovingly at his son.

ANGELO
You have given me a boy to carry on
the Sposeto name.

Angelo kisses Mary on the forehead.

MARY
Be happy, Angelo.

BABY DOMINIC CRIES. He captures Mary's heart.

INT. BAL-KONI NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT.

Business booms. Packed nightclub. Angelo peruses the GUESTS like a detective would. He approaches RICO.

ANGELO
You call me the minute you see any
faces you don't know, you hear?

RICO
I told you I would.

ANGELO
They will not use this place to
deal their crap. I don't care
whose orders I disobey. You see
anything exchanging hands--I want
to know about it.

Rico nods obediently.

Angelo returns to scanning the crowd. He passes

TWO ITALIAN GENTLEMEN, well dressed, who eye him as he
passes. They say nothing. They don't have to.

INT. ST. ANTHONY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH - DAY.

A PRIEST HOLDS BABY DOMINIC above the baptismal font. MARY
AND ANGELO flank the priest.

PRIEST
St. Gregory told us baptism is
God's most beautiful bestowal. Sin
is buried in the water. Anointing
is priestly and royal. The
enlightenment radiates light.
Clothing veils our shame. Bath
washes it away and the seal guards
us under God's Lordship.

The priest anoints Baby Dominic.

PRIEST

Lord, protect your new baby Dominic
from the sins of the world. Keep
Satan away and let him thrive in
your great world.

THESE WORDS HIT ANGELO HARD. He stares at the Priest and then at his BABY BOY. He turns, eyeing FRANCESCA, who winks at her son, as if to wipe away worry.

SMASH CUT

A MASSIVE EXPLOSION. FIRE. SMOKE BILLOWS FROM THE TOP OF

EXT. BAL-KONI NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT.

The NIGHTCLUB in flames. This is no small fire. There are NO PEOPLE AROUND. The neon sign topples to the ground as we watch BAL-KONI split apart in shards. A FAINT SIREN gets LOUDER.

EXT. AVON LAKE NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT.

Another massive EXPLOSION. Building bursts apart. More destruction. The AVON LAKE sign topples.

EXT. FORT DES MOINES BAR AND GRILL - NIGHT.

We hear FOOTSTEPS in the gravel outside this Grill. Within seconds, FIRE ERUPTS FROM THE BACK OF THE ESTABLISHMENT.

The FOOTSTEPS can be heard RUNNING AWAY.

EXT. BAL-KONI NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT.

FIREFIGHTERS FIGHT THE BLAZE. Onlookers watch as the establishment slowly disintegrates.

A CAR SCREECHES. Angelo BOLTS OUT OF THE CAR. Furious. He kicks the ground. He expected this. SOON OTHERS APPROACH.

HE WATCHES THE BUILDING IMplode.

INT. MARY AND ANGELO'S HOME - DES MOINES - DAY.

Mary feeds Dominic his bottled milk. Angelo paces the kitchen. Frantic.

ANGELO
We'll rebuild. Bigger and better.
They can't scare me. Fuck these
people.

THE PHONE RINGS. They both stare at the phone, unsure if they should answer.

MARY
You gonna hide the rest of your
life?

Angelo grabs the phone.

OLD MAN (V.O.)
It's time to leave Des Moines.

ANGELO
I'm not afraid of them.

OLD MAN (V.O.)
This isn't about you. It's about
your family. It's about that
little baby.

Angelo looks at Mary, who caresses Dominic's head, softly kissing him. Angelo fights the decision...

ANGELO
I can't let them win.

Angelo kicks the nearby trash can sending it flying across the room, splattering garbage everywhere.

MARY
Angelo!

OLD MAN (V.O.)
The greatest test of courage is to
bear defeat without losing heart.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. OLD MAN'S HOUSE - DAY.

Dominic lifts his napkin to his lips. It's a long moment.

DOMINIC
It was you.

The Old Man clears his throat, perhaps gaining his composure.

DOMINIC
You brought us here.

OLD MAN
Your grandmother and I grew up
together in Catania. I was on the
ocean liner that night she sang.
She took all our breath's away.

A moment.

OLD MAN
The Mafia boys wanted to bring
drugs and prostitution in to
collect more money. Our side
wanted no part of it. Nightclubs
are trouble...

Dominic sighs.

DOMINIC
So you know about The Amber Room.

OLD MAN
How the Americans say, "the apple
does not fall far from the tree."

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE AMBER ROOM - NIGHT.

FLASHBACK. Dominic shakes hands with one of his partners,
CARL, on the success of their first club.

CARL
Looks like your nightclub's a hit,
Boss.

PACKED ROOM. YOUNG CROWD. ROCK BAND ON STAGE.

DOMINIC
I hope there are lots of pretty
ladies here...

CARL
Overflowing.

YOUNG COUPLES DANCE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DANCE FLOOR.

DOMINIC

We have the booking agency now. I expect top musical acts to play in here every weekend.

CARL

We're already booked four months in advance.

DOMINIC

And make sure those hookers are gone. I don't want any of that kind of stuff in here. You hear?

CARL

Yes, sir.

Carl moves on.

A YOUNG HIPPIE WOMAN wearing a funky cap and dangling jewelry approaches Dominic.

YOUNG LADY

Hear we don't see eye to eye...

DOMINIC

You have a raspy voice...it's irritating. I think you better find another venue.

YOUNG LADY

Screw you...

The young woman starts to walk away...

DOMINIC

What was your name again?

YOUNG LADY

Joplin. Janis Joplin.

Dominic heads for his office.

INT. DOMINIC'S OFFICE - THE AMBER ROOM - NIGHT.

Dominic enters his lavish office. A glass window overlooks the club so Dominic can peer out...even if just for fun. He pours himself a drink. The phone rings.

CUT BACK AND FORTH TO SHERRY AT HOME.

DOMINIC
Sposeto.

SHERRY
You coming home early tonight?

DOMINIC
I just fired my singer. I've got a new band playing tonight. Have to stay and hear them.

SHERRY
You're missing monumental moments. Tony put two words together today.

DOMINIC
Really...what were they?

SHERRY
"Where's Daddy?"

Sherry just hangs up. Dominic's annoyed. Carl peaks his head inside...

CARL
There's some Beverage Control officers downstairs. They're searching for minors.

DOMINIC
What else can happen today?

Dominic gets up and heads downstairs with Carl.

INT. DOMINIC AND SHERRY'S HOME - DAY.

A very nice home. Modern 1960's furniture. State of the art stereo equipment. Large television. Plush carpeting.

SHERRY
Between caring for the kids and worrying about where the hell you are at two in the morning, who has time to sleep?

DOMINIC
Sherr...you're just upset. Calm down.

SHERRY

I won't calm down, Dom. Between your law practice, the booking agency, the nightclub and your incessant casino trips...there is no time for being a father or a husband.

DOMINIC

I'm just trying to give you what you want.

SHERRY

What I want is you! What these kids want is their father.

INT. RENO CASINO - DAY.

Dominic sits at the BLACKJACK TABLE. TWO DRINKS in front of him. A STACK OF CHIPS, been dwindling. The dealer, STUNNING BLONDE, finishes the hand.

DEALER

Nineteen.

Dominic loses. Mitch sits beside Dominic.

MITCH

Your gonna need to take on some new cases... What do you say we call it a day?

DOMINIC

The tide will turn. I'll get it all back.

Dominic slides several chips up for his ante.

MITCH

You have boys to send to college.

DOMINIC

They'll get there.

TWO GORGEOUS LADIES approach the table and wrap their arms around Dominic.

LADY #1

Hey there, Mr. Sposeto...

Lady #2 runs her hands through Dom's hair, playful and fun. Dominic eats up the attention.

LADY #2

Are we up?

Mitch rolls his eyes as if "here we go again."

DOMINIC

I'm always up. Dinner for everyone around, Mitch. I feel like spending an insane amount of money.

The Hottie's eat it up. Mitch looks worried. Dominic drinks up. A new HAND IS DEALT.

DEALER

Sorry, Dom...I've got blackjack.

WE SEE THE ACE AND KING staring at us. Mitch gets up.

INT. POSH RENO CASINO SUITE - DAY.

A lavish suite in the hotel. Impeccably decorated. Crystal glass bar. King size bed, turned down. Fancy pillows. A dapper suit hangs near the closet.

THE PHONE IN THE ROOM RINGS...CONTINUOUSLY.

INT. SPOSETO HOME - DAY.

Sherry, anxious and upset, looks down at her TWO SONS. ANTHONY sits at the kitchen table picking at his food and MICHAEL roughly turns the television dial on the TV.

SHERRY

Michael, stop that...you'll break it! Anthony stop playing with your food!

Sherry is clearly overwhelmed.

OPERATOR

Ma'am...there seems to be no answer in the suite. Would you like to leave a message?

SHERRY

I've left three already. Can you page him in the hotel?

INT. RENO CASINO - POSH RESTAURANT - NIGHT.

Dominic stands before his ENTOURAGE; Mitch, the two ladies and a bevy OF OTHER PATRONS they've picked up along the way.

DOMINIC
I love you people.

OPERATOR'S VOICE
Telephone call for Mr. Sposeto.
Mr. Sposeto telephone call.

Dominic ignores the page. Instead he toasts with some EXPENSIVE CHAMPAGNE. Dinner is served.

INT. SPOSETO HOME - NIGHT.

OPERATOR (V.O.)
There is no answer on the page...

Sherry, angry, slams the phone down. THE TELEVISION SKIPS FROM STATION TO STATION. Sherry rushes to the television and grabs MICHAEL'S HAND to get him to stop and INADVERTENTLY BREAKS THE CHANNEL KNOB. The emotions overtake her.

EXT. THE CAPITOL - WASHINGTON DC. - DAY.

Sherry, ever the supportive wife, guides Dominic out of a limousine where they are greeted by a string of REPORTERS.

REPORTER
Mr. Sposeto, how does it feel to be sworn in by the United States Supreme Court?

DOMINIC
This is a proud moment for me and my family. We're deeply grateful for this extremely satisfying honor.

REPORTER #2
Have you enjoyed the sites?

SHERRY
Oh yes, we've seen all of it. Arlington Cemetery is beautiful.

A TELEVISION REPORTER records a news beat...

TELEVISION REPORTER
California famed defense attorney
Dominic Sposeto, who proved that
even the blind can have powerful
careers, was chosen by Congressman
Don Edwards to be sworn in before
the United States Supreme Court...

WE WATCH SHERRY AND DOMINIC make their way up the challenging
steps of the Capitol.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO CITY STREET - NIGHT.

Dominic and BROTHER JOACHIM walk down a city street on their
way to dinner.

DOMINIC
I try. I'm just so damn busy.

BROTHER JOACHIM
Dom. It's me. Okay. I know you
have time for the parties. The
frolicking. The casino's.

DOMINIC
You're like my mother...

BROTHER JOACHIM
You like to play.

DOMINIC
You like guilt.

BROTHER JOACHIM
When was the last time you went to
confession?

Dominic doesn't answer. They continue walking.

BROTHER JOACHIM
Temptation knocks on Dominic
Sposeto's door and you answer.

They reached a darkened, unpopulated section of the street.

DOMINIC
You act like I'm the devil.

BROTHER JOACHIM
Come to another retreat with me.
Salvation.

They are suddenly ATTACKED by a DISHEVELED, YOUNG MAN, wielding a KNIFE.

ATTACKER
Salvation my ass. Give me your money!

The attacker shoves the knife against Dominic's neck.

IT'S ALMOST PENETRATING THE SKIN. Tense.

BROTHER JOACHIM
He is a blind man.

ATTACKER
Yeah...and I'm a starving one.

DOMINIC
Let me go and I'll give you my wallet.

ATTACKER
I'm not falling for that crap.

BROTHER JOACHIM
Down on your luck, huh?

DOMINIC
He's a priest you know.

The attacker continues to rough Dominic up. Agitated. Suddenly more intense. Cars whiz by. But no one stops.

BROTHER JOACHIM
A light that burns so bright that everything in its path is warmed by the brilliance of its glow.

ATTACKER
Preach to someone who gives a shit.

BROTHER JOACHIM
Every man is inherently good. Even you.

DOMINIC
Hey, if you two are gonna talk philosophy...can you at least let me go?

The attacker shoves Dominic back against a CAR. The knife nicks his neck.

BROTHER JOACHIM
How 'bout I buy that knife from
you. I think it's worth something.

DOMINIC
(questioning)
Joe...what are you doing here?

Brother Joe engages the attacker more intently.

BROTHER JOACHIM
I'll give you a hundred bucks for
it.

The attacker shoves Dominic to his other side.

ATTACKER
Two hundred.

BROTHER JOACHIM
I've only got one hundred.

DOMINIC
I'll throw in the other hundred.

BROTHER JOACHIM
And you don't go to jail. My
friend here, lives. And I get a
valuable souvenir.

Things calm. The attacker releases Dominic. Brother Joachim
reaches into his pocket and removes the hundred dollars.

BROTHER JOACHIM
I need your hundred, Dom.

Dominic sighs.

BROTHER JOACHIM
It's a really good knife.

Dominic reluctantly removes money from his wallet.

THE EXCHANGE.

The attacker takes off with the money. Brother Joachim looks
closely at the knife.

IT'S OLD AND RUSTY. He hands it to Dominic.

BROTHER JOACHIM
You keep it.

DOMINIC
What for?

BROTHER JOACHIM
A reminder...what might have been.

Dominic twirls the RUSTY OLD KNIFE, the same one we saw
INSIDE DOMINIC'S DESK.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. OLD MAN'S HOUSE - DAY.

PRESENT DAY. Dominic rubs where his neck was once nicked.

DOMINIC
What might have been...

OLD MAN
Isn't it possible for a powerful
man to do well and keep his
integrity?

DOMINIC
I have...

THE OLD MAN COMES UNGLUED.

OLD MAN
Corruption is a disease! Once it
grabs you--it's hard to let go!

The Old Man pounds his fists on the table with great passion.

OLD MAN
IT'S NOT TOO LATE FOR YOU!

The Old Man's words penetrate deep.

OLD MAN
Imagine who Angelo Valenti could
have become. He had good
intentions. But, how did you
say...temptation came knocking.

Long moments of silence. Both men. Their expressions. A
volley back and forth.

THE EPIPHANY.

It sinks in...

DOMINIC
Do no evil and have no fear.

The Old Man confirms it in Italian...

OLD MAN
*Del male non fare e paura non
avere.*

The Old Woman begins removing plates from the table.

A moment. Dominic's empowered to change his ways.

DOMINIC
Aren't you going to even tell me
your name?

OLD MAN
Not today.

DOMINIC
I have ways of finding things like
that out.

OLD MAN
Yes...you attorneys are ever so
resourceful.

The Old Man stands and turns to the religious figurines. He
takes the Saint Lucy statue and hands it to Dominic.

DOMINIC
What's this?

OLD MAN
I want you to have it. Saint Lucy.
She governs the blind.

INT. DOMINIC SPOSETO'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Dominic returns to his office. Messages. Documents. His
desk has new piles of work.

He sits at his desk. He removes the Saint Lucy statue and
places it prominently on his desk. He then opens the drawer.
The CASH. The RUSTY OLD KNIFE. Pondering.

INT. SPOSETO HOME - NIGHT.

Dominic arrives home in the RAIN. His coat is wet. It's
deathly quiet in the house. Too quiet.

DOMINIC

Sherry?

SHERRY'S OLD DUSTY VIOLIN CASE sits on the table.

DOMINIC

Anyone home?

Sherry slowly enters. Dominic picks up her scent.

DOMINIC

There you are. Where are the boys?

SHERRY

Out.

DOMINIC

Why didn't you answer me?

SHERRY

Didn't hear you.

DOMINIC

What's the matter?

SHERRY

I'm going to a violin lesson tonight.

DOMINIC

Violin lesson? Tonight? I'm home. I thought we'd watch some TV.

SHERRY

Dom...please don't. You can't just check into our lives when it's convenient for you.

DOMINIC

Sherr...

SHERRY

I'm tired of being a library book. I stay on that shelf waiting for you to check me out. I can't live like this anymore.

DOMINIC

Don't give up on me...

SHERRY

I love you, Dom. I worked very hard to make a life for us.

(MORE)

SHERRY (cont'd)

You became successful. I'd like to think I was partly responsible for that. But to be honest...you outgrew me. Maybe we outgrew each other.

DOMINIC

What about the boys?

SHERRY

They're almost young men. They'll adapt. It's really better for everyone.

DOMINIC

I'll change, Sherry. No more casinos. No more overnights. I'll sell the club...

SHERRY

I think you should do all of that. But for you. Not me. You're an amazing man, Dom. A hurricane. I just need calmer weather.

Sherry fights her emotions. This is the toughest thing she's ever done. She takes her violin case and heads for the door.

INT. VIOLIN LESSON MUSIC ROOM - NIGHT.

Sherry sits opposite HER VIOLIN INSTRUCTOR. She's nervous. Hasn't played in years. But this is for HER, someone she's neglected far too long. She lifts the bow, adjusts the violin under her chin and BEGINS TO PLAY.

Beautiful music. After a few seconds, Sherry loses herself in her playing. A TEAR FORMS. As she fiddles back and forth, the enormity of what just occurred TAKES OVER. Tears stream down her face.

INT. SPOSETO HOME - NIGHT.

SHERRY'S MUSIC PLAYS OVER as

Dominic sits in a LEATHER CHAIR in a dark room. The television flickers in the distance, but he pays no attention. He stares ahead blankly, sipping WHISKEY.

INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH - DAY.

Dominic, looking exhausted, makes his way down the church aisle with his GUIDE DOG. It's relatively empty except for a few PRAYING PARISHIONERS.

Dominic arrives at the CONFESSIONALS. A moment. He opens the door goes inside with the dog.

INT. CHURCH CONFESSIONAL - DAY.

Dominic kneels before the confessional window. Candles flicker behind him. The window slides open...

DOMINIC

Dear Father...it has been...years since my last confession. I got it all wrong. Maybe because I've been angry about being this way. I don't really know. I was greedy. Tempted by the allure of lots of money. The casinos. I gambled. I gambled so much more than just money. Glitz and glamour. I cheated. I thought I was smarter than everyone else. I let people buy me. Bad people sometimes. I should have known better. I kneel before you a broken man...

INT. SPOSETO AND MADSEN OFFICES - DAY.

Dominic sits at his desk on the phone.

DOMINIC

Can you try her again? If you reach her, tell her I want to see her. And the boys.

Mitch enters the office. Dominic hangs up.

MITCH

You looking for me...

DOMINIC

I want you to sell the Amber Room. Get whatever you can for it.

MITCH
(surprised)
But it's making you a fortune.

DOMINIC
Get rid of it. I also want you to
sell the agency. Let the artists
out of their contracts. I just
want it all out of my life. I just
withdrew from the campaign as well.

MITCH
How does Sherry feel about all
this?

Dominic lifts his pen to his mouth...

DOMINIC
If I'm lucky it won't be too late.

EXT. FRANCISCAN COMPLEX - DAY.

MONTHS LATER.

Dominic MEDITATES atop a hill on a bench overlooking the
Pacific Ocean. A light wind passes through the trees. It's
the most serene moment we've experienced yet. Breathtaking.

Dominic gets up from the bench and walks along the paved
pathway, collecting his thoughts.

SEVERAL ROBED FRANCISCANS pass him along his way.

As we pull further and further away, we see the majesty of
this place.

INT. FRANCISCAN COMPLEX - DAY.

Brother Joachim and Dominic sit at a table enjoying soup.

DOMINIC
Thanks for inviting me here.

BROTHER JOACHIM
You are always welcome, Dom.

DOMINIC
She left me you know.

Brother Joachim offers his hand. Dominic takes it.

BROTHER JOACHIM
You are always welcome, Dom.

A moment. Silence.

DOMINIC
Time for me to get busy...

EXT. CATHOLIC CHURCH - DAY.

A SIGN READS "YOUTH MINISTRY PROGRAM" MEETING NEXT SATURDAY.

A COUPLE TEENAGERS enter the church hall.

Dominic walks with Brother Joachim as they welcome several YOUTH arriving for the first meeting.

DOMINIC is all smiles.

DOMINIC
We get a decent turnout?

BROTHER JOACHIM
Touchdown.

Dominic smiles wider.

DOMINIC
Good.

INT. SWIMMING POOL - DAY.

Dominic sits in the bleachers at A COLLEGE SWIM MEET. Many ONLOOKERS. WANDA BOTTOM, 40's, attractive, perky and sensitive to Dominic's situation arrives and sits by him.

WANDA
You made it.

DOMINIC
Every week, Wanda.

WANDA
I'm sure Michael is thrilled.

DOMINIC
Probably doesn't even notice.

WANDA
I bet he does.

There is chemistry between these two. We feel it.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Heat two.

MICHAEL AND DAVID STAND AT THEIR LANES, READY FOR THEIR SWIM.

DOMINIC

Wanda...what lane is Michael in?

WANDA searches the swimmers...

WANDA

Lane five. And my David is in lane six.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

On your mark...set...GO!

THE SWIMMERS DIVE INTO THE WATER. The stands CHEER.

DOMINIC

They can both push each other!

WANDA

Let's go boys!

Wanda jumps in her seat, watching the race.

THE SWIMMERS FLY THROUGH THE WATER.

DOMINIC

Is Michael kicking, Wanda?

WANDA

Yes, Dom. He's kicking, but he's second right now...behind David!

As the excitement builds, Wanda pushes on Dominic's knee.

TIGHT we see BOTH SONS fly through the water, arm over arm...

DOMINIC

Come on, Michael kick it in!

A FEW YARDS TO GO...

WANDA

It's the two of them!!!!

TIGHT ON LANES FIVE AND SIX AS THEY GLIDE FOR THE FINISH...

WANDA SQUEEZES DOMINIC'S LEG IN ANXIOUS ANTICIPATION.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
And it's lane six! David Bottom by
less than an arms length!

Wanda stands up and cheers triumphantly.

DOMINIC
Hope I can walk...

Wanda realizes she practically destroyed Dominic's leg...

WANDA
Oh I'm so sorry, Dominic. But
isn't that exciting? Our boys
finished ONE, TWO!

Michael congratulates David.

The SCOREBOARD SHOWS 1. DAVID BOTTOM. 2. MICHAEL SPOSETO.

WANDA
Olympic trials right around the
corner...

Dominic clears his throat.

DOMINIC
Brother Joachim tells me he's
invited you to the next retreat?

WANDA
Yes, he has. I can't stay a
grieving widow forever.

DOMINIC
It'll be good for you. It was for
me.

There's a spark between these two. We're glad.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT.

Dominic sits bedside with MARY, tubes hooked up to her,
breathing machine, life comes to an end.

Dominic reaches for her hand. Mary opens her eyes. She's
tired. Been quite a fight.

MARY
(struggling to talk)
Dom...what took you so long?

Mary finds the energy to smile.

DOMINIC
I'm here, Ma.

MARY
You're in charge now.

Dominic fights to keep it together.

DOMINIC
You're gonna be fine.

MARY
I used to say that to you.

DOMINIC
One good mother is worth a hundred
teachers.

These words set Mary at peace. She closes her eyes. Takes a breath. ONE TEAR FALLS FROM DOMINIC'S EYES.

Wanda steps in to comfort Dominic, placing her hand on his shoulder. Dominic lifts his other hand to meet hers.

INT. SANTA ROSA CATHOLIC CHURCH - DAY.

Elaborate, beautiful Catholic Church. Candles flicker at the altar. Mass has just ended as the last PARISHIONERS exit.

Dominic finishes his prayers and exits the pew.

Brother Joachim approaches.

BROTHER JOACHIM
Dom...

DOMINIC
Long mass today. You need to
remind that guy that there is
another mass following this one.

BROTHER JOACHIM
Dom...I need your help.

Brother Joachim's tone grabs Dominic's attention.

DOMINIC
Of course, what's the matter?

BROTHER JOACHIM
I've got a priest in a bit of
trouble.

DOMINIC
What's going on?

Brother Joachim really lowers his voice. Looks around.

BROTHER JOACHIM
When this breaks, it's gonna be
insurmountable.

Dominic's face registers great concern.

DOMINIC
Whatever you need...

EXT. COURTHOUSE STEPS - DAY.

REPORTERS try to interview Dominic, with his GUIDE DOG, on
the court steps. Too frenzied, Dominic finally stops.

DOMINIC
Yes, the Catholic Church realizes
the serious nature of this problem.
The accused are entitled to the
same rights as an ordinary man and
therefore, must face the same types
of sentencing. Whether that be
psychological help, leaving the
priesthood or perhaps
incarceration.

More questions fly.

REPORTER
What about the victims?

DOMINIC
If there are victims, they will
have their day in court.

Dominic continues on his way through the WAVES OF REPORTERS.

INT. AQUATIC CENTER - DAY.

Dominic and Wanda stand above the railing overlooking THEIR
COMPLETED AQUATIC CENTER.

We see an indoor pool. Beyond it is both an outdoor 50 meter pool and outside spa.

SWIM INSTRUCTORS teach various STUDENTS. WATER THERAPY takes place in another area. AEROBICS. It's a fully operational aquatic clinic.

DOMINIC

They love it don't they, Wanda?

Wanda peers around, taking it in, very pleased.

WANDA

We did good, Dom.

A YOUNG SWIM INSTRUCTOR, ALEXANDER, 20's, handsome, well built passes by...

ALEXANDER

Gettin' in your pool today, Mr. Sposeto?

DOMINIC

You know it, Alex!

ALEXANDER

Good to see you. You too, Mrs. Sposeto.

WANDA

Don't work too hard, Alex.

ALEXANDER

Mr. Sposeto, I have a friend who needs some...

Dominic stops him...he's heard this story ENDLESS TIMES.

DOMINIC

Just have him call my office.

ALEXANDER

But he doesn't...

DOMINIC

I said...just have him call my office.

ALEXANDER

Thanks, Mr. Sposeto.

Alexander dives into the pool, creating a HUGE SPLASH.

DOMINIC
I love that sound.

Wanda smiles at him. She looks around at the walls.

WANDA
Maybe we should repaint.

DOMINIC
I love the color.

They laugh.

INT. SPOSETO HOME - DAY.

CHRISTMAS DAY. The Sposeto home dazzles. Huge Christmas Tree, hundreds of lights, exquisite ornaments. Countless wrapped presents.

A large dining table extends the entire living room.

Seated are COUNTLESS RELATIVES. Family. Laughs. Food passing. Several GENERATIONS.

Dominic sits at one end. Proud. Content.

Wanda, at the other, offers dishes to those seated by her.

MICHAEL, Dominic's oldest son, sits next to him.

MICHAEL
Merry Christmas, Pop.

DOMINIC
Merry Christmas, Michael.

Dominic pats Michael's hand and gets up from the table. He peers at all of them as if sees them...in many ways he does.

Dominic raises a glass of CHAMPAGNE.

DOMINIC
Merry Christmas!

Dominic's other son, ANTHONY, raises his glass.

ANTHONY
Cheers, Pop.

The REST OF THE FAMILY all lift their glasses and toast.

Wanda smiles endearingly at her man.

DOMINIC

The most important things to us
Italians are our food, our drink,
our church and...our family.

Dominic raises his glass and then sips, savoring the taste.

Dominic walks through the living room, passed the glorious
Christmas tree. He calls for his GUIDE DOG.

Wanda watches him. What a journey.

Dominic slides the door open and steps outside on the deck.
It is a beautiful day. The sun basks. He feels good.

Dominic looks towards the heavens...

DOMINIC

Thanks for the gift.

ONE OF HIS YOUNG GRANDSONS joins him. He pats the DOG.

GRANDSON

Hey Grandpa...are you gonna tell me
a story today?

Dominic reaches for his grandson. The song "SANTA LUCIA"
begins to play...

DOMINIC

It all started back in Catania,
Italy when my great-great-
grandfather was a little boy just
like you...

Dominic's words drift away as the "SANTA LUCIA" theme takes
over...

SONG

*Days here are heavenly,
Nights are pure ecstasy,
Santa Lucia, Santa Lucia!*

*Venite all'argiine,
Barchette mie,
Santa Lucia, Santa Lucia...*