

MALCOLM

by

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FADE IN:

INT FUNERAL HOME NIGHT

The funeral of a wealthy, popular man: most of the men are in mourning suits, the flowers boggle the mind with their number and beauty, and everyone there seems satisfied that at least it is not them in the casket.

MALCOLM JONSTON, a young man, intelligent and with questioning eyes, stands to one side of the room, observing the proceedings. His clothing has an expensively scruffy look, inappropriate for the occasion.

MARGARET JONSTON approaches Malcolm, her son. She is a beautiful woman, in her mid-forties but looks ten years younger.

MARGARET

Why are you just standing there?

MALCOLM

Where would you have me stand?

MARGARET

Just don't glare so. It's a funeral, for Christ's sake: people are uncomfortable all ready. You don't need to aggravate them.

MALCOLM

My father has died, and I have to comfort other people?

MARGARET

Just talk to someone. Please. That's all I ask.

Malcolm turns with crisp precision, steps up to the casket and looks down upon his father.

MALCOLM

So how is it being dead, father?
Do they let you spend your
millions in heaven?

Margaret trails after him, smiling to those nearby.

MARGARET
Stop it. You're being
disrespectful.

MALCOLM
Fine.

MARGARET
Go back to glaring if you have
to.

Margaret turns, then reconsiders, and faces her son.

MARGARET
Please Malcolm. I know this is
hard. It's hard for me too.

MALCOLM
Death is easy. Comedy is hard.

MARGARET
Please, Malcolm. Please behave.

Margaret turns and moves closer to a group of MOURNERS
standing to one side, as if to greet them.

MALCOLM
You know, you don't seem so
distraught over this.

Margaret pauses long enough to glare with a hurt and
resentful look at Malcolm, then continues on to the
MOURNERS awaiting her.

MARGARET
(to Mourner)
Hi. Thank you for coming.

Malcolm smiles caustically, then, looking over the
people, turns ashen white as he sees

LISA PEARL

A beautiful young woman, staring at him from the back
of the room where she stands with her FATHER (REUBEN
PEARL) and PIERCE JONSTON, whose arm she clutches.

BACK ON MALCOLM

Malcolm smirks ironically, then turns and walks out of the viewing room.

INT FUNERAL HOME LOBBY

LISA PEARL crosses the lobby slowly, looking left and right. She continues on to the door.

EXT FUNERAL HOME

LISA coming outside to find MALCOLM leaning against a column and smoking, staring out at nothing.

LISA

Hey.

Malcolm glances at her.

LISA

Your father's being eulogized.
Don't you want to hear?

Malcolm shakes his head no.

LISA

They're saying nice things.

MALCOLM

He can't hear them.

Lisa starts to go back inside, then stops short.

LISA

I've missed you.

Malcolm nods his head, then looks away as he takes another drag on his cigarette.

LISA

You know: you don't have to be
such an ass about things.

This has his attention, but Malcolm only smiles ironically.

LISA

Is everything beneath you?

MALCOLM

Nothing is beneath me, just as I
am beneath nothing.

LISA

If that's your philosophy, it's
just stupid.

MALCOLM

Then I won't bother you with it
any longer.

Malcolm turns away with finality, and Lisa goes back
inside.

EXT CEMETARY DAY

A large group is gathered beside an open grave. The
coffin awaits its descent. MARGARET JONSTON cries
softly, comforted by CHARLES JONSTON, a man slightly
older than herself. They sit in the front row of
seats.

As the crowd takes its place in preparation for the
burial service, LISA and PIERCE move close to Charles
and Margaret.

PIERCE

Dad: Lisa's worried about
Malcolm.

CHARLES

What would you have me do?

PIERCE

I'd be glad to drag his ass
down.

LISA

Could you talk to him? I don't
want him to get hurt.

Margaret looks over her shoulder and up at a tree.

MARGARET

Charles, could you?

Charles hesitates, but, begrudgingly, gets up.

EXT TREE

In the leafy limbs of a tree, MALCOLM sits, smoking and staring absently at the funeral below.

CHARLES climbs up, his dress shoes slipping, and his suit ruffled terribly from the exertion.

MALCOLM

Hello Uncle Charles.

CHARLES

Malcolm: would you please get down. Your mother is worried.

MALCOLM

What does it matter where I sit. My father will still be dead.

CHARLES

It matters to your mother, and it matters to Lisa, and it matters to me.

MALCOLM

I don't see why.

CHARLES

For one thing: we're worried you might hurt yourself.

MALCOLM

Are you worried that I might embarrass you even more, or that I might die?

CHARLES

We want you to sit with us, with your family!

MALCOLM

Because if you're worried I might die, what does it matter? We all die eventually. What does it matter if I die today, by falling out of this tree?

CHARLES

I'm losing my patience.

MALCOLM

Do you know who loses his patients the most?

CHARLES

Are you coming down?

MALCOLM

Dr. Kevorkian! Get it?

CHARLES

Fine.

Charles climbs down the tree.

EXT JONSTON MANSION NIGHT ESTABLISHING

The expansive grounds of a millionaire's estate. There is a gated entrance at the road, and a lighted driveway that winds past ponds and trees to a mansion.

INT DRAWING ROOM

CHARLES and MARGARET at a wet-bar in the corner, where a SERVANT pours them a drink.

CHARLES

I think the worst of it is over.

MARGARET

(flustered)

It just seems that there are a million more things to do!

CHARLES

You're doing fine, though.

MARGARET

You think you have everything figured out, and then suddenly you're the largest stock holder in a billion dollar corporation.

CHARLES

That's the easy part.

MARGARET

And then there's my son.

They both look to the far corner of the room, where MALCOLM sits cross-legged, apparently meditating.

MARGARET

He's starting to worry me.

CHARLES

I didn't think he would be effected.

Margaret looks at him curiously.

MARGARET

You didn't think?

CHARLES

I just mean I'm surprised. But we shouldn't be. He's too damn introverted, is all.

REUBEN PEARL ENTERS. Reuben looks the corporate officer that he is: touch of gray, late middle-aged, and pampered, with an aloof demeanor.

CHARLES

Reuben! Have a drink?

REUBEN

No thanks.

CHARLES

(to the Servant)

You're excused, Todd.

SERVANT

Yes, Mr. Jonston.

MARGARET

Thanks for all your help, Todd.

SERVANT

You're welcome, Mrs. Jonston.

The servant EXITS.

CHARLES

What news have you?

REUBEN

Good news: I took an informal poll, and the board is in favor of your being the acting CEO.

CHARLES

Outstanding.

REUBEN

As long as Margaret approves, it will become official in a couple of weeks.

MARGARET

Fine with me.

REUBEN

We just have to assuage Wall Street fears.

Charles nods confidently.

CHARLES

So long as my nephew keeps a low profile, there shouldn't be any surprises.

They all look at Malcolm, still cross-legged in the corner.

REUBEN

What's he doing? T.M.?

MARGARET

He calls it ascending. From the Society of the Ascension, or something like that.

REUBEN

But it's meditation?

MARGARET

Yes, but with a religious basis. Supposedly this is the deep prayer technique Jesus taught to Paul, who taught it to some monks in the Indian Himalaya, who preserved it for the past two thousand years.

CHARLES

The monks taught it to some guy from Akron, who charged Malcolm fifty thousand dollars to teach him.

MARGARET

Malcolm donated that money.

They all look again with pity at Malcolm.

REUBEN

Mind if I speak with him?

MARGARET

Please do.

INT DRAWING ROOM

REUBEN sits in front of MALCOLM.

REUBEN

Malcolm? Can you hear me?

Malcolm remains fixed, like a Buddha.

REUBEN

Malcolm?

Malcolm opens his eyes, stares right through Reuben.

REUBEN

Can you hear me?

MALCOLM

Yes.

REUBEN

I'm sorry to interrupt, but I wanted to let you know that if you need someone to talk to, talk to me.

Malcolm stares without blinking.

REUBEN

I know you and Lisa were close once, and I liked you. I've always liked you. I thought you would be my son-in-law, in fact. And I want you to know that you can talk to me.

MALCOLM

Is that it?

REUBEN

Yeah. That's it.

Malcolm closes his eyes. Reuben stands up, turns to Charles and Margaret, and shrugs helplessly.

INT KITCHEN MORNING

MARGARET and CHARLES having a light breakfast, dressed only in robes. Margaret pours coffee as Charles reads a magazine.

MARGARET

Did you want to do anything special today?

CHARLES

No.

(Whispers)

Just to be with you.

Margaret smiles, then catches herself and gathers her robe as MALCOLM ENTERS.

Malcolm walks to the table, regarding Charles and his Mother with some surprise.

MALCOLM

Uncle Charles: this is a special.

CHARLES

Morning Malcolm.

Charles occupies himself with his magazine.

MARGARET

Care for a scone or some tea?

Malcolm looks about the kitchen.

MALCOLM

Where's cook? Or Theresa?

MARGARET

They have the day off.

Margaret, self-conscious under Malcolm's glare, pours coffee and arranges a scone for him.

MALCOLM

Oh really.

MARGARET

Yes.

MALCOLM

So, you'll be cooking today?

MARGARET

There are several meals prepared, if you're worried about the quality.

MALCOLM

Which reminds me: what did father have the night before he died.

Margaret at last returns his glare.

MARGARET

What exactly do you mean?

Malcolm sniffs the scone and samples the coffee, seating himself at the table.

MALCOLM

Nothing. Except, what was the cause of death?

MARGARET

He had a heart attack.

MALCOLM

Oh.

Malcolm butters his scone and bites into it, leaving crumbs and butter all about his mouth.

Charles lowers his magazine and glares at Malcolm.

CHARLES

So: will you be returning to school soon?

MALCOLM

What exactly do you mean?

CHARLES

I meant to renew the offer your father has always made of a position in the company.

MALCOLM

Oh.

CHARLES

You can't hide behind school books all your life! It's about time you got out and did something.

MALCOLM

(scoffing)

Oh, really?

CHARLES

How many degrees do you have anyway, Socrates?

MALCOLM

You know Uncle: I've never liked you. You're an arrogant, brash, boor. But I tolerated you because my father insisted that I do so.

CHARLES

I see.

MALCOLM

I don't have to tolerate you any longer, and I sure as hell wouldn't work for you.

CHARLES smirks and returns to his magazine.

MALCOLM

And Socrates never had any formal studies. He was self-taught, and relied upon the power of his mind to challenge the beliefs of his day.

Charles raises an eyebrow, shakes his head in pity.

MALCOLM

I don't think I'd fit in with your corporation anyway, Uncle Charles.

CHARLES

Why's that?

MALCOLM

I have a drinking problem.

Malcolm throws his coffee in his Uncle's lap, and scampers from the room as Charles jumps back from the table, upsetting it and falling over backwards as he SHOUTS in pain. Margaret is nearly knocked over in the tumult.

MARGARET

Oh Charles!

CHARLES

Damn it!

Charles rights himself, then considers going after Malcolm for a second, but instead accepts Margaret's help in wiping off the coffee.

CHARLES

How much money did he just inherit?

MARGARET

Over a million in cash, plus more in trusts.

Charles snatches the towel from her hands and throws it to the floor in anger.

CHARLES

God damn kid should have been kicked out of the house ten years ago.

MARGARET

Charles.

CHARLES

Ten years of college so he could
learn to be an idiot!

Margaret bristles as she rights the table.

MARGARET

Charles: that's enough.

CHARLES

(getting the last
word)

Socrates.

EXT COLLEGE QUADRANGLE DAY ESTABLISHING

STUDENTS trudge across the quad with book bags slung
over their shoulder. A makeshift BOOTH is set up to
one side, where TWO PROTESTERS sit.

EXT PROTEST BOOTH

MALCOLM is one of the protesters, along with a YOUNG
WOMAN, who seems interested in what she's doing.

YOUNG WOMAN

(calling out)

Help end exploitation of the
Inuit peoples.

(targeting another
student)

Become tomorrow's leader today!
Sign our petition!

The Young Woman sits back in a temporary lapse of
frustration, and looks at Malcolm.

YOUNG WOMAN

It seems like everyone wants to
be bourgeoisie today.

MALCOLM

(absently)

It's pretty cyclical.

Malcolm looks about the quadrangle, then gets up out of
boredom.

MALCOLM

I guess I'll go home.

YOUNG WOMAN

Are you going to work on your thesis?

MALCOLM

No.

YOUNG WOMAN

Are you going to meditate? I could ascend with you.

MALCOLM

No.

YOUNG WOMAN

Then what are you going to do?

MALCOLM

Nothing.

Malcolm starts away, and the young woman looks after him fondly.

YOUNG WOMAN

Nothing? Do you want some help?

Malcolm smiles politely.

MALCOLM

No, but thanks.

YOUNG WOMAN

How about if I come by later. When you're finished.

MALCOLM

Sure. That'd be okay.

EXT COLLEGE TOWN BOULEVARD

MALCOLM walking down the street past STUDENTS in a hurry.

EXT APARTMENT STEPS

A Young Man (RON) in business casual attire and toting a briefcase sits on the steps. He scrutinizes all who pass by with an almost sinister glare.

EXT SIDEWALK

MALCOLM stops as he recognizes RON, who is sitting on the steps to his apartment.

MALCOLM

Ronald!

RON

Malcolm!

They shake.

MALCOLM

What are you doing out here? My doors always open. You could have gone right up.

RON

Is that safe?

MALCOLM

Well, I suppose my Uncle might send a thug to rough me up, but I have nothing that can be stolen.

INT MALCOLM'S APARTMENT

The apartment is an affectatious and eclectic collection of the bizarre and obscure: lava lamps, Inuit decorations, Hindu icons, Buddha statues, and Christian icons. MALCOLM AND RON ENTER.

RON

Shit: I'd say you have plenty that can be stolen.

MALCOLM

But they're only objects. I don't need any of them.

RON

You can afford to replace them.

RON

Some guy is waiting at my car last night. Hands me a safe deposit box key, tells me the name of a bank. Gets in a rental car and disappears.

MALCOLM

That's it?

RON

I get to the bank this morning, and there's this note from your father, telling me to give this tape to you as soon as you're away from your Uncle.

Malcolm pushes the tape into the VCR, and sits on the sofa.

INSERT SHOT TELEVISION

MALCOLM JONSTON, SR., an older man, with the pampered, touch of gray look of a corporate mogul. He's seated at a desk in an office with a view, looking directly into the camera.

MALCOLM SR.

Malcolm: if Ron or anyone else is with you, stop this tape now, and ask them to leave. What I have to say is intended for you alone.

INT LIVING ROOM

Malcolm stops the tape and looks at Ron, who shrugs and EXITS.

INSERT SHOT TELEVISION

MALCOLM GAYLORD, SR., looking directly into the camera.

MALCOLM SR.

I'm dead. That much you know. But it's possible that your Uncle Charles has killed me. If the rest of what I say now points to him as my killer, I want you to avenge my death. And I don't want you to go to the police, either. If I'm dead, then so should Charles be dead. Bringing in the police will make it difficult for your mother, as well, because she has been in love with Charles for several years, and I hold her innocent in all this, even in her infidelity.

INT LIVING ROOM

MALCOLM, looking quite pale, gets up and takes a picture of his mother from his desk, looking upon it desperately.

MALCOLM SR. (V.O.)

Your mother and I have not been in love for a very long time. She was something of a trophy wife for me when I married her.

Malcolm retrieves the magazine from a drawer, and admires the cover picture of a YOUNG MARGARET sprawled on a beach at sunset.

MALCOLM (V.O.)

I haven't spent more than a few hours a week with her the past fifteen years, and that's the way I wanted it. She never betrayed me physically, and for that I grant her full pardon.

INSERT SHOT TELEVISION

MALCOLM GAYLORD, SR., looking directly into the camera, now with fire in his eyes.

MALCOLM SR.

But that cock-sucking brother of mine has been trying to seduce her since I brought her home, even through both of his failed marriages to air-headed models.

Malcolm Sr. Eases back in his chair to take a more business-like posture.

MALCOLM SR.

Charles has been trying to replace me, turning the God damn board of directors against me one at a time. I have defended myself well, and I think that's why he's had me killed.

INT LIVING ROOM

MALCOLM staring at the TV in amazement at what he's heard, the magazine drops from his hands.

MALCOLM SR. (V.0.)

This is what you do, son, so write this down.

Malcolm returns to the desk to retrieve a pad of paper and a pen.

MALCOLM SR. (V.0.)

Get yourself a room at a hotel that rents by the month and has direct dial phones. Pay cash, use a false name. Wear gloves. Buy an answering machine, and install it on the phone in your room. Make sure no one knows about the room.

Malcolm sits on the sofa as he takes notes.

INSERT SHOT TELEVISION

MALCOLM SR. Staring intensely at the camera, the force of his personality being brought to bear.

MALCOLM SR.

You call zero-one-thirty-two, four-three-three, eight-nine-six. You leave the phone number of your answering machine. Then go to the room and check messages twenty-four hours later. Remember, you go there, make sure no one knows about it.

INT LIVING ROOM

MALCOLM staring at the TV in amazement again, still taking notes.

MALCOLM SR. (V.O.)

A man will leave a message with a number. This is a Swiss bank account number. You call the Bank of Zurich, and transfer one million dollars from account two-two-seven-eight-zero-nine-five-six-six. The PIN is three-eight-eleven.

INSERT SHOT TELEVISION

MALCOLM SR. staring more casually now at the camera.

MALCOLM SR.

After the money is transferred, he will leave another phone number on your machine. You call that number, and tell him your Uncle's name and address. Then you take a trip, leave the country, and a few days later, your Uncle will be dead. He will be dead of what appears to be natural causes. If that's how I died, then you know your uncle was responsible.

Malcolm Sr. sits back in the chair and takes a deep breath.

MALCOLM SR.

Do it son. I don't mind being dead. I mind that the corporation, the empire I created will be squandered by my idiot brother. I could have done this myself, but it wasn't justified, until now.

Malcolm Sr. leans in again.

MALCOLM SR.

Do it son. Make sure you have the phone numbers correct, then erase and destroy this tape. Then place the call. Do it.

The TV fades to black.

EXT APARTMENT BALCONY

MALCOLM steps onto the balcony, and looks over the side, where

RON is sitting on the front steps.

MALCOLM

Yo: Ron. Could you come up now?

INT APARTMENT LIVING ROOM

MALCOLM is seated on the sofa, the videotape is shattered in his lap, and he's running the tape over a refrigerator magnet. RON sits next to him.

RON

The tape could be bogus.

MALCOLM

But it was my father. Why would he do that to me?

RON

He didn't like you?

MALCOLM

He wanted me to work, but he didn't want me to die or go to jail.

RON

Why did they wait so long after your father died?

MALCOLM

Maybe he wanted it that way, so that it wouldn't be quite so obvious when Charles dies right after him.

RON

So you're going to do it?

Ron eases himself over to the balcony doors, and peeks outside from behind the drapes.

MALCOLM

I don't know yet. I'm afraid.

RON

I'd be afraid too.

MALCOLM

What are you looking at?

RON

Just some chick.

MALCOLM

It's so like Hamlet. I mean: like he hesitated, thought about things too much, and the royal family was destroyed because of it.

Ron moves as he peeks, watching someone across the street.

RON

That's only one interpretation. Hamlet was being prudent.

MALCOLM

Right: He was too much of a thinker!

RON

No: he verified that the ghost's story was true. It could have been Satan setting him up.

MALCOLM

But then he waited.

RON

No: he struck the very same night that he was convinced. But he killed Polonius by mistake.

INT/EXT DOWN AND ACROSS THE STREET

A WOMAN looks at Malcolm's balcony, then ducks around the corner of a building.

RON (V.O.)

Killing Polonius put into motion an inevitable chain of events that delayed his killing the king.

The woman peeks out from behind the corner, again looking directly at Malcolm's balcony.

RON (V.O.)

Hamlet didn't hesitate to have Rosencratz and Guildenstern killed. He was quite vicious, really.

INT APARTMENT LIVING ROOM

Ron looks back at Malcolm with some concern.

RON

There's a woman peeking around the corner of the building across the street at us.

MALCOLM

Oh. That's probably just Julie. She knows I don't answer the door if I'm ascending. She's waiting to see if I turn on the television.

RON

Ascending?

MALCOLM

Meditating, if you will.

Ron moves away from the balcony, grabs his briefcase to go.

RON

This whole thing's giving me the creeps. I just have this bad feeling!

MALCOLM

You should stay and ascend with me.

RON

I have to get home.

MALCOLM

I really wish you would stay: I don't feel like being alone tonight.

INT DARKENED BEDROOM

The ASSASSIN edges closer to the door, shakes out his arms and legs, and rocks his head to relax.

RON (V.O.)

I have to go.

INT MALCOLM'S APARTMENT

MALCOLM opens the door for Ron, and JULIE, laden with a bag of food, is waiting patiently in the hall.

JULIE

Hi! I brought some food!

MALCOLM

See: it was only Julie.

RON

She's not who I saw.

Julie presses past them.

MALCOLM

I'll walk you down. Maybe we'll see her.

Malcolm and Ron EXIT.

Julie busies herself in the kitchen, unloading the groceries, and pulling out pots and pans to make dinner.

EXT APARTMENT

MALCOLM and RON stand on the sidewalk. A CAR with the WOMAN inside sits just a few feet away from them, parked at the curb but running.

RON
Well, I don't see her.

MALCOLM
Then it was nothing.

Ron notices the woman in the car.

RON
Unless that's her in that car.

INT APARTMENT

JULIE goes from the kitchen to the living room, passing by the ASSASSIN without noticing him in the hallway.

JULIE
(to herself)
Music.

Julie flips on the radio, then notices the videotape, and pulls at the loose tape curiously.

The ASSASSIN emerges from the corner and points the gun at her, then pauses as he sees it is not his target.

ASSASSIN
Whoops.

Julie turns and SCREAMS.

EXT STREET

RON and MALCOLM hear the scream and look up at his balcony. The SOUND of a GUN SHOT is heard.

RON
Oh shit.

They both make a break for the front door. Just as they go inside, the ASSASSIN steps out onto the balcony, leaps off to the sidewalk below, and gets in the running car, which drives off rapidly.

INT POLICE INTERROGATION ROOM

TWO DETECTIVES stand over a seated MALCOLM, who stares absently at the wall.

DETECTIVE #1

So rich kid: do you know how much cash you keep in your house?

MALCOLM

I don't count money.

DETECTIVE #1

And you don't lock doors.

MALCOLM

I don't believe in personal possessions.

DETECTIVE #2

But you think this burglar was actually an assassin sent by your Uncle.

MALCOLM

He stole a video tape which implicates my Uncle in a crime.

DETECTIVE #1

Oh yes: the video tape.

DETECTIVE #2

How long had you been seeing the now deceased Julie Stoner?

MALCOLM

On and off for four years.

DETECTIVE #2

Since she started at college.

MALCOLM

That's right.

DETECTIVE #1
Were you in love with her?

DETECTIVE #2
Were you going to marry her?

MALCOLM
I don't believe in marriage.

DETECTIVE #1
Oh, that's right: you only believe in the individual.

DETECTIVE #2
Do you believe in getting license plate numbers of suspicious cars?

MALCOLM
I'm not a cop.

DETECTIVE #2
What the hell are you kid?

DETECTIVE #1
Yeah kid: what do you expect us to do?

MALCOLM
I suppose see that justice is served. That is your job, isn't it?

DETECTIVE #2
(scoffs)
Justice?

DETECTIVE #1
How many degrees do you have kid?

MALCOLM
Four. I'm working on my fifth.

DETECTIVE #2
(scoffs)
Well you got a lot to learn kid.

DETECTIVE #1
You got a lot to learn.

EXT POLICE STATION

RON is leaning against his parked car as MALCOLM exits the station.

MALCOLM

How'd you get your car?

RON

They let me out over an hour ago, and a uniform took me back to your apartment.

MALCOLM

So they don't think you did it?

RON

No. They checked me out. Did you tell them about the tape?

MALCOLM

Only that it implicated my Uncle in a crime.

RON

So are you still going to make the call?

MALCOLM

I don't know.

RON

Your apartment is still a crime scene, so can I give you lift somewhere else?

MALCOLM

How about to my Aunt's house.

RON

Who's your Aunt.

MALCOLM

She used to be my mother, until she took up with my Uncle.

RON

Ooh! I like her! She's pretty.

Malcolm glares at Ron.

INT JONSTON MANSION ENTRANCE NIGHT

MALCOLM and RON arrive in the still of the night.
Malcolm turns on lights throughout the mansion.

MALCOLM

Ah! To be alive Ronald my
friend! What a strange thing it
is.

RON

Cool it, dude.

MALCOLM

One minute you breathe and speak
and think, the next an assassin
splatters your brains and you
die.

RON

It's one in the morning!

MALCOLM

So? Let us savor the moment.

Ron follows Malcolm into the kitchen, where Malcolm
opens the refrigerator and scatters food across a
countertop.

MALCOLM

So what is it to be dead, Ron?
Is it simply the cessation of
life. A nothingness.

RON

You'll wake your Aunt. I mean
mother!

MALCOLM

Or is there another dimension.
An existence our weak minds
cannot even imagine.

MARGARET (V.O.)

Malcolm?

RON

There! You woke her!

MALCOLM

So let her wake up! Perhaps we shall awaken her from more than just sleep!

MARGARET enters tying her robe on. Malcolm takes a can of whipped cream and squirts it in his mouth and around his face.

MARGARET

Oh Malcolm: thank heavens you're alright! I thought it was the staff gone mad!

RON

Hello Mrs. Jonston.

MARGARET

Hello Ron. Thank you for bringing him home.

MARGARET

(to Malcolm)

I saw you on the news. Are you alright?

Malcolm smiles through the whipped cream, now fashioned like a beard on his face.

MALCOLM

I'm alive, mother. That is something.

MARGARET

Are you on drugs?

(to Ron)

Is he?

RON

No.

MALCOLM

I've seen a ghost! And it's changed me?

MARGARET

Has it?

MALCOLM

When we die, I believe we become electrical signals recorded on videotape, where we exist until the magnetic media wears out, or until someone tapes over us. Whichever comes first.

MARGARET

What is he talking about.

RON

I think it's a soliloquy, so there's not much to do but listen.

Malcolm takes a bottle of champagne from the wine rack in the pantry, and begins shaking it.

CHARLES (V.O.)

What in blazes is going on?

MARGARET

Malcolm, calm down now!

CHARLES ENTERS also tying on a robe. He is much disturbed. Malcolm is meanwhile loosening the wire from the bottle's cork.

CHARLES

Have you all gone mad?

There is a loud POP as the cork explodes from the champagne bottle, which gushes foam. The cork hits Charles square between the eyes, and he cries out in surprise as he falls backwards.

MARGARET

Charles!

MALCOLM

Hap-py new year!

Charles rushes to his feet, and charges Malcolm, now sitting on the counter pouring champagne down his throat. Ron and Margaret restrain Charles.

CHARLES

You insane little bastard!

MARGARET

Charles calm down!

CHARLES

Is he celebrating anything in particular?

MALCOLM

It's my second death in a month.
Care to make it three, Uncle?

Malcolm jumps off the counter and stands before Charles, still restrained though not struggling.

CHARLES

What do you mean by that?

MALCOLM

(like a lawyer)
Withdrawn.

Malcolm turns away and begins picking through the food.

MARGARET

Bad things come in three
Charles. That's all he meant.

Charles shakes himself free of Margaret and Ron.

CHARLES

If you're to stay in this house,
then you'd best behave like an
adult.

MALCOLM

Uncle, I thought you inherited
the company, but not the house.

(to Margaret)

Is he the man of the house? Not
that I want to be the man of the
house.

CHARLES

How could you ever?

MALCOLM

Of course, because then I'd have
to sleep with the woman of the
house, and I never really
thought about sleeping with my
mother.

Margaret shifts her glance to Charles in discomfort as Malcolm stuffs food in his mouth.

MALCOLM

But then, Uncle, did you ever think about sleeping with your sister? Perhaps yes, no?

CHARLES

(to Margaret)

You tell him to behave, or I'll throw him out!

Charles EXITS.

MALCOLM

(loudly)

Uncle: when you're dead, do you want to be reincarnated on Beta or VHS?

MARGARET

Malcolm, no!

RON

Eight millimeter is better.

MALCOLM

(laughing)

Yes! Eight millimeter!

RON

Super eight!

MALCOLM

(thoughtfully)

But if you were on DVD, you might live forever.

RON

In Dolby surround sound!

Margaret tightens her robe.

MARGARET

Go to sleep. Both of you.

Margaret EXITS. Malcolm shrugs, and offers the bottle of champagne to Ron.

INT GREAT ROOM DAY

RON is on the sofa, reading, as MARGARET goes over menu plans with a CATERER.

MARGARET

There will be about sixty guests total, but plan for seventy five.

CATERER

Yes, madam. Very good.

MARGARET

The staff will have a buffet set up in the gallery, with seating and dinner service.

CATERER

And this menu is acceptable?

MARGARET

Yes. I like it very much.

CATERER

Excellent. Then I'll see you tonight.

MARGARET

Thank you very much.

The CATERER EXITS. Margaret stands near Ron.

MARGARET

Ron. Can I speak with you?

Ron sits up obediently.

RON

Of course.

MARGARET

Is there anything you can do to take Malcolm out of here, at least for tonight?

RON

I suppose I can try.

MARGARET

Charles and I are hosting a very important business meeting tonight. It's Charles's first since being named CEO. He wants very much for it to go smoothly.

RON

Well, like I said, I'll try. But Lord knows I can't promise anything.

MALCOLM appears on the balcony overlooking the great room, gazing down upon Ron and his mother.

MARGARET

Is he all right?

RON

Who's to say.

MALCOLM

Aha! A conspiracy!

Margaret is startled, and looks up.

MALCOLM

Is she offering you money to have me killed?

RON

We're starting a pool as to when you'll kill yourself.

Malcolm slides down the railing with a wild, mad gleam in his eyes.

MALCOLM

Just consider me dead. That makes everything else easy.

MARGARET

Malcolm: you're frightening me!

MALCOLM

Well, what of it?

This irks Margaret, and she stands up to him.

MARGARET

You're a spoiled little brat, do you know that?

MALCOLM

Moi?

MARGARET

Your father gave you everything in this world. You could have done anything you wanted, achieved everything.

MALCOLM

Like my father did?

MARGARET

Yes. Is that a sin?

MALCOLM

What does it benefit a man to gain the whole world, and three putt the last hole?

They are interrupted by the SOUND of the DOORBELL.

MARGARET

I just don't understand you.

MALCOLM

Ah! An enigma!

MARGARET

I love you Malcolm, but you're a rude person.

The BUTLER escorts STEVE and AL, young men the same age as Malcolm and Ron, as well as stepsons of Charles, into the great room. The butler bows slightly, and EXITS.

MARGARET

Steve and Al! Welcome. Charles said you'd be visiting.

STEVE

Good old Chucky!

AL

As far as step-fathers go, he's all right.

Steve and Al admire the mansion.

STEVE

He's plenty rich!

AL

Does Mom know he's living here now?

MALCOLM

This isn't his house.

STEVE

Sorry, cousin.

AL

We meant no offense.

MALCOLM

You're not my cousin.

MARGARET

Malcolm! Stop being rude. Of course they are!

MALCOLM

They are my late Uncle's stepsons by a woman he has since divorced.

MARGARET

Your Uncle is not dead!

STEVE

Not yet, at least!

MALCOLM

Then he is early! Nevertheless, he is certainly not my Uncle, as his brother (my father) is dead, and thus there is no relation between us.

AL

But there once was!

MALCOLM

And that relationship is dead. Therefore: he is my late Uncle!

Malcolm bows at his own victory, and, beckoning to Ron, they leave. Steve and Al look to Margaret in utter confusion.

MARGARET

Let me show you to your room.

INT GALLERY NIGHT

A large, black-tie affair. Most of the guests are pampered, executive types with a touch-of-gray and trophy wife. Quite a few faces are familiar from the funeral.

EXT PATIO NIGHT

The party overflow is out back, where torches burn in the back garden, and a BAND PLAYS on the large gazebo.

EXT GARDEN PATH

MALCOLM and RON lurk in the shadows, observing the party.

RON

C'mon already. You've seen it.
Let's go!

MALCOLM

I haven't seen everything yet.

RON

You're just looking for trouble.

MALCOLM

Trouble? What's trouble? Is
not life itself trouble.

RON

Give me a break.

MALCOLM

And what is life, then, anyway,
if not trouble. For whom is it
trouble free? The Maytag
repairman?

RON

Maybe I'll kill you.

INT CHARLES'S OFFICE

The executive suite of the mansion, with paneled walls, a huge desk, and plush furniture arranged close for meetings.

RON and MALCOLM enter through a back door, creeping serepticiously.

RON

Why didn't we just come in the front door?

MALCOLM

Because Uncle Charles changed that lock. He forgot that the library shares this bathroom, and that I had the key.

INT OFFICE DESK

MALCOLM is going through the desk drawers, as RON listens at the main door.

RON

What if he comes in the same way you did?

MALCOLM

Then we're screwed.

RON

What are you looking for?

MALCOLM

A combination.

Ron shakes his head as Malcolm feels along the underside of a drawer, and pulls off a strip of masking tape.

MALCOLM

I saw this on The Rockford Files once.

Malcolm moves the painting on the wall behind the desk, revealing a safe. Reading from the masking tape, he turns the combination, and opens the safe.

RON

Isn't this, like, illegal?

Malcolm is stunned by what he sees.

RON

What?!

Malcolm extracts a shattered videotape from the safe.

RON

Maybe it's just a coincidence.

MALCOLM

The prick bastard knew about it
the whole time.

Malcolm returns the tape to the safe and closes it,
putting the portrait back in place.

RON

What are you doing? Aren't you
going to call the cops?

MALCOLM

They'll eventually want to know
what was on the tape.

RON

Damn.

MALCOLM

And we could have planted this
anyway. This doesn't tie him
directly to the assassin.

RON

So you're going to place the
call?

Malcolm rifles through another of the drawers, finds a
pistol and checks it for ammunition.

MALCOLM

Nope.

RON

Don't do it like that, dude.
You're not the type.

MALCOLM

Maybe I just don't want Uncle Charles to have it.

Malcolm stuffs it in his belt, tucks it under shirt and jacket.

RON

Dude, seriously, lots of burglars shoot their own balls off that way.

Malcolm tidies up the desk.

MALCOLM

I can handle it.

They head out the way they entered, through the bathroom.

RON

Have you ever even held onto a gun?

MALCOLM

Don't you think I can handle this?

RON

Shit, this makes me an accessory before the fact.

MALCOLM

Quit worrying.

RON

And I'll probably get shot by mistake, as well!

INT DRAWING ROOM

CHARLES speaks privately with STEVE and AL.

STEVE

He's avoided us all day.

AL

Twice he ran off into the woods.

STEVE

Like we were tax auditors.

CHARLES

It's all right.

STEVE

We'll try.

CHARLES

Thanks. I appreciate it.

INT GALLERY

CHARLES, STEVE, and AL enter the general party from the drawing room.

AL

It's a great party, though,
Charles.

CHARLES

Thanks, boys. Enjoy yourself.
I may have something else in
mind for you later.

INT UPSTAIRS BALCONY

In a dark alcove, MALCOLM and RON look down upon the crowd. At one side, there is CHARLES and STEVE and AL, with Charles very friendly towards them.

MALCOLM

(whispering)

There! I told you they're in
cahoots.

RON

They're his stepsons.

MALCOLM

He hates them more than me!

RON

So how do you know they're part
of the conspiracy?

MALCOLM

I just know!

RON

Now, I think you're getting a
little crazy!

Malcolm turns pale as he sees LISA in the crowd.

INT GALLERY

LISA and PIERCE, quite stunning as a couple, move
through the crowd towards CHARLES.

INT BALCONY

MALCOLM is frozen, as RON looks over the crowd.

RON

Hey! Isn't that your old
girlfriend?

MALCOLM

Yeah.

RON

Who's she with?

MALCOLM

Pierce Jonston. Charles's son.

RON

Another cousin?

MALCOLM

By his first wife.

RON

Wow. She's even more beautiful
than I remembered her.

Ron looks at Malcolm, and is shocked at the expression
on Malcolm's face.

INT GALLERY

MALCOLM pushing through the crowd.

INT GALLERY

LISA, dressed in a magnificent nightgown, listens
absently to a conversation of PIERCE and her father

REUBEN and another EXECUTIVE. MALCOLM walks up to them through the CROWD, surprising Lisa as she brings a punch glass to her lips.

LISA

Malcolm!

MALCOLM

I'd like to see you.

Pierce sees the intrusion, and moves to defend.

PIERCE

Hello Malcolm. How's the
grieving cousin getting along?

Malcolm doesn't even look at him.

MALCOLM

May I please see you?
Privately.

Lisa looks about her, feels more eyes from the crowd upon them, and nods in assent, handing her glass to Pierce.

LISA

I'll just be a minute.

Malcolm leads her by the hand down a side hallway.

INT LIBRARY

MALCOLM leads LISA to a sofa where they sit.

LISA

What is with you?

MALCOLM

I just need to talk to you.

Malcolm sits close, and Lisa backs away slightly in defense.

LISA

Malcolm! If you have something
to say, say it.

MALCOLM

I guess I don't have anything to say.

Malcolm takes her hand and scoots close.

MALCOLM

I just want to be with you.

Lisa gets up angrily, pulling her hand free from his.

LISA

Your girlfriend was shot and killed in your apartment just a couple of days ago!

MALCOLM

So?

LISA

Have you no respect for that?

MALCOLM

She wasn't my girlfriend.

LISA

That makes it even worse.

Lisa turns a cold shoulder, yet, she doesn't bolt for the door. But Malcolm is angry now.

MALCOLM

That's the whole point!

LISA

(sarcastically)

What is the point?

MALCOLM

That life is so fleeting, so fragile.

(struggles for words)

And we muck it up and squander our time here with conventions and habits and protocols.

LISA

You're blathering again.

MALCOLM

There are things and feelings in
the human experience for which
there are no words!

LISA

(hotly)

How about I love you? How about
I care about you and want to
have a relationship with you?
That says a lot.

MALCOLM

But those are just words!

Lisa throws up her hands in frustration, heads for the
door.

LISA

You've never tried those words,
so how would you know?!

MALCOLM

Because I feel what's right!

LISA

Billions of people have used
those very same words to express
their feelings, but now, you of
all people, have concluded that
they're inadequate?

MALCOLM

All I meant was...

LISA

I'm sorry, Malcolm, but I need a
relationship, some commitment,
and those words. Even if they
don't mean squat to you, that's
what I need.

MALCOLM

And Pierce says those things to
you.

LISA

(indignant)

Yes he does.

Lisa EXITS. The wind leaves Malcolm's sails.

INT GALLERY

The party is in full swing, and CHARLES is holding court with his arm around MARGARET, REUBEN, PIERCE, LISA, and several EXECUTIVES around him, hanging on his every word and laughing at his jokes. Charles seems quite drunk.

CHARLES

So I said to the son of a bitch:
I'll sue your ass, and the horse
you rode in on!

Much laughter.

CHARLES

They shut the hell up, too!

CLOSE on MALCOLM who leans against the wall behind CHARLES.

CLOSE on CHARLES and MARGARET. Margaret appears enamored with Charles.

CHARLES

I'm not afraid of anyone or
anything. That's what you need
in business. That's how you
survive.

CLOSE ON MALCOLM

MALCOLM

(loudly)

But are you afraid of dying?

BACK TO GROUP

Charles snaps around to look at Malcolm.

CHARLES

Ah! My favorite nephew
Socrates!

Tense laughter in the group.

CHARLES

I thought you'd be back in
school by now.

Malcolm steps slowly and gravely towards Charles, his
hands at his side.

RON ENTERS and gets between them.

RON

(whispering
severely)

Let's go outside.

Malcolm moves to go around, so Ron wraps his arm around
Malcolm's shoulder and leads him away from Charles.

EXT GARDEN

MALCOLM and RON in a relatively quiet portion of the
garden. The BAND plays, and the torches still burn,
and people mill about the pool.

MALCOLM

He just disgusts me.

RON

But you can't just do such a
thing. Have you meditated about
it?

MALCOLM

Screw that. He killed my father
and seduced my mother. What
else is left?

RON

And if you shoot him in cold
blood, they'll hang you?

MALCOLM

I'll plead insanity.

Ron pauses, for this sounds reasonable.

RON

Well then, I hope you won't. I
don't think you can handle it.
I don't say that as a challenge,
either.

MALCOLM

I can, and I'll tell you why.

RON

I think you've spent your whole life creating a gentle spirit within you, and this violates that whole lifetime.

MALCOLM

You're right, that is how I've spent my whole lifetime. And now I see that it doesn't matter. Did you ever read "The Stranger?"

RON

Sartre? You're relating to the narrator?

MALCOLM

Yes. I could put five slugs in Uncle Charles, like he did to the Arab, and it won't change me.

RON

The narrator had his head chopped off on the guillotine.

MALCOLM

So be it.

EXT JONSTON MANSION DRIVEWAY

NUMEROUS LIMOUSINES and LUXURY CARS line up at the front steps. EXECUTIVES and their WIVES pile in the vehicles which then drive away.

EXT GARDEN POOL

The garden is quiet and mostly dark. A few lights inside the mansion windows shine. MALCOLM and RON sit on a bench near the pool.

Malcolm pulls the gun from his pants, admires it almost lovingly.

RON

Put that away before I get hurt.

MALCOLM

We should make a videotape of me, so that I'll live forever.

RON

Stop it. I don't want to hear about this crap anymore.

MALCOLM

You don't think I'll do anything?

RON

I'm afraid you will, then you'll be dead and I'll be in jail for not turning you into the police.

CLOSE ON UPSTAIRS MANSION WINDOW

MARGARET and a MAN (REUBEN) are seen at an upstairs window, embracing.

MALCOLM (V.O.)

(distractedly)

So call the police.

Margaret pushes away the man, who grabs her again.

BACK ON MALCOLM AND RON

MALCOLM

(hotly)

Look at that son of a bitch!

RON

What?

Malcolm points to the window.

CLOSE ON UPSTAIRS MANSION WINDOW

MARGARET and breaks the embrace, and draw the curtains as the man stands close to her.

RON (V.O.)

Well well well.

BACK ON RON AND CHARLES

MALCOLM

That's not well well well.

Malcolm jumps up and points the gun at the window.

MALCOLM

That's my mother, who is
screwing my uncle, and my father
not in the grave two months yet!

RON

You can't do anything about
that.

Malcolm walks briskly towards the house.

MALCOLM

C'mon!

Ron hurries to catch up.

EXT JONSTON MANSION BACK DOOR

RON catches up to and grabs MALCOLM.

RON

Don't do anything like this!

MALCOLM

I'll confront my mother, and
threaten to kill myself. Then
you try to take the gun away,
and in the struggle, Uncle is
accidentally killed.

RON

No!

Ron grabs Malcolm, but Malcolm waves the pistol in
Ron's face angrily and breaks free.

INT MARGARET'S BEDROOM

MARGARET SLAPS REUBEN, who has his pants down around
his knees, and his jacket and tie off. His glasses are
knocked askew on his face.

MARGARET

You must be drunk.

REUBEN

But Margaret, I thought...

MARGARET
I simply wanted to talk to you.

REUBEN
I'm sorry.

MARGARET
And you're married.

REUBEN
It's unforgivable.

Margaret's looks soften at Reuben's comical stance.
She sniggers.

REUBEN
(smiling)
You should take it as a
compliment.

MARGARET
Yes, I'm honored, to be sure.

REUBEN
So what did you want to talk
about?

Margaret laughs outright.

MARGARET
Pull up your pants.

Reuben laughs as he pulls up his pants.

REUBEN
I really feel a fool.

MARGARET
I wanted your opinion on
Malcolm. He's worrying me.

They are interrupted by the SOUND of a KNOCK ON THE
DOOR.

MALCOLM (V.O.)
Mother! I have to talk to you
right now!

Reuben is scared out of his wits, and looks about in a
panic. Margaret points to a door, but Reuben dives
under the bedspread. Margaret tries to pull him out.

MARGARET

What is it?

INT HALLWAY

MALCOLM is at the door, and RON motions for him to abandon this project.

MALCOLM

I have to see you right now or
I'll kill myself!

INT BEDROOM

Margaret leaves Reuben hidden in the bedspread and rushes to the door.

MARGARET

Malcolm, please don't say such
things!

She opens the door, and MALCOLM rushes in, waving the pistol.

MALCOLM

I'm going to kill myself!

MARGARET

Oh God! Where did you get that?

MALCOLM

It's father's, and I know how to
use it!

Malcolm presses the barrel under his chin.

MARGARET

(panicked)

Reuben! Help! He's got a gun!

REUBEN, still covered by the bedspread, springs up and rushes at Malcolm, who is startled and fires the gun BANG BANG BANG BANG at the onrushing bedspread. Reuben drops in his tracks, blood oozing from his chest, the life quickly escaping from his face. Reuben tries to speak, but can only manage a pathetic death rattle.

RON rushes in as Margaret SCREAMS. Margaret steps towards Reuben, but backs off as the blood soaks through the bedspread and into the carpet.

MARGARET

Are you out of your mind?

MALCOLM

What was he doing in here?

RON

Oh, Jesus.

MARGARET

What are we going to do?

MALCOLM

Are you screwing everyone then?
Or is it just family and close
friends?

Margaret turns an angry look on Malcolm.

MARGARET

What exactly is going on inside
that strange head of yours?

MALCOLM

Really Mother, I should be
asking you the same thing.

MARGARET

You'll go to jail for this.

MALCOLM

So be it.

MARGARET

You are mad.

CHARLES ENTERS brandishing a pistol, his tuxedo
disheveled. Malcolm points his pistol at Charles, but
Ron steps between them, glaring defiantly at Malcolm.

CHARLES

What the fuck is going on?

Margaret reaches for Malcolm's pistol, and a brief
struggle ensues. Ron also grabs Malcolm

MARGARET

Let it go!

MALCOLM

I'll shoot you all, God damn it!

RON

Just drop it!

Charles presses his pistol against Malcolm's temple.

CHARLES

Let it go, or I'll splatter your
brains, Socrates.

MALCOLM

Go ahead. I don't give a fuck.

RON

Let it go, Malcolm.

Malcolm releases the pistol into Margaret's hands.
Charles slowly pulls back, and Ron pushes Malcolm
gently to the wall, staying close to him.

MARGARET

Where did you get this?

MALCOLM

It was my father's.

CHARLES

Where did you get it?

MALCOLM

Out of his desk drawer.

CHARLES

In the office?

MALCOLM

In his office.

Charles nods knowingly, then looks over Reuben's body.

CHARLES

And why exactly did you shoot
Reuben four times in the chest,
at point blank range?

Malcolm merely glares at Charles as Margaret hands the
pistol to Charles.

MARGARET

Charles: he's not going to jail
for this. Understand?

CHARLES

He shot a man in cold blood, in front of a witness.

MARGARET

He was going to kill himself, and was startled by Reuben.

Charles shrugs.

MARGARET

He's sick, and needs help. He was going to kill himself.

Charles looks Reuben over once again.

CHARLES

Well, Reuben had his pants on. So what do we say about Reuben being here in the first place.

MARGARET

I was talking to Reuben about Malcolm.

(Quietly)

About Malcolm's behavior lately. When Malcolm burst into the room, Reuben hid beneath the cover.

Charles raises an eyebrow.

MARGARET

I don't know why. I think he wanted to eavesdrop on Malcolm. When Malcolm threatened to kill himself, Reuben leapt up and startled Malcolm.

Charles looks at Margaret as if she's mad.

MARGARET

He doesn't go to jail.

CHARLES

(angrily)

Well then he's got to leave. I can't have the Board of Directors in fear of their life.

MARGARET

Fine. That's probably a good idea.

CHARLES

And I can't have the stockholders thinking that we are harboring a crazed fucking killer!

MALCOLM

Perhaps I could make a videotaped statement. A sort of last testament.

Charles points the pistol at him and walks towards Malcolm in anger. Margaret, bewildered at the outburst, steps between them, but Charles moves closer anyway.

CHARLES

You should learn to keep your tongue.

MARGARET

Charles!

MALCOLM

(snottily)

Excuse me for a moment, but I have to make a phone call.

CHARLES

You're in no position to negotiate.

MARGARET

Please Charles. Please.

Margaret carefully lowers Charles's pistol.

MARGARET

Thank you Charles.

MALCOLM

(mockingly)

Thank you Charles.

EXT POLICE STATION

Amidst a crush of NEWS REPORTERS and their CAMERAS, MALCOLM is escorted from the police station by Margaret and Charles. Charles keeps one hand up angrily shielding himself, as Margaret clings protectively to Malcolm. They head for a waiting limousine.

REPORTER #1

Was this a crime of passion?

REPORTER #2

Is it true you tried to kill yourself?

REPORTER #1

Are you engaged to Lisa Pearl?

INT LIMOUSINE

MARGARET puts her arm around MALCOLM protectively, though he seems indifferent to it. CHARLES sits with gruff contempt of the entire proceeding.

CHARLES

(to the driver)

Let's go.

DRIVER

Where to?

CHARLES

The airport. To the corporate jet.

MALCOLM

(smiling)

You sound like Batman telling Robin where to go.

Charles burns holes in Malcolm with his glare.

CHARLES

You have no idea how lucky you are, Socrates.

MARGARET

Let's not fight and make it worse.

CHARLES

The stock is down ten points today. You know what that is doing to us all?

MARGARET

That's not important.

CHARLES

The hell it isn't: it'll cost us millions for his defense.

MARGARET

I can't believe what jackals they all are!

They ride for a moment in tense, hostile contempt for one another, each kettle boiling over on its own.

CHARLES

I never should have agreed to this.

MARGARET

It's the right thing to do.

MALCOLM

No it's not. He shouldn't be protecting me.

MARGARET

Malcolm! Why would you say such a thing?

MALCOLM

To bug Uncle Charles.

Charles glares at Malcolm, who smiles irreverently. Charles suddenly laughs.

MARGARET

What's so funny?

CHARLES

Even if the Grand Jury doesn't bring charges, Reuben's wife will sue him for every cent in a wrongful death civil case.

MALCOLM

So?

CHARLES

So, Socrates: you'll finally be
the penniless philosopher you've
always wanted to be!

EXT AIRPORT HANGAR

The limousine pulls up to a private jet parked next to a hangar. AL and STEVE, dressed as pilots, are going over their takeoff checklist as CHARLES, MALCOLM, and MARGARET get out of the limousine.

MALCOLM

Where's the pilot?

STEVE

I'm the pilot.

MALCOLM

There's no way in hell I'm
flying with these idiots!

CHARLES

They've been piloting this plane
for three years, already, so
shut your mouth and get your ass
inside!

MARGARET

It's alright Malcolm. Nothing
will happen. I promise.

The DRIVER gets out of the limousine and retrieves Malcolm's duffel bag from the trunk. Steve takes the duffel bag, and throws it in the small cargo compartment in the rear of the fuselage.

Malcolm follows Steve as he does this, then looks inside the compartment.

INT JET

The small but plush passenger area of the jet. MALCOLM moves to a seat as STEVE watches him from the aft door.

MALCOLM

Where's the toilet.

STEVE

(pointing to stern)

Back there.

Malcolm continues on to the TOILET.

INT TOILET

The SOUND of the ENGINES STARTING is deafening in the tiny toilet compartment. MALCOLM investigates a hinged panel, and discovers that it opens directly to the cargo compartment, open to the outside.

INT PASSENGER COMPARTMENT

MALCOLM seats himself under the gaze of STEVE.

INT/EXT LIMO ON TARMAC

MALCOLM looks out the window where MARGARET and CHARLES wait. Margaret waves.

INT PASSENGER COMPARTMENT

AL climbs in behind STEVE.

AL

All aboard!

Al signals a thumbs-up back to Charles out the door.

STEVE

Contact!

AL

Contact!

Steve closes the compartment door as Al climbs into the cockpit. Then Steve joins Al in the cockpit.

EXT RUNWAY

The CORPORATE JET takes off.

INT LIMOUSINE

MARGARET and CHARLES in the back seat. Margaret looks anxiously out her window.

MARGARET

Where are they going?

CHARLES

To Ted's game ranch in the south.

MARGARET

Will there be guns?

CHARLES

Not that Malcolm can get.

The car pulls away from the hangar, and Margaret turns to look out the back window.

MARGARET

Why are they flying? It's only a few hours driving?

Charles regards her briefly, shocked at her impertinence.

CHARLES

I didn't want them followed.

EXT LIMOUSINE

As the limo drives out of the airport, MARGARET still gazes out the rear window.

INT JET PASSENGER COMPARTMENT

STEVE steps out of the cockpit and stops short at the sight of MALCOLM seated on the floor in front of his seat, in a meditative trance. Steve approaches the Malcolm cautiously.

STEVE

Yo, dude: you alive?

Steve nudges MALCOLM with his foot.

STEVE

Hello!

Malcolm opens his eyes, and glares at Steve.

MALCOLM

What do you want?

STEVE
We'll be landing soon.

MALCOLM
Do I need to strap in?

STEVE
Nope. I could care less.

Steve drops the blanket on Malcolm, shrugs, and goes back to the cockpit.

EXT GAME RANCH ESTABLISHING

A limousine winds its way up a long, private driveway. Amongst the wilderness is a sprawling ranch house set among trees and hills.

INT RANCH HOUSE

FRANK BRANCH, a rugged but wealthy looking man escorts STEVE, AL, and MALCOLM into the house. The three visitors carry their bags. A DOG sniffs at their feet suspiciously.

FRANK
(coldly)
So you shot Reuben.

Steve points at Malcolm.

STEVE
He did!

AL
You knew him?

FRANK
I was friends with all the executives at your father's company. They used this ranch as a retreat for meetings, crap like that.

MALCOLM
I didn't mean to shoot HIM.

FRANK

I was friends with your father too. I was real sorry to hear about his death. But I don't understand why you shot Reuben.

The Dog begins barking at Malcolm, baring its teeth and growling.

AL

Are there guns here?

FRANK

Not where you can get at them. They're all in the vault.

Frank points to the rooms at the other end of the lodge.

FRANK

Bring your bags, I'll show you to your rooms.

They move across the ranch. The dog following at Malcolm's heels, barking with every step.

STEVE

Where're all the hunters?

AL

And the staff?

FRANK

Sent them all home. You guys are all there are.

STEVE

Why?

FRANK

Chuck wanted his nephew incommunicado for a while. He's paying big bucks for it, too.

AL

But we can't even hunt while we're here.

FRANK

Only if you can kill a deer by chucking a rock at it.

MALCOLM

Are you going to be here.

FRANK

Mostly. I have to fly down to Mexico on business for a couple three days.

Malcolm turns pale with dread.

FRANK

I suppose you can cook your own eggs for that time. I don't expect to find the place burned down when I get back, either.

They come to a row of rooms off the main public area of the ranch house.

FRANK

Thems your rooms; pick whichever you want. They're the nicest ones.

Frank snaps his fingers at the dog.

FRANK

King! Quiet.

The dog ceases barking, but continues to glare at Malcolm.

INT PUBLIC AREA OUTSIDE ROOMS

STEVE listens at Malcolm's door as AL hangs up a phone.

AL

Is he in there?

STEVE

(whispering)

Must be, but I don't hear anything.

Steve and Al move away from the door.

STEVE

What did the old man say?

AL

Not much. Just wants us to keep him here until he's needed back in court.

STEVE

Does he have a satellite dish at least?

AL

I'm hungry.

They walk off.

INT MALCOLM'S RANCH BEDROOM

MALCOLM sits cross-legged in a meditative trance. There are mounted heads on the walls and animal skins on the floor.

Malcolm awakens from his trance and stands, stretching his arms high. He goes out.

INT PUBLIC AREA OUTSIDE ROOMS

As MALCOLM comes out of his room, the dog KING gets up, and sniffs him suspiciously. Malcolm pats his leg, and King approaches. Malcolm strokes the dog's head.

INT KITCHEN

STEVE and AL are eating a cooked, frozen pizza at the island as MALCOLM and KING enter. Malcolm looks at them with a peaceful, contented expression.

AL

What's with King?

STEVE

I thought he hated your guts.

MALCOLM

I've made my peace. I no longer trouble him.

AL

What: were you meditating?

STEVE

What is that crap, anyway?

MALCOLM

You know we're going to be killed tonight, don't you?

AL

By who?

MALCOLM

Uncle Charles.

STEVE

Our father? You are weird?

MALCOLM

It all fits: the homeowner is out of the country, there are no witnesses.

AL

I'm a witness.

STEVE

Me too!

Malcolm takes a slice of pizza, and shares half with King.

MALCOLM

You'll be killed as well.

AL

What: our own father is going to kill us?

MALCOLM

But you are only stepsons.

STEVE

(scoffing)

C'mon!

MALCOLM

I'm an embarrassment to him and the company. I must go, and so you'll go too, so that he won't be suspected.

AL
Get out of here!

MALCOLM
I bid you: make your peace. Our
time has come.

Malcolm grabs another slice of pizza, and he smiles benevolently as he and King EXIT.

Steve dismisses him with an irreverent wave.

STEVE
He's a nut!

EXT RANCH HOUSE NIGHT

The house is dreary and dark in the still of a black night. Scant light shows through windows as the NOISES OF THE NIGHT: crickets and tree frogs, are heard. The NOISES STOP as a DARK FIGURE passes as a shadow by one of the windows. Only the SOUND OF FOOTSTEPS on lawn are heard.

INT RANCH GREAT ROOM

AL and STEVE are sleeping in front of the TV, sitting on the sofa, and wearing only their underwear. A pyramid of empties stands on the floor before them. Half drunk beers are in their hand, tipped over and pouring onto the floor. Cigars burn on the coffee table in ashtrays. The SOUND of a HOCKEY GAME is heard from the TV.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Konstantin brings it up the wing
and passes to Berth. He's stick
checked at the red-line, and the
Hawks dump it into the zone for
a line change.

COLOR MAN (V.O.)
Here comes young Yzerman, Bruce!

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
He's charging up the center, and
passes to LeFleur!

COLOR MAN (V.O.)
Now that's hockey!

KING BARKING and HOWLING frantically is heard.

CLOSE ON AL and STEVE

Their faces seem lifeless.

INT RANCH BEDROOM DOOR

MALCOLM opens his door to the great room, and his face immediately screws up from a foul odor. KING BARKS at his heels.

MALCOLM

What in the world?

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Kretin shoots from the circle,
SAVE!

Malcolm goes to STEVE and AL, and shakes them.

MALCOLM

Get up! Fumes! Carbon
Monoxide!

COLOR MAN (V.O.)

There! They don't back check.
You can't win at hockey if you
don't back check!

Malcolm runs to each window and flings it open, then returns to STEVE and AL.

MALCOLM

Get up! You idiots! Get up.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

And now the Wings are on the
attack.

Malcolm grabs a can of beer, shakes it up, and opens it, spraying them with beer. He opens another the same way.

COLOR MAN (V.O.)

Now the Hawks back check!

Malcolm tries to lift up Steve in a fireman's cradle, staggering, and dropping him at the end of the sofa as AL awakens.

AL

What in the hell are you doing?

MALCOLM

I'm trying to save your life!

Steve awakens and pushes Malcolm away.

STEVE

Back off, homo!

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

And it looks like we're going to have a fight!

MALCOLM

Don't you smell it? Carbon monoxide! We're being poisoned!

AL

Carbon monoxide is odorless.

COLOR MAN (V.O.)

There's really no place for that in hockey!

MALCOLM

But that stench!

AL

Beer and cigars!

STEVE

Now get away before I kill you myself.

Malcolm backs away. King's ears perk up, and he BARKS as he leaps out one of the windows.

MALCOLM

King! No!

COLOR MAN (V.O.)

You should hit hard, but not with your stick, and definitely not in the face!

Malcolm runs to the window just as the SOUND of KING YELPING IN PAIN is heard. Al and Steve look on with gravity.

MALCOLM

King!

COLOR MAN (V.O.)

That will just be a major, but I think it should get him at least one game, if not two!

Al grabs the remote and shuts off the television.

STEVE

Go get him.

MALCOLM

I don't hear anything.

The SOUND of a CAR STARTING is heard.

MALCOLM

Shit!

INT/EXT RANCH DRIVEWAY

The TAILLIGHTS of a car are seen on the driveway, as the car winds its way through the darkness.

INT ASSASSIN'S CAR

The ASSASSIN, Julie's killer, drives away, his face illuminated by the green glow of dashboard lights.

INT RANCH GREAT ROOM

MALCOLM smiles at Al and Steve with an "I told you so" look on his face.

MALCOLM

So: have you made your peace with the supreme being?

STEVE

Screw you!

AL

It was probably only a poacher.

Malcolm shuts the window, and locks it.

INT MARGARET'S BEDROOM NIGHT

It is pitch black as the SOUND of a CELL PHONE RINGING is heard, and the GREEN GLOW of a cell phone LCD panel lights up.

MARGARET (V.O.)

Is that your phone?

A light snaps on, and there are CHARLES and MARGARET in the bed. Charles fumbles with the phone as it RINGS AGAIN.

CHARLES

Yeah?

INT RANCH GREAT ROOM

AL is on the phone as STEVE looks on anxiously.

AL

Charles! This is Al.

(pause)

Your stepson Al. You know: Al and Steve.

INT MARGARET'S BEDROOM

MARGARET AND CHARLES in bed, Charles on the cell phone.

CHARLES

What in blazes do you need now?

INT RANCH GREAT ROOM

AL on the Phone as STEVE looks on. Al loses his nerve about what he's going to say.

AL

It's just that, there was this noise, and King barked, and now King's dead, and someone drove away.

CHARLES (V.O.)

Did you call the police.

AL

Well, no.

CHARLES (V.O.)

Do you need me to do that for you?

AL

Well, no, I guess.

CHARLES (V.O.)

Are you afraid?

AL

(embarrassed)

No.

CHARLES (V.O.)

What then?

AL

It's just that, Malcolm thinks it was an assassin, and that you're trying to kill him, and that you'll kill us too. I don't know, it's just weird, okay?

INT MARGARET'S BEDROOM

MARGARET looks on curiously as CHARLES talks on the phone.

CHARLES

I sent you two along to protect him. I'm afraid he's going to kill himself, or do something equally stupid. Understand.

AL (V.O.)

Yeah.

CHARLES

What's he doing now?

AL (V.O.)

Meditating, probably. That's all he's been doing.

CHARLES

Fine. Make sure he doesn't starve to death. He's still got to live down this fiasco long enough for the stock to recover. Understand?

AL (V.O.)

Yeah.

CHARLES

So stay alert. Call the police if you have to. And keep me informed. Can you handle that?

INT RANCH GREAT ROOM

STEVE looks on as AL talks on the phone.

AL

Yeah!

CHARLES (V.O.)

You need anything?

AL

No. We're fine.

CHARLES (V.O.)

Good. Call me tomorrow.

AL

Thanks. Goodbye.

Al hangs up the phone, and looks with some bewilderment at Steve.

AL

What else could I say?

INT MARGARET'S BEDROOM

MARGARET sits up and looks with contempt at CHARLES.

MARGARET

What's going on?

CHARLES

The boys scared themselves, is all.

MARGARET

I want them home tomorrow.

CHARLES

That wasn't the plan.

MARGARET

I don't care. I want Malcolm near me. This is a mistake.

CHARLES

We were going to get married tomorrow!

MARGARET

I think that would be a mistake too!

Charles looks with amazement at her.

MARGARET

I mean about the publicity. Let's just postpone it. It's so soon after Malcolm's death, and now this.

CHARLES

(pondering)

I suppose.

MARGARET

It won't change our relationship, darling. I promise that!

CHARLES

Good.

Charles takes her in his arms.

MARGARET

But bring him home. Let me try to salvage something with my son.

Charles studies her for a moment, unblinking.

CHARLES

Yes dear.

EXT RANCH

The limousine drives past a freshly dug grave. Above the grave is a crudely drawn headstone made of plywood, which reads: "KING, defender of his home, murdered by treacherous cowardice."

INT LIMOUSINE

The ASSASSIN is driving, dressed as a chauffeur, and AL, STEVE, and MALCOLM are in back. Malcolm stares back at King's grave as Steve searches for something in a compartment.

STEVE

Don't you have any booze?

The Assassin shakes his head, offering only a glance back in the rearview mirror. Steve waves him off in frustration.

INT AIRPORT LOUNGE DAY

MALCOLM sits in a phone booth holding the receiver to his ear, the SOUND of a RINGING CONNECTION repeating softly. AL and STEVE sit at the bar drinking heavily. The lounge is deserted but for them and the BARTENDER, still preparing for the day's work.

AL

Who you calling: your Mama?

Malcolm stares through him.

STEVE

(to Al)

Who is he calling?

AL

How the hell should I know?

Al and Steve each finish their drink (a Bloody Mary) and motion for another.

MALCOLM

Are you guys licensed to pilot a jet when you're drunk?

AL

Would you rather walk?

MALCOLM

I'd rather not die.

STEVE

I thought you made your peace?

MALCOLM

I have, but there's some unfinished business.

AL

(to Steve)

Get him.

Al and Steve laugh as they touch their fresh drinks together.

INT LISA'S APARTMENT

The PHONE RINGS as PIERCE and LISA enter, dressed in mourning clothes. Lisa is distraught and tearful. Pierce scowls at the phone, but answers it.

PIERCE

Hello.

MALCOLM (V.O.)

(hesitating)

May I speak to Lisa?

Pierce looks suspiciously at the receiver.

PIERCE

She can't be disturbed right now. Call back in a year.

Pierce hangs up as Lisa looks at him in horror.

LISA

That was rude!

Pierce shrugs as he takes off his jacket.

LISA

Who was it?

PIERCE

They didn't say.

LISA

Then why were you so rude?

Pierce shrugs. The phone rings again, and Lisa snatches it up.

LISA

Hello?

INT AIRPORT LOUNGE

MALCOLM brightens, though not quite smiling, at the sound of Lisa's voice.

MALCOLM

Hello Lisa. How are you?

LISA (V.O.)

Malcolm?

MALCOLM

I thought of you this morning,
and wanted very much to speak
with you.

LISA (V.O.)

Oh? Oh really.

INT LISA'S APARTMENT

LISA is on the phone, the look of hateful death about her.

MALCOLM (V.O.)

Yes.

LISA

Well how very ironic, because I
thought of you too.

MALCOLM (V.O.)

Yes?

LISA

It was even doubly ironic,
because here the man that shot
my father, the man who had
already broken my heart twice
before, was thinking of me! Now
who would have figured that?

PIERCE steps up to Lisa and tries to take the phone away, but she yanks free and turns away from him.

LISA
God damn it! Get away from me!

MALCOLM (V.O.)
Lisa, I don't know what to say.

Lisa focuses once again on the phone.

LISA
Let me guess: you've just found out that you have AIDS, and you'd like to share it with me. Is that it?

There is silence. Lisa breathes heavily from the exertion.

LISA
Well? Any philosophical aphorisms or Buddhist ironies you'd like to share?

Lisa begins to sob.

LISA
Maybe a reading from I Ching, or one of your God damned condescending quotations from Doonesbury or some obscure Salinger book!

Lisa begins to cry. Pierce takes the phone from her and hangs it up, then cradles her in his arms.

INT AIRPORT LOUNGE

AL and STEVE knock back a bloody Mary as MALCOLM stares absently at the bottles lined up on the shelf. The BARTENDER stares at them in boredom.

AL
You know, I think my hangover's gone.

STEVE
Well, let's hit it.

Al and Steve get up to go, throwing cash on the bar, but Malcolm remains planted in his stool.

STEVE

C'mon, Socrates.

Malcolm ignores them, and Al and Steve close ranks behind him.

AL

Get on the plane.

MALCOLM

There is no way in hell I'm getting on that plane.

STEVE

Then we'll drag you on.

MALCOLM

You'll have to kill me, because if your drunken piloting doesn't destroy us, then I'm sure that plane will blow up.

AL

What the hell are you talking about?

STEVE

Let's just drag him!

MALCOLM

Your step father wants me dead. I think he's willing to sacrifice you to get me.

AL

Just shut up.

MALCOLM

Ask King then.

STEVE

Who's King?

AL

The dog.

(to Malcolm)

He doesn't hate us. Why would he kill us?

MALCOLM

Throws off all suspicion if his
own sons die, along with his
nephew.

AL

You really are a nut, Socrates.

STEVE

Let's just drag him!

Al and Steve grab Malcolm's jacket, but he slips out of
it and squirms away as they stagger after him.

MALCOLM

Look how drunk you are!

AL

C'mon, Socrates.

They stalk him across the lounge. Malcolm waves a set
of keys before their eyes.

MALCOLM

I rented a car, and I'll
probably be at the mansion
before you are.

AL

We're all going together.

Al and Steve lunge at him, but Malcolm side steps them,
and hustles out the door.

EXT AIRPORT DROP-OFF LANE

It is a small regional airport, with only a single
door, and very little traffic. MALCOLM bursts out of
the door, and runs across the lot to a small car. AL
and STEVE come out of the door, but stop at the curb,
for Malcolm has already started the car, and backed out
of the spot.

INT AIRPORT LOBBY

AL and STEVE cross to the gateway side of the airport.

STEVE

What do we do now?

AL

We fly home.

STEVE

Should we call Charles?

AL

And tell him what?

STEVE

I don't know.

AL

We'll call him once we've
landed.

INT CHARLE'S MANSION OFFICE

CHARLES is seated at the desk, worrying over papers
when MARGARET leans in at the door.

MARGARET

Any word from the boys?

CHARLES

No.

Margaret waits a moment.

MARGARET

Could you call them?

CHARLES

They're in an airplane.

MARGARET

Which has a telephone.

Charles waits a moment.

CHARLES

I'll see if they took off.

MARGARET

Thank you.

INT LIMOUSINE

The ASSASSIN answers the RINGING CELL PHONE.

ASSASSIN

Yes?

CHARLES (V.O.)

Have they taken off?

ASSASSIN

The plane left, but Malcolm wasn't on it.

INT CHARLE'S MANSION OFFICE

CHARLES with an anxious look on the phone.

CHARLES

What?

ASSASSIN (V.O.)

Malcolm didn't board. He took off in a rental car. I'm following him.

CHARLES

What about his luggage?

There is a pause, and Charles's face grows more anxious.

ASSASSIN (V.O.)

Call me on the other phone.

Charles seems about to explode, but the SOUND of the LINE DISCONNECTING averts it. He hangs up, and pulls open a desk drawer, revealing a bulky, voice encrypting digital phone.

Charles retrieves a phone number on a slip of paper from his wallet, and begins to dial. He is interrupted by MARGARET's ENTRANCE.

MARGARET

Are they on their way?

Charles puts the phone down, and changes his expression to a pleasant countenance.

CHARLES

Yes, but apparently the boys had an argument, and Malcolm is driving instead.

Now Margaret is quite anxious.

MARGARET

What happened!

CHARLES

I'm calling to find out. Just relax.

Charles waves her away, and Margaret reluctantly backs out.

CHARLES

Shoo. Close the door please thank you.

Margaret pulls the door shut. Charles dials the number on the secure phone.

INT LIMOUSINE

The ASSASSIN answers a bulky cell phone.

ASSASSIN

Yes.

CHARLES (V.O.)

Did you take the luggage off?

ASSASSIN

No.

INT CHARLES'S MANSION OFFICE

CHARLES is agitated at the news.

CHARLES

(loudly)

Why? Why on earth did you do that? Do you realize what you've done?

ASSASSIN (V.O.)

Yes.

CHARLES

(loudly)

But why, you crazy bastard?

ASSASSIN (V.O.)
That was the plan.

CHARLES
Oh, fuck!

INT HALLWAY OUTSIDE OFFICE

MARGARET stands next to the door, listening with her ear pressed to the wall, her face full of dread.

CHARLES (V.O.)
What the fuck about Malcolm?

A painful moment passes.

CHARLES (V.O.)
You're following him in the limousine?

INT LIMOUSINE

The ASSASSIN is on the secure phone.

ASSASSIN
He won't see me.

CHARLES (V.O.)
Make sure of it!

The assassin shakes his head, rolls his eyes, and waves the phone in the air as if he were talking to a yackitty aunt.

ASSASSIN
Listen: he seems to be headed for Bridgeport. Who's he going to see?

INT CHARLES'S MANSION OFFICE

Charles is on the secure phone, but flipping through the rolodex on the desk.

CHARLES
Hang on. Let me check something...

He finds a card of interest.

CHARLES
Ron. Ronald Urbanski.

ASSASSIN (V.O.)
You got an address?

CHARLES
1313 Flocking Lane.
(businesslike)
Now, can you handle this, or do
you need help?

ASSASSIN (V.O.)
I'll handle it. One way or
another, I'll handle it.

CHARLES
Wait right there!

The SOUND of the PHONE DISCONNECTING is heard. Charles looks at the receiver in his hand for a moment, then puts it down with little expression. He slumps down in his seat, stares at his feet beneath the desk, and rubs his temples slowly, his arms propped on the chair rests.

INT RON'S APARTMENT

RON is in his underwear watching television as the SOUND of a KNOCK ON THE DOOR is heard. Ron goes to the door.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)
The Lear Jet was owned by
Jonston Industries, which has
corporate offices in Blue Veil.

We lose the news broadcast as gets to the entranceway. Ron peeks through the door safety lens.

RON
Whoa!

Ron opens the door, and ushers MALCOLM inside.

RON
You should be dead!

MALCOLM
Tell me about it.

RON

Why weren't you on the plane.

MALCOLM

How do you know about the plane.

RON

Jesus, man. It crashed.

Ron points to the television.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

It is not yet known exactly how many occupants were aboard. Our records indicate that that model, a Lear 704c, had a maximum capacity of twelve, including the crew, depending on its configuration.

MALCOLM

Holy shit.

RON

So what happened?

MALCOLM

I just didn't get on. Those idiots were drunk, and I didn't have a good feeling about it.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

Eyewitnesses reported seeing an explosion, and that the plane then broke apart, falling quickly to the ground. Officials of the National Transportation Safety Board are not yet available for comment.

MALCOLM

It blew up.

RON

Did you have a feel for that too?

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

We will provide details of this disaster throughout the night, as they become available.

Ron turns down the volume on the television.

RON

Shit, does anyone know you were supposed to be on board? Because they're going to think you put a bomb on it.

MALCOLM

Only Uncle Charles.

RON

You are really screwed now.

MALCOLM

Thanks.

INT JONSTON MANSION KITCHEN

MARGARET stares out a window. The light of a television flickers in one corner. A MAID stands to one side, unsure of herself.

MAID

Madam, I'm so sorry. It is a terrible loss.

Margaret turns, stares right through her.

MAID

And the young master. He was on that plane?

MARGARET

(absently)

Yes, he was supposed to be.

MAID

I'm so sorry. Is there anything I can get for you?

MARGARET

No, thank you. Yes, wait: ask the staff to leave. Please ask them. I want to be alone.

MAID

Of course madam.

The maid EXITS.

EXT MOCKINGBIRD LANE

The ASSASSIN parks his car (not the limousine) on the street opposite an apartment building.

INT APARTMENT BUILDING ENTRANCE

The ASSASSIN scans the names on the mail boxes, then climbs the first set of stairs.

INT RON'S APARTMENT

MALCOLM and RON sit on the sofa, beers in hand, staring at the silenced television.

MALCOLM

I feel like I'm in some bad made-for-cable movie.

RON

If this were a tragic movie, you'd take your own life.

MALCOLM

Actually, if it were a made-for-cable movie, I'd kill my family, have a standoff with the police, and then shoot myself.

RON

So what are you going to do?

MALCOLM

I don't know. I suppose I should take care of any unfinished business.

RON

Your not going to shoot Charles, are you?

MALCOLM

I meant Lisa. I really should apologize to her.

They are silent for a moment. A small CLICKING SOUND is just barely perceptible, and Malcolm turns his head towards it, towards the door.

RON

I don't think even Hallmark has a greeting card for that.

(as if reciting)

You know I feel real bad, Sorry that I shot your Dad..

Malcolm interrupts him with a wave of his hand, and puts his finger to his lips to shush him.

MALCOLM

(whispering)

Did you lock the door?

Ron thinks for just a moment, then shrugs. The barely audible CLICK SOUND is heard again.

Ron creeps to the entrance, grabbing a kitchen chair on the way, and carefully props the chair underneath the door handle.

INT HALLWAY

The ASSASSIN is crouched, trying to pick the lock, when he hears the SOUND of the CHAIR touching the door. He stands to one side of the door, and pulls his pistol from a shoulder holster.

INT APARTMENT ENTRANCE

RON has his eye pressed to the security lens. He backs off quickly and in horror. MALCOLM stares with dread at the door.

MALCOLM

(whispering)

What?

RON

I saw a gun.

Malcolm pulls him towards the balcony doors.

MALCOLM

Let's jump.

RON
I'm on the fourth floor.

INT/EXT STREET BELOW

A POLICE CRUISER, his lights flashing, stops in front of the building, and TWO COPS get out.

INT APARTMENT

The SOUND of a SHORT SIREN BLAST is heard. MALCOLM peeks out the balcony door, and turns in confusion to RON.

MALCOLM
The cops are here!

RON
That's good, I think.

MALCOLM
What are the cops doing here?

INT HALLWAY

The ASSASSIN creeps to the top of the stairs, and looks down. Then he turns and hurries towards the back stairs, holstering his pistol as he walks.

INT APARTMENT

RON and MALCOLM.

RON
They probably want you about the plane crash.

MALCOLM
How the hell would they know that?

RON
If Uncle Charles sent the assassin here, he probably sent the cops as well.

The SOUND of POUNDING STEPS on the stairway is heard.

RON

Shit: I'd better put some pants
on!

Malcolm opens the balcony door.

MALCOLM

Tell them that I've left.

The FOOTSTEPS are louder, almost at the door.

RON

They may think to look there.

MALCOLM

That's fine.

MALCOLM EXITS out the balcony door just as the POLICE
POUND ON THE DOOR. Ron removes the chair.

RON

Who is it?

EXT APARTMENT BALCONY

MALCOLM climbs over the railing and hangs down,
lowering himself by hanging onto the balustrades. His
feet touch the baluster on the balcony below, and he
precariously balances, trying to jump down. Before he
makes the move, he looks down, and sees

EXT MOCKINGBIRD LANE

The ASSASSIN walks nonchalantly down the driveway and
onto the sidewalk. He glances up at Ron's apartment,
where MALCOLM stands on the railing of the balcony
below.

INT RON'S APARTMENT

TWO COPS charge past RON.

COP #1

Is Malcolm Jonston here?

RON

He just left.

COP #2
You're sure about that?

RON
Go ahead and look, but I swear
he left just ten seconds before
you knocked. He must have gone
down the back stairs as you came
up.

COP #2
I did notice someone.

COP #1
Let's look around anyway.

RON
Be my guest.

Cop #2 looks out the balcony door, as Cop #1 starts
down the back hallway. Cop #1 stops short and turns
back to Ron.

COP #1
Do you know what kind of car
he's driving?

RON
I think it's a BMW convertible,
but I honestly don't know. He's
got a lot of cars.

The cop nods, then continues his search, joined by the
other cop.

EXT BALCONY

MALCOLM is on the balcony below Ron's. The apartment
within is dark and quiet. Malcolm is pressed against
the glass doors. He cautiously glances over the
railing at the street below.

EXT MOCKINGBIRD LANE

The ASSASSIN gets into his car, and drives off without
a glance back.

INT JONSTON MANSION KITCHEN

MARGARET sits staring at the wall, a glass of wine in her hands as CHARLES ENTERS.

CHARLES
Where's Marie? I'm hungry.

MARGARET
I sent the staff home.

CHARLES
Why? Because of the crash?

MARGARET
So that we could grieve in private, and so that we could talk.

Charles goes to the refrigerator and roots around for food.

CHARLES
So what do you want to talk about?

Margaret stands and approaches Charles.

MARGARET
You don't seem terribly upset about this.

CHARLES
Those boys did it to themselves. There's nothing I can do about that!

Margaret creeps a little closer as Charles lifts some food from the refrigerator and sets it on the counter.

MARGARET
Are you so certain they did it to themselves?

Charles takes offense.

CHARLES
In fact, I'm not so damned sure. Malcolm was supposed to be on it, and at the last minute he backed off.

MARGARET

Don't even suggest that!

Charles moves closer now, bearing down on Margaret.

CHARLES

Well if he did, there'll be
nothing I can do to save him!

They glare at each other for a moment, then Margaret
throws down her wine glass, smashing it on the floor,
and storms out of the room.

CHARLES

(shouting)

Since you're the one that sent
the staff away, you're damn sure
going to be the one to clean
this mess!

EXT APARTMENT BALCONY

RON is helping MALCOLM climb back up to his balcony.
They struggle, using belts for grip.

RON

Maybe it would've been easier
going down, rather than up.

MALCOLM

I should have just smashed those
doors.

With an effort, MALCOLM flops over the railing and onto
the cement balcony floor.

INT RON'S APARTMENT

MALCOLM is headed for the entrance with RON after him
closely.

RON

Wait. What about our visitor?

MALCOLM

I saw him leave.

RON

Maybe he double backed.

Malcolm stops short of the door.

MALCOLM

I keep thinking about what you said before about Hamlet.

RON

Man, give it up now. This is way out of control, and there's nothing you can do to make any of this right. I swear man, this is bad. Screw Hamlet.

MALCOLM

I didn't kill my father. I didn't kill Julie. I didn't kill those two idiots on that plane.

RON

But you did kill Reuben.

This stuns Malcolm, but only for a moment.

MALCOLM

But the uncle destroyed the family. If Hamlet did no more than shit in the moat for the rest of his life, the family would still have been destroyed.

RON

I'm not going to cover for you anymore. I'm calling the police as soon as you leave!

MALCOLM

Fine. Have them waiting for me at my Aunt's house. That will keep what's-his-name away.

INT PEARL HOUSE FAMILY ROOM

The WIDOW PEARL and PIERCE are on the sofa. The widow has been crying, and she and Pierce look off to one side of the room, from where the SOUND of LISA'S VOICE is heard.

WIDOW PEARL

Who's she talking to?

PIERCE

I don't know.

The fall silent in order to listen.

LISA (V.O.)

(barely audible)

Okay. I know where it is.

Goodbye.

LISA ENTERS carrying a cordless phone, and looking somewhat shamefaced. She sets down the phone and sits next to her mother without much eye contact.

WIDOW PEARL

Who was that dear?

LISA

Debbie.

WIDOW PEARL

Oh? That's nice. How is she?

LISA

Fine.

Lisa looks Pierce in the eyes.

LISA

I have to go out for a minute.

Will you stay here with Mom?

PIERCE

Go out where?

LISA

To buy something.

WIDOW PEARL

Tonight dear? Now? Please don't.

LISA

I'll just be a minute.

PIERCE

Let me go get it.

LISA

No.

PIERCE

Why not?

LISA

It's personal. I need kotex and
panty-shields.

WIDOW PEARL

I have some.

LISA

I want to get my own.

(to Pierce)

Stay here with Mom, please.

Just for a few minutes.

Pierce considers this, not quite believing her.

PIERCE

All right.

Lisa gets up.

LISA

Thanks.

INT/EXT FRONT OF HOUSE

PIERCE looking out the window sees Lisa's CAR is
backing out of the driveway.

INT PEARL HOUSE FAMILY ROOM

PIERCE turns away from the window. The WIDOW PEARL has
a confused look on her face.

PIERCE

I'm going to follow her.

WIDOW PEARL

Please do.

EXT CONVENIENCE STORE NIGHT

MALCOLM is near a pay phone outside of a convenience
store, sitting cross-legged on the sidewalk,
meditating.

LISA's CAR pulls into the lot, and parks directly in front of Malcolm, the front bumper almost touching him. The front license plate is a vanity plate that reads: "JAP".

INT/EXT CONVENIENCE STORE

From within LISA's CAR, LISA sees flashes her high beams in MALCOLM's face, who remains seated and meditating.

Lisa HONKS the HORN, and Malcolm opens his eyes slowly. Lisa rolls down a window and leans her head out.

EXT CONVENIENCE STORE

MALCOLM stands and goes calmly to Lisa's car.

MALCOLM

Thanks for coming. I really need to see a friendly face.

LISA

I hate your guts, Malcolm. I wish you were dead. I'm only here because you're pathetic.

MALCOLM

Again, thanks for coming.

Lisa scoffs at him.

LISA

What is your deal. Why are you meditating out here? It's like, so weird! You may as well jack-off.

MALCOLM

Lisa: I've learned a few things in this ordeal, and when it's all over, I hope you can forgive me.

LISA

Well, I won't. I hope you are frequently raped in prison. I hope you choke to death on an inmate's cock.

Malcolm smiles at her calmly, pleasantly.

MALCOLM

Can I ask a favor?

LISA

I should just call the police.
Aren't you wanted for that plane
crash? I mean, how many people
are you going to kill?

MALCOLM

I need a ride, and a place to
stay. Can I use your apartment?

Lisa gapes at him, amazed at his capacity to take.
Malcolm returns her look unflinchingly.

INT LISA'S CAR

MALCOLM is in the passenger seat, his feet drawn up
under him as if he were about to meditate. LISA,
driving, casts curious looks at him.

LISA

I don't know why I'm doing this.
I should just drive straight to
the police.

MALCOLM

If all you wanted to do was
verbally abuse me, you could
have done that on the phone.
There's a part of you that longs
for me, as I long for you.
That's why you're doing this.

LISA

Please. Give me a break.

She casts another glance at him, smirking.

LISA

And what is with all this
meditating crap?

MALCOLM

I need to think all this
through.

LISA

All what through?

MALCOLM

My Uncle Charles killed my father, so he could take over the company. I thought I was killing Charles, when I killed your father by mistake. Now there's an assassin trying to kill me.

LISA

An assassin?

MALCOLM

Yes. The assassin that killed Julie in my apartment, the King, the dog, and planted the bomb in the plane that killed Al and Steve.

LISA

(laughing)

You really are screwed.

MALCOLM

I know that if I can just meditate for a while, the answer will come.

Lisa laughs.

LISA

If any part of that is true, you should tell the police.

MALCOLM

But there's no connection between the assassin and Uncle Charles. And Charles can get any number of lawyers. Nothing will ever stick.

LISA

But why are there so many people dead, if this is between you and your uncle? Why did you shoot my father?

MALCOLM

I truly thought I was ending all this when I shot your father. I thought it was Charles in my mother's bedroom. I was ready to go to jail for the rest of my life, just to have him dead.

Lisa looks at him once, then again, not sure of what to believe.

INT CHARLES'S MANSION OFFICE

CHARLES is at his desk, on the secure phone. The SOUND of POUNDING and SCREAMING can be heard. There is someone locked in the closet, a chair wedged under the doorknob.

MARGARET (V.O.)

Charles! Charles! Open this God damn door!

CHARLES

Where are you right now?

MARGARET (V.O.)

Why are those boys dead Charles?

CHARLES

Well, I need you over here. I have a problem.

MARGARET (V.O.)

I want to see Malcolm, Charles. Do you hear me?

CHARLES

I understand that you have your own way of working. But I have a problem, and you're going to solve it.

MARGARET (V.O.)

(desperate,
pleading)

Charles. Don't do this. Please!

CHARLES

You can name your God damned price. But I need you to bring Malcolm here.

INT LISA PEARL'S APARTMENT

The ASSASSIN leans against a wall in the front room, his bulky secure phone held to his ear. All the lights are off, and there is just a small amount of light from the window. He's wearing gloves, and has a pistol set out on a table.

ASSASSIN

I'm waiting for him now. But I thought the cops were all over your place.

The assassin picks up a picture of LISA PEARL and looks it over.

CHARLES (V.O.)

They're going to scour the God damned ranch.

ASSASSIN

Well that's it. Let me finish this right now, and I'm gone. I ain't hanging around until they want to talk to the limo driver.

CHARLES (V.O.)

But my fiancé is the problem now.

The assassin puts down the picture and looks out the window.

INT/EXT PARKING LOT

LISA'S CAR pulls into the lot, and MALCOLM and LISA get out.

ASSASSIN (V.O.)

I'll need two million. Transfer it now.

INT LISA'S PEARL'S APARTMENT

The ASSASSIN moves away from the window and picks up the gun.

ASSASSIN
Did you hear me?

MARGARET (V.O.)
(faintly)
Charles! Are you some kind of lunatic? Let me out.

CHARLES (V.O.)
Fine. I'm transferring it now.

ASSASSIN
I'll bring your nephew right over.

INT ASSASSIN'S CAR

The ASSASSIN is driving, a grim expression on his face. MALCOLM is crumpled like a sack of potatoes on the floor of the passenger side. His head bobs with the car's motion, and he wakes up.

MALCOLM
What is this?

ASSASSIN
Go back to meditating.

The assassin takes a blackjack from between his legs and raises it to smack Malcolm in the head.

MALCOLM
Did you kill Lisa?

The assassin pauses, a brief glimpse of sympathy in his face.

ASSASSIN
I'm just doing my job.

He smiles, a cat toying with his mouse.

ASSASSIN
She was pretty. How was she in bed.

Malcolm drops his head in grief. The assassin toys with the blackjack, his look satisfied.

MALCOLM

Why are you doing this?

ASSASSIN

Beats heavy lifting.

MALCOLM

He's doing it all wrong, though.

ASSASSIN

He pays well.

MALCOLM

But you're too involved. Are you headed out of the country after this?

The assassin looks with interest at Malcolm.

ASSASSIN

What for?

MALCOLM

Look at how messy this is! Six people dead. A major corporation involved. The Feds. will be all over this. America's Most Wanted will dedicate three episodes.

The assassin ponders this.

MALCOLM

Are you at least using Swiss bank accounts?

ASSASSIN

Virgin Islands.

MALCOLM

And Charles?

ASSASSIN

I don't know.

MALCOLM

You see? You're screwed. You won't even have the money to defend yourself. Charles is an ignorant, crude pig, and he just shit in your lunch pail.

The assassin is angry now.

ASSASSIN

Shut up kid.

The assassin takes up the blackjack and raises it high.

MALCOLM

(desperate)

I can pay! Just go to the cops and turn State's witness. I have a Swiss...

The assassin lowers the blackjack in anger, knocking Malcolm unconscious.

INT WIDOW PEARL'S HOUSE

The WIDOW PEARL opens the front door for PIERCE escorting LISA, holding her head in some pain.

WIDOW PEARL

My God! What happened?

PIERCE

Malcolm attacked her in her apartment?

WIDOW PEARL

Her apartment? Was the seven-eleven out of kotex?

LISA

He didn't attack me, Mom!

PIERCE

If I hadn't shown up, he probably would have killed her.

WIDOW PEARL

My God!

LISA

It wasn't Malcolm! I was facing Malcolm when it happened! I was hit from behind.

PIERCE

The coward can't even do his own dirty work.

WIDOW PEARL

My God! Why isn't she at the hospital.

Pierce and the widow sit Lisa down on the sofa, and the Widow runs for a glass of water.

PIERCE

I'm calling the police!

LISA

No! I'm fine. Malcolm didn't do anything.

The widow returns with a glass of water and hands it to Lisa.

WIDOW PEARL

Dear, he's a killer. What was he doing in your apartment?

LISA

I don't want to talk about it.

Pierce takes up the phone and begins dialing.

LISA

Pierce! Stop!

Pierce pauses and looks at her.

PIERCE

Why are you protecting him?

LISA

He didn't hurt me just now.

PIERCE

Then he's in trouble. We should call the police.

Lisa ponders this.

EXT JONSTON MANSION

The ASSASSIN'S CAR pulls into the garage port. The mansion is dark and deserted, and the garage door closes quickly on the car.

INT JONSTON MANSION

CHARLES leads the ASSASSIN who carries MALCOLM in a fireman's cradle down a hallway.

INT CHARLES'S MANSION OFFICE

CHARLES holds open the door as the ASSASSIN carries MALCOLM inside and dumps him on the sofa. The SOUND OF MARGARET WHIMPERING can be heard.

CHARLES

Well done.

INT WIDOW PEARL'S HOUSE

PIERCE is looking out the window as LISA and the WIDOW sit on the sofa.

PIERCE

The cops are here. I'm going to the mansion.

LISA

Why?

PIERCE

I want to make sure my dad is okay.

PIERCE EXITS.

INT CHARLES'S MANSION OFFICE

MALCOLM is unconscious on the sofa, and CHARLES and the ASSASSIN stand over him.

ASSASSIN

So what the hell is this new plan of yours?

MARGARET (V.O.)

Charles?

Charles nods towards the closet door.

CHARLES

Shoot her, then him, make it
look like he did it.

ASSASSIN

Fine.

MARGARET (V.O.)

Charles? Please let me out?

CHARLES

So, go ahead.

Charles starts for the door.

CHARLES

After you're gone, I'll call the
police.

The assassin stops him with a look.

ASSASSIN

What bank are you sending me the
money from?

CHARLES

What?

ASSASSIN

What bank?

MARGARET (V.O.)

(louder)

I have to go to the bathroom!

CHARLES

My bank.

ASSASSIN

Can the transfer of funds be
traced?

MARGARET (V.O.)

Please help me? I have to go to
the bathroom! Anybody? Please.

CHARLES

Who would trace them?

MARGARET (V.O.)

(crying)

My bladder really hurts.

The assassin shrugs.

CHARLES

Just do this, for Christ's sake!
I'll get you cash next week, but
just do this!

ASSASSIN

Whose gun?

Charles stops short in confusion.

CHARLES

Yours!

The assassin shakes his head. Malcolm GROANS as he
wakes up, grabs at his head.

MARGARET (V.O.)

(pathetic)

Please. Just let me pee.
Charles. Don't do this.

ASSASSIN

Yours. They'll need a gun.
Your gun, for this to work.

Charles goes with great agitation to his desk and pulls
out an automatic pistol. Malcolm lifts his head,
quickly assesses the situation.

CHARLES

Here!

The assassin takes the gun.

MARGARET (V.O.)

Damn you Charles! You murderous
bastard!

MALCOLM

Mom?

MARGARET (V.O.)

Malcolm?

Charles and the assassin look at Malcolm then at each other. The assassin smiles wryly.

MALCOLM

Mom: it's going to be alright.

MARGARET (V.O.)

Get me out of here!

The assassin raises the pistol and shoots through the closet door. The SOUND of Margaret falling to the floor is heard. Malcolm SCREAMS, then shudders in horror.

Charles goes to the door and listens. He peaks inside, then turns his head in revulsion.

CHARLES

Well, you fucked that up.

ASSASSIN

She ain't dead?

CHARLES

No, she's dead. But how do we make it look like he did it?

Points to Malcolm, who looks on in horror.

CHARLES

Why the hell would he shoot her through the closet door?

ASSASSIN

I don't care. She was bugging me.

CHARLES

I'm not paying you for this. This is a big freaking mess.

The assassin looks menacingly at Charles.

ASSASSIN

Oh, I'll be paid.

Malcolm stands defiantly, disgusted with the whole mess.

MALCOLM

So what: I'm supposed to have killed my mother AND my former girlfriend, and then kill myself? Why?

Charles smiles at the opportunity.

CHARLES

Grief over the loss of your father. But you didn't kill Lisa.

MALCOLM

I didn't? But I thought he...

ASSASSIN

He wouldn't let me.

CHARLES

Pierce is in love with her, though I don't know what the hell he sees in a Jew.

Malcolm considers this.

MALCOLM

Then, how do you know she won't remember being hit from behind?

CHARLES

So?

MALCOLM

She was facing me when Chuckles there hit her. She knows it wasn't me.

Charles realizes his mistake.

CHARLES

Is that true?

ASSASSIN

I did what you asked, even though I wanted to kill her.

MALCOLM

(to the assassin)

That's what I was saying: he doesn't know how this stuff works! He's an amateur.

The assassin raises an eyebrow.

CHARLES

That's enough. Kill him. Make it look like suicide.

But the assassin doesn't move. He merely fiddles with the barrel of the gun against his cheek.

MALCOLM

They'll hunt you forever.

CHARLES

Kill him!

MALCOLM

They'll transfer back the money!

The assassin looks hard at Charles.

CHARLES

Damn it! What are you waiting for. We can still make it work!

MALCOLM

No! Kill him!

CHARLES

Kill him!

The assassin brings the gun to bear on Malcolm, and moves closer to him. Malcolm shows some fear, but suddenly the assassin throws the gun into the corner and flees out the door.

For a moment, Malcolm and Charles are frozen, looking at the door after him. Then they both break for the gun.

MALCOLM

You prick bastard!

Charles gets to the gun first, but Malcolm slams into him, knocking him against a wall, and starts pounding on him. They both cry out, shoving, kicking, SCREAMING as they struggle.

Malcolm jumps back as Charles has the gun and levels it at Malcolm's gut. Charles is breathing heavily.

CHARLES

Alright, asshole. You're going to die.

Malcolm backs up, and Charles stays with him, step for step. Charles smiles, savoring the moment.

CHARLES

I never liked you, Socrates.

Malcolm glances at the closet.

MALCOLM

I've seen what you do to your loved ones, so I suppose there isn't much hope for me.

Charles smiles, and squeezes the trigger, but the gun jams. Charles quickly moves the action and ejects an unspent cartridge, but Malcolm is out the door before he can raise the gun again.

INT GALLERY

MALCOLM is running through the gallery without looking back. He ducks into a doorway.

INT HALLWAY

CHARLES comes out of the library with the gun at the ready, and takes off after Malcolm.

INT GALLERY

CHARLES enters the deserted gallery breathing heavily. MALCOLM peeks out from a doorway on the balcony above.

CHARLES

Where do you think you're going?

Charles scans the different doors and hallways leading off from the Gallery. Then he notices the balcony, and begins to look up as well. Malcolm ducks back inside.

CHARLES

No matter what happens, I'm going to come out of this a winner. I guarantee it.

Charles notices the door slightly ajar on the second floor. He takes aim at it.

CHARLES

If you don't believe me, just ask your father.

There is the SOUND of POLICE SIRENS, and Charles looks to the windows for a brief moment.

Malcolm emerges from another doorway, unseen by Charles, and flicks a pencil across the gallery in the direction of the first doorway from which he had emerged.

At the SOUND of the PENCIL FALLING, Charles whirls about and FIRES two shots at the door. MALCOLM leaps from the balcony, falling on Charles's back, knocking him sprawling to the floor, and the gun clatters to the floor. Malcolm rolls backwards and struggles to right himself, having injured an ankle in the fall.

Charles scrambles for the gun; Malcolm limps up and kicks Charles in the groin, flattening Charles, who GROANS in pain. Malcolm kicks him again. Charles GROANS and MOANS.

Malcolm picks up the gun leisurely, holding it gingerly by the trigger guard so as to not smudge finger prints. He carries it back to where Charles still writhes in pain.

MALCOLM

Well looky here.

PIERCE ENTERS the gallery behind Malcolm, quietly observing. He has a pistol in his hand, and aims it at Malcolm as he approaches. Charles MUMBLES something in anger.

MALCOLM

How's it feel now?

Charles sees Pierce, and lifts himself to hands and knees.

MALCOLM
Easy, there, big fella'.
Socrates is just going to call
the police...

PIERCE
They'll be here very soon.

Malcolm is startled and jerks around to find Pierce's
pistol just a few feet in front of his face.

PIERCE
Easy there yourself.

Glancing nervously at Charles.

PIERCE
Dad? Are you okay?

CHARLES
Shoot him! Shoot him!

PIERCE
It's okay. I've got him.
(to Malcolm
severely)
Drop the gun.

Charles crawls towards Malcolm, reaching for the gun.

MALCOLM
No way.

Holds the gun out of reach.

MALCOLM
This is all I got.

PIERCE
Drop it.

CHARLES
Just shoot him, damn it!

Pierce looks around nervously.

PIERCE
Where's the other guy? He had
help at Lisa's apartment.

MALCOLM

Tell him about the other guy,
Uncle Charles.

Charles drags himself to his feet and reaches for
Pierce's gun.

CHARLES

Son of a bitch, Pierce: give me
the gun.

Pierce pulls the gun away, and steps back from Charles.

PIERCE

What's the deal, Dad. I've got
it.

MALCOLM

Daddy wants number one son to
learn lesson well.

CHARLES

Just shoot him!

MALCOLM

Ask him who killed my mother.

PIERCE

(to Charles)
She's really dead?

Charles nods impatiently.

CHARLES

Shoot. Before the police are
here!

MALCOLM

Ask him who planted the bomb in
the plane.

PIERCE

What?

CHARLES

Can't you see he's mad? Either
shoot him or give me the gun.

Charles makes another lunge for Pierce's gun, and
Pierce jumps back. Malcolm makes a break for a door.

CHARLES

Damn it!

Pierce aims and FIRES, hitting Malcolm in the shoulder and sprawling him on the gallery floor. Malcolm's gun spins free of his hand, and Charles pounces on it.

Charles smiles at Pierce.

CHARLES

Fine shot, son.

Charles aims the pistol at Malcolm's head. Malcolm looks up helplessly at him, grabbing at his shoulder. Pierce runs up beside Charles, and pushes away the gun.

PIERCE

Dad, don't. He can't get away now.

CHARLES

Don't you want to see him dead after what he did to Lisa.

PIERCE

The other guy did it. Where's the other guy?

CHARLES

And he just killed your Aunt, his own mother.

Charles aims again at Malcolm's head. Malcolm closes his eyes, his lips moving in prayerful meditation as he awaits the shot unflinchingly.

PIERCE

Dad, please don't.

CHARLES

And your step-brothers too. Next it would have been me.

Charles has anger in his face, and he focuses now on Malcolm.

The camera closes in on Malcolm, who looks more calm now than ever. He doesn't even flinch with the final SHOT is FIRED.

Charles spins around, a look of cruel surprise on his face as he realizes that Pierce, who holds the smoking gun, has shot him in the kidney. Charles collapses.

Pierce can't believe what he's done either, and looks to Malcolm, back at his father, and back once more at Malcolm.

Malcolm closes his eyes, and puts his head down on the floor to rest.

INT PRISON VISITOR CENTER

LISA is on one side of the glass, talking on the phone with MALCOLM, dressed in prison dungarees.

LISA

Well, I broke up with Pierce.

MALCOLM

Really? Why?

LISA

Too much like his father.

Malcolm nods, smiling.

LISA

So how is it? I mean, in here?

MALCOLM

Not bad, really. I've been teaching a lot of the cons meditation. They think it makes them stronger in fights, so I'm quite popular.

LISA

(laughs)

Really? I was worried you might be, um, taken advantage of.

MALCOLM

I was too. But I'm given the benefit of the doubt because I'm in for manslaughter. It really matters. They say I can even get a tattoo, but I don't think I will.

Lisa smiles, shaking her head.

MALCOLM

What?

LISA

I can't believe I'm talking to you. I don't know why I'm here.

Malcolm smiles.

MALCOLM

You know, they're pretty much full, and there's a good chance I'll be released if there are a lot of convictions next month.

LISA

What would you do?

MALCOLM

I've been thinking of teaching meditation. Maybe start my own religion.

The camera pulls back slowly, revealing other prisoners talking to their own women.

LISA

(laughing)

That sounds just stupid enough to work.

MALCOLM

Don't laugh. I think it's my one true path.

LISA

(laughing out loud)

You're own religion?

MALCOLM

No, seriously! Here's how it'll go...

FADE OUT