ANDY BARKER, P.I.

"Pilot"

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INT. SUBURBAN FOYER - MORNING

ANGLE ON: A Dilbert tear-off DESK CALENDAR. A man's hand for tears off the top page marked "April 30th", revealing the cartoon for May 1st. It's Dilbert's Pointy-Haired Boss with a banana peel on his head. His thought bubble says "Apparently my teamwork speech wore off." We hear a MAN CHUCKLING at it.

MAN (O.C.)

That's pretty good.

REVEAL: The man is ANDY BARKER, 35, dressed for his first day of work at his new accounting business. His wife RUTH BARKER, 34, hands him his lunch in a brown paper bag.

RUTH

There's ham and cheese, an apple, and one of Kyle's squeezey yogurts if you get hungry in the afternoon.

ANDY

Thanks.

RUTH

(remembering)

Oh, I've got Cub Scouts tonight. Will you set the TiVo for "Judging Amy?"

ANDY

Did it.

They kiss.

ANDY (cont'd)

Well, I'm off.

He starts to turn, then looks back at her.

ANDY (cont'd)

Ruthie. Am I doing the right thing?

RUTH

Andy, you know you are. You've been talking about hanging out your own shingle for a long time.

They step out the front door.

EXT. SUBURBAN STOOP AND DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

They walk over to Andy's car, a white 2001 Ford Probe. He gets in and puts his seat belt on. Ruth talks to him through the open driver's side window.

ANDY

I know. But there's risk. And rent at the Common is pretty steep.

RUTH

Andy, if you're worried about it, you could always call some of your old clients. They really like you.

ANDY

Ruthie, I can't poach from Bryson & White. Arnold Sweeney took a bunch of clients with him when he left, and believe you me, that did not work out well at all.

RUTH

Didn't he just open a third office?

ANDY

You know what they call Arnold Sweeney at Bryson & White?

<u>Benedict</u> Sweeney. No thanks. I'd rather do it my way.

RUTH

(sincere)

You've always followed your own path, Andy Barker.

ANDY

(modest shrug)

I'm a maverick.

He starts the car and pulls out, cautiously, his hands at ten and two. The camera widens to show that Andy lives in a VERY PLANNED, TIDY SUBURBAN COMMUNITY, with identical white cars pulling out of IDENTICAL DRIVEWAYS serving IDENTICAL HOUSES.

MUSIC: Andy Barker theme music.

A SERIES OF SHOTS:

(Andy's car and how he drives it is a reflection of him: orderly, well-planned, safe.)

He removes his sunglasses from the sunglasses caddy mounted on his visor.

He has a suction cup notepad mounted on his dash. The note reads "TiVo *Judging Amy*." He tears the note off and throws it into a little trash bag mounted below his dash.

He approaches an intersection and uses his right hand directional. From outside the car, we also see that he uses his left hand to make the International right hand turn gesture through his window.

EXT. SOUTHBURY COMMON - MORNING - A LITTLE LATER

Southbury Common is Connecticut's take on a retail/office mini-mall, made somewhat New Englandy with brick and clapboard. Andy pulls up, parks carefully, and gets out. He checks his watch: 8:58 A.M. He looks at the complex, takes a deep breath, and strides toward it confidently.

EXT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE ANDY'S OFFICE - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

Andy's office is on an exterior corridor, with a front window facing the parking lot. In his hallway window, there's a SIGN which reads "Andy Barker, Certified Public Accountant. M-F 9:00-5:30 p.m." He unlocks the door and enters.

INT. ANDY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

He turns on the light, hangs his keys on a well-placed hook, crosses to his desk, and sits down. He takes the Dilbert desk calendar out of his brief case and sets it up. He looks up at the clock. It clicks from 8:59 to 9:00. Andy smiles contentedly and looks at his desk phone. It doesn't ring.

MUSIC: The Andy Barker theme music, slowed down.

(BEGIN MONTAGE: Envision lots of graceful PANS and DISSOLVES)

Andy's arranges the stuff on his desk, getting things even tidier.

DISSOLVE TO:

The wall clock: it reads 10:00.

DISSOLVE TO:

Andy finishes reading Modern Accountant magazine. He sees his stress toy, a thing you press your hand and face into to make an impression on the dull pins. He picks it up and plays with it.

DISSOLVE TO:

The clock. It's noon.

DISSOLVE TO:

Andy eats his ham sandwich-and-apple lunch..

DISSOLVE TO:

The clock. It says 2:00 p.m.

DISSOLVE TO:

Andy sits, quietly. He looks at his desk phone, thinks for a second, then picks up his cell phone and calls the desk phone (to make sure that incoming calls can be received). The main line on his phone lights right up. Andy looks a little dismayed and clicks his cell phone closed.

DISSOLVE TO:

The clock. 3:00 p.m.

DISSOLVE TO:

Andy thinks for a second, looks around, then lifts up the "May 1" page on the Dilbert calendar to peek at the next day's cartoon. He chuckles, but less than before. Suddenly, he's startled by a loud metallic CLATTER, echoing from downstairs. He gets up to investigate.

EXT. DOWNSTAIRS FROM ANDY'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Andy arrives at the bottom of the exterior staircase to see a METAL GARBAGE CAN in the doorway of a VIDEO STORE. STUFF (DVD's, a doll, a coffee mug) flies out of store and into the can. Andy peeks in the store.

INT. VIDEO STORE DOORWAY- CONTINUOUS

Andy sees SIMON, a tousled, opinionated guy in his early 30's who's about to toss a DVD into the garbage can from inside his store. He stops mid-toss and sees Andy.

SIMON

You might want to step aside, unless you want *I*, *Robot* to hurt even more than when it came out in theaters.

(indicating himself)
Hi, I'm Simon. You're the new guy
upstairs.

ANDY

Yeah. Andy Barker. Nice to meet you. You're throwing out *I*, *Robot?* Don't people like to rent that?

STMON

People rent it all the time. But they shouldn't.

He tosses it out the door and it hits the can with a CLANK.

ANDY

Oh.

(indicating what Simon is holding now) Whattya got there?

Simon holds up what looks like a GI JANE in a BALL GOWN.

SIMON

This? Why, this is a programmable, remote controlled talking figurine of Sandra Bullock as featured in Miss Congeniality 2.

ANDY

Oh yeah. That was pretty good. We didn't think they could top Miss Congeniality 1, but they came close.

(off Simon's blank stare) Why do you have that?

SIMON

It's swag, payola, a piece of future landfill given to me by the movie company in hopes that I will prominently feature Ms. Bullock's magnum opus in my store.

He tosses it into the can with a CLANK.

ANDY

Hey! That seems like a waste.

Andy reaches in and retrieves it and presses the remote. The figurine speaks.

SANDRA BULLOCK (V.O.)

"You think I'm gorgeous, you want to kiss me!"

Andy LAUGHS. Simon, who has walked up to the doorway, does not. He takes the figurine from Andy.

SIMON

You can also program it yourself.

He presses a button and speaks into the back of the figurine.

SIMON (cont'd)

(woman's voice)

"I was renovating a house, I did it for the cash."

He presses a button. The doll speaks.

SIMON (V.O.) (cont'd)

(scratchy)

"I was renovating a house, I did it for the cash."

He hands it to Andy.

SIMON (cont'd)

It's yours if you want it.

ANDY

Thanks.

SIMON

This complex isn't bad. Best place to eat is right here, Wally's Afghan Kebabs.

He points to WALLY'S AFGHAN KEBAB HOUSE. The windows are decorated with a great deal of red, white and blue BUNTING.

SIMON (cont'd)

Wally went a little overboard with the patriotic decorations after 9-11. Major overcompensation.

Pan to reveal a red, white and blue SIGN with flag decorations in the window which reads: "Go USA People."

SIMON (cont'd)

Food's good, though.

(noticing something)

Yow, tanning studio babes.

We see two very attractive, tanned YOUNG WOMEN, JESSICA & LINDSAY, walking down the hall talking to each other, wearing T-Shirts that say "Portofino Tanning Studio."

SIMON (cont'd)

They sometimes like to drop by for a little hang.

They walk by without speaking to him.

SIMON (cont'd)

(clearing throat)

Ladies.

The women stop and notice Andy.

JESSICA

(totally friendly to Andy)
Oh, hey, you're the accountant from
upstairs.

ANDY

Yes, I am. I'm Andy.

JESSICA

Welcome. We're Jessica and Lindsay.

LINDSAY

Stop by our salon some time. First tan is on the house.

JESSICA

Yeah. With your baby skin, you'd look great in a caramel latte.

ANDY

(thrown, awkward)

Oh, okay. Thanks.

They ADLIB GOODBYE and start to move off. Simon, without turning around, calls after them.

SIMON

See you later on, ladies. Expecting some new titles in, Japanese anime...

(running out of steam)

Terence Malick director's cut...

(to Andy, covering)
They're pretty busy. Spring break's
next week, lots of folks laying
down a base tan.

Andy blinks. It's a slightly awkward moment.

ANDY

Well. I should get back to it. Simon, nice to meet you.

INT. ANDY'S OFFICE - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

The clock reads 4:00 p.m.

A close-up of Andy's hand on his keyboard, punching numbers. PAN to his computer screen, reveal that he's playing sudoku.

DISSOLVE TO:

The clock. It's 5:29. It changes to 5:30. PAN to Andy, his face now pressed up against the pins of the stress toy. He pulls his face out, sighs a little, gets up, and leaves.

INT. ANDY'S OFFICE - THE NEXT DAY

Andy turns on the light in his office.

MUSIC: The theme music is now a little more desperate.

A SERIES OF SHOTS, PANNING AND DISSOLVING THROUGH THE DAY:

Andy checks out his ad announcing his new office in the newspaper. He looks expectantly at the phone. Nothing.

Andy plays with the stress toy, pushing his hand into it firmly.

Andy at his desk, eating a kebab sandwich from Wally's. The SODA CUP is covered with AMERICAN FLAG DESIGNS.

Andy tests the Sandra Bullock toy, to see if the remote works across the office. It does.

Andy looking bored, daydreaming a little. There's a KNOCK on his door, which we can hear under the music. REVEAL: the tanning salon women, Jessica and Lindsay. They wave hello. Andy waves back. He thinks for a second.

The back of Andy's desk chair. Andy swivels around, revealing that he's now very TANNED.

Andy looking up at his clock. The clock changes from 5:29 to 5:30. Andy sighs, turns out his light, and leaves.

INT. ANDY'S OFFICE - ONE MONTH LATER

MUSIC: Andy Barker theme music, now with notes of desperation and melancholy, as appropriate.

Andy turns on the light in his office. He's now looking a little mussed up, a little frayed. He crosses to his desk and tears off the Dilbert cartoon for May 29 and reads May 30th's. He doesn't laugh. He crumples it up.

ANDY

It's getting old, Dilbert.

He slumps in his chair. We do a TIME LAPSE EFFECT: the clouds go by, the day passes. We end up on the clock, it's 2:00.

The MUSIC STOPS.

PAN to Andy. He's taken apart the stress toy. The pins are in a pile in front of him. He picks up a piece of paper.

ANGLE ON: The paper. It's a RENT STATEMENT from the Southbury Common Management Company, for \$3000.00. Andy pulls out a pen and his corporate checkbook. Suddenly, his sign outside his office slips—one of the wires holding it broke and the shingle now hangs lopsided. Andy grabs some wire cutters from his desk drawer and crosses outside to the sign.

INT./EXT. - THE HALLWAY OUTSIDE ANDY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Andy bends to pick up the sign, and as he starts to straighten, he finds himself staring at a pair of SHAPELY FEMALE LEGS. He rights himself and is face to face with a very beautiful WOMAN, NADIA, 30's, well-dressed, somewhat exotic, a little world-weary.

NADIA

(strong Russian accent)
This is Suite 210?

ANDY

Yes it is. May I help you?

She doesn't respond, and blows by Andy and enters his office. Andy follows her.

ANDY (cont'd)

Uh, right this way.

She crosses to his desk, takes out a cigarette from her purse and lights it. She offers Andy one.

ANDY (cont'd)

Uh, no, thank you, and actually, if you wouldn't mind not sm--

NADIA

My name is Nadia Kerensky. I would like some help from you.

ANDY

Okay.

NADIA

My husband. He died a year ago.

She hands him a SNAPSHOT of a MUSTACHIOED MAN, early 40's.

ANDY

I'm so sorry. What was his name?

NADIA

Nikolai Kerensky.

Andy begins to enter the name into his DESKTOP COMPUTER.

ANDY

Okay, on "Nikolai", is that "c-k?"--

NADIA

I am needing your help.

ANDY

Yes, of course. There are so many things to deal with after a spouse's death.

NADIA

And I have heard you are the best.

ANDY

Oh, good. Did you see my ad? I worried it was too small--

NADIA

I think my husband is not dead.

ANDY

Huh? You just said--

NADIA

I need you to find him.

ANDY

Find him? Uh, well--

NADIA

Please, you seem so kind.

ANDY

Oh, thank you, it's just that, I actually don't ordinarily do--

NADIA

Here's \$4,000. There's more when you find him.

She produces an ENVELOPE OF CASH and puts it on his desk.

ANDY

Uh, okay, let me explain--

She stands up and hands him a business card with her name and phone number handwritten on the blank side.

NADIA

Here is my number. Call me when you know something.

She leans into him, stares into his eyes imploringly.

NADIA (cont'd)

(throaty, emotional)

Please. You're my only hope.

She gives him a light KISS on the cheek. Andy reacts by stumbling slightly backwards, into a FILING CABINET.

ANDY

(awkwardly)

These are my files.

She doesn't respond except to give him one last, pleading gaze. Then she turns and leaves, without looking back.

ANDY (cont'd)

Ma'am, I--

A stunned Andy just stares after her, trying to make sense of what just happened. He looks down at the business card in his hand, and flips it over.

ANGLE ON: the business card. "Lew Staziak. Private Investigator. Missing Persons, Surveillance, Personal Security. Southbury Common, Suite 210."

ANDY (cont'd)

(reading)

Lew Staziak. Suite 210.

Andy glances up and sees the "Suite 210" on his own sign.

ANDY (cont'd)

Oh.

INT. WALLY'S KEBAB RESTAURANT - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Andy and Simon are seated in Wally's restaurant, which looks like a Fourth of July float exploded inside of it: red, white and blue paint, American flags and bunting everywhere.

SIMON

Yeah, I remember Lew Staziak. Older guy, used to wash out his underwear in the men's room. Nobody was sorry to see him go.

ANDY

Huh. Boy, this poor lady seemed desperate to find her husband. I really wish I could help her.

SIMON

Oh, come on. You know there's no way she's his actual wife.

ANDY

What do you mean?

SIMON

It's right out of the movie Chinatown. There's the first woman, the fake Evelyn Mulwray, who comes to see Jack Nicholson-Jake Gittes--before Faye Dunaway, the real Evelyn Mulwray, shows up.

ANDY

I've never seen *Chinatown*. Is that with Jackie Chan?

Simon takes a beat, then buries his head in his hands. He looks up.

SIMON

Uh, yes. Jackie Chan and the dog from the Beethoven movies.

Anyway, this guy Nikolai's probably in trouble with the mob, they pay some girl to go hire the private eye, in this case you, in hopes that you'll lead them right to him.

ANDY

That sounds kind of farfetched.

SIMON

No. Marisa Tomei winning the Oscar for My Cousin Vinny was kind of farfetched. So, what are you going to do?

WALLY, the owner, Middle Eastern, early 40's, enthusiastic, friendly, approaches the table with their food.

ANDY

I'm going to call her and return the money and tell her she should go to the police.

WATITIY

Chicken kebab with tahini and falafel?

Andy raises his hand.

WALLY (cont'd)

(setting it down)

The Ben Franklin. One of our greatest presidents.

(to Simon)

And the Thomas Jefferson: lamb shawarma with baba ghanouj.

SIMON

Thanks, Wally.

He helps himself to a seat.

WALLY

So, what are you recommending the police for?

ANDY

A lady came to my office today and she thought I was a private eye. She wants me to find her husband. WALLY

(tsk-tsk, shaking head)
Well, you can't send her to the
police. The police are the
adversary for a private eye.
They're all on the take. Haven't
you ever seen Chinatown?

ANDY

No, I've seen the Jackie Chan movies with Chris Tucker, but not the one with the dog.

Wally looks at him, puzzled.

ANDY (cont'd)

Look, I'm not a private eye. And with all due respect, double crosses and dirty cops? That's movie stuff. That's not the real world. Sorry.

(then, to Wally, politely) I had an order of the eggplant kibbe with tabouleh.

WALLY

(yelling)

Hakim, could we get a "Ronald Reagan" here for my friend?

INT. ANDY'S OFFICE - A LITTLE LATER

Andy is back from lunch. He pulls out the envelope of cash from his jacket pocket, with Nadia's business card and the snapshot attached to it. He picks up the phone to call her, and notices his big checkbook and the rent statement on his desk. He hangs up the phone, thinks for a second, and turns to his computer instead.

ANGLE ON: The computer screen. Andy Googles "Nikolai Kerensky." A bunch of entries pop up.

ANDY

Russian powerlifter, silver medalist 1956 Olympics. Nooo...let's try this one.

Andy clicks on a newspaper article in a local newspaper on Long Island: The Bellport Herald. The headline: "Crimefighting Bellport Councilman Missing in Boating Accident, Presumed Dead." There's a photo: it's the guy from the snapshot Nadia gave Andy.

ANDY (cont'd)

Bingo. Crimefighting councilman. Huh.

He clicks again, to a related article, entitled "Charges Fly in Council Race, Kerensky to Release Tax Return."

ANDY (cont'd)

Tax return. Okay. Wouldn't mind checking that out.

Andy tries to click on a link on the paper's homepage to the tax return as published. He gets the "This page has expired" screen.

ANDY (cont'd)

Oh, cheese and crackers. Hmm.

Andy looks at his watch, thinks for a beat, then scribbles something down on a note pad and leaves, very determined.

EXT./INT. ANDY'S FORD PROBE

Andy gets into his car, very determined-looking.

MUSIC: PUMPED-UP VERSION of the ANDY BARKER THEME.

In contrast to the music, Andy very methodically puts on his seat belt, starts the car, and pulls out with his hands in the 10 and 2 o'clock position.

INT./EXT. ANDY'S FORD PROBE/THE MERRITT PARKWAY - A LITTLE LATER

ANGLE ON: the speedometer. It reads 55 mph.

INT./EXT. ANDY'S FORD PROBE - A LITTLE LATER

Andy pulls up to a tollbooth manned by a TOLL TAKER.

ANDY

Good afternoon. Could I have a receipt for that?

As the MUSIC CRESCENDOS to a dramatic fury, Andy takes a moment to tuck the receipt into a METICULOUSLY ORGANIZED LEATHER EXPENSE LEDGER, with compartments for different kinds of receipts, before very carefully pulling back into traffic.

EXT. THE BELLPORT WEEKLY HERALD OFFICE - AN HOUR LATER

Andy pulls up in front of a small N.D. office building.

INT. NEWSPAPER ARCHIVES - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Andy approaches a counter manned by a YOUNG MALE CLERK reading a 'zine. The clerk wears a black t-shirt with a very cool minimalist graphic on it, and the words "Commit."

ANDY

Hi. I was looking for a copy of the March 19th, 2004 paper.

Andy hands him a slip of paper with that date.

CLERK

(without looking up)
Try the public library.

ANDY

Well, it's actually a document that might not have been in the paper, just online. A tax return.

CLERK

(finally looking up)
Yeah, we'd have that on file.

He takes the slip of paper and moves off sullenly.

ANDY

I like your t-shirt, by the way. I got a barbecue apron, says "Cows Don't Get Mad, They Get Eaten."

The clerk, in the stacks, looks over at Andy blankly.

ANDY (cont'd)

'Cause of the expression, "I don't get mad, I get even"...and mad cows.

Andy chuckles awkwardly. The clerk returns with an open file.

CLERK

Is this what you're looking for?

ANDY

Yes, that's great.

He tries to turn it to see better. The clerk stops him.

CLERK

I need to see your Metropolitan Press Assocation card.

ANDY

Huh? Oh, I, uh, forgot it. Shoot.

The clerk SIGHS, closes the file and shakes his head. No way. Andy turns to leave, resigned that he's at a dead end. After a few steps, though, we see on his face that he's got an idea, and he makes a decision. He turns back to the clerk.

ANDY (cont'd)

Uh, okay, how about I have my boss from the... Danbury News call you and vouch for me. What's your number here?

CLERK

(wearily) 516-555-4534

Andy starts punching numbers into his cell phone.

ANDY

Might need you to repeat that when I get him on the line.

The clerk's PHONE RINGS at his desk behind the stacks. He goes to answer it, leaving the return on the counter. Andy quickly opens the file and begins scanning the tax return.

ANDY (cont'd)

(calling to clerk)

Usually takes him a few rings.

Andy furiously tries to commit as much of the return to memory as he can. The clerk reaches his desk phone.

CLERK

(into phone)

Hello?

ANDY

(disguising voice, stammering as he tries to read the return) Oh, hi. I was looking for a reprint of an article you ran last summer. It was from, uh, your food section, a, uh, --a barbecue recipe for, uh...bread.

Andy knocks himself on the head: "Why did I say that?"

CLERK

Barbecued bread?

ANDY

Uh, bread...loaf. Meatloaf.

CLERK

What date, sir?

ANDY

Gee, it was right before Memorial Day, I think.

Just then, Andy sees a page on the return he really wants to take note of. He holds out the phone over the return, away from his mouth. He SNAPS a picture with his CELLPHONE CAMERA.

ANDY (cont'd)

(a little louder, as he

snaps)

Uh, why don't we try May 28th?

ANGLE ON: The clerk, reacting to Andy's louder, echoey voice. He spots Andy, sets the phone down and folds his arms, as Andy snaps another photo.

ANDY (cont'd)

(still disguised)

Yeah, pretty sure it's the 28th, now that I think about---.

Andy sees the clerk seeing him.

ANDY (cont'd)

--it.

(to clerk, nervous)

Hi. I'm on the phone with my boss.

The clerk presses a button on his phone.

CLERK

I need security in archives, right away.

Just then, a WOMAN walks past Andy, on her way out of the archives area.

Andy thinks fast, grabs a BOOK from the counter, and sticks it in her TOTE BAG as she exits through the "METAL DETECTOR"-TYPE ANTITHEFT MACHINE at the door. An ALARM goes off. The clerk walks toward the counter.

CLERK (cont'd)

Ma'am, I'm going to have to ask you to stop, I need to check your bag.

In the confusion, Andy snaps some more photos of the return, quickly. He then clicks his phone shut, scrambles past the woman at the door who is now being approached by the clerk.

ANDY

(to woman)

I am so sorry.

(to clerk)

And to you, too. I'm really sorry I did that, I just...

He turns and bolts out the door.

INT. ANDY'S OFFICE - LATER

Andy's at his computer, looking at the cell phone photos. He's kind of charged up. Simon sits on the edge of Andy's desk, holding a box containing a shipment of new DVDs.

SIMON

(eyes closed, hand in box)
Let's see, what towering cinematic achievements will the discerning film lovers of Southbury be treated to next week? A digital remaster of Kurasawa's Throne of Blood?
Perhaps Godard's Breathless, with commentary from the seminal cinematographer Raoul Cotard?

(pulls out a DVD)

How to Lose a Guy in Ten Days.

ANDY

Oh, yeah. Matthew McConaughey. He seems like a real decent guy. (then, re: computer)
This is interesting.

SIMON

What?

ANDY

Mr. Kerensky lists a large cash payment to St. Boris' Church in Brooklyn. \$7200.00 for the year. But he doesn't claim it.

SIMON

So what?

ANDY

Charitable contributions to reliqious organizations are fully deductible under Section 170(a) of the Internal Revenue Service code. That's Accounting 101.

Just then, Simon pulls the DVD of Rent from the box.

SIMON

Oh, Rent. You'd have to pay me (singing)

"Five hundred twenty five thousand six hundred dollars, to watch this crap for even one minute."

He notices Andy staring at the Rent DVD box, transfixed.

SIMON (cont'd)

What?

ANDY

Rent. That's it. (getting up)

I'll see you later.

He grabs his cell phone and the business card with Nadia's name and exits. Simon watches him leave, then looks into his box of DVDs. He sees something disturbing.

SIMON

(scolding)

No! Ben Affleck as Daredevil, you are not welcome here!

He dumps the contents of the box in a wastebasket.

MUSIC: Pumped up Andy Barker theme music.

EXT. SOUTHBURY COMMON PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Andy gets into his car.

INT./EXT. - ANDY'S CAR - HIGHWAY - A LITTLE LATER

We see Andy driving, again with his hands at 10 and 2.

ANGLE ON: The speedometer, again at 55 mph.

EXT. MERRIT PARKWAY - CONTINUOUS

From overhead, we see Andy's Probe, with a LINE of CARS stuck behind him as he drives carefully.

EXT. ST. BORIS' CHURCH, BROOKLYN - AN HOUR AND A HALF LATER

Andy pulls up in front of ST. BORIS', a very evocative Russian Orthodox CHURCH, complete with onion skin minarets. He notices the RECTORY next door, and gets out of his car.

EXT. RECTORY - MOMENTS LATER

Andy rings the DOORBELL. After a moment, an ELDERLY PRIEST answers the door. He speaks with a Russian accent.

PRIEST

Yes? Quickly, please. I am cooking a hamburger.

ANDY

Yes, of course, Father. My name is Andy Barker, and I've been hired to locate a Mr. Nikolai Kerensky.

Andy holds out the photo of Nikolai. The priest ever so slightly reacts, but then shakes his head politely.

PRIEST

I do not know him. Is there a problem?

ANDY

Well, he was a crimefighting city councilman in Bellport Long Island, turned up missing in a boating accident.

PRIEST

Oh, yes. I recall something of this, from the newspaper. But he was a suicide, no? The police found a body. ANDY

Well, actually, no they didn't. Father, are you aware that Mr. Kerensky gave a sizable amount of money to this parish the year before he disappeared?

This takes the priest back a little.

PRIEST

I am just a priest here, I don't
know the church's finances. But it
doesn't sound familiar.
 (glancing around

nervously)
I should go. My hamburger.

ANDY

Yes. Your hamburger. Thank you, Father.

PRIEST

Bless you.

Andy leaves. As he walks across the street back to his car, he stops mid stride, with a puzzled expression on his face. He turns around just in time to see a MAN emerge from the side entrance of the rectory and head down an alley. Andy walks quickly; the man starts running. Andy runs and catches up with him and whirls him around: it's NIKOLAI KERENSKY.

NIKOLAI

Who are you?

ANDY

Andy Barker, I'm an accountant.

NIKOLAI

How did you find me?

ANDY

I saw your tax return online. I figured out that the money you were sending this church wasn't charity. \$7200 per year. \$600 a month. Sounds like a rent payment. My guess is you were paying advance rent to the church and planning to hide out here, for whatever reason.

Nikolai is stunned. Andy has it pretty much exactly right.

ANDY (cont'd)

(helpful)

Also, FYI, you missed some other deductions you should have taken. You're a politician, so newspapers, magazines, those are all unreimbursed business expen---

NIKOLAI

You have to understand, I had to go into hiding, to protect my wife.

ANDY

Well, she misses you very much.

NIKOLAI

(floored)

You saw Nadia? How is she?

ANDY

Um, she seems fine. Needs to stop smoking, though.

NIKOLAI

(confused)

She doesn't smoke.

Suddenly, they are flooded with LIGHT from a pair of HEADLIGHTS. A BLUE VAN has pulled up into the alley. Nikolai'S widen in terror. TWO LARGE THUGS jump out of the van and, YELLING IN RUSSIAN, tackle Nikolai and throw him to the ground.

ANDY

Hey, not so rough!

Thug #1 whacks Andy in the back of the head, and Andy goes down hard. They hustle Nikolai into the van. Andy glances up and sees this.

ANDY (cont'd)

(bleary realization)

Chinatown!

Andy PASSES OUT face down on the sidewalk.

INT. DANBURY GENERAL HOSPITAL - LATER THAT NIGHT

Andy's in a hospital gown, sitting on the edge of an examination table. He's got a BANDAGE on his forehead. Ruth is with him. An ER DOCTOR looks at his chart.

DOCTOR

Tests are negative. Just a little bump on your head. Take it easy, call us if you need us.

The doctor exits. Ruth hands Andy his clothes and he starts to get dressed.

RUTH

How are you feeling now?

ANDY

Stupid. I could have gotten myself killed.

RUTH

(a little testy)

Yeah, I know.

ANDY

But, I gotta say, before that—figuring it all out, being on the stakeout, finding Nikolai—I kind of enjoyed it. It was a rush.

RUTH

Andy...

ANDY

Plus, I at least thought I was helping somebody.

RUTH

Andy, you do help people. By being a really good accountant.

He looks at her for a beat.

ANDY

Ruth, uch, you're totally right. What am I doing, running around playing detective?

RUTH

Exactly. Look, the accounting will pick up, you know it will.

(remembering)

In fact, Ron Davies called at home, wants to meet you in the city tomorrow to discuss a big tax problem.

ANDY

Really? That's good.

RUTH

Yeah. Now, why don't we turn this whole thing over to the police?

ANDY

Okay. Except, I don't know. What if the cops are on the take? (off her look)
It's all in this Jackie Chan movie.

RUTH

Andy--

ANDY

You're right.

Just then, an ORDERLY enters and hands Andy a plastic bag with his belongings in it. Inside the bag, Andy notices the business card Nadia wrote her number on; it's turned to the other side.

ANDY (cont'd)

(to himself)

"Lew Staziak."

Off Andy's thoughtful look, which Ruth doesn't see...

EXT. WILLOW GROVE GARDENS - ESTABLISHING - THE NEXT DAY

A retirement community in suburban Connecticut.

INT. WILLOW GROVE CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Andy waits; a NURSE exits a room.

NURSE

You can see him now.

Andy enters the room.

INT. ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Seated is LEW STAZIAK, 70's, weathered, but still imposing.

ANDY

Hi, Mr. Staziak, I'm Andy Barker. Could I talk to you for a minute?

LEW

(warily)

What about?

ANDY

Well, apparently, I have your old office, over at Southbury Common.

LEW

So?

ANDY

Well, I'm an accountant, but the other day a woman came in to my office and I guess she must have been looking for you. She wanted help in finding her husband.

LEW

Right. And you knew she wasn't really the guy's wife, so you tailed her.

Before Andy can respond, Lew notices an ASIAN ATTENDANT, CHANG, walking by in the corridor.

LEW (cont'd)

Chang! C'mere.

Chang enters Lew's room.

LEW (cont'd)

Whattya got? What's the dope on the brunette night nurse?

Chang looks around, then a little reluctantly leans into Lew.

CHANG

38. Divorced. Boyfriend, but I hear it's not going well.

LEW

Got it. What else?

CHANG

Well, you were right. New patient in 15 is a diabetic. Here's his butterscotch puddings.

He hands Lew a strip of LITTLE PUDDING PACKS.

TEW

Thanks, Chang. Go buy yourself an egg roll.

He slips Chang five bucks. Andy seems pained by this. Chang gives a shrug and leaves.

ANDY

Anyway, I tracked the guy down. Kerensky was an anti-crime politician on Long Island. He faked his death and was hiding out in a Russian Orthodox church, and I guess somebody was watching me 'cause they grabbed him.

(re: bandage)

I got whacked in the head. ER doctor said it's just a bump.

LEW

(incredulous)

You went to the hospital?

ANDY

Yeah. Better safe than sorry. Any kind of blow to the head, even if you feel okay, there could be some underlying neurological damage.

LEW

(scornful)

I got knocked cold twice a week for fifty years, I ain't got no neurological damage.

ANOTHER ATTENDANT leans in, holding a SNEAKER.

ATTENDANT

Mr. Staziak, you put your sneaker in the vending machine again.

There's an awkward silence.

ANDY

Anyway--

LEW

Ah, I've heard enough. Welcome to Stalingrad, kid.

ANDY

What do you mean?

LEW

You're in with the Cossacks, buddy. The Rooskies. Russian mob. They're taking their orders straight from Khrushchev.

ANDY

Khrushchev? Really? Hasn't he been out of office--

LEW

My guess is you're dealing with medium to low level punks. They'll bring your boy alive to the top guy, try to get a big payday out of it. If the big shot doesn't want him, they'll take him back and dispose of him on their own. Either way, he gets whacked.

ANDY

(floored)

What?

LEW

You heard me. When did you say this happened?

ANDY

Last night.

LEW

You got maybe 12 hours to find him.

Andy slumps in a chair.

ANDY

I don't suppose you want to take over the case.

LEW

Me? No way. I mean, there's nothing I like better than kicking the brown bread out of a bunch of Commies high on potato juice. But I'm out of the game. This is your deal. You got your boy in hot water, you get him out. And don't even think of going to the police. Russian mob's wired up like Jayne Mansfield's underbra. The goons'll catch wind, and bang, good night nurse.

Andy sits there, too stunned to move.

LEW (cont'd)

Make that 11 hours and 59 minutes.

Andy reacts to this and gets up to leave, resolved that now he has to figure this out on his own.

ANDY

Thank you so much, Mr. Staziak.

LEW

Call me Lew. Hey kid, could you do me one favor? My roommate's down at physical therapy. He always puts the TV remote in his pants pocket.

He points to a pair of PANTS on his roommate's bed. Andy hands him the pants. Lew takes the guy's WALLET out and removes the MONEY from it. Then he turns on the TV with the remote, which was next to him all along. He smiles at Andy, kind of smugly. Off Andy's look;

INT. WALLY'S KEBAB RESTAURANT - A LITTLE LATER

Andy sits, drinking a coffee with Simon, fretting. He's trying to figure out what to do. Wally enters, prepping his restaurant for lunch.

ANDY

I'm just not sure where to start.

Wally walks over to a LARGE PAINTED STATUE OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN. He removes part of the STOVEPIPE HAT, revealing a small video camera setup, and begins changing the tape. Andy notices this.

ANDY (cont'd)

Wally, is that a security camera?

WALLY

Yeah. I tape everything. I put it in after 9/11. Somebody threw a toilet through my front window.

ANDY

Does that shoot the parking lot?

WALLY

(shaking his head)
Lincoln just watches the store.

(pointing up)
Nixon's got the parking lot.

We see a similar but smaller STATUE OF RICHARD NIXON, mounted on a wall, pointing out the glass storefront.

INT. WALLY'S BACK OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Andy, Wally and Simon are in front of a sophisticated bank of EXPENSIVE TV MONITORS and a control panel.

WALLY

Now what are we looking for?

ANDY

A blue van, around 5 p.m. Wednesday.

Wally punches some numbers in, and the tape rewinds fast, then starts playing: an image of the parking lot.

ANDY (cont'd)

There I am.

ANGLE ON: the monitor. Andy gets into his car and pulls out. After a beat, a blue van pulls into the frame. Wally freezes it. The van's got something written on the side in small block letters, but it's illegible.

ANDY (cont'd)
I can't make it out. Shoot.

Wally effortlessly punches a bunch of buttons on the control panel, SNAP-ZOOMING onto the writing and BLOWING IT UP. He punches more buttons to correct the resolution, revealing: "Duffy Plumbing Supply 280 Atlantic Avenue Brooklyn, NY."

SIMON

(beat)

You wouldn't happen to have any footage of a certain tanning studio.

INT./EXT. ANDY'S CAR - BROOKLYN STREET - LATER

Andy and Simon sit in Andy's car, across the street from the entrance to the Duffy Plumbing Supply building and the blue van parked in front of it. They're on stakeout. Andy's reading the newest issue of *Modern Accountant*,

STMON

You know who watches gangster movies? Gangsters. They study them. That's why you need me here, bro. I know how things go down.

Andy smiles, without looking at him. Suddenly, there's movement at the front door of the shop.

ANDY

Here we go.

Thugs #1 & 2 bring out a ROLLED UP RUG (large enough to hold a man--Nikolai--inside) and load it into the van, which drives away. They watch all this, and follow the van.

EXT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - A FEW MINUTES LATER

The van stops. The thugs unload the rug and take it into the warehouse. Andy and Simon check to make sure they're not being watched, then get out of the car and follow them in.

INT. WAREHOUSE FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

P.O.V. Andy and Simon: they watch from behind some old machinery, as the two thugs unroll the rug to reveal a bound Nikolai, who they lead into the middle of the dimly-lit warehouse floor. They are met by HENCHMAN #1 & #2. Henchman #1 has his hands in his jacket.

THUG #1

Boss ready to make a deal?

HENCHMAN #1

We'll see. Have a seat.

He looks around. There are no chairs.

THUG #1

Where?

With a jerk of his head, Henchman #1 indicates the floor.

THUG #2

On the floor? What is this, Lamaze class?

Thug #1 "SHUSHES" him, and they and Nikolai sit. Andy watches this, knowing that he's got to do something now. He looks around, then spots a GLASSED-IN SUPERVISOR'S OFFICE.

He gets an idea. He indicates to Simon "stay here", and moves toward the office.

ANGLE back on the thugs and Nikolai sitting cross-legged.

THUG #2 (cont'd)

My back's tightening up.

THUG #1

You don't get enough potassium. Eat bananas. Here, let me show you a stretch.

He moves into a complicated hip flexor yoga stretch.

THUG #1 (cont'd)

Oh, that's good. Opens things up.

Out of the shadows, Andy emerges.

ANDY

Hello, fellas.

They all startle. Henchman #1 points a gun through his jacket pocket at Andy.

HENCHMAN

Who's this?

THUG #1

Lew Staziak. We used him to find Kerensky.

ANDY

Actually, I'm Andy Barker.

(pointedly)

I'm an accountant.

No one is impressed. Simon steps out from behind his cover.

SIMON

And I'm Simon. I own a video

store.

(to Henchman #1)

Godfather I, am I right?

ANDY

Simon--

SIMON

(cutting him off)

Michael and Enzo the Baker come out of the hospital and they don't have guns so they point their fingers in their coat pockets to intimidate Sollozzo's men. This guy's not carrying a gun.

SFX: GUNSHOT CRACK

A bullet whizzes by Simon and Andy. Simon = wrong.

HENCHMAN #1

(shrugging)

My hands were cold.

ANDY

(more nervous now)

Uhm, okay. So, anyway, we'd like you to let Mr. Kerensky go.

From the shadows comes a familiar voice.

FAMILIAR VOICE (O.C.)

Why would we do that? We went to so much trouble to find him.

REVEAL: the fake Nadia, smiling malevolently.

ANDY

You! Well, I am glad you're here. I have a bone to pick with you. You lied to me.

NADIA

(normal voice now)
I did? I'm so sorry.

She LAUGHS.

NIKOLAI

Andy, Lew, whatever your name is. You don't know what you're dealing with. These people are drug dealers, they kill people for no reason.

One of the thugs slaps Nikolai to shut him up.

ANDY

I know, but to <u>lie</u>, to my <u>face</u>. (he shakes his head, offended)

Look, what you're doing is wrong. Not to mention stupid. Do you even own this warehouse?

NADTA

No.

ANDY

So you're renting? I hate to tell you, but you're throwing your money away. What about building equity, letting your money work for you? Or else you're just squatting, which is a whole 'nother kettle of fish. You know, squatters have big liability issues.

They all look at him blankly.

ANDY (cont'd)

Somebody twists an ankle on that sidewalk out front, you're in for a real hassle.

They stare at him for a beat. Finally,

NADIA

(to henchmen)
Beat them to death.

The henchmen move toward Andy and Simon. Simon is freaking out; Andy remains strangely calm.

BOOMING VOICE ON P.A. The building is surrounded! Come

out with your hands up!

Everyone is thrown by this.

ANGLE ON: The Sandra Bullock figurine in the supervisor's office, next to the P.A. MIC. Andy's recorded this message, and is controlling it with his remote control.

BOOMING VOICE ON P.A. (cont'd) Repeat! The building is surrounded.

The thugs/henchmen/Nadia are all frozen. What to do?

BOOMING VOICE ON P.A. (cont'd)

Come out with your hands up!
(then, Andy's regular
voice)

Geez, I hope this thing recorded.

SIMON

Hey, that's you!

Thugs/Nadia/henchmen look at each other. Something's fishy.

BOOMING VOICE ON P.A.

(Sandra Bullock)

You think I'm gorgeous, you want to kiss me!

They realize they've been had and lunge for Andy and Simon. Andy dives for Nikolai, and pushes him out a STEEL DOOR.

INT. STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

...leading to a STAIR WELL. Andy secures the door as bullets hit it. Andy, Nikolai and Simon scramble down the stairs.

EXT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Andy, Nikolai and Simon bust out of the door and race across the street to Andy's car. The thugs and henchmen come out, Thug #2 clutching his tight back, and jump into the van and take off after the Probe.

INT./EXT. ANDY'S CAR/MANHATTAN BRIDGE - A FEW MINUTES LATER

The Probe is chased over the bridge by the thugs in the van. ANGLE on Andy's speedometer: it reads 55. Andy thinks for a second, furrows his brow and steps on the gas. ANGLE on the speedometer: it climbs to 58 mph. Then Andy sees a note on his dashboard pad about his meeting with Ron, the client.

ANDY

Oh, right.

Still driving, Andy punches a number on his phone.

NIKOLAI

Watch out!

Andy has to swerve to miss a car in front of him.

ANDY

(into phone)

Hey, Ron, Andy Barker. Listen, could we reschedule today's meeting?...Oh, has to be today. Okay, how 'bout you meet me at the corner of 26th and 3rd in say, ten minutes? Terrific. I'll be in the white Ford Probe.

SIMON

Okay, here's what you do. In the car chase in *Bullitt*, Steve McQueen swerves out of the--

ANDY

(to shut him up)
Saw that one!

EXT. CORNER OF 26TH ST. & 3RD AVENUE - TEN MINUTES LATER

Andy screeches to a stop in front of RON DAVIES, 50ish.

ANDY

Hop in!

Ron gets in the backseat and they take off. We see that the blue van is in hot pursuit.

INT. ANDY'S CAR- CONTINUOUS

ANDY

Ron, this is Simon. So, what's going on?

RON

(nervous)

Uhm, is this a good time, Andy?

ANDY

As good as any.

Ron looks around nervously as Andy swerves through traffic.

RON

Okay, well, as you know, I've got a bunch of money in a rollover IRA.

ANDY

Right, those are great. Course, you can't tap into the money until you're 59 1/2.

Andy bangs a sharp right onto 28th Street.

RON

Uh, that's the problem. My daughter's tuition is due, and I'm in deep on a home improvement thing we're doing. Whoa!

Their way is blocked by a huge DELIVERY TRUCK backing across the street perpendicularly. Andy slams on the brakes, and starts backing up, one hand over the back of Nikolai's seat.

ANDY

Here's what we can do. Split the IRA into two funds, the smaller one pays for college over the next 5 years by annuitizing the fund until you're 59 1/2. You still have to pay tax, but there's no penalty.

Andy finishes his thought as he backs out onto Third Avenue, the blue van closing in. Andy whips around and SCREECHES up Third; the van tries to accelerate and SMASHES into a TRUCK crossing the intersection. Squad cars descend on the van. Andy eases the Probe back into traffic. Ron is speechless.

ANDY (cont'd)

You know what else I'm loving these days? Municipal bonds.

INT. AIRPORT PARKING GARAGE - A FEW HOURS LATER

OPEN ON: sign reading "Terminal A." Pan down to Andy, leaning on his Probe, on his cell phone.

ANDY

(into phone)

Yeah, thanks so much. They'll stay in your condo in West Palm just until they can relocate. They're trying to, uh, reinvent themselves.

PAN to reveal a VAN: THE PORTOFINO SALON MOBILE TANNING UNIT.

Simon leans on the van, chatting up Lindsay, who's putting Armorall on the wheels of the van, ignoring him.

SIMON

(Barney Fife)

It was a good thing I was there, 'cause there certain patterns to criminal behavior—gestalten is how they say it in German—

JESSICA (O.C.)

You ready to see this?

ANDY

(into phone)

Thanks, Doug. I gotta go.

(to Jessica in van)

Bring 'em out.

Nikolai emerges, no mustache, Hawaiian shirt, really dark tan. He's followed by his wife, the REAL NADIA.

ANDY (cont'd)

You look great.

NADIA

We cannot thank you enough. You really went above and beyond.

ANDY

No problem. Happy to do it. It felt good, actually.

Ron emerges from the Probe, on the phone.

RON

(into phone)

Bye, Scott.

(to Andy)

That was my lawyer. He thinks splitting off a chunk of the IRA and putting it into a mix of munis and short term t-bills sounds great. Thanks, Andy.

ANDY

You got it, Ron.

They shake hands, and Andy, Nikolai and Nadia head off.

EXT. ANDY'S BACK PATIO - AFTERNOON - A FEW DAYS LATER

Andy's grills steaks, wearing the "Cows Don't Get Mad" apron. His son hits balls off a tee. Ruth sets down a bowl of potato salad, and heads back inside. A portrait of suburban bliss.

FAMILIAR GRUFF VOICE (O.S.)

Yeah, Chang. This must be it.

Reveal Lew Staziak in a wheelchair, coming around the corner by the driveway, with Chang the attendant pushing him.

ANDY

Lew? What are you doing here?

LEW

Hey kiddo. I heard what you done on the thing with the Krauts.

ANDY

Rooskies.

LEW

Yeah. Sounds like you handled it pretty well. You might have a knack for this kind of thing.

Andy does an "awshucks" roll of his head, but he's flattered.

LEW (cont'd)

Anyway, I still do some "consulting" work for a few people, insurance companies...

Andy looks at him, unsure where this is going. Lew pulls out a weathered brown manila file folder and opens it.

LEW (cont'd)

I need somebody with a good pair of legs to check out a Mr. Ranjit Chandana.

ANGLE ON: a PHOTO of a fierce SRI LANKAN MAN. Andy glances over at Ruth inside the kitchen window, and his son playing ball. A beat. He gives his attention back to Lew.

LEW (cont'd)

Hard case. Will gut you like a fish just for the ha-has. Anyway, there's a container ship arriving from Sri Lanka on the 19th. Chandana will be hidden aboard.

ANDY

Well, can't someone just talk to the ship captain and see if they've spotted him?

LEW

(yelling)

You can't talk to the captain!

ANDY

Why not?

LEW

Because...he'll be dead.

ANDY

(shocked)

Oh.

LEW

Whaddya say, Barker. You in or out?

ANDY

Uh...

He takes another nervous glance over at Ruth in the window.

ANDY(cont'd)

(beat)

I'm in.

LEW

OK. The ship arrives at 8:00 a.m. sharp.

ANDY

Ooh, 8:00 a.m.? Yeah, that's gonna be tough. Would 11 work? I'm getting my wheels balanced on the Probe. Every 10,000 miles, like clockwork. Heh-heh.

(off Lew's stare)

Maybe I can move it.

Lew nods, and as he continues to talk, Andy pulls a pen out of his breast pocket and starts to take notes. The camera CRANES UP, as a little boy plays baseball and two generations of private eyes talk business on the bright green lawn.

FADE OUT