

FADE IN:

EXT./INT. HILLTOP/CEDRIC'S CAR (1971) - NIGHT

A parked Ford Capri overlooks the shimmering lights of Dublin city.

CEDRIC SAWYER, 29, reclines in the driver's seat, deliberately not looking at HARRIET SHINE, 23, who coolly smokes a cigarette.

ON THE RADIO: the gentle guitar of 'JUST MY IMAGINATION (RUNNING AWAY WITH ME)' by THE TEMPTATIONS fills the car.

NOTE: *The song is named for narrative's sake. It can happily be substituted with a similar track.*

Cedric glances at Harriet -- their eyes meet for a moment. Then Cedric looks away, agitated. His leg twitches.

Harriet smiles to herself, takes a drag of the cigarette.

She reaches down, TURNS UP the volume -- as she does she brushes Cedric's hand.

She closes her eyes and starts to sway to the easy rhythm. Her long hair floats across her shoulders.

Cedric stares at her as she gets lost in the music.

INT. CEDRIC'S BEDROOM (PRESENT DAY) - DAY

Cedric Sawyer, now a gaunt 76-years-old, raises an old hammer over a chest of drawers. Brings it down --

BANG. BANG. BANG. The blows are weak, laboured.

SOPHIE CLEARY, early-twenties and dressed in a white carer's uniform, appears at the door.

SOPHIE
What's all the racket?

Cedric, on his knees, surrounded by old clutter.

CEDRIC
Fucking drawer broke on me. Cheap wood.

SOPHIE
Lunch. I want you at the table in five.

CEDRIC
Who are you, the Gestapo? I'm
trying to fix my drawer.

SOPHIE
Ah Cedric, you couldn't knock
snow off a rope.

CEDRIC
All this Swedish shit's made from
the edges, you've got to use the
centre--

SOPHIE
Yeah, yeah, write 'em a letter. I
haven't got time for your D.I.Y.
projects today.

She snatches the hammer from him, tosses it on the bed.

SOPHIE
Let's clean this mess up, will
we?

Cedric rises shakily to his feet. It takes effort.

CEDRIC
No, no, leave them, they're my
personal things--

But Sophie's moving too fast, shoving piles of old
scrapbooks, shoe boxes and pages onto the bed.

CEDRIC
Sophie, stop--

An old black-and-white photo falls out of one of the books
-- a smiling photo of Harriet. Sophie picks it up.

SOPHIE
Who's this fox? She looks like a
keeper, what happened to her?

Cedric SNATCHES the photo back.

CEDRIC
I just told you it's personal!

SOPHIE
Jesus, I'm sorry--

CEDRIC
You're a carer. If you want to
care for me, stop pawing through
my scrapbooks and start serving
my lunch.

Sophie looks at him indignantly. Walks out of the room.

INT. CEDRIC'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Cedric languishes on a recliner chair. Sophie clears an empty mug from the table, puts a hand on her hip.

SOPHIE
Anything else?

CEDRIC
How long are we going to keep
this up? We've been like Kennedy
and Krushchev all afternoon.

SOPHIE
I've gotta go.

CEDRIC
Go where?

SOPHIE
I have a date.

CEDRIC
Are you two-timing me with a
younger fella?

Sophie doesn't return Cedric's smile.

CEDRIC
Look, I'm sorry I snapped at you.
(pause)
Just sit down for two seconds,
you're making me edgy with all
the hovering.

Sophie relents, sits on the arm of the couch. Cedric takes out the photo of Harriet from his pocket, hands it to her.

CEDRIC
Her name's Harriet.

Sophie stares at the photo.

SOPHIE
She's beautiful.

CEDRIC
Yes she is. Way above my punching
weight, but I took a swing.

Sophie hands the photo back.

CEDRIC
Didn't last very long though.

SOPHIE
What happened between you two?

CEDRIC
Usual thing that happens between
men and women.

Sophie takes out a packet of cigarettes from her pocket.

SOPHIE
I'm off the clock. You mind?

CEDRIC
If I didn't get lung cancer from
those godawful Lucky Strikes, I
won't get it from you.

Sophie lights up.

CEDRIC
It's ironic that you picked up
the photo, actually. You remind
me a lot of her.

SOPHIE
Me?

CEDRIC
Only the hair--Harriet never had
it tied back.

SOPHIE
Don't get sentimental on me now.
I like you because you're not
sentimental.

CEDRIC
I hope you can permit a little
sentimentality. You did ask.
(pause)
Try it.

SOPHIE
Try what?

CEDRIC
The hair.

He smiles at her. Sophie gauges Cedric -- decides he's
earnest. She snaps the band from her ponytail -- her hair
falls over her shoulders.

CEDRIC
Now you're looking like my kind
of girl.

SOPHIE
Should I be worried?

Cedric holds the photo up, compares Sophie to Harriet.

CEDRIC
I don't suppose you like old
music very much. There was this
song--

With effort, Cedric rises out of his chair.

SOPHIE
How old? 70's yes, 80's no.

Cedric roots around in a cabinet.

CEDRIC
Yeah, I didn't care for that 80's
space keyboard shit either.

He emerges with a record -- dusts off the cover, slips it
out from the sleeve, places it on the vinyl deck.
Delicately lowers the needle -- vinyl CRACKLES --

-- the gentle guitar of 'JUST MY IMAGINATION (RUNNING AWAY
WITH ME)' by THE TEMPTATIONS fills the room.

CEDRIC
Would you humour an old man?

Sophie takes a drag of her cigarette.

SOPHIE
Depends on the humouring.

CEDRIC
One dance.

Takes Sophie a moment to respond.

SOPHIE
Not a hope. You should be so
lucky.

CEDRIC
I realise none of you young folk
know how to dance anymore. But
there's really nothing to it.

SOPHIE
Good to know, wouldn't want you
displacing the other hip.

She stays sitting, undecided. He extends his hand.

CEDRIC
Come on. You weren't very nice to
me either, by the way.

SOPHIE
I really have to get going.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK. Front door. Loud over The Temptations.
Sophie glances up.

SOPHIE
I should--

CEDRIC
They'll leave.

Neither of them move, Cedric's hand still outstretched --
KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK.

CEDRIC
Jesus CHRIST--

His sudden anger makes Sophie jump slightly.

He motions her to the front door, flips the needle off the
vinyl -- cutting The Temptations off mid-chorus.

INT./EXT. CORRIDOR/FRONT OF HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Sophie trots down the corridor.

CEDRIC (O.S.)
If it's those Jesuit cocksuckers
again, tell 'em to take their
good book and piss on it, 'less
they want a boot in the fucking
ear!

Sophie reaches the front door, pulls it open --

DET. KATE MADIGAN, forties, sharp-eyed and unsmiling,
stands behind it. Behind her -- two UNMARKED GARDA CARS
surrounded by PLAINCLOTHES OFFICERS.

Sophie gapes in shock, confusion.

MADIGAN
Sophie Cleary? Detective
Inspector Madigan. I need you to
step out of the house please.

Sophie looks at her, slowly coming back to earth.

Cedric appears at the other end of the corridor. We PUSH
IN on his face as he half-grasps what's happening.

SOPHIE (O.S.)
What is this?

MADIGAN (O.S.)
Step out of the house. Please.

SOPHIE (O.S.)
Why?

MADIGAN (O.S.)
Mr. Sawyer is being arrested.

SOPHIE (O.S.)
Arrested? For what?

Madigan motions to one of the officers behind her. Sophie follows her lead, still dazed.

Cedric stands stagnant in the shadows at the end of the corridor. Madigan's hand moves to her waist.

MADIGAN
Cedric. We have officers covering
the back exits. Come forward.

Cedric stays still a moment -- then shuffles forward, a shadowed figure -- stops when he reaches Madigan.

She SNAPS handcuffs around Cedric's wrists.

MADIGAN
Cedric Sawyer, you are being
charged with multiple counts of
first-degree murder. You are not
obliged to say anything unless
you wish to, but whatever you do
say will be taken down in writing
and may be given in evidence.

Cedric stares at her.

Madigan pulls him out of the doorway and into the yard. We stay close on Cedric, who's barely registering it all.

He locks eyes with Sophie -- she stares at him in horror. He holds her gaze as the Guards push him toward a car.

INT. GARDA CAR - MINUTES LATER

A KNOCK on the roof -- the engine GUNS -- car pulls off.

Slowly, alone in the back of the car, it hits Cedric like a slow hammer.

A series of emotions flicker like shadows across his face -- shock -- regret -- confusion -- rage.

INT. INVESTIGATION ROOM - DAY

Madigan leads a cuffed Cedric into an interview room.

On the back wall: the blueprint of a thorough and wide-reaching investigation from four decades ago.

NOTICE: Eleven prominent, 70s-era photographs of eleven different women -- among them, Harriet Shine.

NOTICE: A police sketch of a younger man, bearing a crude but recognisable resemblance to Cedric.

Scuffed boxes packed with files are piled high below the investigation wall.

Cedric trawls his gaze across the tapestry of his crimes.

CEDRIC
What was it, DNA?

Catches Madigan by surprise -- she quickly turns a nearby TAPE RECORDER on.

MADIGAN
Three distinct matches.

CEDRIC
Fucking technology.

MADIGAN
It's aging quick, lot quicker than you. You weren't ever going to get away with this.

CEDRIC
I'm seventy-six-years-old, little girl. Getting away with it's a matter of opinion.

He looks at the wall of victims.

INT. PRISON CORRIDOR - DAY

Two GUARDS escort Cedric through the prison, flanked by cells. Their footsteps ECHO, chains RATTLE.

JEERS and BANGS from the other PRISONERS rise up --

PRISONER #1 (O.S.)
Dead man walking, Sawyer!

PRISONER #2 (O.S.)
Give ya three days before they wheel you outta here in a bag--

From a nearby cell --

TATTOOED PRISONER (O.S.)
I'll cut your throat myself you
woman-killing scum--

Cedric stops suddenly -- looks in the direction of the
insult. He locks eyes with a LARGE, TATTOOED PRISONER.

Something flickers between them. A kind of mutual
recognition. The prisoner stops short.

GUARD
Move. Let's move.

Cedric doesn't move. He stares at the prisoner -- then
steps towards him. The prisoner backs up, almost
unconsciously.

The guards grab Cedric, THRUST him forward.

INT. CELL - DAY

Cedric gazes around his cell -- dank, cramped, spartan. A
guard loiters at the door.

GUARD
Take it all in, Sawyer. Four grey
walls 'til you keel over and rot.

Cedric doesn't look back.

CEDRIC
I've had three books written
about me, and that was before
they even knew my name.
(pause)
I think I'll be alright.

The guard SLAMS the door shut, SHUNTS the thick lock
across the door.

INT. SOPHIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

MATCH CUT: Sophie locks her door -- the bolt SHUNTS.

She flicks the chain across the latch for good measure.

INT. SOPHIE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

She closes her bedroom windows firmly, double-checking
they're shut tight and secure.

INT. SOPHIE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Sophie hunches on her couch, knees pulled to her chest, watching the television. Draped in a blanket, very alone.

ON SCREEN: A NEWSREADER solemnly speaks to camera. A banner below reads: BREAKING: 'BEAST OF THE PALE' SUSPECT ARRESTED.

A photo of a smiling Harriet fills the screen.

NEWSREADER (ON SCREEN)
 --the first confirmed victim was
 twenty-three-year-old Harriet
 Shine, who disappeared on the
 16th August 1971. Her body was
 discovered four days later in
 Glencree, with the cause of death
 ruled to be significant cranial
 trauma from some form of blunt
 instrument--

Sophie stares at the photo of Harriet, unnerved.

She pulls up her laptop from the couch beside her -- puts in her earphones, types something rapidly.

'JUST MY IMAGINATION (RUNNING AWAY WITH ME)' begins to play.

Listening to the music, Sophie draws the blanket in tighter, stares out of her window into the night beyond.

FLASHBACK - EXT. HILLTOP (1971) - NIGHT

A continuation of the first flashback. 'JUST MY IMAGINATION' continues to play on the car radio.

The door to the Ford Capri is open. Blood splatter on the inside window.

A few feet away, Cedric stands sentinel, back to the car. In his right hand, he holds a BLOODY HAMMER.

His face is spangled with blood. He gazes out over the Dublin city lights, eyes twitching.

BACK TO PRESENT - INT. CELL - DAY

Cedric, sitting on his sparse cell bed at seventy-six, has the same look on his face as he relives the crime.

FADE OUT.