

1976

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All-American: A screenplay

by

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A Thesis Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirements for the Degree for
Master of Arts

Major: English

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This thesis has been accepted by the Department of English in lieu of the research thesis prescribed by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in English.

(1) Interior: Joe's Living room, night.

Rick and Joe, two black men, are seated at a large table. There is a game board on the table. Empty liquor bottles are lying on the table and on the floor. Joe drops two dice into a cup and is about to roll them out onto the table, when there is a knock on the door. Joe gets up to answer the door. Benny comes in.

Joe (laughing): Hey, man, how you like the crib? It's not the ghetto, but it's pretty close!

Benny (grinning): Not bad! Looks like you started partying without me. Where is everybody?

Rick (grinning): John and Norm are in there with these two chicks—they were hanging around John's dorm room. Come on, Joe! Let's start!

Joe (anxiously): You're not too late to get in on the action, Benny.

Benny (nervously): I've never played this before.

Rick (jokingly, to Joe): My roommate here is from South Chicago—he's not use to playing drinking games. Benny, my man, an important part of your education has been neglected here at 'Cowpasture U.'!

Joe (laughing): It's fun—you'll catch on real fast. Roll the dice!

Benny (confused): What's the object?

Rick (impatiently): Just shut up and throw!

Benny rolls the dice onto the table. Then he moves a green peg four spaces and lands on a spot marked "pass out".

Benny (grinning, nervously): Now, what?

Rick picks up a wine bottle and pours a brownish liquid into three small shot glasses.

Benny (surprised): Hell, what is this?

Joe (laughing): Everytime you land on "pass out", you get three shots of WAR. That's wine and 100 proof alcohol!

Benny (anxiously): But there are more "pass outs" on this board than anything else.

Rick (grinning): Yeah, that's the fun part. You win if you're still standing when everyone else has passed out.

Joe (jokingly): But if you're lucky, you'll pass out early!

Benny (hesitatingly): I'm suppose to be in training and—

Joe (interrupting): We're all in training. But we're graduating. Hell, you need a break!

One of the bedroom doors opens and a young blond woman runs out of the room pursued by Norm. The woman is screaming and laughing, then runs back through the door with the man still chasing her.

Rick (laughing): Hurry up with that one, Norm! Need any help, just give a yell! (pause): Drink up, Benny!

Benny quickly gulps down the three drinks.

Benny (loudly): God, that was awful!

(2) Interior: Benny's Bedroom, night.

Benny is asleep on a double bed, when the phone rings.

Benny (drowsily): Hello,....Hello!

There is the sound of light breathing on the other end.
Benny sits up in the bed.

Benny (angrily): God damn it—this isn't funny. If I ever
find out who this is, I'll—

He hears the dial tone on the other end, so he hangs up the
phone. It rings again, and Benny picks it up again.

Benny (loudly): Listen, you bastard! If you don't stop
calling me, I'll call the police and—

Liz (interrupting): Benny, this is Liz!

Liz, a young brunette, is seen standing near a couch in a
living room setting. Then the viewing screen is split with
Benny on the right and Liz on the left, so that Benny's back
is toward her.

Benny (surprised): Liz?

Liz (laughing): Don't sound so surprised—you knew I'd be
back. I wasn't committed or anything.

Benny (hesitatingly): I'm glad you're out—I mean, I really
missed you.

Liz (sarcastically): Yeah, I'm still waiting for your letter!

Benny (anxiously): I couldn't write—didn't know what to say.
Hey, when did you get back?

Liz (quickly): Yesterday. Is something wrong?

Benny (drowsily): I've been getting phone calls—some
obscene. (pause): Look, Liz, I'm tired and I've got

to drive home this afternoon, so—

Liz (reluctantly): I'd like to come over and talk.

Benny (firmly): I'm going home today—Sunday's my mother's birthday.

She picks up a coat from the sofa and starts to put it on.

Liz (persisting): I'll only stay for a little while—it might be like it—

Benny (impatiently): No, Liz! I'm—there's just nothing I want to say. Besides, I'm getting up early to go to graduation.

Liz (desperately): Or you could come over here. I've got a new roommate, but she's gone for the weekend.

Benny (loudly): You're not listening to me—I've had too much to drink and I'm tired.

Liz (persisting): So, when can I see you?

Benny (dully): I don't know—in the Fall, maybe. Or I might be back during the summer—I'll give you a ring when I get back.

Liz sinks down to the sofa with the coat still on.

Liz (whining): You're mad at me!

Benny (yawning): No, I'm not mad—I'm tired.

Liz (angrily): Tired of me!

Benny (loudly): That's not what I said—

Liz (interrupting, loudly): But that's what you meant!

Benny (quickly): No, it's not! I tell you what. Why don't you meet me at the ceremonies?

Liz (firmly): No! I wanted to talk to you privately. How about lunch in the Union? It won't take very long.

Benny (drowsily): I want to leave at least by two—I'm too tired to argue anymore. I'll meet you in the Union at eleven. But there's nothing—

Liz (interrupting): You sure you'll be there?

Benny (firmly): I said I would—look! I'm falling asleep talking to you—Good-night!

Benny hangs up. Liz hears the phone click, slams the receiver down, and then stares at it before picking it up again. Then she replaces it slowly.

End of Split-Screen.

Benny takes the receiver off the hook, dials eight, wires the dial permanently in that position, and puts the receiver on the table.

(3) Interior: Liz's Kitchen, night.

Liz is talking to Steve on the phone.

Liz (hesitatingly): I called him, Steve, but he couldn't come over tonight.

Steve (quickly): What do you mean 'couldn't'?

Liz (dully): He said he was too drunk or too—

Steve (interrupting, loudly): Then you should have gone over there!

Liz (angrily): Look! I know what I'm doing. I didn't want to sound too anxious—he hates that—

Steve (calming): So when are you calling him back?

Liz (hesitatingly): I'm not going to.

Liz opens a can of beer.

Steve (loudly): You've got to, Liz! You know how important this is to me—to both of us. You said you'd help me if I'd help you get out of that place. (pause): You should have pressured him into meeting you for lunch—

Liz (quickly): I said I don't want to seem anxious.

(pause): Besides, he said he'd call tomorrow afternoon.

Steve (hesitatingly): I guess that's better than nothing.

(pause): Hey, did you just open a beer?

Liz (loudly): No, it's pop! (pause): I'm cured—I'm off that hard stuff for the rest of my life.

Steve (sighing): You'd better be—we can't afford to have anything go wrong.

Liz (slowly): Are you coming back here tonight?

Steve (quickly): I don't think so. (pause): Hey, I got to go.

He hangs up and Liz throws the half empty can into a container which is full of beer cans.

(4) Interior: Trailer Kitchen, early morning.

Rick is drinking liquor and Benny is drinking water.

Benny (grinning): God! You never get enough!

Rick (seriously): I'm just having a little more to clear my head. You should try it—it really helps. Who won last night?

Benny (dully): We were all losers. You probably don't remember it, but you went into Joe's kitchen closet and threw up! Then Joe just fell out cold on the floor!

Rick (laughing): That don't make you the winner—we had been drinking before you got there. Joe's not much of a drinker anyway.

Benny (laughing): Neither am I. I can't remember how I got back here. (pause): All I want to do now is graduate and get the hell out of here—this last year took everything out of me.

Rick (seriously): Your folks coming for the graduation ceremonies?

Benny (hesitatingly): No, but I'm going anyway. (pause): Hey, did I tell you I've agreed to sign a contract?

Rick (dully): No. Who's the lucky team?

Benny (quickly): Fred Jones, the manager of the Toronto Hawks, called last night. They've sent a contract to—

Rick (interrupting): How much they offering you?

Benny (angrily): All you ever think about is money!

Rick (loudly): You're damn right, 'cause that's all that's important. (pause): Fifty grand a year with Dallas—and you turned it down. And for what? So you could get

Benny (angrily): Shut up! You've had too much to drink.

Just shut up before you say something—

Rick (bitterly): My problem is that I never say anything.

I drown it in liquor. (pause): But you, Mr. All-American, denounced the title, and you were still Mr. All-American to the pro teams. You got offers, and you were drafted in the first round—We didn't even get a thank you note!

Benny (firmly): Shut up! Just shut up—it's the liquor—

Rick (defiantly): It's not the liquor talking—it's me. And for the first time since I've known you, I'm able to say that I hate—

His sentence is interrupted by a loud knock on the back door. The knocking becomes louder and more desperate, and Benny leaves the room.

(5) Interior: Trailer Hallway, early morning.

Benny grabs the doorknob and stands close to the back door.

Benny (shouting): Who is it?

(6) Exterior: Behind the Trailer, early morning.

Joe is standing knee-deep in tall grasses.

Joe (hesitatingly): It's me, man, Joe. Let me in—quick!

(7) Interior: Trailer Hallway, morning.

Benny and Joe are standing in the hallway. Joe is frightened.

Benny (loudly): Why the hell didn't you come around to the front door?

Joe (whispering): I didn't drive, not all the way—thought I might be followed! (pause): Two men came by the crib this morning. They were asking questions—about you!

Benny (seriously): Who were they?

Joe (hesitatingly): They didn't say—said they were football scouts or something. But I know they were Feds!

Benny (loudly): Feds?

Joe (nervously): I've seen them before at Fort Leavenworth—I'm telling you, they were Feds!

Benny (surprised): Leavenworth? What were you doing there?

Joe (quickly): I did three years there for armed robbery—it took three years to prove I was framed. Anyway, there were plenty of Feds hanging around all the time.

Benny (nervously): What did they want to know?

Joe (hurriedly): They asked me about the last time I saw you, where you lived, your telephone number—

Benny (anxiously): What did you tell them?

Joe (reluctantly): I pretended I didn't know anything—I didn't say anything. I told them you weren't too friendly, and that I barely knew you except for on the football field.

Benny raises the hall curtain and glances out.

Benny (angrily): Damn! Did they say what they wanted?

Joe (nervously): No, they didn't say anything—just asked questions.

Benny (grinning nervously): You'd think they would've shown up here last year, when we first started the Black Student Organization, or when we threatened to drop out of the University if our demands for a black coach weren't met—

Joe (interrupting): They were here! There's no proof—they never came out and asked any questions—but they were probably here as students.

Benny (firmly): No! This is too wild to believe! It can't be true!

Joe (seriously): Maybe it isn't true, but, to be safe, I think you should skip graduation—head for Chicago right now!

Benny (laughing nervously): You really are scared! (pause): Supposing these dudes are Feds—just supposing—what can they do to me here that they can't do to me on the road?

Joe starts to pace back and forth in the hallway.

Joe (seriously): I don't know, I just don't know. But you can't just sit here waiting—they're going to come here sooner or later! You've—

Joe is interrupted by the ringing of the phone. Benny leaves

the room and heads in the direction of his bedroom.

(8) Interior: Benny's Bedroom, morning.

Benny is talking on the phone to his mother, Mrs. Carter.

Mrs. Carter (talking fast): I don't want to talk too long—
I have something to tell you. But first I want to know
when you'll be leaving.

Benny (reluctantly): I don't know, Mama. I was going to the
graduation ceremonies, but—I'm not sure anymore.

Loud voices are heard coming from the kitchen.

Mrs. Carter (concerned): Is something wrong?

Benny (hurriedly): No, nothing's wrong. (pause): Whether I
go to graduation or not, I still have to meet Liz in the
Union at eleven. So I should be leaving here at least by
two.

Mrs. Carter (surprised): Liz? (pause): I thought she was in
an institution or—

Benny (quickly): We all thought she was committed—she just
got out.

Mrs. Carter (seriously): But I thought you weren't seeing her
anymore—you broke up or something.

Benny (dully): We did break up. Liz just wants to talk—
maybe that's the least I can do for her.

Mrs. Carter (angrily): You don't owe her nothing!

Benny (holding back his anger): I know I don't, but we're not

enemies either. You never liked Liz ! (pause): Look, Mama, we can talk about this when I get home. Now, what did you want to tell me?

Mrs. Carter (hesitatingly): Some people have been calling here for you—

Benny (interrupting): Who were they? What did they want?

Mrs. Carter (seriously): I don't know for sure—wanted to know when you were coming home, what you plan to do after graduation.

Benny (anxiously): Did you tell them anything?

Mrs. Carter (slowly): What could I tell them?

Benny (desperately): Did any of them leave their names?

Mrs. Carter (quickly): One did. There was a Mr. Jacobs or Jones or something. Said he was a football team manager.

Benny (sighing): Hopefully, they were all team managers or scouts. (pause): You sure you didn't tell them nothing?

Mrs. Carter (slowly): I might have given them your phone number—

Benny (loudly): My phone number?

Mrs. Carter (reluctantly): Since it's not listed in your name, and they said it was urgent. (pause): Is something wrong?

Benny (calming): No, you did all right—I'll tell you about it when I get home tonight.

Mrs. Carter (anxiously): Be careful, Benny!

Benny (reluctantly): I always drive carefully!

Mrs. Carter (hesitatingly): That's not what I meant!

Benny (quickly): Okay, Mama. Don't worry! Everything's fine.

(9) Interior: Liz's Living room, morning.

Liz is asleep on the couch, and Steve comes in the front door, walks to the couch, and stands over her for a few seconds. He takes off his coat and covers her with it. Then he walks into the kitchen.

(10) Interior: Trailer Kitchen, midmorning.

Benny is leaning against the kitchen sink, Rick is still seated at the table, and Joe is pacing back and forth.

Rick (loudly, to Benny): Look at the facts, man! Some dude's been questioning your friends and your family about you—
Dudes who don't leave names!

Joe (desperately): And they look and act like Feds! (pause):
What do you need? Someone to walk in here and collar you?

Benny (angrily): So, what if they're Feds? I ain't broke no laws—ain't done nothing wrong. Hell, I'm on their side!

Joe (louder): If they're looking for you, you ain't on their side! (pause): Man, I been there and I know what I'm talking about!

Benny (firmly): I still ain't sure there's anything to worry about!

Rick (calmly): Man, you been away from the 'hood too long, but, okay. (pause): If none of us know what these dudes are up to, (to Joe): whoever they are, (to Benny): Joe's right. We'd better check it out!

Benny (quickly): How?

Joe (seriously): I don't know yet. (pause): I'll just ask around—I should be back before two—

Benny (interrupting): I wanted to be out of this place at least by two—and what about the graduation ceremonies!

Joe (angrily): You just stay here—And forget about going to graduation!

Joe exits down the hallway and the sound of the door opening and shutting is heard.

(11) Interior: Liz's Kitchen, midmorning.

Steve is standing in the kitchen. He turns and sees Liz standing in the doorway.

Liz (drowsily): What are you doing, Steve?

Steve (hesitating): Just looking around. Who drank all the beer?

Liz (hurriedly): My roommate—she had some friends over before she went home for the weekend. There might be some left in the refrigerator, if you want one.

Steve (slowly): Oh God, Liz! You're beginning to believe your own lies! (angrily): I just knew this wouldn't work!

Liz (puzzled): What are you talking about? I haven't had anything to drink.

Steve (loudly): Look! You don't have a roommate—you made up that story for Benny, remember? Not even he would believe you could afford a place like this by yourself!

Steve crosses over to the refrigerator and takes out a beer.

Liz (smiling, shakily): I'm pretty convincing, huh? I poured the beer down the drain. (pause): I had to make the place look like I had a roommate—just in case Benny decided to come over. Honest.

Steve (calming): Yeah. (pause): Heard from Benny yet?

Liz (dully): No, he hasn't called.

Steve (seriously): You sure?

Liz (emphatically): I said he didn't call—

Steve (anxiously): When you think you'll see him?

Liz (angrily): I don't know! Why the hell you asking all these questions?

Steve (slowly): Oh, I don't know. Sometimes I think you might be lying to me about how you feel—about Benny.

Liz (loudly): I left him, remember? I'm not lying.

Steve (hesitatingly): I'm sorry!

Liz (firmly): That's a lie! (pause): You've known me all my life—you know I'd never lie to you!

Steve (loudly): I said I was sorry. Well, God, what am I suppose to think when I come in here and see all those

empty beer cans. And if you lie so well about the beer and all, then you could be lying about everything else!

Liz (angrily): You're a real bastard. Guess I'm attracted to bastards like you and Benny!

Steve (angrily): Why do you always have to talk about him? Hey, where you going?

Liz (loudly): I'm getting the hell out of here!

She turns shakily and walks out of the room. Steve follows her.

(12) Interior: Trailer Kitchen, midmorning.

Benny and Rick are seated at the table again.

Benny (seriously): Man, I sure hope Joe is wrong! (pause):

I told Liz I'd meet her in the Union at eleven.

Rick (surprised): Liz? When did she get out?

Benny (dully): I don't know—she called last night.

Rick (hesitatingly): I thought I heard the phone ring, but I figured it was just another crank. I guess it was! (pause):

Did she sound all right? You know, was she okay?

Benny (sighing): What's okay for Liz? (pause): You know, I think I really—needed her at the beginning.

Rick (quickly): Of course, you did! The university recruited black athletes, but no black women—so it was all right to have a white chick around then. (pause): You didn't have to fall in love with one!

Benny (dully): I know that now. (pause): She sounded funny last night. I guess she sounded different. Anyway, after she called, I kept having these crazy dreams about her.

Rick (seriously): I don't believe in superstition or whammies or anything, but I'd forget that broad, if I were you.
(pause): Those dreams—that's real scary.

Benny (laughing): Man, you really come out of that bottle with some good ones! Dreams don't scare me, and they can't hurt me either. Besides, they weren't nightmares.

Rick (scary): Dreams are dreams. I've heard of them making people hurt themselves—

Benny (smiling): That's what I mean about the bottle—it's got you mixed up in your superstitions! It's ghosts that make you hurt yourself!

(13) Interior: Liz's Living room, midmorning.

Liz and Steve are lying on the living room floor. Steve's bare shoulders are visible above the blanket. Liz, dressed in a slip, gets up and moves around the room, picking up her clothing. She walks to the bathroom. Steve stirs a little in his sleep.

(14) Interior: Benny's Bedroom, late morning.

Benny picks up the last box of books and heads down the hall.

Benny (shouting, to Rick): I'm done in here. I hope we're through cleaning by two, or before the landlord gets here.
(pause): If you're not done, I'll help you finish—

(15) Interior: Trailer Living room, late morning.

Benny walks in with his box of books and sees Rick asleep on the couch.

Benny (angrily): Hell, I'm not doing all the work around here!

He glances at the clock which says 10:45.

(16) Interior: Liz's Living room, late morning.

Liz comes out of the bathroom fully dressed and glances at her watch which says 10:45. Before going out the front door, she stares at Steve who is still curled up on the floor.

(17) Exterior: Outside the Trailer, late morning.

Benny cautiously exits from the trailer and gets into his car.

(18) Interior: Norm's Living room, late morning.

Norm is hanging up the telephone and Joe is waiting anxiously.

Norm (quickly): That was Red—that red headed brother that sells dope. He says he knows one of them dudes!

Joe (hesitatingly): So, who is he?

Norm (anxiously): No, man, he doesn't know him by name! Red says the dude's an agent.

Joe (seriously): I just knew they were Feds!

Norm (loudly): Not Feds—state agents!

Joe (surprised): What would they want with Benny?

(19) Interior: Student Union Cafeteria, late morning.

Benny enters the cafeteria and walks over to Liz's table.

Liz (excitedly): Benny! (pause): Gee, you really put on some weight. No, don't pull in your stomach!

Benny (hesitatingly): You look—real good, Liz!

Liz (smiling): You mean different! I'm different.

Benny (calmly): That's why you called last night. You wanted me to see that you look different—your hair is pretty and you have new clothes!

Liz (hesitatingly): Yeah. (pause): I also wanted to ask you to help me.

Benny (anxiously): Help you? What can I do?

Liz (slowly): I want to go with you when you leave.

Benny (firmly): No!

Liz (desperately): You've got to help me! (pause): It sounds like I'm running away, but I can't help it. It's worse than I thought!

Benny (frowning): What can I say?

Liz (anxiously): Say I can go with you. Or I can join you in Chicago in a few days. Just say I can—

Benny (louder): But you can't!

Liz (pleadingly): Okay, I'll come out in a few weeks.

Benny (dully): I won't be there.

Liz (hesitatingly): Where will you be?

Benny (anxiously): I'll be in Canada!

Liz (excitedly): That's even better; I can meet you in
Canada and I won't even have to face your parents!

Benny (louder): It's no good!

Liz (hysterically): But it can be if we both try to—

Benny (interrupting): I don't want it to be any good—I mean,
it's all over.

Liz (pouting): Then, why the hell did you come here?

Benny (hesitatingly): I don't know—you sounded so desperate
on the phone and—

Liz (angrily): Pity! You came here because you felt sorry
for me?

Benny (slowly): No, not exactly. (pause): They say it's
easier to hate or love a person if he or she's not with
you for a long time.

Liz (impatiently): So?

Benny (shrugging): I wanted to find out how I felt about
you! (quickly): Are you hungry?

Liz (seriously): No—I mean, stop trying to confuse me.

(pause): Hey, do you know those two girls over there?

Benny (calmly): Where?

Liz (seriously): The blond in the red blouse with the brunette
near the door.

Benny (dully): I don't think so, why?

Liz (anxiously): The blond waved a few seconds ago. Are you
sure you don't know them?

Benny (indignantly): What if I do?

Liz (angrily): I knew it! That's why you wanted to meet at the Union—so you could finish with me real quick and then leave with that bitch!

Benny (angrily): Look, Liz! I said I don't think I know her. So will you just let it go? (pause): There's no reason for you to be jealous—

Liz (laughing hysterically): Jealous? You've been hit on the head too many times. We're not even going together, remember? (pause): And if we did decide to try it again—

Benny (firmly): No, Liz! We just went through this—

Liz (seriously): Just supposing we decided to get back together, it would be different, because I'm different! (pause): You said I looked different!

Benny (loudly): I know what I said, and you really do look—different. I ain't so sure you've changed.

Liz (angrily): You think I'm crazy. That was your reason for breaking up. (pause): I've been away and I've come back with a clean bill of health—signed and sealed!

Benny (confused): I don't know what you want me to say.

Liz (loudly): Don't look now, but I think your girlfriend and her friend are about to join us. That'll be real cozy!

The two girls near the door stand up and stare toward Liz and Benny.

Benny (angrily, through his teeth): She's not my girlfriend!

(pause): Wait a minute! The blonde was my lab partner in freshman biology.

As the girls approach the table, Liz gets up quickly. She walks to the lunch counter, picks up a tray, and slams it onto the railing. Benny talks to the two girls then follows Liz.

Benny (grinning nervously): I thought you said you weren't hungry! (pause): That girl was in my freshman English class.

Liz (loudly, facing him): I thought you said biology.

Benny (loudly): That's what I meant, biology. Hell, why do I have to explain anything to you. You should be apologizing to me—

Liz (angrily): If you think I'm so stupid that I couldn't see through that act, then you're the one who's crazy!

Benny (angrily): Let's forget it! It's none of your business if I knew them or not!

Liz places some food on her tray and then heads for the cashier. Benny puts the same thing on his tray and rushes after her.

Benny (quickly): I'll pay for both of these!

Liz (angrily to the cashier): No, he won't! I'm paying for my own!

Benny (dully): Suit yourself!

Liz pays for the food, picks up her tray, and heads for the table. Benny pays for his food and starts to follow her. She gets her tray to the edge of the table and drops it.

Liz (hysterically): Look what you made me do, you—you
bastard.

Benny is stunned. Liz knocks his tray out of his hands and starts kicking both trays and their contents around the floor. Then she starts swinging at Benny with her fists. Benny grabs her by the shoulders and shakes her, but she continues to strike out at him. Finally, Benny strikes her with the palm of his hand and she falls back onto the table. He then grabs her by the arm and helps her out of the room.

(20) Exterior: In front of the Student Union building, noon.
Liz and Benny are sitting in front of a fountain.

Liz (angrily): Let go of me! You really enjoyed yourself in
there—that's how you get your kicks. (pause): Go ahead
and hit me again, like I'm a damn punching bag!

Benny (holding back his anger): I've never hit you before—

Liz (loudly): That's a lie! You broke my arm three years ago!

Benny (calmly): I didn't know you three years ago.

Liz (hysterically): I knew you'd deny it. You're all alike.

(pause): And your stupid friends—every one of them,
thinking I was easy. They raped me—

Benny (anxiously): Let's not talk—

Liz (continuing): They came over to my trailer and they forced
me to—

Benny (interrupting): You weren't living there anymore.

Don't you remember? You were gone for over six weeks,
moved out all your things!

Liz (hysterically): Why don't you just leave me alone?

Benny (loudly): I don't want to leave you like this—you
might—

Liz (angrily): You think I'm crazy! You don't want me
because you think I'm crazy. That's it, isn't it?
Everybody does, so why shouldn't you?

Benny (firmly): You're not crazy—I don't think you are. You
just mix things up in your mind sometimes, that's all!

Liz (calming): Yeah! That's what those shrinks kept saying.
'You're not crazy, Liz. You're just here for a short
rest. You'll be just fine in a few days'.

Benny (sighing): Liz, don't—

Liz (louder): Days became weeks and then months. I'd still
be rotting away in that place right now, this very
minute, if it hadn't been for—

Benny (after a long pause): If it hadn't been for who?

Liz (calming): No one—I mean nothing. I showed them I
had changed—they knew it and let me out.

A man and woman come out of the building, walk past Liz and
Benny, and stand in front of the fountain.

Liz (laughing hysterically): You really think I wanted to
go with you? I wouldn't leave here with you for nothing.
Just last night a very nice white man asked me to marry
him!

Benny (slowly): You don't have to—

Liz (angrily): So, you can go on back to Chicago and live with your mammy—maybe she can make you happy!

Benny grabs at her and she moves away.

Liz (loudly): Yeah, that's the only way you know how to handle a situation—'Hit 'em hard and low'—that's what they always told you!

Benny (seriously): You really hate me! You think everything was my fault.

Liz (angrily): Hell, yes! You think you can use me like I'm toilet paper—then flush!

Benny (firmly): That's not true—we were going to be married—once. We even lived together.

Liz (calming): Yeah, that would have been another mistake—I left just in time!

Benny (seriously): But you came back—

Liz (quickly): You're trying to confuse me.

Benny (continuing): And you were drunk—falling-down drunk. I wasn't at the trailer so I don't know what happened—exactly. When I got there you were lying in the middle of the floor—

Liz (hysterically): Stop it! Shut up!

Benny (louder): And you was naked and unconscious! Three or four dudes were standing around—I don't know who—

Liz (firmly): They were your friends. And they raped me!

Benny (continuing): They **said** you came in and started strip-
ping. They'd been playing cards—they were drunk, too,
you know!

Liz (loudly): That's not true. They tore my clothes off me!

Benny (angrily): They said they chased you around the room
and you fell!

Liz (louder): They raped me—I know they did!

Benny (calming): I'm sorry for you, Liz.

Liz (slowly): Don't be! I don't need your pity or anything
else!

Benny (calmly): There was a doctor's report. (pause):
You hadn't been raped—your mother said that's all
you screamed when you came around.

Liz (angrily): My mother? You'd believe anybody before
you'd believe a word I say, wouldn't you?

Benny (seriously): I want to know why you decided to come
back.

Liz (loudly): Just drop it. It's not important now.

Benny (sighing) It is my fault! I didn't think you'd be
back, so Rick moved in. Guess I should have told you.

Liz (calming): It's too late now.

Benny (dully): Yeah, it is.

Liz (seriously): I'm leaving—I've got something else to do.

She turns and starts to walk away.

Benny (shouting): Liz!

She runs quickly into the Student Union building.

(21) Interior: Trailer Livingroom, afternoon.

Benny is lying on the couch, Rick is sweeping the floor, and Joe is pacing back and forth.

Joe (nervously): The Feds don't have no monopoly on scare tactics—those men were state agents!

Benny (surprised): State agents? How do you know?

Joe (quickly): I talked to some of the brothers—Norm and Harry—and they asked around. (pause): They're state agents all right, and one of them went to school here a couple years ago—

Benny (interrupting): Who is he?

Joe (hesitatingly): They couldn't find that out, but Norm'll call me back if he finds out.

Benny (anxiously): Are you really that scared?

Joe (nervously): Hell, yeah! And you should be, too. You can't imagine the power those dudes have. They're as bad as the Feds, and they get a kick out of messing with you—for no reason!

Benny (loudly): Then why aren't we getting the hell out of here?

Rick (calmly): Take it easy!

Joe (hesitatingly): I think you should act natural, as if you don't know they're looking for you. Finish packing and whatever else you have to do. Then come over to my—

Benny (interrupting, loudly): They can get me just as easy over at your house!

Joe (quickly): But over there they won't just come in and get you in front of a lot of witnesses!

Benny (skeptically): Maybe—it just depends on how badly they want me—

Joe (continuing): Then when it's dark, I'll put on your clothes and drive your car toward Chicago. You'll put on mine and drive in the opposite direction after I leave. They'll never know the difference—

Benny (dully): Unless they stop you!

Joe (hurriedly): Yeah. Anyway, when I get close to the border, I'll turn back. You can take a round-about way to Chicago!

Benny (loudly): That's the most ridiculous idea—

Joe (angrily): Can you think of anything better?

Benny (anxiously): No, but I'm trying! (pause): If I go along with that plan, I'm heading for Canada—I ain't taking no chances in Cook County. (pause): Rick, are you done in here?

Rick (calmly): Yeah. We can't leave yet, because the landlord's coming over. If you want your deposit back, you've got to be here.

(22) Interior: Liz's Living room, afternoon.

Liz enters the room and slams the front door. Steve jumps up from the floor and reaches for a small revolver on the

table. He points it at Liz.

Steve (angrily): God, Liz!

Liz (surprised): What are you doing?

Steve (gasping): You scared the hell out of me!

Liz (loudly, turning away): Just put that thing away!

He places the gun on the table and sits on the couch.

(23) Interior: Rick's Bedroom, late afternoon.

Benny is standing and talking to Mr. Lynn, the landlord.

Lynn (seriously): I'm sorry, Benny. I'm unable to give back
your deposit!

Benny (surprised): Why not, Mr. Lynn? There's nothing wrong
with this place—

Lynn (calmly): Taxes! Taxes went up and I should've raised
the rent, but I like you boys. So I waited until you
moved out before I raised the rent! (pause): Then
there's general depreciation—

Benny (angrily): Depreciation, Hell! Our deposit was only
suppose to cover damages! You can't do that!

Lynn (anxiously): Oh, yes, I can!

Benny (loudly): You old bald-headed slum lord—you charged
us an arm and a leg for this dump! Rick needs that
money to get home.

Lynn (loudly): See here, boy! Don't use that tone of—

Benny (louder): If you don't give me that money—

Lynn (boldly): What are you going to do?

Benny grabs Mr. Lynn and slams him against the wall. Rick and Joe come in and pull them apart.

Lynn (frightened): He needs to be locked up—he just went crazy for no reason! (pause): Here's your deposit. And get out of here before I call the police!

Lynn throws the money on the floor and runs out.

(24) Interior: Liz's Living room, late afternoon.

Liz and Steve are arguing.

Steve (angrily): You met Benny at the Union!

Liz (grinning nervously): What did you do, follow me? Or did you have someone else do it?

Steve (angrier): You little bitch! You've been lying to me all the time!

Liz (angrily): And you don't trust me, else you wouldn't have sent someone to follow me.

Steve (louder): You? He was tailing Benny, not you!

Liz (surprised): Benny? Why would you want to tail Benny?

Steve (shouting): Come off it! That little crazy act isn't going to work this time. You know what we want with Benny!

Liz (seriously): What are you talking about?

Steve (concerned): Either you're putting me on again, or else—

Liz (hysterically): Tell me what you're talking about!

Steve (seriously): I think you've really lost it this time.

I don't care how good an actress you say you are—
you don't know what's going on half the time!

Liz (shouting): I hate you! Get out of here!

Steve (loudly): Oh, no! You're not getting off that easy.

We made a deal and you're going to stick to it!

Liz (seriously): What deal? I said I knew Benny Carter and
that I would introduce him to you. And I will.

Steve (angrily): You know there was more to it—you was going
to help—

Liz (loudly): Shut up! I don't want to hear any more of your
lies. (pause): Let go of me!

Steve (loudly): You said you hated him and you would help
us get him if we would—

Liz (hysterically): If you don't stop it, I'll scream!

Steve (louder): You said 'Do whatever you want to do to that
nigger, and I'll help you. He's the one who put me
in here. I'll help you, if you get me out of here!'

Liz (screaming): Leave me alone! I never said that. I never
said any of those things. They're just lies.

Steve (firmly): Every bit of it is true and you know it.

(pause): You would have rotted in that place if I
hadn't got you out—they'd have locked you up and
thrown away the key!

Liz (loudly): I hate you, you bastard! I hate you!

Steve (calming): Just calm down—I don't want to hurt you.

(pause): I want you to stop lying to me. I'll keep my promise to you, if you'll keep yours—

Liz (angrier): I'll never do anything for you!

Steve (grinning): You will, or else you'll go back to—

Liz kicks him and when he lets go of her, she runs out the door. She is brought back into the apartment by Pete, a short, stocky white man about the same age as Steve.

Liz (loudly): Let go of me, you fat little freak!

Pete (shakily): Want me to hold on to her, Steve?

Steve (dully): It depends on her.

Pete (angrily): I'd like to punch her—

Steve (interrupting): Cut that out! (pause): We've got to come up with something else—Liz won't help us!

(pause): We've got to do this, with or without you, Liz!

Let her go, Pete!

Pete (confused): But she'll just run away!

Steve (firmly): Let her go!

Pete lets go of her arm and Liz runs out the door.

Pete (angrily): I don't know what you're doing, but if anything goes wrong—

Steve (seriously): Forget her and close the door! There aren't too many places she can go to. And I know them all.

Pete (quickly): Think she'll go to Benny?

Steve (dully): No, she's scared to death, but I don't think she'll go there. (pause): She might try to warn him, but I don't think he'd believe her—she's pretty far gone. Maybe I should have left her in that place.

Pete (hesitatingly): I think we should just quit all this—
Let's go home!

Steve (firmly): It's gone too far. We got her out of that place. And we've got to justify it to the Bureau.

Pete (anxiously): But I think there really is something wrong with her—

Steve (agreeing): I know there is! You should have known her before she started messing with him—she was different. Maybe a little wacky, but nothing compared to the way she is now.

Pete (seriously): What about you and Liz? That's what this is all about, isn't it?

Steve (dully): I guess I just never got over her—

Pete (interrupting): Then why do you throw her around like that? I'm wondering if you're not as crazy as she is!

Steve (grinning): She loved it—I'm telling you, she thrives on it. It's the struggle that turns her on!

Pete (seriously): You're crazy! She's crazy! I'm getting out of this mess!

Steve (angrily): You're in this as much as I am. So, if I get canned, so do you!

Pete (surprised): Me? This was all your idea.

Steve (threateningly): I'll swear that you suggested I help you, so I could get off probation.

(25) Interior: A Bar, early evening.

Steve and Pete walk into a dark bar room and join Liz at a booth. Liz is drunk.

Liz (surprised): How'd you find me?

Steve (nervously): I knew you'd be here. You ready to go?

Liz (angrily): No! I just got here. I've only had two drinks.

Steve (loudly): You said you didn't drink any more!

Liz (puzzled): What?

Steve (impatiently): Nothing. It's after five—time for us to go get Benny!

Liz (puzzled): What are you talking about? Benny who?

Steve (quickly): Benny Carter, remember?

Liz (seriously): Oh, yeah, Benny! What do I have to do?

Steve (hurriedly): Do exactly what I say—start by standing up!

Liz (loudly): Oh, no! You're going to hurt him! You've got a gun!

Pete (nervously): God! I told you this would happen!

Steve (angrily, to Pete): Will you shut up? (calmly, to Liz): Now come on, Lizzie. We're not going to hurt him. All we want is your help.

Liz (angrily): Benny wouldn't help me—I did everything except get on my knees. (pause): Know what he said? Said I couldn't go with him—couldn't go to Chicago or Canada with him. I thought he didn't like me because of his mother.

Steve (seriously): It's all right. We'll show him, Let me help you up!

Liz (proudly): I can get up by myself, thank you. I'm the star of your little production, and I'm not going to let you carry me out of here! (pause): Did I ever tell you I wanted to be an actress? I've finally reached the top.

She staggers out of the room.

(26) Interior: Joe's Living room, early evening.

Rick is sitting at the table with a bottle of alcohol
Benny is lying on the couch.

Benny (nervously): Hey, man, why don't you lighten-up on that stuff? (pause): Where's Joe?

Rick (calmly): He's waiting for a phone call.

Benny stands up and moves toward the window.

Benny (anxiously): It's getting dark out now—maybe we ought to start out.

Rick (loudly): Relax! Joe's got to give me a ride to the bus station, then he'll come back and you two can get started!

Benny (sighing): If I ever get out of this mess, I swear I'll
never—

He is interrupted by the sound of a telephone ringing. Benny begins to pace.

Benny (nervously): I hope that's the call he's waiting for!

Rick (seriously): Come on, man! Joe knows what he's doing!

Joe sticks his head in the doorway.

Joe (hesitatingly): Hey, Benny! It's Liz. Says she wants to
say good-bye or something.

Benny (anxiously): I don't want to talk to her. She'll just
bug the hell out of me about going with me.

Rick (grinning): Now you're being sensible!

Benny (hesitatingly): Wait, Joe!

Joe (angrily): Make up your mind—and don't stay on there all
night—

(27) Interior: Joe's Bedroom, evening.

Benny is talking to Liz on the phone.

Benny (quickly): You've got to make this short, Liz. Joe's
waiting for another call—are you drunk or something?

Liz (anxiously): I did have a little bit to drink. (pause):
Benny, I want you to come over so I can say good-bye.

Benny (loudly): Oh, no you don't. You want to get me over
there so you can try to convince me to take you with me!

No way! Good-bye, Liz.

He starts to hang up the receiver.

Liz (begging): Wait, Benny! I'm going to kill myself if you don't come over here!

Benny (loudly): Speak up! I can't hear you!

Liz (drowsily): I took ten pills—I only have five left in the bottle!

Benny (seriously): Pills? Oh, God! (pause): Wait a minute! This is part of your scheme to get me over there.

(long pause): Liz?

Liz (hysterically): I'll take one pill for every half hour it takes you to get here!

Benny (loudly): No, don't do that! Where are you?

Liz (laughing hysterically): I'm not telling you!

There is a rustle and then a crash on Liz's end of the phone.

Benny (loudly): Liz? Is something wrong?

Liz (hysterically): Oh, God!

Benny (calmly): Tell me where you are!

Liz (starting to cry): I'm at Ron and Mary's—the Randall's. You remember them.

Benny (anxiously): Did you tell them what you've done!

Liz (sobbing): They're not here—you've got to come. Else I'll take the rest of the pills.

Benny (loudly): Don't do that! I'll try to get over there—
but—

Liz (desperately): I'm taking another one right now!

She hangs up. Joe enters the room.

Benny (hurriedly): I'm going over to see Liz!

Joe (loudly): You can't do that, man! You'll blow everything!

Benny (quickly): I'll be back in time. She's taken pills
again. And she's threatening to take some more.

Joe (firmly): It's got to be one of her tricks.

Benny (hurriedly): I don't think so!

Joe (louder, stepping in front of Benny): What can you do
when you get there? And you can't run back here every-
time she threatens to kill herself!

Benny (loudly): I don't know—maybe I'll take her with me—I
don't know. Once she gets away from here, she might be
all right.

Joe (seriously): God! She really laid a guilt bag on you!

Benny (angrily): Well, hell! It's my life! (pause): I'll
take Rick to the bus station. That should save some time.

Joe (calming): Just be back by seven—we got to leave by
seven. Hey, she's not going to fit into the plan!

Benny (seriously): Yes, she will!

Joe (anxiously): How?

Benny (hesitatingly): I don't know! I'll think of something
on the way back.

As Benny leaves the room, the phone rings.

(28) Interior: Joe's Livingroom, early evening.

Benny enters from the bedroom, and Rick is standing and waiting.

Benny (hurriedly): Let's go!

Rick (surprised): I thought Joe was giving me a ride!

Benny (quickly): He thinks it'll save time if I give you
a ride.

Rick (reluctantly): Hey, wait a minute! You going to see
Liz?

Benny (defensively): What if I am? It's my life, isn't it?

Rick (hesitatingly): I just asked, that's all. Where's my
bottle?

(29) Interior: Joe's Bedroom, early evening.

Joe is talking on the phone.

Norm (quickly): I found out who one of the dudes is. His
name is Steve Mason—he's the one who went to school here
a few years ago.

Joe (hesitatingly): I don't think he ever played football—
I never heard the name before. What about the other dude?

Norm (dully): Nothing's turned up on him yet. (pause):
There's one other thing. Mason's from Lyleville.

Joe (seriously): I've heard of that town before.

Norm (quickly): Yeah, that's where all the richies live.

Joe (hesitatingly): It's a suburb of the capital city.

Benny went there once with Liz. (pause): Oh, God!

Liz is from Lyleville, too!

Joe drops the phone and runs out of the room.

(30) Exterior: Outside Joe's apartment, early evening.

Benny and Rick pull out of the driveway just as Joe's front door opens. Benny sees Joe, honks, and then speeds down the street.

(31) Exterior: Outside the Randall house, early evening.

Benny drives up into the drive way and stops.

Rick (angrily): You should've taken me to the bus station
first—

Benny (quickly): Just wait here! This won't take very long.

Rick (loudly): But I'll miss my bus!

Benny opens the door and gets out.

Benny (hurriedly): No, you won't! I'll drive real fast!

Benny walks to the front door and knocks. The door pushes open, and he walks in.

(32) Interior: Living room of the Randall House, evening.

Benny walks in and sees Liz sitting on the couch with the telephone receiver in her hand.

Benny (anxiously): Liz? Are you all right?

Liz (surprised): Benny! I didn't think you would come!

Benny (hesitatingly): Where's the party? You said you were at a party, so where is everybody?

Liz (whispering): Go ahead and leave! Quick—I'll be all right!

Benny (anxiously): What are you talking about? I want to take you—

Liz (desperately): No, I can't go—save yourself! I'll only get you in—

Benny (loudly): I'm not leaving without you. You said you would kill yourself if I didn't come—

Liz (hurriedly): There isn't time—just leave!

Benny (angrily): Stop it! I want to know what's going on!

Liz looks toward an open package on the table and looks frightened. Benny walks to the table and picks up the package.

Benny (hesitatingly): Hell, Liz! This is skag!

Liz (loudly): I tried to warn you.

Pete and Steve appear in the kitchen doorway.

Benny (puzzled): Liz?

Steve (grinning): You should have listened to her, Benny!

(pause): You've just tried to sell Miss Gray some heroin!

Benny (angrily): That's a lie!

Steve (continuing): And we're agents. We were just checking

out a rumor , so the Feds weren't called in—

Benny (nervously): You'll never get away with this. Liz is my witness.

Steve (seriously): No, she isn't. This was all her idea!

Steve pulls Liz over to him.

Benny (seriously): Is this true, Liz? (pause): You still won't make this stick—

Steve (sighing): It's not suppose to stick. Ruin him, isn't that the idea, Liz? (pause): And for the record, we've read you your rights—you don't have any!

Benny (hesitatingly): Why are you doing this?

Steve (reluctantly): I had to have a reason for getting her out of that place—you're responsible for her being in there, so—

Benny (interrupting): You got her out?

Steve (smiling): Surprised? We're the only power on earth that could've gotten her out. We got her out, because we wanted to catch a big drug dealer in this area. And that's you!

Benny (angrily): Your voice! You're the crazy phone caller!

Steve (grinning): Yeah. Just wanted to see you squirm.

Benny (loudly): You're sick! And you're sicker if you think I'm going to leave here with you. So you can forget the whole thing!

Steve (angrily): There are two of us and only one of you.

Benny turns to leave, and Steve takes out his revolver.

Pete (excitedly): Steve, don't! Put the gun away! We don't have to do this—let's call it quits and get out of here.

Steve (angrily): What's the matter? You afraid of a little gun? You should be like our All-American football star turned hero. Guess neither of you ever saw anyone get shot!

Pete (to Benny): Look, Benny! I'm sorry! It's all a mistake—

Steve (angrily): Shut up! I'm not going to use it unless Benny makes me.

Benny (angrily): And I'm not leaving here with you!

Pete (anxiously): I think he means it, Steve. What if you shoot him?

Steve (grinning): I'm an agent! He'll just be shot in the arm or leg while trying to escape—a drug dealer admitting guilt.

Pete (anxiously): But—

Steve (louder): Shut up!

Benny (firmly): I'm leaving here—

Liz (interrupting): And I'm going with you.

Steve (angrily): Get away from him, Liz!

Benny and Liz turn to leave, and Steve points the gun at Liz. Pete reaches out and pushes the gun up. Two shots are fired into the ceiling.

Steve (angrily, to Pete): You little bastard!

Steve punches Pete in the face, and Pete reels backward. Benny is at the door and turns around.

(33) Exterior: Benny's Car, evening.

Rick hears the first two shots and jumps out of the car. He runs to the front door and sees Steve pointing the gun at Liz. Rick hears shouting and a shot. Then he sees Benny drop to his knees, holding his chest. Rick backs away from the door then runs down the street.

(34) Interior: The Randall Living room, evening.

Pete and Steve are holding Benny down. Liz is standing over them in a daze.

Liz (hysterically): You shot him and it's all my fault. You said you wouldn't hurt him—just ruin his life like he ruined mine. (pause): He's going to die! I just know he will!

Steve (anxiously): No, he won't die! If he stops fighting—

Liz bends over Benny, and he stops struggling. Steve and Pete move away from them.

Pete (hesitatingly): Someone should call the police and an ambulance—

Steve (whispering): We can't do that! You think I wanted to shoot him?

Pete (angrily): Yes, I do!

Steve (seriously): I didn't! But he made me do it. I couldn't let her leave here with him. (pause): I just went crazy for a second.

Pete (emphatically): Tell it to the police when they get here.

Steve (nervously): They'll put me under the jail—for murder.

He's shot in the heart, and he'll probably die!

Pete (hesitatingly): It doesn't matter, you'll get off. You were an agent who shot a drug dealer. The bureau will back you up—

Steve (desperately): No, they won't! The Bureau won't claim us in cases like this one—the Feds can get away with anything, but we're not Feds.

Pete (anxiously): That means I'll serve two to seven years in prison as an accomplice. (pause): You'll do all right in a mental institution—you'll be on the same funny farm with Liz.

Steve (loudly): There is only one way for us to get out of this mess.

They move back to Liz and Benny.

Liz (anxiously): He's bleeding real bad! Benny don't move—

Benny (angrily): You'll never get away with this!

Liz (nervously): Did you call the police and an ambulance?

Steve (hesitatingly): No, we didn't!

Liz (surprised): He'll bleed to death!

Steve (seriously): That all depends on you, Liz! I can't call the police and say I shot him. I'd go to jail for attempted murder. (pause): But if you were to say you shot him—

Liz (shocked): Me? I didn't shoot him—you did!

Steve (desperately): You'd get off free. No jury in the country would find you guilty of attempted murder.

(pause): They'd say you were defending yourself against this black brute!

Benny (slowly): Don't listen to him, Liz! (pause): You can call an ambulance. Rick's out in the car—he'll help—

Liz gets up to call, and Steve grabs her by the wrists.

Steve (quickly, to Pete): See if there's anyone out there!

Liz (loudly): I'll never do it!

Steve (hesitatingly): Then Benny will lay there and bleed to death, and you'll be shipped back to the sanitorium!

Pete (nervously): There's no one out there!

Benny (loudly): I won't die! Somebody heard the shots and called the police. Maybe Rick—

Steve (seriously, to Liz): Do you hear any sirens? How long you think he can hold out?

Liz (hurriedly): I wouldn't know what to say!

Steve (anxiously): All you have to say is that you did it— Here, take the gun! (pause): You can make up a story about how it happened!

Liz (nervously): Will my picture be in all the papers?

Steve (hesitatingly): Sure! All of them.

Ron and Mary Randall, the owners of the house, walk in.

Ron (surprised): Liz! What happened?

Liz (hysterically): I shot him! I didn't know what I was doing—he was like a mad-man!

Benny (slowly): No, she didn't—

Benny faints.

(35) Interior: The Randall House, evening.

Two ambulance attendance attendants take Benny away. Liz, Steve, and Pete are standing near Officer Strike.

Steve (anxiously): I think she should wait until she has a lawyer present before—

Liz (interrupting): It's all right, Steve! I'll just tell the truth. (pause): I shot Benny Carter, Officer Strike!

Strike (hesitatingly): What was he doing here?

Liz (slowly): I don't know—he'd been bothering me all day, and last night he called me for the first time since we broke up four months ago. (pause): I guess that's when it all started.

Strike (seriously): What did he want?

Liz (reluctantly): He wanted to get back together again. I finally agreed to meet him in the Union today at eleven. (pause): He was wild even then—said he wanted me to go with him to Chicago or Canada. But I turned him down.

Strike (quickly): What was his reaction?

Liz (anxiously): He got furious—threatened to kill me if I didn't go with him. I got nervous, I mean real scared. Benny knocked my tray out of my hands and started slap-

ping me around. Finally he pulled me outside.

Strike (anxiously): Were there any witnesses to this fight?

Liz (hesitatingly): Six or seven people—and a friend of Benny's. Then there was a couple out by the fountain—that's where he took me after he beat me up in the Union.

Strike (seriously): What happened out there?

Liz (anxiously): He talked—tried to convince me that it was better to go with him. I said I still wouldn't go.

(pause): He grabbed at me again, and I ran away from him.

Strike (calmly): Where'd you go after that?

Liz (hysterically): I went home. I was so scared he'd come over there that I called this man here—Steve Mason, a friend of mine. I asked him to meet me at a bar. He came and brought his gun. I put it in my purse. Then we came here to the Randall house—they were having a party. I didn't think he'd find me here—

Strike (anxiously): So, how did he get here?

Liz (louder): I don't know—maybe he was following me—I don't know. Anyway, he came, and he was wild—Oh, God! I didn't know how to use the gun. (pause): I told him to get out—to leave me alone, but he kept coming at me. I missed him the first two times, but he was so close! He just fell to his knees.

She starts to cry.

(36) Interior: Bus Station, evening.

Rick is talking to Joe on the telephone.

Rick (desperately): What am I going to do, man?

Joe (reluctantly): Did anyone see you looking in the door?

Rick (hesitatingly): No, I don't think so!

Joe (anxiously): Then take your bottle, get on the bus, and—

Rick (interrupting): I left the bottle in Benny's car!

Joe (loudly): Get on anyway! Benny's going to be all right.

He'll straighten all this out later!

(37) Interior: The Randall House, evening.

Steve, Liz, and Pete are standing together and talking.

Steve (surprised): You're doing just great, Lizzie. Where'd
you learn to do that?

Liz (slowly): Do what? I just told the truth—I shot
Benny!

Steve (grinning, to Pete): Relax! If she repeats that story
often enough I'll start to believe it.

Pete (firmly): I won't!

Officer Strike walks up to them.

Strike (hesitatingly): I just received word from the hospital—
Carter died a few minutes ago.

Liz starts to cry again.

() Exterior: Outside the Courthouse, midmorning.

Two months later: A large crowd of black men and women are standing on the steps. They are carrying large signs. Joe and Rick are standing in front of the crowd. A car pulls up, and Liz, her lawyer, and her parents get out.

Liz (reading the signs): 'Liz Gray is Guilty', 'Give her the chair', Give her what she gave Benny'—

They walk into the building.

Words across the screen: Liz Gray was found not guilty of murder in the second degree on August 2, 1972.