

Cry Baby

A Screenplay

James A. Napoli

Cry Baby (1983)

EXT. TOWN RISING — EARLY MORNING

Scenes of the town of Brattleboro, Vermont, rising. Brattleboro has a population of about 12,000 on an ordinary weekday morning. Just after the sun has risen, we see milkmen making their rounds, lawn sprinklers snapping on, an old man jogging in the street, and Jeff delivering newspapers. Jeff, sitting still on his bike, holds a newspaper out slowly, aiming it. He brings his arm back and then snaps it forward, the paper flying to a welcome mat in front of a door.

Jeff continues down the street, riding his bike, stopping at the corner, aiming, and throwing the paper. It hits the steps of the house, just as a man opens the door to the house, picks the paper up, and walks down the path toward Jeff.

MAN

Jeff, Jeff, wait a minute.

Jeff gets off his bike and walks with it to the man.

JEFF

Yes, sir?

MAN

Haven't I asked you to put the paper in the mailbox?

JEFF

(smiling)

Yes, sir. Sorry, sir.

EXT. STREET —

On another residential street similar to the one Jeff rides down in appearance and distance, a young girl, Amy, about 14 years old, stumbles down the street, her back bent and dragging her left foot, walking in the gutter next to the curb. She reaches her house, goes up onto the sidewalk, and starts across the lawn to the front door. She moves slowly and awkwardly, looking around, making sure this is the right one. There is a newspaper at the foot of the lawn, and she takes her last steps just before it, falling sharply. As she dies, she reaches out for the newspaper, grabs it, then releases it. And we see it stained from the girl.

EXT. STREET —

Jeff is on his bike still delivering his papers about 30 minutes later. He turns on a small radio attached to the handlebar of his bike.

ANNOUNCER

And this just in, the body of a dead girl has just been found only feet from the girl's home. The young girl's name is being withheld because of her age, which police report is 13. The girl was apparently sexually assaulted before her

death, police say, and is believed to have been using the drug PCP. Though the cause of death appears to be a knife wound, police said...

Jeff reaches the corner of the block where Amy lived, and starts down it, throwing a paper to the right. There are four or five police cars outside the house now, an ambulance, and several trucks from TV stations. As Jeff passes the house, a cop directing traffic waves him away, and Jeff rides off.

EXT. JEFF'S HOUSE — EARLY MORNING

Jeff arrives at his house, which is dark and run down, the lawn uncut, grass and weeds growing in the front yard. The house, in general, doesn't look as neat or tended as the other houses.

Jeff leaves his bike on the left side of the house and goes inside.

INT. JEFF'S HOUSE — EARLY MORNING

Inside, Jeff's house looks as shabby and unattended as it did from the outside. The furniture is ancient and ripped, the living room that Jeff enters into is unswept and darkly lit. Jeff walks across the living room to a stairwell next to a kitchen door, almost directly across from the front door.

There is a stairway leading up next to the kitchen door, and Jeff starts walking up the stairs as his mother appears at the door to the kitchen, wearing a dirty housedress, a cigarette in one hand and a coffee cup in the other.

Jeff stops, turns to his mother, named Elaine. She is not too old, mid-thirties, but looks burnt out and always tired.

ELAINE

Hey, Jeff.

Turning, Jeff gives his mother the same smile he did the customer — pleasant, innocent, and humble.

JEFF

Yeah, mom?

ELAINE

Phone call for you, kid.

She turns as Jeff continues up the stairs.

JEFF

Right. I'll take it upstairs.

INT. KITCHEN —

Ten minutes later, Jeff's mother sits at the kitchen table, in a kitchen with old appliances on the counter next to the table, an old Norge refrigerator against the opposite wall, and two windows that supply the only light.

She pours a little whiskey from a bottle on the table into her cup, drinks a little, puts it down. She starts going through her pockets and then pulls out a small packet of tinfoil.

She opens the tinfoil up. There is an oval-shaped pill inside it. She swallows it, and drinks some more from the cup.

At that moment, Jeff is coming down the stairs, and comes into the kitchen just as she is taking the pill.

JEFF

Mom, I'm leaving —

He sees her taking the pill.

JEFF

You know, you're pathetic. You really make me sick
sometimes...

Jeff sees the phone on the kitchen counter, the receiver off the hook. He starts to the counter.

JEFF

You can't even hang up a goddamn phone.

He hangs the phone up, nervous she heard anything he said on the phone. He starts to leave the kitchen, but stops at the kitchen doorway at her words.

ELAINE

Let me be one of your girls, jeff?

He stops for a moment, then continues out the door.

EXT. JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL — MID-MORNING

Outside the front entrance of the local Brattleboro junior high, Jeff waits, leaning against a gate, looking at the crowd as it goes in. A girl, Cathy, who is fifteen, small and extremely attractive for her age, goes right past Jeff without looking his way.

JEFF

Cathy?

(Cathy turns, nods to two other girls she's
with, and they walk off as she stands there
with Jeff.)

CATHY

Jeff, hi. Haven't seen you the last few days.

JEFF

That's cause you haven't stopped around the house.

(pause)

Listen, you have an appointment.

CATHY

Now? I really can't today, I have a test in English and...

JEFF

(smiling)

You let me worry about your test in English.

He hands her a folded slip of paper.

You better get going.

CATHY

I guess so. I wouldn't want to get the boss angry, now
would I?

INT. CATHY'S HOMEROOM —

Jeff is walking through the halls of the junior high school, looking around as if he's forgotten his way around the school, which he no longer attends. He eventually finds Cathy's homeroom class, steps in front of the closed door.

Through the window we see a teacher sitting at a desk inside. Jeff knocks twice, opens the door, and stands at the doorway. The teacher, a young woman, is sitting at her desk, reading. She closes her book when she sees Jeff, just as the nine a.m. bell rings.

JEFF

Sometimes I forget my way.

TEACHER

That's surprising, considering you're back here so often.

JEFF

Cathy's here.

TEACHER

Is that her introduction? Or her excuse?

JEFF

Funny. Nevertheless, Cathy is here.

(turning to leave)

Now remember that when you're doing the attendance.

Jeff leaves as the teacher watches him, and as students begin coming into the class.

INT. JEFF'S ROOM — EARLY MORNING

In Jeff's room, Debbie sits on a stool by the window, looking out. Jeff's room is very large, with comparatively little furniture. There is a bed in the far left corner, a dresser, a wooden chair, and a beat up old couch on the right.

Jeff slowly opens the door. Debbie turns, takes notice of him, then turns back to the window. Jeff stands at the door, his left hand still on the doorknob.

JEFF

I have some bad news...

DEBBIE

What is it, Jeff? Does your mother object to us meeting every morning like this?

Jeff steps into the room, closes the door.

JEFF

No, she doesn't care, you should know that by now.

DEBBIE

A young girl was found dead outside her house, the radio said about ten minutes ago... the thing was, she was so close, she almost made it... home

JEFF

Maybe you'd better go home. Maybe now's not a good time...

DEBBIE

What's the matter, you lose your nerve, Jeff? Or your interest? You know, I've been wondering if maybe you would rather Cathy, but now I have a whole lot more to worry about.

JEFF

You don't have anything to fear, anything.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL — AFTERNOON

At Brattleboro high school we see Jeff's day, from classes, to eating lunch alone, to him reading in the library. The point here is that Jeff is alone in his free time, and is spending it reading or studying.

EXT. STREET — MID-AFTERNOON

Jeff, walking home from school, passes the elementary school. On the street across from the school a big kid, and a little girl, Cindy, are fighting, the big kid blocking her way as Cindy tries to get home. Jeff, from across the street, spots the scene, and crosses the street to where he is behind the big kid, not so big next to Jeff.

JEFF

Is there some problem here, Cindy?

CINDY

Jeff!

(she runs past the kid to behind Jeff)

KID

No, no there's no problem.

JEFF

Then why don't you get the fuck out of here?

The boy starts away slowly the other way, then looks back, and moves quickly.

JEFF

You okay?

CINDY

Jeff! Jeff, he said... well you know what he said.

Jeff starts for home again, Cindy following.

JEFF

I don't care what he said! Do you know what I say?

Cindy frowns, then shakes her head no.

JEFF

I say you're not beautiful without a smile on your face.

She slowly forms a smile.

INT. JEFF'S HOUSE — MID-AFTERNOON

The two arrive at Jeff's house and go in. They go through the living room, Jeff's mother is laying, eyes closed, on the couch, not looking up to see who it is.

CINDY

Do you mind if I get something to drink?

JEFF

Sure, help yourself. Don't mind my mother.

Jeff starts up the stairs, glancing at his mother, whose eyes are now open. He says nothing to her and continues up the stairs.

ELAINE

Your friends are upstairs, Jeff.

INT. JEFF'S ROOM —

In Jeff's room, Cathy, Claudine, and Bob sit and stand, waiting for Jeff. Cathy is sitting on his bed reading, and barely takes notice of him. Claudine is staring out the window, which faces the street below. Bob is playing with some model airplanes on Jeff's desk.

JEFF

Hey, guys. How did it go, Cathy?

Cathy just looks up at him for a second, goes back to her reading.

CLAUDINE

Hey, Jeff, you got any more of that orange stuff?

JEFF

Sure, darlin', right here.

Jeff crosses the room to a dresser, pulls open the top drawer, and pulls out a plastic bag with a variety of pills of all shapes and sizes, opens it, takes out an orange oval shaped pill, hands it to Claudine, just as Cindy walks in, a glass of Coke in one hand.

CLAUDINE

Thanks a lot. Got a math test and I got to stay up and study tonight for it.

BOB

That will keep you up until the math test, and then you'll conk out.

Claudine and Bob laugh and walk away from Jeff as Cindy starts his way.

JEFF

Cathy?

Cathy looks up again, puts her book on the bed, and reaches into her jeans pocket. Jeff goes over to her as Cindy reaches the spot where Jeff was standing.

CATHY

Don't worry, I didn't forget.

She hands him fifty dollars that Jeff stuffs into his pocket without counting, goes back to reading, as Cindy follows Jeff to the bed.

CINDY

(almost whispering, speaking low so the others don't hear)

You know, Jeff, you haven't sent me out for nearly a week.

JEFF

(smiling, going to the dresser)

Well, I got to be fair to the others, Cindy.

He puts the plastic bag back into the dresser drawer.

CINDY

(putting her arms around him as he turns
from the dresser)

It's getting like Claudine with her pills for me, Jeff... I need
it.

JEFF

(gently pulling loose)

I'll try and make sure you're next, Cin.

CINDY

(stepping in his path)

Why not just you and me Jeff? Please?

JEFF

I can't Cindy, sorry.

(smiling again)

Got all this schoolwork.

Jeff steps out of frame to Claudine at the window and Cindy doesn't follow this time.

At the window, Jeff and Claudine watch as several moving men move furniture off a truck and into one of the houses, nicer in its appearance outside, than Jeff's. A station wagon pulls up to the house and a man, a woman, and a girl about Cathy or Claudine's age get out and go into the house.

CLAUDINE

There's a girl, a teenage girl she looks like.

JEFF

Got to meet her. Why don't you and Cathy go over there
tomorrow maybe bring some of your mother's cookies, the
friendly act, you know?

CLAUDINE

I didn't know you were interested in younger woman. I
don't see how you can get lonely, not with Cindy around.

JEFF

We got to replace Amy. Maybe give a little party.

EXT. OUTSIDE SCHOOL — MID-AFTERNOON

After the school day has ended for the students at the junior high, a girl, Susan, is walking home, alone. Not far behind her, Cathy and another girl walk together. When Susan reaches the corner and the light is red, she waits at the corner. Cathy's friend departs and Cathy walks up beside Susan, waving to her friend.

CATHY

Alright, see you later.

She turns and takes notice of Susan, smiles. From here on Cathy, Claudine, Jeff, and Bob all act with the kind of friendliness you can only find in small towns, always smiling, nothing bothering them, always friendly, and smiling.

CATHY

Oh, hi, I'm Cathy. You're new, right?

SUSAN

(speaking and acting normally)

Yeah, I am. Hi.

The light changes and the two start walking across the street.

CATHY

Yeah, a friend of mine said he saw a new family moving across the street from him... oh, there's Claudine.

Cathy waves to Claudine, who crosses the street to meet the two.

CLAUDINE

Hi, Cathy.

CATHY

Claudine, this is — oh, you haven't told me your name yet!

SUSAN

I'm Susan. Hi.

CATHY

Susan here lives across the street from Jeff.

(turning to Susan)

My friend I was telling you about.

CLAUDINE

You haven't met Jeff yet? You have to, he's a great kid, you just have to meet Jeff!

CATHY

Oh yeah, yes, definitely.

Susan, overwhelmed by their enthusiasm nods yes.

SUSAN

I'd like to.

INT. CATHY'S HOUSE — EARLY EVENING

Cathy's house seems average and somehow typical of Brattleboro and its residents — neater and cleaner than Jeff's. Cathy is at her front door, opening it.

CATHY

Hi! Come on in!

Susan is at the door, comes in.

SUSAN

Hi. Your parents' home?

CATHY

No, PTA meeting. I bet your parents are there too, right?

SUSAN

Yeah, they went.

Cathy closes the door and leads Susan down a hall to the living room, Claudine is standing at the window, watching. Jeff is sitting on the couch, flicking popcorn into his mouth. Bob is sitting next to him. They both rise to meet Susan.

CATHY

Susan, meet Jeff, and Bob, and of course you remember Claudine.

JEFF

Hi! So you're my new neighbor.

BOB

Hi, nice to meet you, Susan.

SUSAN

Hi. So you live right across the street from me?

JEFF

Yeah, that's right. Drop in any time, just don't mind my mother or the gardening.

Jeff, Bob, Cathy, and Claudine all laugh, Susan just sits there.

CATHY

Private joke, but you'll learn, Susan. Can I get you something to drink?

SUSAN

Uh, no thanks, I'm fine.

JEFF

You got any Coke, Cathy?

CATHY

Sure, no problem, I'll get it.

Cathy leaves the room through a door in the back of the living room.

CLAUDINE

So where are you from, Susan?

SUSAN

New York. My father got transferred from there.

JEFF

Well, Brattleboro isn't quite the Big Apple, but I'm sure you'll grow to like it here.

Cathy enters the room with a tray with five Cokes on it, sets it onto a coffee table, takes one of the Cokes on the right. Bob, Jeff, and Claudine are all sure to take Cokes on the right, and there is one left for Susan.

CATHY

I got you something to drink anyway, Susan, just in case you got thirsty.

SUSAN

(giving in, taking the last drink)

Thank you.

BOB

So what year are you in, Susan?

Jeff rises and Cathy soon does as well, goes to a huge television set. They drink their Cokes and converse silently.

JEFF

What did you put in the drink?

CATHY

Mescaline She'll be happier than us, if that's possible.

CLAUDINE

Jeff, can you help me with that homework I told you about now? Please?

Jeff and Cathy turn around, Jeff re-joins the three at the couch

JEFF

Yeah, sure.

CLAUDINE

Great, My books are in Cathy's room.

Claudine rises and the two start up the stairs to the left.

JEFF

Good, There's something I want to show you.

He chases her up the stairs.

CLAUDINE

Oh, yeah, I'll bet there is.

Cathy starts away.

CATHY

I better go with them, my parents don't like me to have boys alone in my room.

BOB

So what do you do in New York?

SUSAN

Just go to school, hang out, probably the same things you do around here. Is there anything specific you had in mind?

BOB

For fun. What for fun?

SUSAN

Well, what do you do around here?

BOB

Did you ever do it, Susan?

SUSAN

I think maybe I...

BOB

Oh come on, Susan, Back there in New York, did you ever do it. Just for fun?

SUSAN

I better leave.

(starts to rise.)

BOB

Ever do it for money?

Susan walks away, down the hall to the door. Bob follows, grabs her and holds her back.

SUSAN

Just get the hell off me, alright?

Jeff and Cathy come down the stairs and stand at the bottom, watching.

JEFF

What's wrong?

SUSAN

You people are sick. Or am I the crazy one?

Susan starts to lose her balance and falls against the wall. Bob tries to catch her, but she sees him coming and jumps back up straight, then opens the door and stumbles out of the house, into the street.

CATHY

Oh come on back, Susan. I'm sure Bob didn't mean anything. He was just trying to be nice, I'm sure. He, we, were just trying to be friendly.

BOB

Susan, don't! Wait, Susan, don't!

EXT. STREET — LATE EVENING

On the street near her and Jeff's homes, Susan walks in the gutter, the mescaline now fully hitting her. She wanders down the block slowly and in confusion.

Several blocks away at the same time. A police car is cruising around, with two cops are talking inside the car. The 2nd cop is driving and the 1st cop is in the front passenger seat.

1ST COP

It's incredible. A murder? In fucking Brattleboro. I checked and the last murder here was better than six months ago! How many murders every six months in New York?

2ND COP

When I was patrolling there, two, maybe three, a day

1ST COP

Shit. Goddamn jungle, that's what New York is. It's like a disease, I'm telling you, and now it's spreading to Brattleboro. I'm telling you, something very wrong is going on in Brattleboro.

The 2nd cop suddenly hits the brakes, and the 1st cop bolts forward.

1ST COP

The 2nd cop gets out, then the 1st cop looks and sees Susan laying in the street in front of the car, throwing up into the sewer hole in the sidewalk.

EXT. STREET — EARLY MORNING

Jeff is riding his bike, delivering his papers as before, while listening to the radio on his bike. A news report plays as he rides.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

In local news, last night police picked up a newly arrived resident of Brattleboro, fifteen year old Susan, who authorities say was “laying in the street, throwing up into the sewer” after having apparently used the drug mescaline. Police, who brought Susan home, did not file charges, and the girl was not arrested. Susan had told her parents she would be visiting several local kids. Susan’s friends say Susan never arrived, and that they were beginning to get worried. One of the children said, “No, she never came, we were really worrying. But we don’t want the kind of stuff that that girl is doing around here.”

INT. JUNIOR HIGH — LATE MORNING

In the student lunchroom at Brattleboro Junior High School, kids wait on line for lunch and then bring it to a large section of tables where they sit and eat. Cathy is sitting at one long table with her friends, in the middle with Claudine on her left, and Stacey on her right. Cathy, at the moment, is leaning slightly over to Claudine and talking with her.

CATHY

Oh, haven’t you met Stacey yet?!

(turning to Stacey)

Stacey, this is Claudine. Stacey is new here. Where did you say you were from, Stacey?

STACEY

California.

CLAUDINE

Oh, is that so? That’s nice.

Cathy again leans over to Claudine and this time whispers in her ear

CATHY

She just got here. Christ, Brattleboro’s getting real popular, isn’t it?

CLAUDINE

Yeah, Jeff must be advertising or something. By the way, has Jeff spotted her yet?

CATHY

Oh, of course. But “she’s not the type,” he said, so there’s no need for the act.

STACEY

Cathy?

(Cathy turns to her)

Could you show me to the library later?

CATHY

Sure, no problem. Oh, look who it is.

Three rows down, Susan is sitting alone with a tray.

CLAUDINE

She has some nerve showing her face around here.

STACEY

Isn’t she new here too?

CATHY

Yeah, but she’s getting old real fast. She’ll never do anything around here, she’s just the wrong type. Stay away from her, take my advice, she’s the wrong type.

EXT. JUNIOR HIGH — MID-MORNING

Music as Jeff meets Cathy again in front of her school, and hands her a slip of paper. Cathy is walking away from the school as Jeff walks toward it. Jeff steps in front of the door to Cathy’s homeroom.

Next Cathy is taking the bus to a seedy part of town, getting off and walking into a hotel, with some bums and hookers hanging outside. The music fades as she knocks on a hotel room door marked 3A. A small but muscular looking man answers the door and allows Cathy in, closes the door, slamming it slightly.

The man turns to Cathy, now standing at the foot of the bed, which is against a wall. He says little and only grunts at Cathy’s friendly attitude.

CATHY

Hi. You must be Willy. Ready, Willy?

She puts her bag on the bed as he takes a step toward her.

WILLY

Shut your mouth, you bitch.

Stepping closer he grabs her and slaps her. Cathy falls to the floor beside the bed. He rips her shirt off, throws her to the bed, and gets on her to keep her down. He starts to undress and she lays there helpless, shivering from fear.

Later, the man is buttoning his shirt in front of a mirror, muttering to himself as Cathy lays half-conscious on the bed.

WILLY

I think this one's on you, right bitch?

She lifts her head from a pillow and sees a phone on a stand next to the bed. She painfully starts to reach for it.

INT. JEFF'S ROOM — AFTERNOON

Jeff is on his bed reading a book. The phone rings. He goes to his desk, answers, and after a long pause a voice answers.

CATHY

(almost whispering)

Jeff...? Jeff, you... there? Jeff?...

JEFF

Cathy? That you? Where are you? You're supposed to be...

The phone is slammed down on the other side as Jeff stands there, wondering, then realizing.

EXT. STREET — AFTERNOON

Jeff is taking the bus, then walking down the street of the hotel, looking for Cathy. As he is walking down the crowded street he accidently bumps into another man. Jeff just keeps walking, checking his left pocket, the man, in pain, feels his thigh, and stumbles along.

He goes into the hotel and to the door of the room where Cathy should be. The door is slightly ajar and he slowly opens it. From the door he sees Cathy laying on the bed, beaten and unconscious, he reaches into his left pocket and pulls a gun, goes into the room. Cathy is just awakening as Jeff enters. On the night table there is no phone, but the window above it is smashed.

The man, Willy, is combing his hair in the mirror. He looks Jeff's way and only manages to take a step or two before Jeff aims and fires. The bullet strikes the man in the head, sending the back and shattering.

Cathy is now fully awake as Jeff goes to the bed to drag her from the room.

INT. JEFF'S ROOM — EARLY EVENING

Jeff and Cathy (who is bruised all over) are sitting against the wall. He takes a pillow and puts it behind Cathy, who is sitting up. Jeff is just staring at her. She turns her head, studying her surroundings, finds them familiar, and then turns to Jeff. She tries to sit up a little more, receives a wave of pain, so she tries more slowly.

CATHY

Hi.

JEFF

Don't worry about that.

(pause)

Cathy, I'm going to be more careful from now on, I guess, huh? And you haven't been especially fond of me lately, and this mustn't...

CATHY

You got a mirror?

JEFF

Sure

Jeff reaches over to his desk and pulls a small mirror from there. He holds it up for her, keeping one arm around her and holding it so she can see herself.

CATHY

Oh shit... what am I gonna do about that?

(referring to the bruises on her face)

JEFF

I took care of it... for the moment. I had Claudia call your folks and tell them you were sleeping over at her house.

Cathy is still looking at her reflection

CATHY

Well, now Claudia can say she's more beautiful than me.

JEFF

But she isn't.

Cathy ignores him and changes the subject

CATHY

Jeff, will you tell me something? Why are you always telling Cindy she's beautiful?

JEFF

(slowly, mumbling almost)

Well... that was something that happened back when Cindy was first starting out. A customer, a lot like the one you just had, except for the fact he's still alive, a customer told Cindy she was an ugly bitch. Cindy was real upset, she was gonna quit, but then I told her she was beautiful and fuck anyone who didn't think so. I guess now she kind of depends on me telling her that.

CATHY

Jeff... who do you run it all with?

JEFF

What?

CATHY

The whole thing, who's your partner, who do you run the whole thing with? Who keeps you out of trouble from school, who keeps your teachers marking you present?

JEFF

I really don't know what you're talking about.

CATHY

We know, Jeff, at least we've always expected. There has to be someone above you, someone older who keeps you in line. Someone who runs the whole thing.

JEFF

I'm the only person above me and you, and I'm the only one you have to be scared of.

A long pause as Jeff takes the mirror from Cathy, placing it aside and trying to move closer to Cathy, and her just sliding a bit further down the bed.

JEFF

You know, Cathy... I liked... defending you... protecting you, I liked saving you.

Cathy acts tired, yawning, rests her head on the pillow behind her.

JEFF

I need you, Cathy... now, Cathy.

CATHY

Jeff, I can't now. I know this is gonna sound corny, but I understandably have a headache. Tomorrow, okay? I promise.

Jeff's usual smile fades as Cathy rises from the bed and walks away.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL — EARLY AFTERNOON

In a hallway of Jeff's school, between classes, Jeff is walking, putting on his jacket, holding several books. Bob comes from behind, and walks beside him.

BOB

Hey, how's it going. Got any work?

JEFF

Hi, Bob. No, not today.

BOB

I heard about Cathy...

JEFF

Yeah, don't worry about it, it turned out okay. Listen, I really have to go, I'll talk to you later.

BOB

Sure. Where you going?

JEFF

Uhhh, Cathy promised to give me something...

INT. JEFF'S ROOM — MID-AFTERNOON

In Jeff's room, Jeff sits on his bed again, reading the same book as before. There is a knock at the door that Jeff does not answer, he just sits, reading. After a second, he marks his page as the door opens and Cathy stands at the doorway. He puts the book aside, on his desk. Cathy starts toward his bed. Jeff gets up and takes Cathy in his arms as she approaches, eases her down onto the bed, the two kissing. As Jeff begins to undress Cathy sits on the end of the bed.

CATHY

Knock twice. And if there's no answer, you're home.

The two make love as we see on a clock the time is three ten, the children of Brattleboro just coming home, from Jeff's window.

EXT. JEFF'S HOUSE — MID-AFTERNOON

On the block where Jeff lives, two men dressed in suits sit in a car across the street from Jeff's house. After a moment of staring up at the dirty, unkept house, they get out of the car and walk across the street, and up the path to Jeff's house. As they are walking, the front door opens and Jeff's mother, Elaine, stands there as they reach the door.

INT. CATHY'S ROOM — LATE AFTERNOON

A while later, Jeff and Cathy are sitting in Cathy's bed, Jeff's arm around Cathy, as she looks at Jeff.

JEFF

I don't know. This is all so crazy.

CATHY

What do you mean?

JEFF

Me, you, what we've been getting away with. Shit, I have to go back to school tomorrow or I'm dead.

CATHY

I know how you feel, believe me.

JEFF

It's something. I don't know... just a crazy feeling.

CATHY

Of what... of who?

JEFF

That I'm being watched.

25. INT. CATHY'S SCHOOL — MIDDAY

At Cathy's junior high school, police officers rush in and out of the main entrance where Cathy waits by the door. As several cops are leaving, Jeff comes in the door. Cathy rushes over to Jeff.

CATHY

Jeff! Thank God, she's gonna jump, come on!

Cathy takes Jeff by the arm and the two go down a hall. Jeff, trying to get free of Cathy, tugs loose.

JEFF

What the hell are you talking about?

Cathy nervously continues down the hall.

JEFF

Cathy, what's going on? On the phone you sounded crazy.

CATHY

It's Cindy, Jeff! She's gonna jump. She's on the third floor, out on a ledge! Jeff, the reason I called you was... she said that HE said that... she was ugly.

JEFF

Oh Christ. Beautiful,

They come to a stairway and start upstairs.

CATHY

And I think she's tripping, Jeff... ludes, I think. Do you think she got it from you?

JEFF

Shit, who knows. I've just started considering myself the medicine cabinet for you guys. Don't you know? It's one of the fringe benefits.

CATHY

Yeah, the pay is fair, and the customers aren't the best, but you always come up with the pills.

JEFF

They get to the third floor and go out into another hall. Jeff waits for a cop to pass them before saying anything.

JEFF

What's that supposed to mean?

CATHY

Who the hell knows, Jeff? Do you? All I know is you're gonna have to look Cindy in the eye one more time and tell her she's beautiful. And you better make this your best performance, Jeff.

They reach a door near the end of the hall, where a cop and Cathy's teacher are standing outside it.

CATHY

Let him talk to her. She'll respond to him.

TEACHER

I don't see what the point is. Cindy's parents have already tried...

Jeff walks past the teacher and cop into the room.

JEFF

Now I'm on, teacher...

TEACHER

Okay, let them through.

Jeff and Cathy enter the room. In the back there are two large open windows, several cops standing around them. Cindy is on the ledge in between two of the windows, unseen. Jeff walks to one of the cops in the back of the room.

JEFF

How long she been out there?

1ST COP

About an hour.

Jeff is about to lean out of the window.

CATHY

Jeff...

JEFF

I think that if she jumps I'm gonna join her.

Jeff jumps up to the window, goes out the window onto the ledge, and hangs onto the window with one hand, with the other reaching for Cindy, who is shivering, her legs bent and ready to jump.

CINDY

Jeff... Jeff... said.

JEFF

I don't care, Cindy, just give me your hand! Now!

CINDY

Jeff... they all said...

JEFF

They're right, Cindy. You're not beautiful! You're an ugly cunt and it's no wonder I don't send you out more often. Now give me your hand, right now!

Cindy, shaking from fear, starts to move to Jeff. She holds out her hand slightly. Just as she is about to reach safety in Jeff's arms, she jumps toward him. Jeff, with both hands, grabs Cindy. Their only support are Jeff's legs still inside the window as they both fall against the building.

INT. JEFF'S BEDROOM — NIGHT

Jeff is sitting on the floor under an open window, smoking a joint alone. Claudine appears at the doorway, and spots Jeff and starts toward him. There is a newspaper in her right hand. She stands before Jeff, who is still sitting and smoking.

CLAUDINE

All alone tonight, huh?

JEFF

My mother was gone when I got here, Cathy's mad at me, Bob's out on a trick... and Cindy?

CLAUDINE

In the hospital coming down.

Jeff exhales some smoke as Claudine takes the joint and tokes on it, then holds out the paper. Jeff takes it.

CLAUDINE

Made the papers, huh?

She gives the joint back to him, exhales some smoke, and sits down next to him. Jeff opens up the folded paper, the headline reads “Teen Saves Child from Suicide.”

CLAUDINE

I hear you’ve been up to some hero work lately. First saving Cathy, and now Cindy. I almost wish I was in danger, just to see how you would react.

Jeff smiles and places the paper on the floor.

JEFF

A lot faster. And swifter, i promise.

(he yawns, as if tired.)

Shit, i have a math test tomorrow, and the funny thing is, I’m not gonna tell the teacher that i passed. I have to study.

CLAUDINE

How do you do it, Jeff?

JEFF

With Cindy it was so easy. Just tell her she’s beautiful and she’s happy. Now, Cathy, she’s growing older, she’s seeing through the act, she’s learning.

CLAUDINE

What about Amy?

JEFF

Amy, she was a whole different story. I had known her a long, long time. She really helped me get started, she wanted to be my... partner, I guess.

CLAUDINE

But you probably did most of the work.

(pause)

I never really knew Amy that well, till, till well, you know, till she came up to me that day in school. I never really knew her.

JEFF

On that day...

INT. HISTORY CLASS — MORNING

In Jeff’s history classroom, a teacher writes at the board, Jeff sits in the back of the class, copying notes, slowly, as if uninterested. Suddenly there comes a tap at the door, and the teacher answers it. Two men and the

teacher converse, as Jeff looks up, and as if by instinct, knows he they are here for him. He looks toward the back door, across the room. Jeff reaches the door, unseen by the teacher, and goes out the door, as the teacher turns from the two men and points to Jeff's now empty seat.

Jeff, checking the rear nervously as he quickly walks through the empty halls, ducks into an alcove where there are lockers lined against the walls. Jeff goes to the back of the alcove, stands in the corner, hoping to be invisible. Jeff reaches up to the ceiling and turns the lightbulb there until it goes out. A passing guard stops a moment and peers into the locker alcove, Jeff unseen, hiding in a patch of darkness in the back.

Jeff pokes his head from the locker bay, then goes out into the hall, and sneaks farther down, to another alcove. A few seconds after Jeff thinks he is safe and unseen, the fire drill bell rings twice, scaring Jeff by its abruptness. Doors from the classes begin opening, and students and teachers start pouring out toward the exits. Jeff sneaks around a corner to another alcove, goes to the end, frantically enters the combination into the lock, and opens it. He reaches deep into the back and pulls out a gun.

A minute later, Jeff is running through the halls. After running, when he knows there is no escape, he comes to the end of a hall lined with police, and sinks to his knees, crying, throwing away the gun.

INT. POLICE STATION — EVENING

A police officer is walking with another cop dressed in plainclothes and a woman, down a long, guarded hall. They come to a door and stop. The plainclothes cop knocks on the door, another uniformed cop answers, and allows the three in. Jeff is sitting in a corner, looking down. He looks upward when the three enter.

PLAINCLOTHES COP

Jeff, there's someone I'd like you to meet.

The woman steps forward toward Jeff, puts her hand out.

WOMAN

Jeff, hi, I'm Christine. Officers?

(turning to the three cops)

Would you leave us alone for a while? I'd like to talk to Jeff alone.

Jeff shakes her hand as the cops leave, then just stares at the floor again.

WOMAN

Well, at least this explains one thing. Why a young girl tripping out on LSD would answer you and not her own parents.

JEFF

Was it LSD? I didn't know, I hadn't heard.

The woman pulls up a chair and sits opposite Jeff.

WOMAN

That's what it was, all right. Took her a while to get down from it, but, if you're interested, she's fine, now.

JEFF

I saved her, didn't I?

WOMAN

Excuse me?

JEFF

You asked if I was interested. I got out there and saved her, nearly got killed myself.

WOMAN

I didn't mean to make you out as uncaring, Jeff. It's just I would understand if you had your mind on other things right now.

JEFF

Well, I care.

WOMAN

Enough to not tell us who participated in your activities? Now, we know it wasn't just you and Cindy, Jeff. We know about Cathy. She hasn't been notified yet but will be shortly... care to add any other names to my list?

JEFF

I do care enough not to tell you. Though you'll tell me that if I really cared I would tell you who else it was, because of the "great psychological strain" it's probably going to have on them.

WOMAN

There will be problems with those girls. They won't regard sex as something that comes from love. That's why they'll need us to help them.

JEFF

Help them? For you people, help means an institution or prison. That's not the kind of help they need.

WOMAN

I promise you neither they nor you will receive either.

JEFF

You think I haven't noticed where we are, lady? Those are bars up there. And, as far as I'm concerned, I'm not on the desired side of those bars.

WOMAN

Let me ask you a question, Jeff. I know it's been a long day for you and most of it must still be hazy and unclear, but today, at any time, do you remember anyone reading you your rights?

The woman is slowly closing in on Jeff, and he looks up and realizes this.

WOMAN

You're not under arrest, Jeff. You're not free to go, but you're not under arrest. It's part of the deal we made with your mother...

JEFF

My mother?

WOMAN

Yes, Jeff, she informed us of what was going on and...

JEFF

What? So I'm go free?

Jeff just stares at the woman.

EXT. JEFF'S BLOCK — NIGHT

Jeff is walking down on the sidewalk of his block, walking with his bike, the radio on.

RADIO ANNOUNCER

Tonight, police announced the breakup of a local prostitution ring run by a local teenager of Brattleboro. His name and the names of the children involved are being withheld because of the children's ages. Police said tonight that...

Jeff switches off the radio, crosses the street to his house, puts the bike around the side, goes into the house, the door is open. He goes into the living room, which is dark, and hears something moving (Elaine, but he doesn't know it yet), Jeff takes out another gun from inside his jacket, aims it at something moving on the couch.

ELAINE

Jeff! Don't!

Jeff lowers the gun, goes to the wall, and turns on the lights. His mother is laying there, looking terrible as usual. She sits up on the couch.

ELAINE

Christ, you could have killed me! They let you have one of those things on probation? Yeah, that girl, Claudine called.

She said to tell you she'll meet you tonight at the place you said they would, something like that. Can you cut down on your phone calls that come in? I don't want...

Jeff blocks her voice out in his mind as he raises the gun again, aiming at his mother.

JEFF

Thanks mom, that's all I wanted to know...

He fires twice, and Elaine falls from the couch, dead.

CUT TO BLACK.

ROLL END CREDITS.