

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Patrick J. Peters for the degree of Master of Fine Arts  
in Creative Writing presented on September 18, 2003.

Title: Hamilton Falls.

Abstract approved:

**Redacted for Privacy**

Jon R. Lewis

Hamilton Falls is a screenplay about a young attorney who returns home from WWII, is appointed District Attorney, and begins investigating an old murder. In the course of the investigation, he discovers that his mentor, the former district attorney, may have been the murderer. The story follows the film noir style in its depiction of corruption and crime.

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Hamilton Falls

by

Patrick J. Peters

A THESIS

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Patrick J. Peters, Author

Hamilton Falls

Credits super:

January, 1948.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING. NIGHT.

SAM HARRIS and his wife, ANNA, get out of their battered pre-war car before a somewhat dilapidated apartment building. Sam is a handsome attorney in his early thirties returning home from World War II. Sam met Anna, a German, while he was stationed in Germany. She is average looking and her clothing is neat and clean. They look at each other and it's clear the apartment isn't what Anna was hoping for.

INT. HARRIS APARTMENT. NIGHT.

Sam is hanging clothes in his closet. One of the items is an Army Captain's uniform. There are few ribbons on his jacket.

INT. OFFICE. DAY.

Sam, dressed in a business suit, walks into an office with a door marked, "Sam Harris, Attorney at Law." Sam looks cheerful and ready to work. BARBARA, his secretary, is sitting behind the desk.

SAM

Any calls today?

BARBARA

No, sir. I'm sorry, sir.

Cut to black, credits super.

INT. OFFICE. DAY.

Sam, in a different suit and tie, walks into his office.  
He looks slightly less upbeat than in the previous scene.

SAM

Any calls?

BARBARA

No, sir.

Cut to black, credits super.

INT. OFFICE. DAY.

Sam, in a still different suit, walks into the office,  
says nothing. He looks discouraged. Barbara, also  
looking discouraged, simply looks up and shakes her head.

Cut to black, credits super.

INT. OFFICE. DAY.

Sam, looking dejected, enters the office.

BARBARA

(excitedly)

Jack Davis wants to see you at his  
house tomorrow night.

Sam looks a little confused but pleased.

INT. HARRIS KITCHEN. NIGHT.

Anna and Sam are eating dinner and discussing his meeting  
with Jack. Anna speaks with a heavy German accent.

ANNA

What could it be?

SAM

I don't know.

ANNA

The Attorney General. You are not  
in trouble, are you, Sam?



SAM

I worked for him before the war.

ANNA

(astonished)

The Attorney General.

EXT. ROAD. NIGHT.

Sam drives a beat up pre-war car down a street of nice, large homes, each set well back from the road and far apart from each other. All of the cars in the driveways look newer and nicer than Sam's. Sam pulls up at one of the nicest houses on the street.

EXT./INT. DAVIS HOUSE FRONT PORCH. NIGHT.

Sam takes a deep breath before ringing the doorbell. He waits a moment until MARGARET DAVIS opens the door. Margaret is Jack's wife and a beautiful woman in her late forties. She is wearing a dress that accentuates her attractive figure. Sam and Margaret seem very pleased to see each other.

MARGARET

Hello, Sam.

SAM

Margaret.

Margaret half moves to hug him, sees that he doesn't do the same, and instead offers her hand, which he takes. She places her other hand on top of his, holding on through the following conversation.

MARGARET

You look good, Sam. The army must have been good for you.

SAM

You look wonderful, too.

MARGARET

You're not a good liar, Sam, but I like the lie anyway.

SAM

Really, you look as good as when I last saw you.

MARGARET

Maybe you are cut out for the job.

SAM

The job?

MARGARET

You'll see.

Margaret leads Sam to the library door.

MARGARET

Good luck.

Jack has risen from his chair in the library and meets Sam at the door. The two men shake hands.

JACK

Sam.

SAM

Jack. How's the campaign for governor?

JACK

Fine, fine. Being Attorney General doesn't give much time to barnstorm, though.

SAM

I knew you were headed for big things a long time ago.

JACK

Margaret likes the idea. I would have been happy to stay district attorney.

SAM

You were good.

JACK

So you got yourself married in  
Germany. We have to have you two  
over so we can meet her.

Jack takes Sam by the arm and leads him into the room,  
where two older men sit. HENRY WILKES is Margaret's  
father and a former congressman. He is just over seventy  
years old, and wears a somewhat old fashioned but nice  
looking three-piece suit. He holds a glass of wine in  
his hand. THOMAS BROOKES is in his fifties and is  
dressed even finer than Wilkes. He is the county party  
boss and a bigwig in the state party. Wilkes stands up  
to greet Sam.

JACK

(to Sam)

You remember Margaret's father,  
Congressman Wilkes.

WILKES

How do you do, son?

SAM

Fine, Congressman, thank you.

JACK

Thomas Brookes over there is the  
party chairman.

SAM

Mister Brookes.

Sam extends his hands, but Brookes merely nods at him from his chair. Sam puts his hand back at his side.

JACK

Well, as they say in the movies,  
you're probably wondering why I  
brought you here, Sam.

SAM

A bit, yes.

JACK

Oliver Ford had a stroke last  
week.

Sam simply nods.

JACK

I've talked it over with Henry and  
Brookes here. We'd like you to be  
the next district attorney.

Sam looks a little confused but quite happy.

EXT. DAVIS FRONT PORCH. NIGHT.

Jack is seeing Sam off. They both are in good spirits.

JACK

You'll have to run in the fall,  
but that shouldn't be a problem.

SAM

Thanks again, Jack. You seem to  
always be giving me jobs.

JACK

I know I can count on you.

The men shake hands, then Sam gets in his car and drives away. Jack watches until he's gone, then goes back inside.

INT. DAVIS LIBRARY. NIGHT.

Jack goes back to the library where Brookes is waiting.

BROOKES

I'm relying on your judgment.

JACK

I've known Sam since he was just  
out of college.

BROOKES

He'll play ball?

JACK

Don't worry.

INT. HARRIS APARTMENT. NIGHT.

Anna is waiting anxiously by the window. She sees Sam pull up and she goes to sit down on the couch. Sam enters but doesn't say anything.

ANNA

Tell, me, Sam.

Sam grins at her.

INT. MEN'S CLOTHING STORE. DAY.

Sam and Anna are shopping. He's being measured for a suit, and Anna holds up several ties for him to look at.

INT. D.A.'S OUTER OFFICE. DAY.

In the office are two attorneys and two secretaries. Everyone is nervous and no work is getting done. JEFF BATES is an older attorney and clearly the senior person in the office.

SKIP

(sarcastically)

I hear he's a charmer.

BATES

Yeah? We'll he's also your new  
boss, so shut up.

SKIP

And no great shakes as an  
attorney.

Bates turns angrily toward Skip to tell him off just as  
Sam enters the office. Everyone rises.

BATES

Welcome back, Sam.

Bates extends his hand for a handshake, which Sam takes.

BATES

Let me introduce you to your  
staff. Skip Humes. Sally . . .



SAM

(to everyone)

Thanks, Bates, but I've already  
learned all the names. I want to  
get started.

Sam walks into his own office at the rear of the outer  
office. He pauses to look at his name stenciled on the  
door.

INT. SAM'S OFFICE. DAY.

Sam shuts the door behind him and sits at his desk, a  
blank legal pad in front of him, which he taps nervously  
with his pencil. He looks lost.

INT. HARRIS APARTMENT. NIGHT.

Sam walks into their sparsely furnished apartment and  
takes off his jacket. It's clear that Anna has been  
waiting for him.

ANNA

Tell me.

Sam smiles.

SAM

I'm hungry.

Anna hurries into the kitchen. Sam goes to a cabinet in the living room, pours himself a glass of scotch and raises his glass in a solitary toast.

SAM

One day down.

He drinks the scotch in one gulp.

INT. SAM'S OFFICE. DAY.

Sam and Bates sit on either side of Sam's desk. Office noise comes through the open door.

BATES

New cases. Howard Moore, indecent exposure.

SAM

Give it to Skip.

BATES

Okay. Thomas Porter, petty larceny. Stole some gas from Frank's.

SAM

You take it.

BATES

Got too much on my plate now.

SAM

Then Skip.

BATES

He's busy, too.

The two men stare at each other for a few seconds.

SAM

Guess that leaves me.

BATES

Guess it does.

SAM

Leave the file here. I'll look at  
it after lunch.

EXT. SIDEWALK. DAY.

Sam is walking down a sidewalk. As he walks, many people, particularly the younger women, greet him warmly, some of them by name. Sam smiles at everyone, particularly the women, before entering a bar.

INT. BAR. DAY.

The bar is relatively upscale. Jazz comes from a radio. There are only a few people in the bar; most of the stools and tables are empty.

SAM

(To BARTENDER)

Scotch.

Sam begins to drink alone at the bar until he notices Margaret sitting at a booth. With her is LUKE GARMIN, a youngish man, about 25. Sam walks over to them.

SAM

Margaret. I didn't expect you here.

MARGARET

Sam, how are you? Do you know Lucas Garmin? Luke, this is Sam Harris, the new district attorney.

SAM

Garmin.

LUKE

Harris.

The two men shake hands.

MARGARET

(to Luke)

Sam used to work for Jack. Sam,  
join me; I prefer not to drink  
alone and Luke was just leaving.

LUKE

(surprised)

Yes, I did have to go. Nice  
meeting you, Sam.

The men shake hands again and Luke leaves.

MARGARET

How are you holding up in your new  
job?

SAM

It's okay.

MARGARET

I suppose it's quite a change.  
Nuremberg to Hamilton County.

SAM

It's hard to prosecute indecent  
exposure.

MARGARET

Howard showing his wares again?

SAM

(laughing)

Yeah.

MARGARET

Did Nuremberg teach you anything?

SAM

Those with the power survive, and  
those without, don't.

MARGARET

(unsure if he's  
joking)

That's a nice philosophy to live  
by.

SAM

Maybe not, but it works.

Margaret stares at him for a moment.

MARGARET

I've missed seeing you, Sam. You  
should stop by the house sometime.

Sam nods.

INT. BARBER'S SHOP. DAY.

There are two barbers and five customers sitting in the shop. The men are in their shirtsleeves. One of the customers is bald and clearly not there for a haircut but rather for the conversation. Everyone is chatting away amiably when Sam walks in.

BARBER #1

Davis'll be the best Governor this  
state ever had.

The barber just then notices that Sam has come in.

BARBER #1

Sam.

Sam nods.

CUSTOMER #1

That Maddox case was just what he  
needed.

CUSTOMER #2

It made him, but it didn't take no  
lawyering. Don't take much to get  
people to want to hang a Nazi.

BARBER #2

He wasn't a Nazi. He was a German  
soldier.

CUSTOMER #2

Not saying he was innocent.

BARBER #1

I'm glad he was hanged. Anybody  
do what he did to that woman  
deserves whatever he gets.

Sam and the others waiting to get haircuts sit reading newspapers with articles on Davis' nomination for Governor; the article includes headlines about Davis' big case, the conviction of Stahler, A Nazi P.O.W., for the murder of VIRGINIA MADDOX.

CUSTOMER #3

(tapping the  
newspaper)

Went to the gallows claiming he  
was innocent.

BARBER #1

What do you think, Sam?

SAM

Wouldn't know.

He doesn't even look up to respond, he just keeps reading the paper.



CUSTOMER #3

Stahler had opportunity, that was about it. But what was his motive?

BARBER #1

What motive does anyone have to stab a woman?

CUSTOMER #2

I could think of a couple.

Everyone laughs.

INT. RESTAURANT. DAY.

Sam has just finished eating lunch and a WAITRESS is taking away his empty plate.

WAITRESS

Dessert, sir? We got seven kinds of pie: cherry, apple . . .

SAM

Just the bill.

The waitress leaves and Sam, hearing the bell of the front door jingle, looks up to see a woman, BETH MADDOX, standing in the doorway. She is about 25, attractive,

and inexpensively but neatly dressed. She looks around, sees Sam, and walks over to his table.

BETH

Mr. Harris, isn't it? I'm Beth Maddox. A friend of mine pointed you out.

Sam is clearly pleased and he ever-so-slightly rises from his seat and gestures toward the seat across the table. The waitress returns with the bill.

SAM

(To waitress)

You said you had pie?

INT. SAME LOCATION. LATER.

Sam and Beth sit drinking coffee. The table holds two plates with pie crumbs on them. Sam is looking intently at Beth, making her nervous. Beth takes out a cigarette and lights it in order to buy herself some time to collect her thoughts.

BETH

I couldn't come to your office.

SAM

That's okay.

BETH

It's about my mother's murder, Mr.  
Harris . . .

SAM

Sam.

BETH

Sam. It's about my mother's  
murder. I think they got the  
wrong guy.

SAM

Why do you think that?

BETH

Could you look at the case for me?

SAM

Why would I?

She leans forward across the table and places her hand on  
his. He looks at her hand, then up again at her face.

BETH

It would mean so much to me.

Sam hesitates, but he looks her over again.

SAM

I'll take a look at the file.

Beth smiles.

INT. DA'S OFFICE. NIGHT.

It's the end of the workday and people are leaving the office. Variations of "Night, Mr. Harris" and "See you tomorrow" are heard as people leave.

Sam waits until everyone is gone, then goes to a back room and digs through an old file cabinet, finally pulling out a large folder.

Back at his desk, Sam is reading aloud from transcripts of the case.

SAM

(v.o.)

Davis: When did you arrive at the murder scene, corporal?

Hartung: Just after three, sir.

Davis: Describe what you saw when you went to the house.

INT. COURTROOM. DAY - FLASHBACK, 1944

CORPORAL DENNIS HARTUNG, in an U.S. Army uniform, is in the witness seat replying to Davis.

HARTUNG

I came to the house to get water.  
I knocked, there was no answer, so  
I looked in a window.

JACK

What did you see?

HARTUNG

I saw a Mrs. Maddox, dead.

JACK

And how did you know she was dead?

HARTUNG

She didn't move, no matter how  
hard I knocked or how loud I  
yelled. So I went in.

JACK

The door was unlocked?

HARTUNG

Yes, sir.

JACK

You went to her bedroom. Then  
what?

HARTUNG

I saw her lying there on the bed.  
The knife was still in her, in her  
side. Her face was pale.

INT. HARRIS APARTMENT. NIGHT.

Anna is in bed when Sam gets home. She hears him getting  
undressed and sits up in bed.

ANNA

You work late.

SAM

Yeah. Long day at the office, and  
I stopped for dinner.

ANNA

Just dinner?

SAM

Yeah, just dinner.

ANNA

I cannot go through this again,  
Sam.

Sam ignores her and walks into the bathroom, closing the  
door behind him.

INT. DA'S OFFICE. DAY.

Sam exits his office into the outer office. He is putting on his hat as he does so.

SAM

(Handing papers to  
Barbara)

Get this to the courthouse.

Sam looks at his watch.

SAM

(cont.)

I have court at two, so I'm going  
for lunch.

EXT. SIDEWALK. DAY.

Beth is waiting impatiently in her car, which is parked on a busy city street in front of the District Attorney's office. After a few seconds, Sam leaves the building and Beth drives toward him. As she draws even with him she slows the car and speaks out the open window.

BETH

I must have perfect timing. I was  
just coming to pick you up for  
lunch. Care for a picnic?

SAM

I don't know. My wife . . .

BETH

Isn't here. Come on.

EXT. A PARK. DAY.

It is a warm summer day, and Sam and Beth sit near a river, eating while they talk. A couple walks by and Sam nervously looks away. Beth has prepared a picnic basket for their lunch. They've been eating for some time; their plates are almost empty. Finally, they are alone. Sam looks closely at her.

SAM

You aren't telling me everything.

BETH

My mother was a widow . . .

SAM

And?

BETH

This isn't an easy thing to say about one's mother.

SAM



(monotone)

Anything you tell me is in  
confidence.

BETH

After my father died, mother had  
male friends over to the house.  
Often.

SAM

Males friends?

BETH

I'm not judging her.

SAM

Any details? (pause) Names?

BETH

No.

INT. VFW CLUB. NIGHT.

Sam and VIC, an older veteran, talk at a bar. Vic has  
his Veteran's of Foreign Wars hat on. The only other  
person in the bar is the bartender. Sam is drinking a  
scotch and Vic has a beer.

VIC

Know all the boys came back after the war. Not all joined the VFW, but most did. Don't remember you joining.

SAM

Good memory.

Vic looks at Sam expectantly, waiting for him to say more. He doesn't. Finally, Vic realizes he'll have to speak again.

VIC

One fella from Nebraska, when he saw the mountains 'round here, he said he knew he had to come back.

SAM

What's his name?

VIC

I was at Camp Riley myself years ago, that's in Kansas, you know, and I can understand . . .

SAM

His name?

VIC

Fisher. Salmon Fisher, I swear to God that's his name. He goes by Fisher, you can imagine.

SAM

I can.

VIC

So, now you've seen the place, you joining? We need all the members we can get.

Sam gets up, finishes his drink, and walks out.

EXT. FISHER'S HOUSE. DAY.

Sam and SALMON FISHER stand on the front porch as they talk. Fisher was a camp guard and he still has the short military haircut. He is dressed in workingman's clothes.

FISHER

I wasn't with the prisoners when it happened.

SAM

I'm just trying to understand how the prisoners were given so much freedom.

FISHER

Farms needed the labor, we had the men.

SAM

P.O.W.s were sent alone to get water.

FISHER

Where could they go?

SAM

So, tell me what the usual routine was.

FISHER

Six crews, six different farms.  
Everybody wanted to work the Maddox place, so we rotated.

SAM

Why was the Maddox place special?

FISHER

Ever see her? Wasn't a guard in the camp who didn't want to . . . well, you get the picture.

SAM

You saw her when you worked her farm?

FISHER

Sometimes she'd visit mornings . .  
 . with the sun behind her dress .  
 . . well, you get the picture.

Sam looks barely interested. He nods.

Sam and Fisher continue talking over the visuals of the following flashback:

EXT. FARM. NIGHT. - FLASHBACK, 1944

We see Fisher cleaning his rifle while prisoners work in the field. Fisher is obviously not in the least worried about the prisoners. He looks at his watch and sends a prisoner to get drinks.

FISHER

She was a looker. She'd let us  
 send someone up to the house to  
 get water afternoons.

As Fisher looks over the men working in the field, Virginia approaches along with the prisoner who he had sent off earlier. They carry buckets of water. All the men stop working to look. Fisher, smiles broadly to her, stands up and tips his hat.

SAM

You weren't there the day it happened?

FISHER

No sir. It was Robinson the day she was killed, and Hartung the day she was found.

Visuals resume with Sam and Fisher at Fisher's house.

SAM

You think Stahler did it?

FISHER

Pretty nice guy, for a Kraut. But who knows what being without a woman will do to a man.

SAM

You said she was friendly.

Fisher looks back into the house, then takes Sam by the arm and leads him away toward the detached garage.

FISHER

I ain't saying I ever did nothing with her, you understand.

SAM

Nobody said you did.

FISHER

But doesn't do to have the missus  
hear anything anyway. She  
wouldn't like it.

Sam holds up his left hand and waves his wedding ring.

SAM

I know.

FISHER

At first, right after the camp  
started up, she had pretty regular  
visitors from the boys.

SAM

The boys.

FISHER

You know, the camp guards, they'd  
pay . . well, you get the picture.  
Not that I ever did nothing.

SAM

Only at first?

FISHER

She just stopped. Said she  
couldn't no more.

INT. HARRIS HOUSE. NIGHT.

Anna is reading a magazine and Sam is listening to music, drinking, and reading some files when the phone rings.

SAM

Harris.

BETH

It's Beth. Did Fisher tell you anything?

Sam glances over at Anna, then exits into the next room, carrying the phone with him.

SAM

Not really.

BETH

He must have said something.  
Maybe we can meet.

SAM

I don't think that's a good idea tonight.

BETH

(a little unhappy)

Alright, Sam. Goodbye.



Sam hangs up and almost immediately the phone rings again. He hesitates a moment before picking up the receiver.

SAM

Harris.

MARGARET

This is Margaret. You and Anna come to dinner tomorrow. What's your favorite dish?

SAM

Scotch.

MARGARET

I have just the recipe. Tomorrow at seven, then.

Sam returns to the living room and Anna looks up at him.

ANNA

Who was that?

SAM

Margaret. Margaret Davis. We're going to dinner there tomorrow.

ANNA

And the first call?

SAM

Someone checking on a case I'm  
working on.

ANNA

What case?

SAM

The Maddox case. It's nothing.

INT. COURTHOUSE HALL. DAY.

Sam is leaving a courtroom just as the Sheriff, MATT  
COLEMAN, is walking up. Coleman is a small man, slender,  
about fifty years old. He is animated when he speaks.

COLEMAN

Sam, surprised to find you here.

Sam looks at him blankly.

COLEMAN

(cont.)

Just kidding you, Sam, just  
kidding you. Not everyone likes  
the courtroom.

Sam walks by him. Coleman calls after him.

COLEMAN

(cont.)

You never could take a joke.

INT. DAVIS' HOUSE. EVENING.

Margaret greets Sam and Anna at the door. Anna is wearing a simple dress and looks rather plain, while Margaret is quite beautiful.

MARGARET

Jack called at the last minute and  
said he couldn't make it. I  
didn't want to cancel on you.

She brings the couple into the library and prepares  
drinks for the three of them.

MARGARET

(to Sam)

Here's that dish you wanted.

Margaret also hands Anna a drink. Anna accepts the glass  
but doesn't drink. Margaret looks at Anna as if seeing  
her for the first time.

MARGARET

You look lovely dear. What an  
interesting frock.

Anna looks a bit confused at "frock" and Margaret's tone.

MARGARET

Why don't we all sit down.

INT. DAVIS' DINING ROOM. LATER.

Sam, Anna, and Margaret sit eating dinner.

MARGARET

(to Anna)

So you and Sam were married after  
the war?

ANNA

Yes.

MARGARET

How did you meet?

Sam sees that Anna is uncomfortable, so he answers.

SAM

She cleaned for Judge Aronson  
during the Nuremberg trials. I  
was his aide.

SAM

I've hardly seen Jack since I've  
been back. How is he?

MARGARET

I think he likes it. Being Attorney General has its advantages.

SAM

Such as?

MARGARET

Maybe you'll find out for yourself someday.

ANNA

Excuse me. The powder room?

Margaret points through a door.

MARGARET

Through there, third door on the left.

Anna leaves the room. Margaret's eyes follow Anna, and as soon as she's out of earshot Margaret turns to Sam, speaking in a harsh whisper.

MARGARET

You've started looking into the Maddox murder.

SAM

Where'd you hear that?

MARGARET

Stop. You'll only hurt Jack, and me.

SAM

You? Besides, it's not about Jack.

MARGARET

If Stahler didn't do it, it would ruin him.

Sam smiles knowingly.

MARGARET

There's a good boy.

She pats his leg. Anna reenters the room the room just then and looks on disapprovingly.

INT. SAM'S APARTMENT. DAY.

Sam is packing a few things while moving men are carrying out his big furniture. Beth appears at the open door.

BETH

Knock, knock.

SAM

Come on in.

BETH

I didn't realize you were moving.  
Not far, I hope.

SAM

We can finally afford a house.

BETH

I'm sure it's nice.

As the moving men carry out his couch, Sam calls after them.

SAM

Hey, take a break guys.

(to Beth)

Lemonade?

INT. SAM'S APARTMENT. LATER.

The moving men are outside taking a break while Sam and Beth drink lemonade and sit on boxes talking.

BETH

So, where's Anna?

SAM

Shopping. She loves shopping  
here.

BETH

I'm sure. Want to take a ride?

INT. SAM'S CAR. DAY.

Sam and Beth are driving up the dirt road leading to the  
old Maddox farmhouse.

BETH

Why did you marry her?

SAM

Simple, I was in love with her.

BETH

Was?

SAM

You'd make a great lawyer.

As they drive, they pass the now barren fields of  
Virginia's old farm, but there are enough trees as  
windbreaks between the fields that the house only becomes  
visible as they pull around the last corner.



EXT. VIRGINIA MADDOX'S FARMHOUSE. DAY.

Sam and Beth pull up outside Virginia's farmhouse, which shows signs of neglect from being vacant for nearly five years. As they get out of the car, Beth hesitates.

BETH

I always hate coming back here.

SAM

You don't have to go in.

BETH

Yes, I do.

The door is locked but easily forced and Sam and Beth enter the house.

INT. VIRGINIA MADDOX'S FARMHOUSE. DAY.

Sam and Beth enter the living room, which is full of furniture covered by sheets, over all of which is a layer of dust. Beth lifts the cover off a chair and feels the familiar upholstery underneath.

Sam walks to the bedroom door and takes out a manila file he is carrying. He produces several black and white crime-scene photos of Virginia's body in the bedroom. We see a close-up of the photo in Sam's hand as he looks at

the bed, then with the flash of a flashbulb we are brought back to a crowded room with the Sheriff supervising and a Deputy taking the picture Sam is holding. Virginia is sprawled on the bed, a knife in her side. The Deputy moves to a new angle and takes another picture and the flash brings us back to Sam looking at the new picture from a different perspective.

BETH

Aren't you through in there?

Can't we go?

SAM

Yeah, I'm through.

He goes out to Beth.

SAM

Which room was yours?

Beth brings him down the hall to her room. She looks at the dusty homemade quilt on the bed and breaks down crying. Sam goes to her and puts his arm around her.

INT. MOVIE THEATER. NIGHT.

Sam and Anna watch *Key Largo* in a dark theater. As they watch, Anna moves in closer to Sam, leaning over and putting her head on his shoulder. Sam pulls back, leaning away from her.

INT. D.A.'S OFFICE. DAY.

Sam is in his office with the door closed as he looks at the case file again. His finger moves along the pages as he reads. He flips to a page marked "Coroner's Report." His finger rests on the name Dr. Benjamin Epstein.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE. DAY.

Sam is sitting on an examination table and buttoning his shirt. DR. EPSTEIN is writing in his chart.

EPSTEIN

I'm not surprised you're feeling  
tired, what with the new job.

SAM

It's all details.

EPSTEIN

You're lucky.

SAM

No, no, I'd love a big case . . .  
something like the Maddox murder.

EPSTEIN

God, that was terrible.

SAM

You knew her?

EPSTEIN

No, but I was the coroner then.

SAM

I didn't know that.

EPSTEIN

My first murder.

Sam nods.

EPSTEIN

She was stabbed a number of times,  
and there was blood everywhere.

INT. BEDROOM OF VIRGINIA MADDOX. DAY -  
FLASHBACK

We see Epstein looking over Virginia's bloody body.  
Standing back at the door are Sheriff Coleman and a  
DEPUTY with him. The men all hold their hands over their  
mouths and noses.

EPSTEIN

Dear God.

COLEMAN

Doctor?

Epstein examines the body as he talks.

EPSTEIN

Looks like just the stabbing, but  
I won't know for sure until I get  
her on the table.

COLEMAN

Any guess when she died?

EPSTEIN

The body's room temperature, so  
she died quite a few hours ago.  
Still, no real decomposition.

COLEMAN

She was seen yesterday morning.

EPSTEIN

I should say it wasn't more than a  
few hours after that, then.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE. DAY.

Sam and Epstein are finishing the check-up.

EPSTEIN

The way she looked, I'll never  
forget.

Epstein seems lost in the memory, looking down at the notepad he holds. Sam just looks a little bored, waiting. Finally, Epstein snaps out of it and tears a small sheet of paper of a tablet and hands it to Sam.

SAM

Thanks for the prescription,  
doctor.

EPSTEIN

See you later, Sam.

As he leaves the front lobby, Sam drops the prescription in the trash.

INT. DAVIS HOUSE. NIGHT.

Jack and Margaret are their home, talking about Sam.

MARGARET

I've already warned him.

JACK

We'll keep trying.

MARGARET

He's not the man who used to work  
for you. He's changed.

JACK

I don't want to hurt him.

MARGARET

There are other forms of  
persuasion.

Jack looks at her for a moment.

JACK

He'll be at the fundraiser.

MARGARET

What about her?

JACK

I'll take care of her soon.

INT. BETH'S APARTMENT. DAY.

Beth and Sam sit talking about the case.

BETH

You never told me what Fisher  
said.

SAM

Nothing, really. Look, come to the reception tonight.

BETH

For Jack? He didn't want to listen to me before the trial.

SAM

He just thought he had the right man is all. You'll like him.

BETH

Maybe.

Beth raises an eyebrow in question and Sam simply shrugs.

INT. HOUSE OF JUDGE TOMPKINS. NIGHT.

Sam and Anna are at a reception for Jack's campaign. Jack is speaking in front of a small crowd which includes Beth, who occasionally looks over at Sam and Anna. The house is large and well-furnished, with a formal dining room, sitting room, etc. and the party takes place throughout the house. Jack's speech is mostly inaudible. Anna and Sam talk quietly at the other side of the room. Margaret comes up to the couple.

MARGARET

Thanks for coming, Sam. Anna.



Margaret points over to Beth, who has been looking their way.

MARGARET

She looks familiar.

SAM

She should. She's Beth Maddox.

MARGARET

Ah. I wondered what became of her.

SAM

I told her she should come, it'll help Frank to remind people of the case.

MARGARET

(suspiciously)

Is that all?

Sam turns away to take a drink from a waiter passing by. She continues to look at him until he looks back at her.

SAM

What else?

Jack's voice finally penetrates the conversation of Sam and Margaret.

JACK

. . . District Attorney Sam  
Harris, my very good friend.

Sam, realizing he has just been mentioned, smiles and raises a hand in acknowledgment while there is polite applause.

JACK

And of course, my lovely wife,  
without whom I could never have  
accomplished what I have.

The applause is much louder as Margaret smiles. Jack looks around the crowd, scanning the faces.

JACK

Now let's see, have I forgotten  
anyone?

He finally sees Beth. The smile on his face, which had seemed genuine, drops for an instant, then reappears as a kind of grimace.

JACK

No, I think that's it. Thank you  
all again for coming out tonight.

Jack walks through the crowd, and upon reaching Margaret, kisses her. The crowd applauds even louder, then breaks

up into the usual cocktail party groups again and spreads out in the house.

JACK

How'd I do?

MARGARET

Wonderful as always.

SAM

Absolutely.

Jack turns to Anna with a big grin on his face, hugging her.

JACK

You're Anna right? If I'd waited for Sam to introduce you, we'd never have met.

Anna looks a little uncomfortable with Jack's gregariousness.

JACK

I'm getting used to the rubber chicken circuit. Margaret, Anna, Sam and I have to talk business.

Jack pulls Sam away and they walk into the dining room, where it's a little less crowded.

INT. DINING ROOM. NIGHT.

The dining room is huge, like the other rooms in the house. No one is sitting at the large table in the center of the room, but people mill about in small groups. At one end of the room is a table with drinks and a man acting as bartender standing behind it.

JACK

You've been a naughty boy, Sam.

SAM

Have I?

JACK

You've been looking into the Maddox murder.

SAM

Out of curiosity, mostly.

JACK

Curiosity.

SAM

I haven't found anything.

JACK

You won't. Did you bring her?

SAM

Bring who?

JACK

Don't play dumb.

SAM

I never do.

Sam is distracted by seeing Anna and Beth talking at the other side of the room. He sees them laugh at something. Jack notices he's lost Sam's attention and follows it to the women. Jack looks at Anna.

JACK

I'm surprised at you, she doesn't  
seem your type. Beth, on the  
other hand . . .

Before Sam can answer, Margaret's father, Henry Wilkes, comes over to take Jack aside.

WILKES

Sam, can I borrow Jack?

SAM

Certainly.

Wilkes and Jack walk away and Sam continues to look at the two women. Sam walks over to the drinks table and picks up another glass of wine. He looks back and sees

that Dr. Epstein has joined Jack and Wilkes, but we can't hear what they say. As they talk, Dr. Epstein nods toward Sam as he speaks and Jack looks his way. Sam turns away, then walking roundabout, he starts to approach the three men talking, but before he gets there SARAH, an attractive young woman, bumps into him, spilling a little of his wine on his pants.

SARAH

Sam? Don't tell me you've forgotten me. Sarah Dexter.

SAM

(distracted, trying  
to get past her)

Sarah.

SARAH

God, I know it's almost eight years, but you can't have forgotten . . .

SAM

(Finally looking at  
her)

I'm sorry, Sarah, but I have to get cleaned up.

Sam indicates the spilled wine and walks away from her. He looks for Jack, Wilkes and Epstein, but they are gone. Sam takes out a handkerchief, wipes his pants and begins

to look for a bathroom to wash up in. Unfamiliar with the house, he instead steps into the library.

INT. LIBRARY. NIGHT.

Sam is instantly attracted to the rows upon rows of books and at first doesn't notice that Brookes, the party chair, sits smoking a pipe. Finally, Sam sees him.

SAM

I thought political bosses were supposed to smoke cigars.

BROOKES

Do you know John Lansing?

SAM

No.

BROOKES

You will. He was caught in flagrante delecto with a fifteen-year-old blonde earlier tonight.

SAM

You have good sources.

BROOKES

He's just seventeen. Can you blame him?

SAM

I'd have to see the girl.

BROOKES

I think you'd approve.

SAM

What does this have to do with you?

BROOKES

His father would appreciate it if you dropped the case.

SAM

He's Carl Lansing's son.

BROOKES

The biggest developer in the county, and a generous supporter of the party.

SAM

Money.

BROOKES

Favors for friends, Sam. Favors for friends.



SAM

The boy's just seventeen?

Before Sam can continue, Beth enters and finds Sam with Brookes.

BROOKES

Well, well, who have we here?

SAM

Thomas Brookes, I'd like you to meet Beth Maddox.

Brookes rises from his chair and cordially shakes her hand.

BROOKES

Delighted.

BETH

Pleased to meet you. (To Sam)  
Anna and I wondered where you'd wandered off to. She's scouting upstairs.

SAM

(to Brookes)

Duty calls.

BROOKES

Of course.

INT. SITTING ROOM. NIGHT.

Sam and Beth leave the library but as they do, Sam pulls Beth into the corner, away from the rest of the crowd.

SAM

What did you and Anna talk about?

BETH

This and that.

SAM

Does she know about us?

BETH

There is no us, Sam. You haven't even tried to kiss me, remember?

Beth seems to be waiting for him to kiss her, but Sam watches Jack in the distance. Jack laughs at something said, and, leaning in as he laughs, he places his hand on the lower back of the woman with whom he is speaking. Beth realizes that she has lost Sam's attention, so she shakes her head and walks away. Sam is engrossed with

watching Jack until Margaret appears behind him, and she follows his gaze to Jack and the woman.

MARGARET

You look bored.

SAM

You must go to these things all the time.

MARGARET

Not really. I have a reputation for getting migraines before parties.

SAM

I'm sorry, I didn't realize you had migraines.

MARGARET

I don't. The worst part is having people I barely know tell me how lucky I am, how proud I must feel.

SAM

Your glass is empty.

MARGARET

Jack doesn't want me to have more than two drinks at these things.

SAM

Do you always do what Jack says?

MARGARET

When it suits me.

Jack appears with Anna. Beth trails behind.

JACK

I have to go straight back to the  
capital tonight. Sam, can you  
drop Margaret off?

Beth steps forward.

BETH

My ride left a little while ago  
and Sam promised me a lift home.

SAM

(a little confused)

Yeah.

JACK

Nonsense. (To Beth) You live  
north of town, don't you? I'll  
drop you on my way.

Sam clearly isn't comfortable with Jack taking Beth home, but he wasn't comfortable with taking her home himself. His confusion is evident.

INT. SAM'S CAR. NIGHT.

Sam and Anna are driving Margaret home. Anna sits in the back seat, dozing, and Margaret too looks tired, her head resting on Sam's shoulder. Sam looks nervously into the rearview mirror at Anna.

INT./EXT. SAM'S CAR/OUTSIDE THE HARRIS HOUSE. NIGHT.

Sam pulls up and gets out of the car to open the door for Anna. Margaret still sleeps in the front seat.

SAM

Anna. Anna. Wake up. I'll just  
drop Margaret off and be back  
soon.

Anna is so tired, she just barely acknowledges he has spoke to her as he practically carries her up the front walk. Sam opens the door, sees Anna in, and then looks back to Margaret in the car.

INT. DAVIS HOUSE. NIGHT.

Sam and Margaret enter the house, with Margaret hanging on to Sam. Margaret wakes up enough to turn on a single lamp.

MARGARET

Wait.

Margaret leaves the entrance hallway and walks upstairs. Sam waits by the door until Margaret returns. She is completely naked, and she carries two glasses of Scotch. She doesn't look at all sleepy or drunk.

MARGARET

You like yours straight, don't you  
Sam?

Sam takes off his overcoat.

INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT.

Sam and Margaret are making love on her bed. They are naked, and she rolls him onto his back and straddles him. After a few moments, she leans over him, touches his face, and finally, violently, takes his neck in her hand. She leans in close to his face and stops moving.

MARGARET

(forcefully)

I don't want to have to ask again,  
Sam. Leave the case alone.

Sam nods, Margaret smiles, and they resume having sex.

INT. HARRIS BEDROOM. NIGHT.

Sam enters his bedroom and Anna is already in bed. Sam undresses quietly, trying not to wake her, but she turns over sleepily.

ANNA

You get her home?

Sam ignores her and goes into the bathroom. Anna rolls over and falls back asleep.

INT. D.A.'S OFFICE. DAY.

Sam is about to leave the office for lunch when a man enters. It is HANK KELLY, a reporter. He obviously recognizes Sam and heads right toward him.

KELLY

Mr. Harris? Hank Kelly, with the  
Times-Herald.

SAM

What can I do for you, Mr. Kelly?

KELLY

Just Kelly. Election's in two months and we're recapping the candidates for governor.

Sam shrugs.

KELLY

(continues)

I hear you've asked some questions about the Maddox murder.

SAM

Nonsense.

KELLY

I doubt it. I hear things . . .  
Nothing I can print.

SAM

That's too bad.

KELLY

If you talked, it'd be news. It'd help your own run for D.A.



SAM

I've got to meet someone.

Sam pushes past Kelly and walks away.

INT. HARRIS LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

Sam and Anna sit in the living room, Sam holding a newspaper and Anna holding a book in her lap. Each has stopped reading and listen intently to the radio, which is broadcasting the news.

ANNOUNCER

. . . closing all access to West  
Berlin. President Truman has  
vowed the city will not be  
abandoned to this Soviet  
aggression.

Anna, looking scared, turns off the radio.

SAM

They'll be okay. Your family is  
going to be fine.

Sam gets up and goes to Anna and places a hand on her  
shoulder. Anna doesn't look up.

INT. RESTAURANT. DAY.

Sam and Anna are sitting in a restaurant, there half-eaten lunches in front of them.

SAM

Look, there's nothing conclusive.  
Nothing even that suspicious.

BETH

There were fingerprints they  
couldn't identify.

SAM

So?

BETH

They're the killers'

SAM

Prints don't prove anything. How  
many sets of prints would I find  
in your apartment?

BETH

I'm very tidy.

Sam waits for more, but Beth just looks innocently at him.

SAM

I'll check into the fingerprints,  
but you have to have something to  
compare them to.

BETH

You need to see Ruth Hoskins. She  
was my mother's only friend.

INT. RUTH HOSKIN'S HOUSE. DAY.

Sam and RUTH HOSKINS sit on a faded couch. The room is  
neat, but the furniture and the decorations are older and  
a little worn. Ruth is about 60 years old and wearing a  
simple floral dress.

SAM

Like I said on the phone, we lost  
a file and just need to get a  
couple of things put down.

RUTH

Virginia was a wonderful woman and  
a good friend, though she was  
twenty years younger than me.

SAM

Twenty years? No, I can't believe  
it.

RUTH

(obviously pleased)

She only had little Beth after  
Dennis passed, in '32. Thank God  
Virginia wasn't the one found him.

SAM

Thank God.

RUTH

Tractor rolled on him. Pinned for  
hours. He was crushed, strong as  
he was.

SAM

Terrible.

RUTH

It was. Held out three days,  
though, and that's a fact.

SAM

He must have been a strong man.

RUTH

And she was a strong woman. Hard  
running the farm on her own. She  
sent Beth to school, you see.

SAM

I see.

RUTH

That's why Virginia had the Krauts there.

SAM

Did you need help, too?

RUTH

Once the boys enlisted. That's why they let us use the prisoners. A godsend, so we thought.

SAM

Terrible tragedy.

RUTH

Terrible don't tell the half of it. A young woman, beautiful. I expected her to marry again.

SAM

Was she lonely, do you think?

RUTH

Lonely? Lord no, I visited almost twice a week. She had her gentlemen callers.

SAM

Did you meet them?

RUTH

A lady doesn't tell.

Sam leans into toward Ruth and lowers his voice.

SAM

Just between you and me.

Ruth looks around the room as if someone is ready to listen in to the conversation. She leans in to Sam.

RUTH

She didn't talk much about the last one, the one she was seeing at the time of the tragedy.

SAM

No hints? Nothing?

RUTH

She was quiet about this last one. Saw him a long time, though.

SAM

How long?

RUTH

Several months, I'd say. I told Jack about it, though, and he said not to worry.

SAM

Jack?

RUTH

Jack Davis. You know Jack, don't you? Of course you do, what was I thinking. Yes, I told him all this before the trial

SAM

Good for you.

RUTH

Yes, and he said not to worry, it had nothing to do with the case.

SAM

I suppose that's right.

RUTH

He's such a good man, isn't he? He promised he'd see that Nazi hanged, and he did, didn't he?

SAM

Yes, he did.

INT. D.A.'S OFFICE. DAY.

Sam is looking through a cardboard file box. He can't seem to find what he's looking for.

SAM

Bates.

BATES

Yeah?

SAM

This file mentions fingerprints,  
but I can't find them here.

BATES

Probably just lost.

SAM

Maybe.

BATES

City or county?

SAM

County.

BATES

The Sheriff's department should  
have the originals.



INT. SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT OFFICE. DAY.

Sam enters the Sheriff's Department lobby. A DESK  
SERGEANT sits behind the high counter.

SAM

I need to see a file.

SERGEANT

Fine, Mr. Harris. What can I get  
you?

SAM

The Maddox file.

Sam waits impatiently at the counter before the sergeant  
comes back carrying a cardboard file box. He slides it  
over to Sam, who glances inside. Sam looks puzzled.

SAM

I wanted the Maddox murder.

SERGEANT

You said the Maddox case. We file  
by the perp's name, not the vic's.

The sergeant stalks off grumbling. Sam keeps looking at  
the file. Finally, the sergeant returns with a new case.

SERGEANT

Here.

SAM

I want them both. Carry that one  
to the car for me.

SERGEANT

(under his breath)

Asshole.

INT. D.A.'S OFFICE. NIGHT.

Sam has waited until everyone else has left the office. He sits reading the file on Virginia Maddox. The report shows that she was arrested for prostitution, but there was no report of any trial. The date on the file is February of 1943 and Jack is listed as the attorney handling the case.

Sam goes to the District Attorney's file room and looks through the case files. The names skip from MacKay to Madison.

INT. DAVIS HOME. NIGHT.

Margaret and Jack sit alone discussing Sam. Jack paces the room.

JACK

I guess you weren't persuasive enough.

MARGARET

We'll need to make it more clear to him.

JACK

Okay. But who?

MARGARET

I'm sure Brookes knows some men who could help him understand the mistake he's making.

Jack can't look her in the eyes. He seems nervous about the whole idea.

MARGARET

Do you want me to call him?

JACK

He's only to be . . . threatened.

MARGARET

Of course.

INT. RESTAURANT. DAY.

Sam and Beth sit in a corner booth near the back of the restaurant eating lunch. There aren't many other customers, so they can talk in relative privacy.

SAM

I'm beginning to worry about Jack.

BETH

Why?

SAM

I think he may have known more about your mother's murder than he lets on.

BETH

You have proof?

SAM

He knew your mother.

BETH

So?

SAM

He didn't tell the judge he knew her, and that's a conflict of interest.

BETH

I don't understand.

SAM

There's evidence missing from the file.

BETH

Things get lost.

SAM

That's what Bates said. He also withheld evidence.

BETH

What evidence?

SAM

You say you knew your mother had .  
. . men in her life after your  
father died.

BETH

Yes.

SAM

(pauses)

She was arrested for prostitution.

BETH

I don't . . . I don't believe it.

SAM

I think you do.

BETH

What does this have to do with anything?

SAM

Jack knew. When she was arrested, he took the case, only the file was lost and nothing happened.

BETH

I don't understand.

SAM

I think Jack used your mother, had an affair with her, only she got tire of it and threatened him.

BETH

How can you be sure?

SAM

I'm not. But it explains why she wasn't tried, why she was killed, why Jack didn't tell the judge he knew her.

BETH

He has to do that?

SAM

In a trial, especially a murder trial, yes. Look, I've got an idea.

BETH

(doubtfully)

Okay.

INT. VFW. NIGHT.

Jack, in his WWI uniform, is being honored by the VFW. Vic is there, as is Salmon Fisher. Sam watches from a back table. Jack responds to great applause by raising his hand in acknowledgement. He gets up from his table to speak from a podium on a slightly raised stage. Jack takes out some notes for his speech.

JACK

Twice in our lifetimes we have  
been called upon to defend  
American ideals against  
totalitarian governments . . .

Sam sees a waiter clearing the dishes from the table where Jack had been sitting. Sam quietly gets up and makes his way to the waiter as he carries his tray into

the kitchen. Sam gives the waiter five dollars and takes Jack's glass from the tray. He uses a handkerchief to carry the glass.

EXT. A DIRT ROAD. NIGHT.

Sam is driving in his car along a deserted road. It is raining and we can only see the little his headlights light up. From behind, two other headlights appear, then the car following Sam passes and quickly swerves in front of him, forcing him to stop the car. Two men approach Sam's car and Sam gets out of his. The men are wearing suits and ties, but they look like thugs. The first man, Charlie, is big; the second man, Tommy, is smaller and seems to be hiding something behind his back.

CHARLIE

Evening, Mr. Harris.

SAM

You know me? Because I don't know you.

CHARLIE

We have mutual friends.

SAM

Really? Who?



CHARLIE

Doesn't matter.

SAM

Does to me.

The Second Man, Tommy, circles behind Sam, takes out a bat and hits him in the back. Sam falls to his knees. The First Man punches Sam in the face.

CHARLIE

Tommy used to play a little ball in his day. I keep telling him to choke up, but he don't listen.

Tommy chokes up on the bat.

TOMMY

Like this?

Tommy hits Sam again. Charlie squats beside Sam, who is crumpled in pain.

CHARLIE

A smart man needs to know when the game is over, Mr. Harris. I hear you're a smart man.

The two men walk away, leaving Sam lying in the mud beside his car.

INT. SAM'S LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

SAM enters his house. His clothes are soaked and dirty. He moves slowly from the pain. Anna enters from the kitchen.

ANNA

My God!

SAM

Get packed.

ANNA

What?

SAM

You need to get out of here.  
You're going to your cousin's in  
Billings. You'll take the train.

Sam goes into the bedroom and pulls a suitcase out from under the bed and begins to throw Anna's clothing into the case. Anna stands at the door looking confused.

ANNA

I don't understand.

SAM

You will, I promise.

Sam goes to her and takes her hands in his.

SAM

(cont.)

Trust me.

EXT. OUTSIDE A TRAIN STATION LOBBY. DAY.

It's early morning and Sam and Anna stand by the train, which is already next to the boarding platform. Sam is still in his rumpled suit.

ANNA

When can I come back?

SAM

It's just not safe for you right now.

A porter comes and takes her bags, and Anna follows him, Sam a little behind. As she gets on the train, Sam pulls her back and kisses her.

SAM

I love you, you know that.

ANNA

Yes. I love you, Sam. Be careful

. . .

SAM

I always am.

She goes to her seat while Sam watches the train pull out of the station.

INT. HARRIS HOUSE. DAY.

Sam enters the house. He pours himself a drink before going to a chest and taking out an army issue pistol. He checks to see that it is loaded then places it under his pillow.

INT. SAM'S BEDROOM. DAY.

SAM lies in bed, asleep. Sunlight streams in from a window. There is a knock on the door, but Sam doesn't move. Another knock, and Sam gets out of bed. His face is bruised, and before he puts on his robe we see bruises on his back as well.

INT. SAM'S LIVING ROOM. DAY.

Sam opens the door for Beth.

BETH

Your office said . . .

She finally notices his bruises.

BETH

God, Sam, what did they do to you?

SAM

I'm okay.

BETH

Have you seen a doctor? Where's  
Anna? You haven't called the  
doctor yet, have you?

SAM

I don't need a doctor. And Anna's  
gone.

BETH

Gone where?

Sam doesn't answer.

BETH

I'm calling Dr. Epstein.

SAM

No.

BETH

After I call, you'll tell me what  
happened.

INT. SAM'S LIVING ROOM. DAY.

Beth is sitting on the edge of Sam's bed, in which he  
sits propped up against some pillows.

There is a knock at the front door and Beth gets up to  
let in Dr. Epstein. He looks surprised at seeing her  
there as he enters. She watches as Dr. Epstein goes into  
the bedroom and closes the door behind him. Beth waits  
impatiently.

INT. SAM'S LIVING ROOM. DAY.

Dr. Epstein enters from Sam's bedroom, closing the door  
behind him.

BETH

How is he?

EPSTEIN

His ribs don't appear to be  
broken.

BETH

That's good.

EPSTEIN

I gave him some pills for the  
pain.

BETH

Of course. Thank you, Doctor.

Epstein leaves. Beth looks down, takes a deep breath and  
opens the door to Sam's bedroom.

BETH

I'm glad to hear you'll be  
alright.

SAM

Me, too.

Beth begins to undress.

BETH

Dr. Epstein insisted I stay with  
you.

SAM

Did he?

BETH

Because of the pills. He said I  
mustn't leave you today. Or  
tonight.

SAM

Funny he didn't mention it to me.

BETH

Yes, funny. Must have slipped his mind.

SAM

Nursed many men back to health?

BETH

Not many, but I haven't lost a patient yet.

INT. STATE CRIME LAB. DAY.

The door to the lab has "State Crime Lab" painted on it. Sam carries in a bag containing the glass he took from the celebration. There is a CLERK behind a desk.

SAM

Sam Harris, Hamilton County D.A.  
I called.

CLERK

Mr. Harris, yes. When did you say you needed this by?



SAM

End of the week. Compare the  
prints on this glass to these.

Sam hands him a large manila envelope.

CLERK

By the way, you didn't say what  
case this was for.

Sam turns and walks out.

INT. FRANK MOORE'S GENERAL STORE. DAY.

SAM talks to Frank Moore, about 50 years old and the  
owner of the store. The store is an old-time general  
store and not very busy. Frank served on the jury that  
convicted Stahler.

FRANK

Everyone else on the jury was so  
sure, I mean, I was the only one  
who even had any doubts.

SAM

Doubts?

FRANK

Well, why would he do it?

Sam nods.

FRANK

Why didn't he run? I mean, you've  
killed someone, you're a Nazi and  
you just wait 'til they find her?

SAM

What was Stahler like?

FRANK

Seemed sure of himself. Like he  
didn't think it was really  
happening.

INT. COURTROOM. DAY. - FLASHBACK

Frank is in the jury box. STAHLER, the POW, is being  
questioned by Jack before a packed courtroom. As Jack  
speaks, an INTERPRETER sitting nearby translates  
everything into German. When Stahler speaks in German,  
everything is translated into English.

JACK

You liked Mrs. Maddox?

STAHLER

Ja.

INTERPRETER

Yes.

JACK

(to the  
interpreter)

I think we figured that out on our  
own, thank you.

The crowd, including the jury and the judge, laughs while  
Stahler looks bewildered. After the laughter has  
subsided, Jack resumes his questioning.

JACK

You claim to have just gone up for  
water that day, correct?

STAHLER

Ja.

JACK

And you say the door was locked  
and you didn't see Mrs. Maddox.

STAHLER

Ja.

JACK

So, how do you explain your  
fingerprints on a glass in her  
kitchen?

Stahler speaks and the interpreter interprets.

INTERPRETER

I don't know. Someone must have  
put them there.

JACK

Someone must have put them there.  
Where did they get them?

Stahler looks pained as he replies in German.

INTERPRETER

I don't know.

INT. FRANK MOORE'S GENERAL STORE. DAY.

Sam and Frank are wrapping up their conversation.

FRANK

The fingerprints were damning, but  
I don't know.

SAM

You think they were planted?

FRANK

The crews were on a schedule.  
Anyone who knew it would have  
known who'd be up for water that  
day.

EXT. IN FRONT OF FRANK MOORE'S STORE. DAY.

As Sam leaves, the newspaperman Kelly catches up to him  
on the sidewalk. Sam glances over and keeps walking,  
with Kelly trying to keep up.

KELLY

Remember me?

SAM

I've been reading your stuff.  
It's not bad.

KELLY

You like it.

SAM

I wouldn't go that far.

KELLY

A front page story could really be  
nice publicity for you.

SAM

Why do you need me?

KELLY

Nobody, and I mean nobody, is  
willing to talk to me.

SAM

Try a new cologne.

INT. MOVIE THEATER. NIGHT.

Sam is in the lobby of the theater looking at the movie posters. His hat is pulled low and turns away when people are near, as if he doesn't want to be seen. Eventually, Beth walks by, pauses at the curtained door leading to the theater, and glances over. Sam nods to her. She goes into the theater.

Sam waits a few moments more, and the sound of the newsreel starting up prompts him to look into the now darkened theater. Sam spots Beth near the back and begins to move toward her. He stops though when he finally pays attention to the screen.

On the screen is a newsreel showing the flights of American planes into Berlin during the Berlin Airlift. It shows Germans happy at receiving the aid. Sam stares at the screen for a few moments, then leaves without

talking to Beth. She sees him just as he leaves, but she doesn't get up and follow him.

INT. CONGRESSMAN WILKES' HOUSE. DAY.

Sam, Congressman Wilkes and party Chair Brookes are sitting in Wilkes' front room.

WILKES

If the newspapers hear you're  
investigating the Maddox case,  
Jack might as well quit now.

SAM

I'm not talking to them and they  
won't find out.

WILKES

That's not what I heard. Sam, why  
do you persist in this?

SAM

If Stahler did this, Jack's got  
nothing to worry about.

WILKES

Well I for one am worried.

BROOKES

Congressman, may Sam and I talk  
privately for a moment?

Wilkes looks at him for a moment, then leaves.

BROOKES

(cont.)

Do you like your job, Sam?

SAM

Not particularly.

BROOKES

It's just that I'd hate to see you  
out of work.

SAM

Oh, I hardly work now.

BROOKES

I'm serious, Sam. Just be  
careful. We don't want anyone  
being hurt, now, do we?

INT. MOVIE THEATER. NIGHT.

Sam and Beth sit watching *Force of Evil*. On the screen  
is the climactic shootout between the John Garfield  
character and the two bosses. As Garfield pulls out his



own gun, Sam rests his hand on his suit coat over the inside breast pocket.

INT. HARRIS HOUSE. NIGHT.

Sam and Beth are having drinks together.

SAM

You don't have to do it.

BETH

I need to.

SAM

You don't need to do anything. We could drop this all right here.

BETH

No, we can't.

SAM

We don't know for sure he did it.

BETH

Look. That night, after the party, I . . .

SAM

Don't. Don't say it. I don't need to know.

BETH

He and I . . .

SAM

Don't. You know what to say?

He hands her the phone.

BETH

(on the phone)

Lincoln five, three four four two.

(pause) Jack? It's Beth.

EXT. BETH'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

Sam is outside Beth's apartment, sitting in his car. He watches Jack enter the apartment building, then the two of them at her window. She looks down at his car before lowering the blinds. Sam looks away.

EXT. BETH'S APARTMENT. LATER.

Sam has slumped down in his seat, obviously tired, then sees Jack leave Beth's apartment. He goes up to her door. She answers his knock and is straightening her blouse as she does so.

SAM

Have a nice chat?

BETH

He didn't say anything.

SAM

I want to hear it anyway.

Sam goes over to the closet and takes out a large tape recorder. He looks at it carefully.

SAM

Forget to turn it on?

BETH

I told you he didn't say anything.  
He didn't want to talk about the  
case.

SAM

I bet he didn't.

Sam throws the recorder against the wall and leaves.

INT. SAM'S OFFICE. DAY.

Sam is working at his desk when his secretary Barbara comes in with a sealed envelope.

BARBARA

State crime lab sent this.

After Barbara leaves, Sam closes his door behind her and sits at his desk contemplating the envelope. The envelope is marked Confidential and after a moment of nervously tapping a pen against the envelope, he opens it. He reads the report quickly, then puts the envelope in his briefcase.

INT. HARRIS HOUSE. NIGHT.

Sam answers a knock at the door, and it's Beth.

BETH

I'd like to talk.

Sam is silent. She moves toward him, kissing him, although at first he doesn't seem to want her to. Then, he begins to undress her.

INT. SAM'S BEDROOM. DAY.

Sam and Beth lie naked in bed, a bedside lamp the only source of light.

BETH

(sleepily)

Maybe you aren't as big a threat  
as you think. Maybe he's got  
something on you.

Sam doesn't answer. She rolls on top of him.

BETH

(joking)

You aren't having an affair, are  
you, Sam?

He shoves her off and sits up in bed.

INT. D.A.'S OFFICE. DAY.

Sam is in his office with the door closed making a phone  
call to Howard Robinson, the guard who was on duty the  
day Virginia was killed.

SAM

You were there the day she was  
killed.

ROBINSON

Read the record. I don't like  
talking about it.

SAM

One last time.

Robinson looks resigned to telling the story again.

SAM

Did you see anything unusual?

ROBINSON

No.

SAM

How about anything usual?

ROBINSON

(confused)

Come again?

SAM

Anything you normally saw that you  
didn't talk about in court.

ROBINSON

I still don't get you.

SAM

Did you see a car go to the house?

ROBINSON

Couple times a week.

Sam looks expectantly at him.

ROBINSON

(cont.)

A green car. Early forties. I  
don't remember.

SAM

Could it have been a customer?

ROBINSON

Customer?

SAM

You know what I mean, and your  
wife doesn't have to hear  
anything.

ROBINSON

It could've been, but this was  
after she stopped seeing the  
guards.

SAM

You see the car that day?

ROBINSON

I don't know.

SAM

Anybody ask?

ROBINSON

I tried to tell that D.A., Davis,  
but he didn't want to talk about  
anything that'd hurt his case.

INT. ANDY HENDERSON'S OFFICE. DAY.

Sam sits in the office of ANDY HENDERSON, the attorney  
who defended Stahler during his murder trial. Henderson  
is not particularly well-dressed and his office looks  
run-down.

SAM

You thought he did it.

ANDY

I never ask. I don't want to  
know.

SAM

But what did you think?

ANDY

He always said he didn't do it,  
that he liked her. I don't know.

SAM

You didn't put up much of a  
defense.



ANDY

Wasn't much defense to put up. It  
was during the war, he was a Nazi,  
she was dead.

INT. COURTROOM. DAY.

We see Andy questioning a witness, the guard on duty the  
day Virginia was probably murdered. He is PRIVATE HOWARD  
ROBINSON.

ANDY

You say you didn't think Stahler  
was gone very long.

ROBINSON

Yessir.

JACK

And how long is very long?

ROBINSON

Sir?

ANDY

Five minutes? Ten?

ROBINSON

Maybe ten minutes.

ANDY

How long did it usually take to  
get water?

ROBINSON

Ten minutes.

ANDY

So there was nothing strange about  
how long he was gone?

ROBINSON

No, sir.

ANDY

What did he say about not having  
the water?

ROBINSON

Said she wasn't there.

ANDY

Was that unusual?

ROBINSON

Not particularly.

ANDY

No further questions, your honor.

With that, Andy turns to sit down. He sees Margaret in the back of the courtroom.

INT. ANDY HENDERSON'S OFFICE. DAY.

We are brought abruptly back to Sam talking to Andy in his office.

SAM

Wait. Margaret was at the trial?

ANDY

Every day.

SAM

You ever see her at any other trials?

ANDY

Now you mention it, no.

INT. BETH'S APARTMENT. DAY.

Beth and Sam are in her apartment. The cardboard box of the case is open on the table between them, and each is looking at files.

BETH

Stahler's prints were on a glass  
inside.

SAM

Maybe Jack kept a glass once from  
when Stahler came to the house.

BETH

But if he didn't do it, he hadn't  
gone to the house in weeks.

Sam and Beth continue talking over the visuals of the  
following flashback:

INT. VIRGINIA MADDOX'S KITCHEN. DAY.

Jack is at the kitchen sink looking out the window.  
Virginia walks through the room to her bedroom. Jack  
sees Stahler walking up the drive.

SAM

(v.o.)

He must have kept a glass one day,  
when he knew it had one of the  
P.O.W.'s prints.

BETH

If the guards kept their usual routine, Jack knew when Stahler would be back.

SAM

So when Jack saw Stahler coming up the drive, he locked the door and killed her.

Jack walks to the door, locks it, then picks up a knife from a drawer. He turns to the bedroom.

Visuals resume with Sam and Beth in her apartment.

BETH

After it was done, just put the glass on the counter. Bad luck for Stahler it happened to be him.

SAM

One unlucky bastard.

INT. SAM'S OFFICE. DAY.

Sam sits on the edge of his desk so he towers over Bates, who's sitting in a small guest chair.

SAM

Have you ever seen Margaret at a trial?

BATES

Margaret who?

SAM

Davis, and don't play stupid.

BATES

I don't recall.

SAM

The Maddox murder. See her there?

BATES

Jack played that one close to the vest. Nobody helped him.

SAM

Don't fuck with me Bates. You must have watched it sometimes.

BATES

Yeah, I saw her. So what?

SAM

Did Jack ever explain why she was there?

BATES

No. Are we done?

Sam nods.

EXT. DAVIS HOUSE. DAY.

Sam drives up to the Davis house. He pulls into the driveway, then goes up to the house and lifts the garage door. Parked inside is a 1940 green Ford. Sam closes the garage door, then walks back to his car. As he gets in, Margaret comes out the front door and looks after him. He sees her, but just drives away.

INT. BAR. NIGHT.

Sam is drinking at the bar and it's clear he's a bit drunk.

SAM

Another.

As the bartender sets another scotch down in front of Sam, two men come into the bar and stand behind Sam on either side of him. Sam looks at them and realizes it's the two men who beat him up earlier.

SAM

Tommy, isn't it? Have one on me.

Sam motions to the bartender.

CHARLIE

Come on. Someone wants to see  
you.

Sam nods. Sam downs the drink and goes out with the men.

EXT. SIDEWALK. NIGHT.

Charlie gets in the front seat of a car and Tommy gets Sam into the back seat. Sam hunches down in the seat, his arms crossed. He has his gun in his inner breast pocket and he rests his hand inside his coat in case he needs to use the pistol.

SAM

Where we going?

CHARLIE

I don't know.

SAM

Sure.

Sam opens the coat a little to show Tommy the pistol.



TOMMY

So you got a gun. What do I care.

Tommy looks at Sam's expression, the pistol.

TOMMY

(cont.)

We're going to see Brookes.

CHARLIE

You goddamn little squealer. You  
Quisling. You . . .

SAM

Just drive.

CHARLIE

(to Tommy)

I told you to frisk him.

TOM

He's a shyster, how would I know  
he's packing?

SAM

I like Tommy, he's cooperative.  
You in the war, Tommy?

TOMMY

With Patton.

SAM

I am. I want to cut a deal.

BROOKES

I had you brought here, remember?

SAM

I won't go to the press. No one will know anything.

BROOKES

You're dropping the Maddox murder?

SAM

I need to talk to Jack about some things first.

BROOKES

I see.

SAM

Don't worry, Jack wins and you're happy. But I need something in return.

BROOKES

Of course.

SAM

Attorney General.

Brookes is silent, considering.

SAM

Well?

BROOKES

I'll make some calls.

Sam nods and leaves.

INT. D.A.'S OFFICE. NIGHT.

It's late, and Sam is the only one in his office. He is typing a statement. Part of it reads "The green Ford drove to the Virginia Maddox's house the day she was killed." At the bottom, Sam types the name Howard Robinson. He takes the statement out of the typewriter, glances over it, then carefully signs Howard Robinson. He puts the statement in his briefcase.

INT. VFW. NIGHT.

Sam is sitting at the bar in the VFW, where Jack's campaign is having a local victory celebration. Jack isn't there yet, but there is a huge crowd and everyone is drinking. Balloons, banners, campaign signs are everywhere. Vic, the VFW manager, comes over to Sam.

VIC

Congratulations on your victory.

Sam nods.

VIC

(cont.)

You still haven't joined.

SAM

I don't expect to be here much longer.

Vic looks puzzled, since Sam just won his election. Sam sees Jack enter. He finishes his drink and pushes his way through the crowd to Jack, who is surrounded by well-wishers congratulating him and slapping him on the back. Jack is beaming, until he sees Sam approaching. His smile fades for a moment, then reappears.

JACK

Congratulations, Sam.

SAM

Congratulations, Jack. Can we talk.

JACK

Not here. Not now.

SAM

No, later.

JACK

I'm going up to the capital  
tonight. Tomorrow morning?

SAM

My office at seven. We'll be  
alone.

Jack is pulled away by the crowd. Sam turns and sees Margaret standing right behind him. She is holding two drinks, and hands one to Sam. She raises her glass as a toast.

SAM

To Jack's election.

MARGARET

To Jack's election.

Sam looks intently at her when she drinks.

SAM

You were at the Maddox trial.

MARGARET

It was the biggest case of Jack's  
career.

SAM

Try again.

MARGARET

I was curious.

SAM

Strike two.

MARGARET

I felt a certain affinity for the  
dead girl. (pause) That's the  
truth.

SAM

Why?

MARGARET

A woman, alone, trying to make it  
in a man's world.

SAM

You weren't alone.

MARGARET

Close enough.

SAM

Know her?

MARGARET

No. Our paths didn't cross.

SAM

Don't be so sure.

MARGARET

How's that?

SAM

Jack knew her.

MARGARET

Jack knows lots of people I don't  
know and I know lots of people  
Jack doesn't know.

SAM

Did you know she and Jack were  
having an affair?

Margaret doesn't react.

MARGARET

Jack has his hobbies.

SAM

You don't seem surprised.

Margaret smiles.

MARGARET

Let the reporters get hold of  
this.

She leans in and kisses him on the lips, then walks away.  
A couple of people in the crowd see the kiss, but aren't  
sure if what they saw was an innocent kiss or something  
more.

INT. HARRIS HOUSE. NIGHT.

Sam sits in the living room, talking to Anna on the  
phone.

SAM

I know the election's over. But I'm  
not quite done looking into the case  
yet.

ANNA

Please stop, Sam. I want to come home.

SAM

It still might not be safe. Just one  
more week, okay? One week.

Sam hangs up, then turns toward the bedroom, where Beth  
lies in his bed.



INT. SAM'S OFFICE. DAY.

Sam arrives at the office early. No one is in the outer offices yet. When he gets to his own office, he sees Jack sitting behind his desk. Jack is looking through a file.

JACK

You know, they probably haven't changed the locks here in twenty years.

SAM

I'll have to take care of that.

Jack throws the file on the desk.

JACK

You really haven't got anything.

Sam approaches the desk and takes out an envelope from his briefcase and hands it to Jack. In it is the crime lab report on the fingerprints, comparing the prints from the crime scene to those on the glass. Jack looks it over while Sam sits silently. Finally, Jack looks up.

SAM

It's all there.

JACK

You've got some fingerprints.

SAM

Your fingerprints. In her  
bedroom. On the headboard of her  
bed.

JACK

Doesn't mean anything.

Sam smiles. He takes out another paper, the report he  
doctored about Robinson seeing a green car.

SAM

I have the guard's statement. He  
saw your car.

Jack quickly scans the statement.

JACK

So he saw a green car. I don't  
own the only one, you know.

SAM

You know there's no recorder here,  
Jack. It's just you and me.

Jack rises from the chair.

SAM

(cont.)

Sit down.

Jack stops, looks at him, then sits back down.

SAM

I don't care about any of this.

Jack looks skeptical.

SAM

You've talked to Brookes.

JACK

I've already promised the job to  
someone.

SAM

Break your promise.

Jack waves at the file and the statement sitting on the  
desk.

JACK

None of this is admissible.

SAM

It doesn't have to be.

Jack considers his options for a moment.

JACK

It'll take some doing.

SAM

Do it.

Jack pauses, and looks at the reports and statements on the desk.

JACK

Okay.

INT. BETH'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

Sam and Beth are in her apartment, lying in bed after making love.

SAM

Anna will be home in a couple days.

BETH

Not right now, Sam, please.

SAM

You know I can't leave Anna.

BETH

I know.

SAM

And we can't see each other any more.

BETH

(suddenly more  
alert)

What about the case?

SAM

I think it's time we gave it up.

BETH

Without you, how can I prove what  
he did to her? How can I do  
anything?

SAM

We can't prove anything anyway.  
We don't have the evidence.

Beth starts dressing and Sam just watches her from the bed. Once she's finished he finally gets up to try and stop her, but he doesn't really want to. She has moved to the living room and is getting her coat from the closet.

BETH

If I talk, you'll be ruined.

SAM

That's probably what your mother  
said to Jack.

She stares at him for a moment, then leaves.

INT. TRAIN STATION. DAY.

Sam watches as Anna gets off the train. He goes to her and picks up her suitcase. Finally, he kisses her.

SAM

I've got some good news.

INT. HARRIS HOUSE. DAY.

Sam and Ann are in their house packing. There's a knock at the door. Sam opens it to reveal Tommy, one of the thugs who had beaten Sam up earlier. Knowing that he would be a surprise visitor, and a threatening one, Tommy holds up his hands, palms forward, then holds open his coat to show he doesn't carry any weapons.

SAM

You here to beat me up?

TOMMY

Nah, there's nothin' in it for me now.

SAM

Have a seat.

Anna comes over to Tommy and looks him over before offering her hand.

SAM

(to Tommy)

Something to drink? Beer?

(to Anna)

Honey, could you get us a couple of beers?

She goes into the kitchen.

TOMMY

You look like you're takin' off somewhere.

SAM

New job. Moving to the capital.

TOMMY

So I hear.

SAM

Yeah?

TOMMY

That's why I'm here. If you ever need help with anything, or anyone, you call.

SAM

I may need that someday, you never know.

TOMMY

Looks like you're busy. I better go.

Tommy gets up to go but seems reluctant to leave, and finally he turns to Sam.

TOMMY

See you in the funny papers.

Anna comes back carrying two beers.

EXT. COURTHOUSE. DAY.

Jack is standing behind a podium with a microphone on the courthouse steps. Sam stands behind him. Anna is next to Sam. There is a crowd of people watching Jack speak, and several newspaper reporters and cameramen taking pictures.

JACK

. . . an outstanding public  
servant and the next Attorney  
General or our great state.



Sam steps up and the two men shake hands as the cameramen all move in to take a picture.

Sam looks around the crowd waving. He grabs her hands and continues waving to the crowd. He spots Beth at the very back of the crowd. Sam motions Anna over to him, and she steps up next to him. When he looks back, Beth has turned away.