

TAXI DRIVER

by

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"The whole conviction of my life now rests upon the belief that loneliness, far from being a rare and curious phenomenon, is the central and inevitable fact of human existence."

--Thomas Wolfe,
"God's Lonely Man"

TRAVIS BICKLE, age 26, lean, hard, the consummate loner. On the surface he appears good-looking, even handsome; he has a quiet steady look and a disarming smile which flashes from nowhere, lighting up his whole face. But behind that smile, around his dark eyes, in his gaunt cheeks, one can see the ominous stains caused by a life of private fear, emptiness and loneliness. He seems to have wandered in from a land where it is always cold, a country where the inhabitants seldom speak. The head moves, the expression changes, but the eyes remain ever-fixed, unblinking, piercing empty space.

Travis is now drifting in and out of the New York City night life, a dark shadow among darker shadows. Not noticed, no reason to be noticed, Travis is one with his surroundings. He wears rider jeans, cowboy boots, a plaid western shirt and a worn beige Army jacket with a patch reading, "King Kong Company, 1968-70."

He has the smell of sex about him: sick sex, repressed sex, lonely sex, but sex nonetheless. He is a raw male force, driving forward; toward what, one cannot tell. Then one looks closer and sees the evitable. The clock spring cannot be wound continually tighter. As the earth moves toward the sun, Travis Bickle moves toward violence.

TRAVIS GETS A JOB

FILM OPENS on EXT. of MANHATTAN CAB GARAGE. Weather-beaten sign above driveway reads, "Taxis Enter Here." Yellow cabs, blue cabs, green-and-white cabs scuttle in and out. It is WINTER, snow is piled on the curbs, the wind is howling.

INSIDE GARAGE are parked row upon row of multi-colored taxis. Echoing sounds of cabs idling, cabbies talking. Steamy breath and exhaust fill the air.

INT. CORRIDOR of cab company offices. Lettering on ajar door reads:

PERSONNEL OFFICE

Mavis Cab Company
Blue and White Cab Co.
Acme Taxi
Dependable Taxi Service
JRB Cab Company
Speedo Taxi Service

Sound of office busywork: shuffling, typing, arguing.

PERSONNEL OFFICE is a cluttered disarray. Sheets with headings "Mavis, B&W, Acme" and so forth are tacked to crumbling plaster walls. A yellowed cab calender hangs on another wall: it is December. Desk is cluttered with forms, reports and an old upright Royal typewriter.

Disheveled middle-aged New Yorker looks up from the desk. We CUT IN to ongoing conversation between the middle-aged PERSONNEL OFFICER and a young man standing in front of his desk.

The young man is Travis Bickle. He wears his jeans, boots and Army jacket.

The Personnel Officer is beat and exhausted: he arrives at work exhausted. Travis is something else again. His intense steely gaze is enough to jar even the Personnel Officer out of his workaday boredom.

PERSONNEL OFFICER

So why do you want to be a taxi-driver?

TRAVIS

I can't sleep nights.

PERSONNEL OFFICER

There's porno theaters for that.

TRAVIS

I know. I tried that.

The Personnel Officer, though officious, is mildly probing and curious. Travis is a cipher, cold and distant. He speaks as if his mind doesn't know what his mouth is saying.

PERSONNEL OFFICER

So whatja do now?

TRAVIS

I ride around nights mostly. Subways, buses. See things. Figur'd I might as well get paid for it.

PERSONNEL OFFICER

We don't need any misfits around here, son.

A thin smile cracks almost indiscernably across Travis' lips.

TRAVIS

You kiddin? Who else would hack through Bed-Sty or Harlem at night?

PERSONNEL OFFICER

You want to work uptown nights?

TRAVIS

I'll work anywhere, anytime. I know I can't be choosy.

PERSONNEL OFFICER

(thinks a moment)

How's your driving record?

TRAVIS
Clean. Real clean.
(pause, thin smile)
As clean as my conscience.

PERSONNEL OFFICER
Listen, son, you gonna wise crack,
you can leave right now. *

TRAVIS
(apologetic)
Sorry, sir. I didn't mean
that.

PERSONNEL OFFICER
Physical? Criminal?

TRAVIS
Also clean.

PERSONNEL OFFICER
Age?

TRAVIS
Twenty-six.

PERSONNEL OFFICER
Education?

TRAVIS
Some. Here and there.

PERSONNEL OFFICER
You moonlightin?

TRAVIS
No, I want long shifts.

PERSONNEL OFFICER
(casually, almost to
himself)
We hire a lot of moonlighters
here.

TRAVIS
So I hear.

PERSONNEL OFFICER

(looks up at Travis)

Hell, we ain't that much fussy anyway. There's always openings on one fleet or another. It's just that it so friggin long to get licensing through the Hack Bureau these days.

(rummages through his drawer, collecting various pink, yellow and white forms)

Fill out these forms and give them to the girl at the desk, and leave your phone number. You gotta phone?

TRAVIS

No.

PERSONNEL OFFICER

Well then check back tomorrow.

TRAVIS

Yes, sir.

CUT TO:

CREDITS

CREDITS appear over scenes from Manhattan nightlife. The snow has melted; it is SPRING.

A rainy, slick, wet miserable night in Manhattan's theatre district. Cabs and umbrellas are congested everywhere; well-dressed pedestrians are pushing, running, waving down taxis. The high-class theatre patrons crowding out of the midtown shows are shocked to find that the same rain that falls on the poor and common is also falling on them.

The unremitting sounds of HONKING and SHOUTING play against the dull pitter-patter of rain. The glare of yellow, red and green lights reflects off the pavements and autos.

"When it rains, the boss of the City is the taxi-driver"--so goes the cabbie's maxim, proven true by this particular night's activity. Only the taxis seem to rise above the situation: they glide effortlessly through the rain and traffic, picking up whom they choose, spurning whom they choose, going where they please.

Further uptown the crowds are neither so frantic nor so glittering. The rain also falls on the street bums and the aged poor. Junkies still stand around on rainy street corners, hookers still prowl rainy sidewalks. And the taxis service them too.

All through the credits the exterior sounds are muted, as if coming from a distant room or storefront around the corner. The listener is at a safe but privileged distance.

After examining various strata of Manhattan nightlife, CAMERA begins to CLOSE IN on one particular taxi, and it is assumed that this taxi is being driven by Travis Bickle.

END CREDITS

CUT TO:

WE MEET TRAVIS

Travis' yellow taxi pulls in foreground. On left rear door are lettered the words "Dependable Taxi Service."

We are somewhere in the upper Fifties on Fifth Ave. The rain has not let up.

An elderly woman climbs in the right rear door, crushing her umbrella. Travis waits a moment, then pulls away from the curb with a start.

Later, we see Travis' taxi speeding down the rain-slicked avenue. The action is periodically accompanied by Travis' narration. He is reading from a haphazard personal diary.

TRAVIS VOICE OVER

(monotone)

April 10, 1972. Thank God for the rain which has helped wash the garbage and trash off the sidewalks.

(CONT'D)

Travis' P.O.V. of sleazy midtown side street; bums, hookers, junkies.

TRAVIS V.O.

(cont'd)

I'm working a single now, which means stretch-shifts, six to six, sometimes six to eight in the a.m., six days a week.

(CONT'D)

A MAN IN BUSINESS SUIT hails Travis to the curb.

TRAVIS V.O.

(cont'd)

It's a hustle, but it keeps me busy. I can take in two to two-fifty a week, more with skims.

Man in business suit, now seated in back seat, speaks up:

MAN IN BUSINESS SUIT

(urgent)

Is Kennedy operating, cabbie?
Is it grounded?

R 8/21/74

On seat next to Travis is half-eaten cheeseburger and order of french fries. He catches a gulp before he answers:

TRAVIS

Why should it be grounded?

MAN IN BUSINESS SUIT

Listen--I mean I just saw the
needle of the Empire State Building.
You can't see it for the fog!

TRAVIS

Then it's a good guess it's grounded.

MAN IN BUSINESS SUIT

The Empire State in fog means something,
don't it? Do you know or don't you?
What is your number, cabbie?

TRAVIS

Have you tried the telephone?

MAN IN BUSINESS SUIT

(hostile, impatient)

There isn't time for that. In other
words, you don't know.

TRAVIS

No.

MAN IN BUSINESS SUIT

Well, you should know, damn it, or who
else would know? Pull over right here.

(points out window)

Why don't you stick your goddamn head out
of the goddamn window once in a while and
find out about the goddamn fog!

Travis pulls to the curb. The business man stuffs a dollar bill
into the pay drawer and jumps out of the cab. He turns to
hail another taxi.

MAN IN BUSINESS SUIT

Taxi! Taxi!

Travis writes up his trip card and drives away.

It is LATER THAT NIGHT. The rain has turned to drizzle.
Travis drives through another section of Manhattan.

TRAVIS V.O.

I work the whole city, up,
down, don't make no difference
to me--does to some.

(CONT'D)

STREETSIDE: Travis' P.O.V. Black prostitute wearing white vinyl boots, leopard-skin mini-skirt and blond wig hails taxi. On her arm hangs half-drunk seedy executive type.

Travis pulls over.

Prostitute and john climb into back seat. Travis checks out the action in rear view mirror.

TRAVIS V.O.

(cont'd)

Some won't take spooks--
Hell, don't make no difference
to me.

Travis' taxi drives through Central Park.

GRUNTS, GROANS coming from back seat. Hooker and john going at it in back seat. He's having a hard time and she's probably trying to get him to come off manually.

JOHN O.S.

Oh baby, baby.

PROSTITUTE O.S.

(forceful)

Come on.

Travis stares blankly ahead.

CUT TO Travis' APARTMENT. CAMERA PANS SILENTLY across INT. room, indicating this is not a new scene.

Travis is sitting at plain table writing. He wears shirt, jeans, boots.

CLOSE UP of notebook. It is a plain lined dimestore notebook and the words Travis is writing with a stubby pencil are those he is saying. The columns are straight, disciplined. Some of the writing is in pencil, some in ink. The handwriting is jagged.

CAMERA continues to PAN, examining Travis' apartment. It is unusual, to say the least:

A ratty old mattress is thrown against one wall. The floor is littered with old newspapers, worn and unfolded street maps and pornography. The pornography is of the sort that looks cheap but costs \$10 a throw--black and white photos of naked women tied and gagged with black leather straps and clothesline. There is no furniture other than the rickety chair and table. A beat-up portable TV rests on an upright melon crate. The red silk mass in another corner looks like a Vietnamese flag. Indecipherable words, figures, numbers are scribbled on the plain plaster walls. Ragged black wires dangle from the wall where the telephone once hung.

TRAVIS V.O.

They're all animals anyway.
All the animals come out at
night: whores, skunk pussies, buggers,
queens, fairies, dopers, junkies,
sick, venal. *

(a beat)

Someday a real rain will come and
wash all this scum off the
streets.

(CONT'D)

It's EARLY MORNING: 6 a.m. The air is clean and fresh
and the streets nearly deserted.

EXT. of TAXI GARAGE. Travis' taxi pulls into the driveway.

TRAVIS V.O.

(cont'd)

Each night when I return the
cab to the garage I have to
- clean the come off the back
seat. Some nights I clean off
the blood.

INT. of TAXI GARAGE. Travis pulls his taxi into garage stall.
Travis reaches across the cab and extracts a small vial of ben-
nies from the glove compartment.

Travis stands next to the cab, straightens his back, and
tucks the bottle of pills into his jacket pocket. He lowers
his head, looks into back seat, opens rear door and bends
inside.

Slight TIMECUT: Travis books in at garage office.

Old, rotting slabs of wood are screwed to a grey crumbling concrete wall. Each available space is covered with hand-lettered signs, time schedules, check-out sheets, memos. The signs read:

BE ALERT!!
 THE SANE DRIVER
 IS ALWAYS READY
 FOR THE UNEXPECTED

SLOW DOWN
 AND GUAGE SPEED TO
 ROAD CONDITIONS
 YOU CAN'T STOP
ON A DIME!

ALL NIGHT DRIVERS
 HAVING PERSONAL INJURY
 ACCIDENTS
 MUST PHONE IN AT ONCE TO
 JUDSON 2-3410
 AND MUST FILE A REPORT Promptly
 AT 9 AM the following 43 W.61st.
 morning at

Over a long wooden table hang half a dozen haggard cabbies, their shirts wrinkled, heads drooping, their mouths incessantly chattering cabbie small talk: "Rode a ghost all the way back here," "Hell, I knew my broda-in-law was right to take that plummin school course!" Another cabbie protests vehemently into a pay phone.

Travis hands a completed time sheet to a cab official, nods slightly, turns and walks towards the door.

OUTSIDE, Travis walks pleasantly down Broadway, his hands in his jacket pockets. The sidewalks are deserted, except for diligent fruit and vegetable venders setting up their stalls. He takes a deep breath of fresh air, pulls a white pill from his pocket, pops it into his mouth.

Travis turns a corner, keeps walking. Ahead of him is a 24-hour PORNO THEATER. The theater, a blaze of cheap day-glow reds and yellows, is an offense to the clear, crisp morning air. The permanent lettering reads, "Adam Theater. 16 mm Sound Features." Underneath, today's features are hand-lettered: "Six-Day Cruise" and "Beaver Dam".

Travis stops at the box office, purchases a ticket, and walks in.

INT. porno theater. Travis stands in the aisle for a moment. He turns around, walking back toward the concession stand.

CONCESSION STAND. A plain dumpy-looking girl sits listlessly on a stool behind the shabby concession stand. A plaster-of-paris Venus de Milo sits atop a piece of purple velvet cloth on the counter. The sound of the feature drones in the background.

CONCESSIONS GIRL

Kin I help ya?

Travis rests his elbow on the counter, looking at the girl. He is obviously trying to be friendly--no easy task for him. God knows he needs a friend.

TRAVIS

What is your name? My name is Travis.

CONCESSIONS GIRL

Awh, come on, buster. Jus cause I work ina joint like this doesn't mean I'm that kinda girl.

TRAVIS

No, I'm serious, really...

CONCESSIONS GIRL

Ya wan me ta call da boss? Huh? Whatja want?

TRAVIS

No, no, it's all right. I'll have a big CocaCola--without ice--and a large buttered popcorn, and...

(pointing)

and some of them chocolate covered malted milk balls.

CONCESSIONS GIRL

We ain't got no CocaCola, only Royal Crown Cola.

TRAVIS

That's fine.

CONCESSIONS GIRL

That's a dollar forty-seven.

Travis lays two dollar bills on the counter.

INT. theater auditorium. Slight TIMECUT to Travis sitting in theater, drinking his Royal Crown Cola, eating his popcorn and milk balls. His eyes are fixed on the screen. A male voice emanates from the screen:

MALE MOVIE VOICE O.S.
Come here, bitch. I'm gonna
split you in half.

Movie voice yields to Travis' monotone narration:

TRAVIS V.O.
Twelve hours of work and I
still cannot sleep. The days
dwindle on forever and do not
end.

FADE TO:

WE MEET BETSY

EXT. CHARLES PALANTINE CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS. The Headquarters of the "New Yorkers for Charles Palantine for President Committee," located at the corner of 58th Street and Broadway, are festooned in traditional red, white and blue banners, ribbons and signs.

One large sign proclaims "Palantine." Another sign reads "Register for New York Primary, July 20." The smiling middle-aged face of Charles Palantine keeps watch over the bustling pedestrians.

It is LATE AFTERNOON

INSIDE HEADQUARTERS, a variety of young workers joke and chatter as they labor through stacks of papers. The room is pierced with the sound of ringing phones.

Seen from a distance -- the only way Travis can see them-- these are America's chosen youth: healthy, energetic, well-groomed, attractive, all recruited from the bucolic fields of Massachusetts and Connecticut.

CAMERA FAVORS BETSY, about 25, an extremely attractive woman sitting at the reception desk between two phones and several stacks of papers. Her attractions, however, are more than skin deep. Beneath that Cover Girl facial there is a keen, though highly specialized, sensibility: her eyes scan every man who passes her desk as her mind computes his desirability: political, intellectual, sexual, emotional, material. Simple pose and status do not impress her; she seeks out the extraordinary qualities in men. She is, in other words, a star-fucker of the highest order.

Betsy handles her job with confidence and ease. Whether answering phones, giving instructions or directing traffic, she remains the calm center of her hurly-burly world. Nothing threatens her.

She calls TOM, a lanky, amiable and modishly long-haired campaign worker over to her desk:

BETSY

Tom.

Tom is pleasant and good-looking, but lacks those special qualities which interest Betsy. He gets nowhere with Betsy-- yet he keeps trying. Just another of those routine office flirtations which pass the hours and free the fantasies.

BETSY

Tom, come here a moment.

(he walks over)

I think this canvas report is about ready to go out. Check it out with Andy, and if he okays it, have a copy made for the campaign headquarters in every county.

(a beat)

And don't forget to add the new photo releases.

TOM

The senator's white paper is almost ready, Bets. Should we wait for that?

BETSY

Andy usually just sends those to the national media. The local press doesn't know what to do with a position paper until UPI and AP tell them anyway.

TOM

I think we should try to get maximum coverage for this new mandatory welfare program. Push the issue.

BETSY

(as if instructing a child)

First we push the man--then the issues. Charles is first of all a fascinating man. An inspiring one. A sexy one.

TOM

You sound like you're selling toothpaste, not issues.

BETSY

Did you ever try to brush your teeth with an issue?

TOM

(smiling)

Touche. Can I take a rain check?

BETSY

On what?

TOM

(makes as if brushing his teeth)

The oral hygiene lessons.

BETSY
Je-sus, Tom. This is work.

TOM
Can't blame a fellow for trying.

BETSY
Have you been noticing anything strange?

TOM
(looks around)
No, why?

BETSY
(pause)
Why has that taxi-driver been sitting
across the street without moving,
staring at us?

Tom's eyes turn up toward camera.

TOM
What taxi-driver?

BETSY
(indicating with her eyes)
That taxi-driver.

QUICK CUT to CLOSE-UP of Travis' cold piercing eyes staring out from his cab parked across the street from the Palantine Headquarters. He is like a lone wolf watching the warm campfires of civilization from a distance.

Tom exchanges Travis' gaze.

TOM
(determined)
Well, I'll go out and ask him.

As Tom walks toward front door Betsy's eyes alternate between him and the position where Travis sits.

EXT. PALANTINE HEADQUARTERS. Tom strides out the front door and walks briskly across the street toward Travis' taxi.

Travis spots Tom walking toward him and quickly starts up his cab, then squeals off in a burst of billowing exhaust.

Tom watches the speeding taxi quizzically.

Travis' taxi continues down Broadway.

CUT TO:

FURTHER THOUGHTS

INT. TRAVIS' APARTMENT. He lies on his mattress staring at the ceiling. He is fully clothed and appears deep in thought.

Near his mattress rest several medications: a large bottle of vitamin pills, two smaller bottles of pills, a bottle of peach-flavored brandy.

TRAVIS V.O.

All my life needed was a sense of direction, a sense of someplace to go. I do not believe one should devote his life to morbid self-attention, but should become a person like other people.

(CONT'D)

LATE AFTERNOON: another day. Travis' taxi is driving down Broadway with the "Off Duty" sign on.

P.O.V. TRACKING SHOT down Broadway. Camera stops at PALANTINE CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS: a few workers remain in the office. Betsy's desk is vacant.

FIFTH AVENUE: the same afternoon. Camera TRACKS with crowded mass of Manhattanites as they ooze through the sidewalks toward their various destinations. Individuals are indiscernable: it is simply a congested mass.

TRAVIS V.O.

I first saw her at Palantine Campaign Headquarters at 58th and Broadway. She was wearing a yellow dress, answering the phone at her desk.

(CONT'D)

Suddenly: out of the congested human mass, IN SLOWING MOTION, appears the slender figure of Betsy in a stylish yellow dress. The crowd parts like the Red Sea, and there she is: walking all alone, untouched by the crowd, suspended in space and time.

TRAVIS V.O.

(cont'd)

She appeared like an angel
out of this open sewer. Out
of this filthy mass. She
is alone: they cannot touch
her.

INT. TRAVIS' APARTMENT. He is at the table, writing in
his diary.

CLOSE-UP: his stubby pencil rests on the word "her."

CUT TO:

SMALL TALK IN A GREASY SPOON

It is 3:30 IN THE MORNING in a bacon-shaped all-night East Side restaurant. The thick smell hangs in the air--fried grease, smoke, sweat, regurgitated wine.

Whatever doesn't flush away in New York at night turns up in places like this. A burly grease-stained COOK stands over the grill. A junkie shuffles from one side of the door to another. Slouched over the small four-person formica tables are several well-dressed blacks (too well dressed for this time and place), a cluster of street people and a lost old coot who hangs onto his cup of coffee as if it were his last possession.

The restaurant, brightly lit, perfectly conveys the image of urban plasticity--without the slightest hint of an accompanying cleanliness.

Toward the rear of the restaurant sit three cabbies: WIZARD, a worn man about fifty, DOUGH-BOY, younger family man, CHARLIE T., forties black.

Travis appears at the door. He has to push aside the junkie to enter without making physical contact--something Travis would not relish. He may be repulsed with these people and this place, but he is too much a part of this to let his feeling rise to the surface.

WIZARD gives Travis a perfunctory wave--Travis is not the sort to elicit emotional closeness from his co-workers.

WIZARD

Travis.

TRAVIS

(dry)
Hey Wizard.

Travis straddles a seat at the table.

WIZARD

(making introductions)
Travis, this is Dough-Boy Johnson
and Charlie T. Travis.

Charlie T. nods sleepily. Dough-boy gives Travis something between a wink and an eye-twitch.

TRAVIS

(nodding)
I know Dough-Boy.

WIZARD

(to Dough-Boy)
You met Travis?

Dough-boy is a comic (of sorts). His attempts at humor are lethargic--but still noteworthy considering the hour of the night.

DOUGH-BOY

Yeah, we went to Harvard together.
(laughs)

WIZARD

(gesturing)
Dough-Boy here likes the dollars--
he'd chase a buck straight into
Jersey.

DOUGH-BOY

Look who's jabberin'. Who else
would come here to squeeze an extra ten
bucks outta the rush hour...
(voice drifts off)
There ain't many that can hack it
around the clock like the cats at
this table.

Charlie T., his elbows propped against the table top, stares silently down at a plate of cold scrambled eggs and a Racing Form. His eyes may not be open.

COOK

(calling)
Whatja want, buddy?

TRAVIS

(calling back)
Cheeseburger...and a glassa water.

WIZARD

So howsit?

TRAVIS

(without inflection)
Bucket load to Queens. Figur'd
the night was fucked, so I come here.

Dough-Boy laughs. His threshold of humor is quite low.

DOUGH-BOY

Fuggin-A. Comes up flat broke in
Queens, hey? I'll tell ya, this time a
night, I bust them bastards they pull
that shit.

TRAVIS

It was a chick.

Travis' eyes turn toward the restaurant's other patrons.

P.O.V.: three street people sitting at a table. One guy, stoned, stares straight ahead. A raggedly attractive girl rests her head on the shoulder of the other, a heavily bearded young man with a headband. They kiss and tease each other, momentarily lost in their separate world.

Travis watches the hippie couple closely, his feeling sharply divided between cultural contempt and morose jealousy. Why should these people enjoy the love and intimacy that has always eluded him? He must enjoy these schizoid emotions, because his eyes dwell on the couple.

WIZARD O.S.

A chick! Sheeit. I'll tell ya what I woulda done. I'da cop me a feel.

(a beat)

I ain't too old for that, you know, Travis.

Travis doesn't answer.

DOUGH-BOY O.S.

(changing the subject)

You run all over town, don't you Travis?

WIZARD O.S.

(mocking--under his breath)

A ladies man.

Travis turns back toward his companions.

TRAVIS

Huh?

DOUGH-BOY

You handle some rough traffic, huh?

TRAVIS

(catching on)

I have.

DOUGH-BOY

You carry a rod? You need one?

TRAVIS

Nah.

(a beat)

I suppose not.

Cook slaps down smudge-marked glass of water, and a cheesburger plate that looks more like a shrunken head on a serving platter.

DOUGH-BOY

Well, you ever need one, I know a feller that kin getcha a real nice deal. Lotsa shit around.

WIZARD

The cops and company raise hell they find out.

Travis drops two Alka-Seltzer into his glass of water.

DOUGH-BOY

Truck drivers bring up Harlem Specials that blow up in your hand. But this guy don't deal no shit. Just quality. If you ever need anything, I can put you in touch.

WIZARD

For a fee.

DOUGH-BOY

For a fee.

WIZARD

I never use mine. But it's a -good thing to have around the house.

DOUGH-BOY

(getting up)

Well, if there's this many hackies inside, there must be lots of fares outside. And I'm gonna go hustle em.

WIZARD

What ya gonna do with all that money, Dough-Boy?

DOUGH-BOY

Support my kids. Can you dig it?

(pause)

Nice to meet ya, Travis.
So long Wizard. Say hello to Malcom X for me.

(nods to Charlie T)

Charlie T: remains unmoved: he is sleeping.

Dough-Boy exits. Travis smiles perfunctorily, then looks back at Wizard. They really don't have much to talk about, and the Wizard doesn't care to manufacture any more conversation.

Travis scans the greasy spoon: the scene is unchanged.

CUT TO:

BETSY, MEET TRAVIS BICKLE

EXT. PALANTINE HEADQUARTERS. Another day. Traffic passes.

INT: business as usual in the campaign headquarters.

Betsy is working diligently at her desk. She looks up sharply toward camera.

EXT. ACROSS THE STREET from headquarters. Travis is striding briskly across Broadway toward the Palantine headquarters.

He is dressed the best we have seen him: his pants (not jeans) are pressed, his boots shined, his hair combed. Under his Army jacket he wears a freshly laundered shirt and ivy league tie.

Watching Travis enter Palantine's headquarters, we are again surprised to realize that Travis is really quite attractive. His deformities are psychological, not physical. He believes he is cursed, and therefore he is.

Travis walks briskly into the office, and heads toward Betsy's desk. Tom walks over to greet him, but Travis ignores him.

TRAVIS
(at Betsy's desk)
I want to volunteer.

As the camera examines Travis' face more closely, one can see the hollowness wrought by lack of sleep and sufficient diet.

TOM
(interrupting)
If you'll come this way.

Travis elbows Tom off.

TRAVIS
(to Betsy)
No. I want to volunteer
to you.

TOM
(under his voice)
Bets.

Betsy waves Tom off with a short gesture, indicating everything is OK. He walks away.

BETSY
(curious)
And why is that?

Travis is on his best behavior. He smiles slightly:

TRAVIS
Because you are the most beautiful
woman I have ever seen.

Betsy is momentarily taken back, but pleased. Travis' presence has a definite sexual charge. He has those star qualities Betsy looks for: she senses there is something special about the young man who stands before her. And then, too, there is that disarming smile. He is, as Betsy would say, "fascinating."

BETSY
(smiling)
Is that so?
(pause)
But what do you think of Charles Palantine?

TRAVIS
(his mind elsewhere)
Who mam?

BETSY
Charles Palantine. The man you want to
volunteer to help elect President.

TRAVIS
Oh, I think he's a wonderful man. Make
a great, great President.

BETSY
You want to canvass?

TRAVIS
Yes, mam.

Betsy is interviewing Travis, but she is also teasing him a little, leading him on in a gentle feminine way:

BETSY
How do you feel about Senator Palantine's
stand on welfare?

This takes Travis back a bit. He obviously doesn't have the slightest idea what Palantine's stand on welfare is, in fact, he doesn't have any ideas about politics whatsoever.

Travis thinks a moment, then improvises an answer:

TRAVIS

Welfare, mam? I think the Senator's right. People should work for a living. I do. Every day. I like to work. Get those old coots off welfare and make 'em work for a change.

Betsy does a subtle double-take: this isn't exactly Palantine's position on welfare. She remains intrigued by Travis.

BETSY

Well, that's not exactly what the Senator has proposed. You might not want to canvas, but there is plenty of other work we need done: office work, filing, poster hanging.

TRAVIS

I'm a good worker, Betsy mam, a real good worker.

BETSY

(gesturing)

If you talk to Tom, he'll assign you to something.

TRAVIS

If you don't mind, mam, I'd rather work for you.

BETSY

Well, we're all working tonight.

TRAVIS

Well, Betsy mam, I drive a taxi at night.

BETSY

Well, then, what is it you exactly want to do?

TRAVIS

(bolstering courage)

If you don't mind, mam, I'd be mighty pleased if you'd go out and have some coffee and pie with me.

Betsy doesn't quite know what to make of Travis. She is curious, intrigued, tantalized. Like a moth, she draws closer to the flame:

BETSY

Why?

TRAVIS

Well, Betsy mam, I drive by this place here in my taxi many times a day. And I watch you sitting here at this big long desk with these telephones, and I say to myself, that's a lonely girl. She needs a friend. And I'm gonna be her friend.
(smiles)

Travis rarely smiles, but when he does his whole face glows. It is as if he is able to tap an inner reserve of charm unknown even to himself. Betsy is completely disarmed.

BETSY

I don't know....

TRAVIS

It's just to the corner, mam. In broad daytime. Nothing can happen. I'll be there to protect you.

BETSY

(smiles)

All right.

(relents)

All right. I'm taking a break at 4 o'clock. If you're here then we'll go to the corner and have some coffee and pie.

TRAVIS

Oh, I appreciate that, Betsy, mam. I'll be here at 4 o'clock exactly.
(pause)

And...ah...Betsy...

BETSY

Yes?

TRAVIS

My name is Travis.

BETSY

Thank you, Travis.

Travis nods, turns and exits.

CUT TO:

COFFEE SHOP RENDEZVOUS

Travis is pacing back and forth on Broadway just beyond the Palantine Headquarters. He checks his watch.

TRAVIS V.O.

April 26, 1972. Four o'clock
p.m. I took Betsy to the
Mayfair Coffee Shop on
Broadway...

(CONT'D)

INT. Travis and Betsy are sitting in a booth of a small New York COFFEE SHOP. They both have been served coffee; Travis is nervously turning his cup around in his hands.

As Travis speaks V.O., waitress brings their orders: apple pie for Travis, fruit compote for Betsy.

TRAVIS V.O.

(cont'd)

I had black coffee and apple pie with a slice of melted yellow cheese. I think that was a good selection. Betsy had coffee and a fruit salad dish. She could have had anything she wanted.

Betsy's conversation interrupts Travis' V.O.:

BETSY

-We've signed up 15,000 Palantine volunteers in New York so far. The organizational problems are becoming just staggering.

TRAVIS

I know what you mean. I've got the same problems. I just can't get things organized. Little things, I mean. Like my room, my possessions. I should get one of those signs that says, "One of These Days I'm Gonna Get Organezized."

Travis contorts his mouth to match his mispronunciation, then breaks into a big, friendly, infectious grin. The very sight of it makes one's heart pound.

Betsy cannot help but be caught up in Travis' grin. Travis' contagious, quicksilver moods cause her to say:

BETSY

(laughing)

Travis, I never ever met
anybody like you before.

TRAVIS

I can believe that.

BETSY

Where do you live?.

TRAVIS

(evasive)

Oh, uptown. You know.
Some joint. It ain't much.

BETSY

So why did you decide to
drive a taxi at night?

TRAVIS

I had a regular job for a
while, days. You know, doin'
this, doin' that. But I
didn't have anything to do at
night. I got kinda lonely,
you know, just wanderin'
-around. So I decided to
work nights. It ain't good to
be alone, you know.

BETSY

After this job, I'm looking
forward to being alone for
a while.

TRAVIS

Yeah, well...

(a beat)

In a cab you get to meet
people. You meet lotsa
people. It's good for you.

BETSY

What kind of people?

TRAVIS

Just people people, you know. Just
people.

(a beat)

Had a dead man once.

BETSY
Really?

TRAVIS
He'd been shot. I didn't know that. He just crawled into the back seat, said "West 45th Street" and conked out.

BETSY
What did you do?

TRAVIS
I shut the meter off, for one thing. I knew I wasn't going to get paid. Then I dropped him off at the cop shop. They took him.

BETSY
That's really something.

TRAVIS
Oh, you see lotsa freaky stuff in a cab. Just the other day a rich society lady comes in the cab on the East Side and says she wants to go downtown. Had diamonds on her earrings. 'Bout 45-50 years old. Well, I pass 42nd and I hear something and look back and this lady's got her feet spread apart and propped up on the front seat. We were in the middle of town and everybody could see. I didn't figure it was any of my business so I didn't say a thing. She says, "Arn't you shocked, cabbie?" Boy, I didn't know what to say. She was just as old as my mother. She asked again and I just kept looking ahead. So she said, "I'm getting out right here." I pulled over and she paid the fare and got out. No tip.

BETSY
(joking)
Maybe you should have helped her out.

TRAVIS
(not understanding)
What do you mean?

BETSY
(dismisses it)
Nothing.

TRAVIS

Oh yeah, people do anything in front of a taxi-driver. I mean anything. People too cheap to rent a hotel room, people who want dope, people who want to embarrass you.

(a bitterness starts to emerge)

It's like you're not even a person, like you're not even there. Nobody knows you.

Betsy cuts Travis' bitterness short:

BETSY

What hours do you work?

TRAVIS

I work a single, which means there no replacement--no second man on the cab. Six to six, somethings eight. 72 hours a week.

BETSY

(amazed)

You mean you work 72 hours a week?

TRAVIS

Sometimes 76 or 80. Sometimes I squeeze a few more hours in the morning. Eighty miles a day, a hundred miles a night.

BETSY

You must be rich.

TRAVIS

(big affectionate smile)

It keeps ya busy.

BETSY

You know what you remind me of?

TRAVIS

What?

BETSY

That song by Kris Kristoferson, where it says, "he's a prophet and a pusher, partly truth, partly fiction, a walking contradiction."

(smiles)

TRAVIS

(uneasy)

I'm no pusher, Betsy. Honest. I never
have pushed.

BETSY

I didn't mean that, Travis. Just the
part about the contradiction.

TRAVIS

(more at ease)

Oh. Who was that again?

BETSY

The singer?

TRAVIS

Yeah. I mean yes. I don't follow music
too much.

BETSY

(slowly)

Kris Kris-tof-fer-son.

Travis looks at Betsy intently and the exchange smiles.

CUT TO:

INCIDENT IN A RECORD SHOP

Travis is walking confusedly around SAM GOODY'S at MIDDAY, obviously unable to locate what he desires.

Travis is lost among the hip, young intellectual types that populate the store. He watches the stylish, attractive female help, unable to come right out and request what he desires.

A young salesgirl sees his plight, walks over and asks if he needs any help. Travis INAUDIBLY says a name to her, although the name is obviously Kristoferson's.

The salesgirl digs out Kristoferson's "Silver-Tongued Devil" album for him.

Travis says something additional to the salesgirl and she goes off to gift wrap the album.

Travis emerges from the EXT. record store, the brightly gift-wrapped album proudly tucked under his arm.

CUT TO:

A NIGHT BEHIND THE WHEEL

A lengthy P.O.V. SHOT from Travis' vantage point behind the wheel.

We see the city as Travis sees it. The front windshield is a little dirty, the lighted meter juts up at the lower right screen. The intercom crackles with static and messages.

The light turns green; we take off with a start. A short first gear--quick shift--a long second gear. The cab eases to the right of the street, checking out prospective fares.

Our eyes scan the long line of pedestrians. The regulars--bums, junkies, tourists, hookers, homosexuals, hippies--they mean nothing now. They only blend into the sidewalks and lighted storefronts.

Our eyes now concentrate on those that step away from the curb--is that man hailing a cab or scratching his head?

In the next block there are perhaps three, four fares--quick gas-up through this yellow light - brake sharply--check the action. The first: tourists, nickel tippers--let the next guy pick them up. Let the second go also, the third--there's a live fare. Middle-aged local woman: short fare to the East Side, good tip.

We pull to the curb, waiting for her to get in. It is a long wait--a black street walker crosses in front of the cab. We focus on (as Travis would) a young couple embracing in the distance.

The meter is activated: .60 registers. Tick, tick, tick. A quick glance shows the woman is now seated. She says softly, "192 East 89." We take off with another jolt. Cross back up 9th Ave, then cut through the park.

We're zooming up 9th Ave--how many green lights can we string together? Somebody steps out to hail the cab, but quickly steps back again. The meter is up to \$.90. It'll be a \$1.40 fare.

Now through the park and we're almost there. Check the numbers--134--140. End of the block. Fare=\$1.40.

Check back mirror--she's getting out two bills. Two quarters and a dime change. Tip'll be either .25 or .35.

The tip comes back: 35¢--good tip. Good lady. We take off again with a jolt.

This is Travis' world: dark side streets, garish glaring main streets, quick glances, quicker evaluations--a dozen instantaneous decisions a minute. Are these people, are these objects?

EXT. Travis' taxi speeds down darkened street.

Travis lets off a fare and pulls into line at the Plaza. He watches the lit doorway; he is waiting for someone special.

TRAVIS V.O.

I called Betsy again at her office, and she said maybe we could go to a movie together after she gets off work tomorrow. That's my day off. At first she hesitated, but I called her again and she agreed.

(pause)

Betsy. Betsy what? I forgot to ask her last name again. Damn. I've got to remember stuff like that.

We see what Travis has been waiting for: Betsy, dressed in a stylish pants suit, emerges from the Plaza, smiles to the doorman and hurries down the steps to the waiting cab.

Travis tries to push forward in line but he is too late. Betsy gets into another cab and rides away.

Travis' thoughts are with Betsy as three men enter his cab. He activates the meter and pulls off.

MAN'S VOICE

Barclay Hotel.

Travis checks the mirror. Scanning across the back seat, he recognizes the middle passenger. It is Charles Palantine, candidate for President. He must have left the hotel shortly after Betsy.

PALANTINE ASSISTANT O.S.

I don't think we have to worry about anybody here committing themselves until things start coming in from California.

Travis recognizes his passenger:

TRAVIS
(interrupting)
Say, aren't you Charles Palantine,
the candidate?

PALANTINE
(only mildly irritated)
Yes I am.

TRAVIS
Well, I'm one of your biggest
supporters. I tell everybody
that comes in this cab that
they should vote for you.

PALANTINE
(pleased; glances
to check Travis'
license)
Why, thank you Travis. This
is going to be a crucial race
here in New York.

TRAVIS
I'm sure you'll win, sir.
Everybody I know is going
to vote for you.
(a beat)
I was going to put one of your
stickers on my taxi but the
company said it was against
their policy.

PALANTINE
(pleasantly)
I've always respected the opinions of
taxi-drivers.
(a beat)
What single thing would you want the
next President of this country to do most,
Travis?

TRAVIS
I don't know, sir. I don't follow
political issues much.

PALANTINE
There must be something...

TRAVIS
(thinks)
Well, he should clean up this city here.
It's full of filth and scum, scum and
filth. It's like an open sewer.
Sometimes

(MORE)

TRAVIS (Cont'd)

I can hardly take it. Some days I go out and smell it then I get headaches that just stay and never go away. We need a President that would clean up this whole mess. Flush it out.

Palantine is not a Hubert Humphrey-type professional bullshitter, and Travis' intense reply stops him dead in his tracks. He is forced to fall back on a stock answer but he tries to give it some meaning.

PALANTINE

(after a pause)

I know what you mean, Travis, and it's not going to be easy. We're going to have to have radical changes all throughout city and municipal government.

TRAVIS.

Damn straight.

EXT. Travis' taxi pulls up in front of the Barclay Hotel. *

Palantine and aide get out of the cab. Second aide stays in back seat a moment to pay Travis.

Palantine looks in front window of cab momentarily and nods goodbye to Travis.

PALANTINE

Nice talking to you, Travis.

TRAVIS

(calling back)

Thank you, sir. You're a good man, sir.

Travis' taxi departs.

old
page

Palantine and aides walk up carpet to well-lighted ~~Plaza~~
entrance.

Barclay

Camera closes in on Palantine as he stops, turns back and
watches Travis' departing taxi.

Palantine turns back and ascends the hotel steps with his
aides.

CUT TO:

DATE NIGHT

EXT. MANHATTAN STREET. EARLY EVENING. Travis, dressed to the teeth, walks brightly down the sidewalk. His face is freshly shaved, his hair combed, his tie straightened.

He pauses in a store window to check his appearance.

Under his arm he carries the gift-wrapped Kristoferson record album.

OUTSIDE PALANTINE HEADQUARTERS. Betsy, smartly dressed, waves goodbye to a fellow campaign worker and walks out the door to greet Travis.

A SHORT WHILE LATER, Travis and Betsy are walking down Broadway toward Times Square. Betsy does not let their bodies touch as they walk, although Travis contemplates edging closer to her.

Betsy has opened the package and is admiring the record--or, rather, Travis' sentiment behind giving it.

Travis looks around himself with pride: this is a moment in his life--one of the few.

BETSY

You didn't have to spend
your money--?

TRAVIS

(interrupting)

Hell, what else can I do with
it all?

Betsy notices that the seal on the record has not been broken.

BETSY

Travis, you haven't even played
the record?

TRAVIS

(evasive)

Yeah, well my stereo player
is broke. But I'm sure the
record is OK.

BETSY

Your stereo broke? God, I could hardly stand that. I live on music.

TRAVIS ,

I don't follow music much. I like to though.

(second thought)

Honest.

BETSY

(pointing to album)

So you haven't heard this record yet?

TRAVIS

No.

(sly smile)

I thought maybe you could play it for me on your player.

Betsy's face backtracks a bit. Maybe she was wrong to go out with this fellow she doesn't know.

She makes a polite laugh.

LATER. Travis and Betsy are in Times Square, turning the corner from Broadway to 42nd street. Travis carries the album under his arm.

They approach the garish marquee of a large midtown porno theater advertising "The Swedish Marriage Manual." The box office is flanked on both sides by glass cages filled with explicit publicity stills. Offending portions have been blocked out with black tape.

Travis steps over to the window and buys two \$5 tickets. Betsy, befuddled, watches him. She doesn't know what to say. Travis returns with the tickets.

Betsy still has not fully comprehended what is happening:

BETSY

What are you doing?

TRAVIS
(innocent)
I bought a couple of tickets.

BETSY
But this is a dirty movie.

TRAVIS
No, these are the kind that
couples go to. They're not
like the other movies. All
kinds of couples go. Honest.
I've seen them.

Travis seems confused. He is so much a part of his own world, he fails to comprehend another's world. Compared to the movies he sees, this is respectable. But then there's also something that Travis could not even acknowledge, much less admit: that he really wants to get this pure white girl into that dark porno theater.

Travis makes an awkward gesture to escort Betsy into the theater. Betsy looks at the tickets, at the theater, at Travis. She mentally shakes her head and walks toward the turnstile. She thinks to herself: "What the hell. What can happen?" She's always been curious about these pictures anyway, and--like all women, no matter how intelligent--she's been raised not to offend her date. A perverse logic which applies even more in offsetting circumstances like these.

INSIDE THE THEATER, Travis escorts Betsy to an empty center row. Travis was right. Couples do go to films like this. There are at least six or seven other men with their bewigged "dates."

Travis settles into his familiar porno theater slouch. Betsy looks curiously from side to side.

ON SCREEN, a conservatively-dressed middle-aged woman is speaking in Swedish about the importance of a healthy sex life in a happy marriage. Subtitles translate her words. Then, without warning, there is a direct CUT to a couple copulating on a sterile table-like bed.

Travis watches intently. The color, however, is slowly draining from Betsy's cheeks. One thought fills her mind: "What am I doing here?"

TRAVIS
(to himself)
Damn.

BETSY
What's wrong?

TRAVIS
I forgot to get the Coca-Cola.

That does it. Betsy just looks at him for a moment, then gets up and starts to leave. Travis, confused, hustles after her.

He follows her out of the theater.

Travis catches up with her ON THE SIDEWALK.

TRAVIS
Where are you going?

BETSY
I'm leaving.

TRAVIS
What do you mean?

Betsy looks at Travis, trying to understand him:

BETSY
Travis, why did you take me here?
What were you trying to do?

TRAVIS
I thought we could see a movie.

BETSY
But these are not the kind of movies
normal people go to.

TRAVIS
Well, I don't follow movies too much...

BETSY
You mean these are the only kind of
movies you go to?

BETSY

All right. I'll accept the record.

Betsy accepts the record, but quickly turns and hails a taxi.

BETSY

Taxi!

A taxi quickly pulls up.

Travis feebly protests to no one in particular:

TRAVIS

But I got a taxi.

Betsy gives instructions to cab driver, looks briefly back at Travis, then straight ahead. Taxi speeds off.

Travis looks around helplessly: a cluster of pedestrians on the crowded street has stopped to watch the argument. Travis looks back at the woman in the porno theater box office who has also been following the argument.

CUT TO:

The ticket girl watches expressionlessly from the booth.

TRAVIS
(hesitant)
Well...mostly.

BETSY
My God!

TRAVIS
We can go to another movie if
you like. I don't care. I got
money. There's plenty...

Travis gestures toward the long row of 42nd Street marquees,
but is interrupted to Betsy's frank--and somewhat disgusted--
statement:

BETSY
If you just wanted to fuck, why
didn't you just come right out and
say it?

Travis is flabbergasted by Betsy's blunt language. His arm
still gestures toward the marquee, his lips continue to move,
but words do not come out.

Unable to respond to Betsy's question, Travis picks up where he
left off:

TRAVIS
...there's plenty of movies around
here. I haven't seen any of them,
but I'm sure they're good.

BETSY
No, Travis. You're a sweet guy
and all that, but I think this is
it. I'm going home.

TRAVIS
(interrupting)
You mean you don't want to go
to a movie?
(a beat)
There's plenty of movies around
here.

BETSY

No, and I don't want to see you again. Understand? We're just two very different kinds of people, that's all. Goodbye, Travis.

TRAVIS

But...Betsy...

BETSY

I'm catching a taxi.

She walks to the curb.

TRAVIS

(following her)

But your record?

BETSY

Keep it?

TRAVIS

(tender)

Please, Betsy, I bought it for you.

Betsy looks back at Travis' sad, sweet face and relents a bit.

BETSY

All right. I'll accept the record.

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CUT TO:

PHONE CALLS AND FLOWERS

INSIDE TRAVIS' APARTMENT, Travis is writing at the table. There are some new items on the table: his giant econo-size bottle of vitamins, a giant econo-size bottle of asperins, a pint of apricot brandy, a partial loaf of cheap white bread.

On the wall behind the table hang two more items: a gag sign reading "One of These Days I'm Gonna Get Organezizied." and a orange-and-black bumper sticker for Charles Palantine.

TRAVIS V.O.

May 8, 1972. My life has taken another turn again. The days move along with regularity...

(CONT'D)

C.U. of notebook: Travis is no longer sitting at desk. The pencil rests on the open notebook.

LATER THAT DAY: Travis has pulled his straight-backed chair around and is watching his small portable TV, which rests on the upright melon crate.

A cereal bowl partially filled with milk rests in his lap. Travis pours a couple shots of the apricot brandy into the bowl, dips folded chunks of white bread into the mixture, and eats them.

Travis is watching early evening NEWS PROGRAM. TV b.g. sound. CHARLES PALANTINE is being interviewed somewhere on the campaign trail.

TRAVIS V.O.

(cont'd)

one day indistinguishable from the next, a long continuous chain, the, suddenly--there is a change.

(CONT'D)

EXT. DAY: Travis is standing in a telephone booth. He speaks intensely into the phone, but his words go unheeded. He hangs up the receiver.

TRAVIS V.O.

(cont'd)

I tried several times to call her,
but after the first attempt, she
would no longer come to the phone.

TRACKING SHOT across interior lower wall of Travis' APARTMENT. Against the stark wall there is a row of wilted and dying floral arrangements. Each one of the four or five bouquets is progressively more wilted than the one closer to the door. They have been returned.

TRAVIS V.O. (Cont'd)

I also sent flowers, with no luck.
I should not dwell on such things, but
set them behind me. The smell of the
flowers only made me sicker. The
headaches get worse. I think I've
got stomach cancer. I should not complain
so. "You're only as healthy as you
feel."

A drama is acted out at PALANTINE HEADQUARTERS: Travis, groggy and red-eyed from lack of sleep, walks into the campaign headquarters about NOONTIME.

Betsy is standing near the rear of the office; she ducks from sight when she sees Travis enter. Travis' path is cut short by Tom's large-framed body. There is no live sound.

TRAVIS V.O. (Cont'd)

I realize now how much she is like
the others, so cold and distant. Many
people are like that. Women for sure.
They're like a union.

Travis tries to push his way past Tom but Tom grabs him. Travis says something sharply to Tom and the two scuffle. Tom, by far the taller and stronger, quickly overcomes Travis, wrenching his arm behind his back.

Travis kicks and protests as Tom leads him to the front door.

ON THE SIDEWALK, Travis' efforts quickly subside when Tom motions to a nearby policeman. Travis quiets down and walks off.

CUT TO:

THE PUSSY AND THE .44

EXT. Travis is again making his way through the garish urban night. He stops for a passenger on PARK AVE. A middle-aging professorial executive.

C.U. Travis: his face is expressionless. The man makes himself comfortable in the back seat.

PROFESSORIAL PASSENGER
Jackson Heights.

Travis has no intention of driving out to Jackson Heights and coming back with a fare.

TRAVIS
I'm off duty.

PROFESSORIAL PASSENGER
You mean you don't want to go out to Jackson Heights?

TRAVIS
No, I'm off duty.

PROFESSORIAL PASSENGER
Then how come your "Off Duty" light wasn't on.

Travis switches on the "Off Duty" light.

TRAVIS
It was on.
(gesturing toward top of taxi)
It just takes a while to warm up. Like a TV.

Travis doesn't budge. Professorial passenger curses to himself and exits cab. Travis takes off.

P.O.V. as Travis' eyes dwell on the young hip couples coming out of a East Side movie house.

LATER THAT NIGHT, Travis pulls over for a young (mid-twenties) man wearing a leather sports jacket.

Travis eyes his passenger in rear-view mirror.

YOUNG PASSENGER
417 Central Park West.

EXT. Travis' taxi speeds off.

LATER, Travis' taxi slows down as it approaches 400 block of Central Park West.

Travis checks apartment numbers.

YOUNG PASSENGER
Just pull over to the curb
a moment.

Travis turns the wheel.

YOUNG PASSENGER
Yeah, that's fine. Just
sit here.

Travis waits impassively. The meter TICKS away.

After a long pause, the passenger speaks.

YOUNG PASSENGER
Cabbie, ya see that light
up there on the seventh
floor, three windows from
this side of the building?

CAMERA CLOSES IN on 417 Central Park West: TRACKING up to the seventh floor, it moves three windows to the right.

TRAVIS O.S.
Yeah.

A young woman wearing a slip crosses in front of the light.

YOUNG PASSENGER O.S.
Ya see that woman there.

TRAVIS O.S.
Yeah.

YOUNG PASSENGER O.S.

That's my wife.

(a beat)

But it ain't my apartment.

(a beat)

A nigger lives there.

(a beat)

She left me two weeks ago.

It took me this long to find
out where she went.

(a beat)

I'm gonna kill her.

C.U. Travis' face: it is devoid of expression.

YOUNG PASSENGER

What do you think of that,
cabbie?

C.U. young passenger's face: it is gaunt, drained of blood,
full of fear and anger.

Travis does not respond.

YOUNG PASSENGER

Huh?

(a beat)

What do you think of that,
Huh?

Travis shrugs, gesturing toward meter.

YOUNG PASSENGER

I'm gonna kill her with a .44
Magnum pistol.

Camera returns to SEVENTH FLOOR WINDOW. Woman is standing
in the light.

YOUNG PASSENGER O.S.

Did you ever see what a .44 can do
to a woman's face, cabbie?

(pause)

Did you ever see what it can do to a
woman's pussy, cabbie?

Travis says nothing.

YOUNG PASSENGER

I'm going to put it right up to her, cabbie. Right in her, cabbie. You must think I'm real sick, huh? A real pervert. Sitting here and talking about a woman's pussy and a .44, huh?

CAMERA CLOSES IN on Travis' face: he is watching the woman in the seventh floor window with complete and total absorption. It's the same glazed-over stare we saw in his eyes as he watched the porno movie.

FADE TO:

THE TRAVELING SALESMAN

BROOKLYN STREET CORNER. DAY. Travis stands near the corner wearing his boots, jeans, western shirt and army jacket.

He pulls his aspirin bottle out of his pocket, shakes three or four into his palm, pops them into his mouth and chews.

An "Off Duty" taxi pulls up to the curb. Travis gets in.

INSIDE, Dough-Boy leans back from the wheel and greets Travis as he enters.

DOUGH-BOY

Hey Travis. This here's Easy
Andy. He's a traveling salesman.

In the back seat, beside Travis, sits ANDY, an attractive young man about 29. He wears a pin-striped suit, white shirt and floral tie. His hair is modishly long.

ANDY

Hello Travis.

Travis nods as the taxi speeds off.

Dough-Boy slows down near an economy hotel. Not a flop house, but not so fancy they care what the guests do in the privacy of their rooms.

ANDY

This is fine Dough-Boy.
(to Travis)
Pay Dough-Boy here.

Travis pulls a twenty out of his pocket and gives it to Dough-Boy.

TRAVIS

20 bucks?

DOUGH-BOY

(takes bill)

Yeah. Hey thanks. That's real
nice, Travis.

Travis and Andy get out of the cab and walk toward the hotel. Dough-Boy pulls away.

As they enter the hotel, they pass a junkie, stoned out and spread-eagled across the hood of a derelict old blue Dodge.

INT. HOTEL. Travis follows Andy up the worn carpeted stairs and down the hallway. Andy unlocks the door to one of the rooms.

The HOTEL ROOM is barren and clean; there's no sign anyone is staying in it. The fire escape is appropriately near.

Andy locks the door behind them, steps over to the closet, unlocks it and pulls out two grey Samsonite suitcases--the kind you can drive a truck over.

ANDY

Dough-Boy probably told you
I don't carry any Saturday Night
Specials or crap like that. It's
all out of State, clean, brand new,
top-of-the-line stuff.

Andy places the suitcases on the white bedspread. The suitcases are equipped with special locks, which he quickly opens.

Andy opens the suitcases: stacked in grey packing foam are rows and rows of brand new hand guns.

TRAVIS

You got a .44 Magnum?

ANDY

That's an expensive gun.

TRAVIS

I got money.

Andy unzips a cowhide leather pouch to reveal a .44 Magnum pistol. He holds in gingerly, as if it were a precious treasure. Andy opens the chambers and cradles the the long eight-inch barrel in his palm. The .44 is a huge, oversize inhuman gun.

ANDY

(admiringly)

It's a monster. Can stop a car--put
a bullet right into the block. A premium
high resale gun. \$350--that's only a
hundred over list.

Easy Andy is a later version of the fast-talking, good-looking kid in college who was always making money on one scheme or another. In high school he sold lottery tickets, in college he scored dope, and now he's hustling hand guns.

Andy holds the Magnum out for Travis' inspection. There's a worshipful close-up of the .44 Magnum. It is a monster.

Travis hefts the huge gun. It seems out of place in his hand. It is built on Micheangelo's scale. The Magnum belongs in the hand of a marble god, not a slight taxi-driver. Travis hands the gun back to Andy.

ANDY

I could sell this gun in Harlem for \$500 today--but I just deal high quality goods to high quality people.

(pause)

Now this may be a little big for practical use, in which case I'd recommend the .38 Smith and Wesson Special. Fine solid gun--nickel plated. Snub-nosed, otherwise the same as the service revolver. Now that'll stop anything that moves and it's handy, flexible. The Magnum, you know, that's only if you want to splatter it against the wall. The movies have driven up the price of the Magnum anyway. Everybody wants them now. But the Wesson .38 -- only \$250 -- and worth every dime of it.

(he hefts .38)

Throw in a holster for \$10.

Travis hefts the nickel-plated .38, points it out the window.

ANDY

Some of these guns are like toys, but a Smith and Wesson, man, you can hit somebody over the head with it and it will still come back dead on. Nothing beats quality.

(pause)

You interested in an automatic?

TRAVIS

I want a .32. Revolver. And a palm gun. That .22 there.

ANDY

That's the Colt .25--a fine little gun. Don't do a lotta damage, but it's as fast as the Devil. Handy little gun, you can carry it almost anywhere. I'll throw it in for another \$125.

Travis holds the .32 revolver, hefts it, slips it under his belt and pulls his shirt over it. He turns from side to side, to see how it rides in his waist.

TRAVIS

How much for everything.

ANDY

The .32's \$150--and you're really getting a good deal now--and all together it comes to, ah, seven eighty-five for four pieces and a holster. Hell, I'll give you the holster, we'll make it seven seventy-five and you've got a deal--a good one.

TRAVIS

How much to get a permit to carry?

ANDY

Well, you're talking big money now. I'd say at least five grand, maybe more, and it would take a while to check it out. The way things are going now \$5,000 is probably low. You see, I try not to fool with the small-time crap. Too risky, too little bread. Say 6 G's, but if I get the permit it'll be as solid as the Empire State Building.

TRAVIS

Nah, this'll be fine.

ANDY

You can't carry in a cab even with a permit--so why bother?

TRAVIS

Is there a firing range around?

ANDY

Sure, here, take this card. Go to this place and give 'em the card. They'll charge you, but there's won't be any hassle.

Travis pulls out a roll of crisp one hundred dollar bills and counts off eight.

ANDY

You in Nam? Can't help but notice your jacket?

TRAVIS

(looking up)

Huh?

ANDY

Vietnam? I saw it on your jacket. Where were you? Bet you got to handle a lot of weapons out there.

Travis hands Andy the bills. Andy counts them and gives Travis a twenty and a five.

TRAVIS

Yeah. I was all around. One hospital, then the next.

ANDY

(through counting)

It's hell out there all right. A real shit-eatin war. I'll say this, though: it's bringing back a lot of fantastic guns. The market's flooded. Colt automatics are all over.

(pockets the money)

TRAVIS

(intensely)

They'd never get me to go back. Never. They'd have to shoot me first. I'd never go back alive.

(pause)

You got anything to carry these in?

(gestures to pistols)

Travis is like a light switch: for long periods he goes along dark and silent, saying nothing; then suddenly, the current is turned on and the air is filled with the electricity of his personality. Travis' inner intensity sets Andy back a bit, but he quickly recovers.

ANDY

. Sure.

Andy pulls a gym bag from under the bed. He wraps the gun in the sheet in the bag and zips it up. An identical gym bag can be partially seen under the bed. He hands Travis the bag.

ANDY

You like ball games?

TRAVIS

Huh?

ANDY

I can get you front and center.
What do like? I can get you Mets,
Yankees, Knicks, Rangers? Hell,
I can get you the mayor's box.

TRAVIS

Nah. I ain't interested.

Andy closes and locks the suitcases.

ANDY

Okay, okay.

Travis turns to leave.

ANDY

Wait a second, Travis. I'll walk
you out.

CUT TO:

TRAVIS GETS ORGANIZED

Several weeks later. The face of Travis' apartment has changed. The long, blank wall behind the table is now covered with tacked-up charts, pictures, newspaper clippings, maps. Camera does not come close enough to discern the exact contents of these clippings.

Travis is in C.U. in the middle of the floor doing push-ups. He is bareback, wearing only his jeans. There is a long scar across his left side.

TRAVIS

May 29, 1972. I must get in shape.
Too much sitting has ruined my body.
Twenty-five push-ups each morning, one
hundred sit-ups, one-hundred knee-bends.
(Cont'd)

Travis, still bareback, passes his stiff arm through the flame of a gas burner without flinching a muscle.

TRAVIS V.O.

(cont'd)

Total organization is necessary.
Every muscle must be tight.

INT. FIRING RANGE. The cracking sound of rapid-fire pistol shots fill the musty air of the firing range. The walls are heavily soundproofed, and sawdust is spread over the floor.

Travis stands rock solid, firing the .44 Magnum at an arm's length. With each blasting discharge from the Magnum, Travis' body shudders and shakes, his arm rippling back. Travis quickly bolts himself upright, as if each recoil from the giant gun was a direct attack on his masculinity.

Travis fires the Magnum as quickly as he can re-set, re-aim and re-fire. The Magnum empty, he sets in down, picks up the .38 Special and begins firing as soon as he can aim. After the .38, comes the .25: it is as if he were in a contest to see how quickly he can fire the pistols. After all the guns are discharged, he begins reloading them without a moment's hesitation.

Downrange, the red and white targets have the black outline of a human figure drawn over them. The contour-man convulses under the steady barrage of Travis' rapid-fire shots.

INT. APARTMENT. Travis, now wearing an unfastened green plaid western shirt, sits at the table writing in his diary. The vial of bennies rests on the table.

TRAVIS V.O.

My body fights me always.
It won't work, it won't
sleep, it won't shit, it won't
eat.

LATER. Travis, his shirt still open revealing his bare chest, sits on his straight-backed chair watching the TV. The .44 Magnum rests on his lap.

The TV is broadcasting ROCK TIME, a late afternoon local teenage dance and rock show. On screen young teenyboppers are dancing, and the TV cameraman, as any devotee of the genre knows, is relentlessly zooming-in on their firm young breasts, fannies and crotches--a sensibility which reflects Travis' own. These supper-hour rock dance shows are the most unabashedly voyeuristic form of broadcasting the medium has yet developed.

The hard rock number ends, and the TV camera cuts to the local disc jockey, a hirstute plastic-looking man about 35. Five scrumptious teenyboppers are literally hanging on his shoulders and arms, their faces turned up to him in droolish awe. Out of his mouth comes an incessant stream of disc jockey blather. He is the complete asshole; I don't know who is currently performing this function in New York, but in Los Angeles his name is Real Don Steele.

T.V. DISC JOCKEY

Freshingly, fantastic, freaked-
out dance time. Can you dig it?
Dig on it. You got it, flaunt it.

Travis watches the show, his face hard and unmoving. He is, as the Scriptures would say, pondering all these things in his heart. Why is it the assholes get all the beautiful young chicks? He takes a swig of peach brandy.

CUT TO:

THE \$20 RIDE

EARLY EVENING, about 6:30 p.m. Travis' taxi, with "Off Duty" light on, sits near the curb somewhere in midtown Manhattan.'

Travis runs his hand down the left side of his jacket, attempting to smooth out the bulge underneath.

Travis opens his jacket partially, checking underneath. There rests the nickel-plated .38 Special in its holster.

P.O.V. down the street where Travis' taxi is parked: several blocks ahead the red, white and blue campaign headquarters of Charles Palantine are visible.

Travis' eyes resume their watch.

Travis starts the cab and drives toward the PALANTINE HEADQUARTERS.

TRACKING P.O.V. shot of row of storefronts leading up to Palantine Headquarters. P.O.V. passes headquarters: it is half-empty. A few stalwart supporters continue to work toward the rear of the office. Betsy's desk is vacant.

Sign in window reads: "Only 4 More Days Until Arrival of CHARLES PALANTINE."

Travis' "Off Duty" light goes off as he speeds up and heads toward a prospective fare.

LATER THAT NIGHT, about 9:30. UPTOWN--128th and Amsterdam. All black area. Travis' taxi pulls up to an address, lets off young black man.

Travis receives fare and tip, takes off.

P.O.V. as Travis works his way through Harlem back down Seventh Ave. Cluster of young black street punks pretend to hail cab--we ignore them. One throws wine bottle which crashes in our path--taxi swerves to avoid it.

Camera TRACKS through sidewalk crowds with the roving, suspicious, antagonistic eye of a taxi-driver.

LATER THAT NIGHT, about 12:30. Travis is on the LOWER EAST SIDE, somewhere on B Street, east of Tompkins Square.

The sidewalks are populated with the remains of what once was the hippie movement: teenage street-walkers, junkies, thugs, emaciated loners on the prowl.

Travis' taxi pulls over, letting out a fare.

Travis pockets his fare, but the rear right door doesn't slam--instead there is the sound of another person jumping into the cab.

Travis checks the back seat in the rear-view mirror: there sits a ragged-looking hippie prostitute.

The girl is, at best, 14 or 15, although she has been made up to look older. She wears floppy, baggy Janis Joplin clothes. Her face is pallid, her eyes red. Her name, as we shall learn later, is IRIS.

Travis hesitates, looking at her in the mirror.

IRIS

Come on, mister, let's get
outta here--quick.

Travis moves to activate the meter, when the front and rear right side doors open simultaneously.

The girl is being helped out of the cab by a man Travis cannot see.

REAR WINDOW MAN O.S.

(to Iris)

Come on, baby, let's go. This
is all a real drag.

Iris lets herself be taken out of the cab. The rear door closes.

The other man leans partially in the front window, throwing something on the front seat. Travis looks: it is a crumpled \$20 bill.

FRONT WINDOW MAN O.S.

Just forget all about this,
cabbie. It's nothing.

Travis cannot see the Front Window Man's face completely, but notices he is wearing a fringed suede jacket. The voice is that of a man in his early twenties.

Travis turns to catch a glimpse of the two men as they walk off with the girl. He notices little more than that one is young, the other old.

Travis shrugs and turns around.

Travis' taxi pulls away.

CUT TO:

FOREPLAY TO GUNPLAY

EARLY MORNING, 6:00 a.m. Quitting time--Travis pulls into TAXI GARAGE.

INT. GARAGE. Travis pulls into his stall.

Travis sits in driver's seat, thinking a moment. He looks to his right: the crumpled \$20 bill still lies there, untouched since it was thrown there six hours previously.

Travis reluctantly picks up the \$20 bill and stuffs it into his jacket pocket as he gets out of the cab. He gathers up his time report and heads toward book-in table.

A SHORT WHILE LATER, Travis is walking down the sidewalk near the taxi garage. His hands are in his jacket pockets, obscuring the slight bulge on his left side.

Travis turns into the box office of PORNO THEATER. He reaches into jacket pocket for money to purchase ticket and pulls out crumpled \$20 bill. Seeing the \$20 bill, he decides not to use it, and pays for ticket out of his wallet instead.

Travis walks past concession stand en route to the darkened theater auditorium. A young man is now sitting listlessly behind the concessions counter.

INT. PORNO THEATER AUDITORIUM. Travis slouches down into his seat, his face glowing in the reflected light from the screen.

FEMALE MOVIE VOICE O.S.

Oh, come on, now, down, lick it,
come on...

(a beat)

Mmm, that's good. Ahh, ahh, more...

Travis averts his eyes as the action on screen becomes too graphic. Placing his stiffened right hand beside his eyes, Travis can, by turning it inward, shut off or open up his field of vision by small degrees.

Movie voice DIMINISHES, replaced by sound of Travis' voice over.

TRAVIS V.O.

The idea had been growing in
my brain...

(CONT'D)

CUT to TRACKING SHOT to wall of Travis' APARTMENT. Camera moves slowly across wall covered with clippings, notes, maps, pictures. We now see their contents clearly:

The wall is covered with Charles Palantine political paraphernalia; there are pictures of him, newspaper articles, leaflets, bumper stickers. As the camera moves along it discovers a sketch of Plaza Hotel, Kennedy Airport and cut-up sections of city maps with notations written in. There is lengthy NY Times clipping detailing the increased Secret Security Protection during the primaries. A section pertaining to Palantine is underlined. Further along there is a sheet reading "traveling schedule" and a calendar for June with finely written notations written over the dates.

TRAVIS VO.

(cont'd)

for some time. True Force.
All the king's men cannot put
it back together again.

As the camera reaches the end of its track, it finds Travis, standing, his shirt open, by the mattress. He is wearing the empty holster, and the .44 is in his hand.

In the shots that follow Travis gives the audience a lesson in gunmanship:

- Travis practices fast-drawing the .38 Special from his holster and firing it.
- He hooks the .44 into his pants behind his back and practices withdrawing it. He holds the .44 firmly at an arm's length, tightening his forearm muscles.
- He has worked out of system of metal gliders taped to his inner forearm, whereby the Colt .25 can rest hidden behind the upper forearm until a spring near the elbow is activated, sending the .25 flying down the gliders into his palm. He has cut open his shirt to accomodate the gun mechanism and now checks in the mirror to see how well the gun is hidden.
- He straps an Army combat knife to his calf and cuts a slit in his jeans where the knife can be pulled out quickly.

--He now tries on various combinations of shirts, sweater and jacket in front of the mirror to see how well he can hide all the handguns he wishes to carry. Finally, wearing two western shirts, a sweater and jacket, he manages to obscure the location of all three guns, although he resembles a hunter bundled up against the Arctic winter.

--He sits at the table dum-dumming the .44 bullets--cutting "x"s across the bullet heads.

--P.O.V.: he scans the objects of his room through the scope of the .38.

Travis stands in the middle of his apartment, staring at his Palantine wall. His eyes are glazed with introspection; he sees nothing but himself.

TRAVIS V.O.

Listen you screwheads:

Here is a man...

(CONT'D)

Travis lies on his mattress, all bundled up in his shirts, sweater, jacket and guns. His face is turned toward the ceiling, but his eyes are closed. Although the room is flooded with light, he is finally catching some sleep. The big furry animal drifts into his own world.

TRAVIS V.O.

(cont'd)

who wouldn't take it any more,

a man who stood up against the scum, the cunts, the dogs, the filth.

Here is.....

(voice trails off)

C.U. of diary: entry ends with words "Here is" followed by erratic series of dots.

CUT TO:

INCIDENT IN A DELI

NIGHT: the taxis are roaming the slick streets.

Sometime after 2:00 a.m., Travis pulls his cab to the curb near an all-night delicatessen in Spanish Harlem. The streets are relatively deserted.

Travis waves to STOREKEEPER as he walks past counter:

TRAVIS
Hey 'Melio.

Spanish rhythm and blues blares from a cheap radio.

Travis walks over to dairy counter in rear of store, picks out a pint of chocolate milk, goes over to the open cooler and picks through various chilled prepackaged sandwiches. He overhears a voice as he looks at the sandwiches.

When Travis returns to the counter with the chocolate milk and a sandwich in one hand, he sees a young black man holding a gun on 'Melio. The stick-up man is nervous, hopped-up, or both: he bounces on the balls of his cheap worn black tennis shoes--a strung-out junkie on a desperation ride. The stick-up man, a thorough unprofessional, doesn't notice Travis.

'Melio watches the stick-up man closely, deciding what to do himself.

STICK-UP MAN
(shaking gun)
Come on, man. Quick, quick,
quick--let's see that bread.

It doesn't take Travis long to decide what to do: without hesitation he pulls his .32 from his jacket pocket.

TRAVIS
Hey dude!

The stick-up man, surprised, turns toward Travis, finding only an exploding .32. The man's lower jaw bursts open with blood as he reels and crashes to the floor. There is no emotion on Travis' face.

As the stick-up man falls, 'Melio leans over the counter, wielding his battered .38. He is about to fire when he realizes the man is already dead.

'Melio, charged up, turns his gun toward Travis, then, realizing the danger is over, lowers it again.

'MELIO

Thanks, man. Figured I'd get him on the way out.

Travis sets his .32 on the counter.

TRAVIS

You're gonna have to cover me on this one, 'Melio. I can't stay for the cop show.

'MELIO

You can't do that, Travis. You're my witness.

TRAVIS

The hell I can't. It's no sweat for you. What is this for you, number five?

'Melio smiles and holds up four fingers:

'MELIO

No, only four.

(shrugs)

Alright, Travis, I'll do what I can.

TRAVIS

Thanks a lot.

Travis exits. 'Melio picks up the phone and starts dialing. The bloody body lies on the floor unmoving.

Travis, still carrying his pint of chocolate milk and sandwich, walks down the empty sidewalk and enters his cab. The street is deserted.

CUT TO:

MIDAFTERNOON MELODRAMA

Direct cut to PORNOGRAPHIC MOVIE: this is the first time we have actually seen the porno movie itself. Several actors and actresses are dallying on screen in whatever manner the ratings board deems permissible.

Whatever the action, the movie's decor is strictly Zody's--erstaz landscape paintings, tufted bedspreads. As in most porno films, the actors look up occasionally toward the camera to receive instructions. Studio grunts, groans and moans of pleasure have been dubbed in.

Action on screen begins to go into SLOW MOTION, the actors and actresses gradually transforming obscenity into poetry.

SOUND TRACK of film also SLOWS DOWN, gradually mixing with and then becoming the sound track of a midafternoon TV soap opera.

A young girl and boy are talking in those familiar soap opera voices about a third party, the girl's mother, who had tried to terminate their "relationship."

CUT TO Travis, sitting in his chair in his APARTMENT, watching afternoon soap opera. He is cleaning his .38 and eating from a jar of applesauce. Soap opera audio continues.

He watches the soap opera without expression.

CUT TO television: the boy is visiting the girl in her hospital room. Both look as if they've stepped out of the Blue Chip Stamp catalogue.

SOAP OPERA BOY

Is it that she just
doesn't--like me?

SOAP OPERA GIRL

(hesitantly)
Well, Jim, it's just that--I
don't know how to say this--it's
that she thinks your parents
aren't...good enough, I guess.

Travis, through cleaning his gun, begins to play a game with the television set.

He places the heel of his boot at the top of the melon crate which supports the TV. Then, slowly rocking his heel back and forth, he sees how far he can tip the melon crate without knocking it over.

The TV, still broadcasting the hospital room melodrama, rocks back and forth.

Travis pushes the TV farther and farther until finally the inevitable happens--the crate tips backward, sending the portable TV crashing to the floor.

There is a short flash and the TV screen turns white.

Travis, realizing what he has done, bends over, turns the TV upright on the floor, fiddles with the knobs, slaps it, and tries to reactivate the vanished image. Travis' efforts are futile; a tube has broken, and the TV will not come back to life.

TRAVIS
(to himself)
Damn, damn.

Travis bends over in the chair and places his head in his hands, despairing of himself.

FADE TO:

THE WIZARD SPEAKS

About 1 a.m. Travis pulls his cab behind a line of empty taxis parked outside the Bellmore Cafeteria, a cabbie hangout on Park Avenue South.

He locks his cab and walks past the line of taxis. He sidesteps two drunken fighting bums and enters the Bellmore.

A loud buzzer rings as Travis steps INTO THE BELLMORE. He pulls a ticket from the dispenser (silencing the buzzer) and walks toward the wall-length counter.

An assortment of cabbies are seated around a formica-topped table near the rear of the cafeteria. Some are barely awake, some are eating, the rest are swapping stories and smalltalk.

Wizard finishes up a story. Charlie T, wearing a hangdog look, watches on.

Travis gets a cup of coffee, has his ticket punched and heads toward the other cabbies. Charlie T spots him:

CHARLIE T
Hiya Killer.

Charlie forms his hand into a pistol, cocks and fires, making the sound, "Pghew." Travis nods.

WIZARD
You're getting a rep, Travis.

Travis sits down and the other cabbies resume their conversation.

CHARLIE T
Got the five you owe me, Killer?

Travis reaches into his pocket and pulls out a roll of small demonination bills. The crumpled \$20 bill falls onto the table. Travis stares at it a moment. He unfolds a five, gives it to Charlie T, then picks up the crumpled \$20 and puts it back into his jacket pocket.

WIZARD O.S.
(to Travis)
What's the action around?

TRAVIS

Slow.

CHARLIE T

Shit yes. Night woulda been shot if I didn't grab a live one. An outa town line-loader. I played in slow and finally got 25 outa him.

WIZARD

(jokingly)

I'm gonna turn you into the C o' C if you keep fleecin the hicks like that.

CHARLIE T

I know'd you to do worse.

WIZARD

Hell, at least I work the whole town. You just hang out around the midtown hotels, lookin for line-loaders in thousand dollar suits.

CHARLIE T

(chucking)

It's a living.

Wizard gets up to leave.

WIZARD

Well, I'm shovin' on.

Wizard gets up, nods and walks toward the cashier. After a second's thought, Travis calls to him:

TRAVIS

Hey Wiz, just a second. I wanna talk to you.

Wizard waits for Travis as he takes a final gulp of coffee and catches up with him. Charlie T calls to Travis as they go:

CHARLIE T

See ya, Killer. Don't foget your pea shooter.

Charlie T cocks his imaginary gun again, fires and chuckles.

Wizard and Travis nod goodbye, pay the cashier and exit.

EXT. Travis follows Wizard out onto the sidewalk. Travis follows Wizard as he walks toward his cab. He has something on his mind, something he wants to talk to Wizard about.

TRAVIS
(walking)

Hey Wiz.

WIZARD

Yeah?

Wizard leans back against his cab. Travis is about to speak when he spots a group of black and Puerto Rican street punks ages 12-15, jiving down the sidewalk toward him. One tose: a spray paint can around his back, basketball style. Another mocks as if he's going to scratch a key along one of the ca .

Wizard has no visable reaction. A flash of controlled anger crosses Travis' face. He stares at the boy with the poised key. It is the same look that crossed his face in the Harlem Deli. We are reminded with a jolt that the killer lies just beneath Travis' surface.

The black punk must instinctively realize this too, because he makes a cocky show of putting the key back into his pocket and be-bopping around Travis and Wizard.

The young mean-streeters continue down the street and Travis turns back to Wizard. Across the street, in the background, a junkie nestles in a doorway.

TRAVIS
(hesitant)

Wiz?

WIZARD

Yeah?

TRAVIS
Look, ah, we never taked much,
you and me...

WIZARD

Yeah?

WIZARD

Travis, I dig it. But look, you choose a certain way of life. You live it. It becomes what ya are. I've been a hack 27 years, last ten at night. Still don't own my own cab. I guess that's just the way I like it.

(a beat)

Look, a person does a certain kind of thing and that's all there's to it. Why fight it? What do you know? How long you been a hack, a couple months? You're like a peg and you get dropped into a slot and you got to squirm and wiggle around until you fit in.

TRAVIS

(pause)

That's just about the dumbest thing I ever heard, Wizard.

WIZARD

What do ya expect, Bertrand Russell? I been a cabbie all my life, what do I know?

(a beat)

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

TRAVIS

Neither do I, I guess.

WIZARD

You fit in. It's lonely, it's rough at first. But you fit in. You got no choice.

TRAVIS

Yeah, sorry, Wizard.

WIZARD

Don't worry, killer. You'll be all right.

(fatherly, taps Travis on shoulder)

I seen enough to know.

TRAVIS

I wanted to ask you something,
on account you've been around so
long.

WIZARD

Shoot. They don't call me the
Wizard for nothing.

TRAVIS

Well, I just, you know...

WIZARD

Things got ya down?

TRAVIS

Real down.

WIZARD

It happens.

TRAVIS

Sometimes it gets so I just don't
know what I'm gonna do. I get
some real crazy ideas, you know?
Just go out and do somethin.

WIZARD

The taxi life, you mean.

TRAVIS

Yeah.

WIZARD

(nods)

I know.

TRAVIS

Like do anything, you know.

WIZARD

Travis, look, I dig it. Let me
explain. You choose a certain way
of life. You live it. It becomes
what you are. I've been a hack 27
years, the last ten at night. Still
don't own my own cab. I guess that's
the way I want it. You see, that must
be what I am.

A police car stops across the street. Two patrolmen get out and rousts the junkie from his doorway.

WIZARD

(continuing)

Look, a person does a certain thing and that's all there's to it. It becomes what he is. Why fight it? What do you know? Howlong you been a hack, a couple months? You're like a peg and you get dropped into a slot and you to squirm and wiggle around a while until you fit in.

TRAVIS

(pause)

That's just about the dumbest thing I ever heard, Wizard.

WIZARD

What do you expect, Bertrand Russell? I've been a cabbie all my life, what do I know?

(a beat)

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

TRAVIS

Neither do I, I guess.

WIZARD

You fit in. It's lonely, it's rough at first. But you fit in. You got no choice.

TRAVIS

Yeah. Sorry, Wizard.

WIZARD

Don't worry, Killer. You'll be all right.

(a beat)

I seen enough to know.

TRAVIS

Thanks.

Wizard gives Travis a short wave implying, "Chin up, old boy," and walks around to the driver's side of his cab.

Wizard drives off, leaving the street to its natural inhabitants.

CUT TO:

A NEW FACE IN THE CROWD

FADE IN:

EXT. CHARLES PALANTINE RALLY. DAY. A rally platform in a supermarket parking lot somewhere in QUEENS is draped in red, white and blue bunting.

A crowd of about 500 persons mill about, waiting for the rally to begin. Piped pop-country MUSIC plays over the loudspeaker system.

The cadre of Secret Service Men, with their distinctive metallic grey suits, sun glasses and football physiques, stand out in the crowd.

On the PLATFORM are seated an assortment of local politicians as well as some Palantine workers and advisers.

TOM is silently reading something on the podium, and BETSY stands on the platform steps talking with another worker.

Tom looks up and to his left for a moment, then returns to what he was reading. Then he returns his gaze to the upper left, watching something very closely.

After a moment he walks over to the steps where Betsy is standing.

TOM

Betsy, come over here a moment.

BETSY

What is it? I'm busy.

TOM

(instant)

Just follow me.

Betsy excuses herself and walks across the platform with Tom. As they stand to the rear of the platform, Tom secretively makes a gesture with his eyes and says out of the side of his mouth:

TOM

Look there.

(her eyes follow his)
No, over further. Yes, over there. Isn't that little guy the same guy that was bugging you around the office about a month ago?

Betsy looks closely, trying not to make her stare too obvious.

BETSY

No, I don't think so.

(a beat)

That's someone else.

TOM

Now look more closely. Look around the eyes and chin.

See? See there?

CAMERA CLOSES IN on Travis Bickle standing in the crowd: he has shaved his head to a short stubble. There he is: brush-cut, wearing a giant grin, and a large "Palantine 72" button.

Although it is a pleasant sunny day, Travis wears a bulky bulged-out Army jacket.

Travis looks warily from side to side and vanishes in the crowd.

A SHORT WHILE LATER, Travis walks up to a SECRET SERVICE MAN standing near the fringes of the crowd. The Secret Service Man--in sun glasses, grey suit, ever-roving eyes--is immediately identifiable.

Whenever Travis confronts a symbol of authority, he becomes like a young boy. This time is no exception, although one suspects there is a plan hatching beneath that boyish exterior. The Secret Service Man, for his part, is about as talkative as the Sphinx.

TRAVIS

Are you a Secret Service Man?

SECRET SERVICE MAN

(indifferently)

Why do you ask?

TRAVIS

I've seen a lot of suspicious looking people around here today.

Secret Service Man glances at Travis momentarily.

SECRET SERVICE MAN

Who?

TRAVIS
 Oh, lots. I don't know where
 they all are now. There used to
 be one standing over there.
 (points)

Secret Service Man's gaze follows Travis' finger for a second,
 then returns to Travis.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)
 Is it hard to get to be a Secret
 Service Man?

SECRET SERVICE MAN
 Why?

TRAVIS
 I kinda thought I might make a
 good one. I'm very observant.

SECRET SERVICE MAN
 Oh?

TRAVIS
 I was in the Army too.
 (beat)
 And I'm good with crowds.

The Secret Service Man is starting to get interested in
 Travis: he definitely ranks as a suspicious character.

SECRET SERVICE MAN
 Is that so?

TRAVIS
 What kind of guns do you guys
 use? .38's?

The Secret Service Man decides it's time to get some more
 information on Travis:

SECRET SERVICE MAN
 Look, um, if you give me your name
 and address, we'll send you the information
 on how to apply.

TRAVIS
 You would, huh?

SECRET SERVICE MAN
 (taking out notepad)
 Sure.

TRAVIS

My name is Henry Krinkle--that's
with a "K." K-R-I-N-K-L-E. I
live at 13 1/2 Hopper Avenue, Fair
Lawn, New Jersey. Zip code 07410.

(a beat)

Got that?

SECRET SERVICE MAN

Sure, Henry. I got it all.
We'll send you all the stuff all
right.

TRAVIS

Great, hey. Thanks a lot.

The Secret Service Man motions to a Secret Service Photographer to catch a picture of Travis. Travis notices this, and quickly slips away into the crowd.

CUT TO: Travis sits at his desk in his APARTMENT, writing. He wears jeans, western shirt and empty holster.

TRAVIS V.O.

June 11. Eight rallies in six
more days. The time is coming.

CUT TO:

A REMEMBERED FACE

NIGHT. Travis' taxi picks up a fare in the midtown area and heads downtown.

LOWER EAST SIDE. Travis lets off fare on B Street and cuts across toward Tompkins Square.

Travis turns the corner when SKREEECH! he suddenly hits the brakes, causing the cab to rock back and forth.

He has almost hit a young girl recklessly crossing the street. She thumps her hand on the taxi hood to regain her balance and stares in shock through the front window. C.U. girl's face.

Travis recognizes her face: it's IRIS, the girl in his taxi a week or so before. Iris looks at Travis sharply then turns and continues walking.

Travis' eyes follow her and she rejoins a GIRLFRIEND. They are both dressed as hippie hookers: sloppy clothes, boots, jeans, floppy hats. And the old come-hither walk is unmistakable.

Travis follows Iris and her girlfriend slowly as they walk down the sidewalk.

Travis' P.O.V.: He examines them from bottom to top--boots, legs, thighs, breasts, faces, hats.

As Travis rolls astride the girls, he notices the familiar FRINGE OF A SUEDE JACKET standing in the shadows. The girls look toward the shadowed figure, smile, acknowledge some unheard comment, and continue on.

Iris looks back uneasily at Travis' taxi and continues on.

On the corner stand TWO well-to-do COLLEGE STUDENTS, somewhat out of place in this environment, but making every attempt to groove on it. They are high on something or another.

The girls spot the college students and walk over to them. They exchange some small talk and walk off together. There is little subtlety involved: it is obviously a pick-up.

Travis must negotiate a turn around the corner if he is to continue following the girls and their collegiate johns. This is not so easy, since the traffic is heavy.

As Travis slows down to make the turn, he notices another HIPPIE HOOKER who had been watching him watching Iris and her girlfriend. She walks over to the taxi, leans in the open left front window and gives Travis the come-on disguised as an innocent question:

C.U. hippie hooker.

HIPPIE HOOKER

Hey cabbie! You comin' or
goin'?

Travis quickly turns his face away from her in a combination of shock, embarrassment and revulsion. He is the child caught with his hand in the cookie jar. The very presence of this crassly, openly sexual human being frightens and sickens him.

Travis takes off with a skreetch. His taxi shoots down the block.

CUT TO:

CAMPAIGN PROMISES

A HOT JUNE DAY. Travis' taxi, the "Off Duty" sign on, is parked against the curb somewhere in HARLEM. White cops, Secret Service Men and reporters, punctuate the otherwise black crowds which walk to and fro in the b.g.

CHARLES PALANTINE's voice can be heard coming from a distant loudspeaker system. It is a political rally.

Travis sits behind the wheel, coldly staring at something in the distance. His hair, of course, is still clipped short and he wears mirror-reflecting sunglasses. Even though a drop of sweat is working its way down his cheek, Travis wears his Army jacket with the bulge on the left side--the .38 Smith and Wesson bulge.

A BLOCK AWAY, Palantine stands on a platform outside his uptown campaign headquarters. On the platform sit an array of black dignitaries. Nearby we recognize the SECRET SERVICE MAN Travis spoke to at the earlier rally: he scans the crowd anxiously.

Palantine is speaking animatedly. He is an excellent speaker and captures our attention. He drives hard toward his arguments, crashes down on his points. His strained voice rings with sincerity and anger.

C.U. of Palantine as he speaks. He is dressed in rolled-up shirtsleeves and sweat pours down his face.

CHARLES PALANTINE

The time has come to put an end to the things that divide us: racism, poverty, war--and to those persons who seek to divide us. Never have I seen such a group of high officials from the President to Senate leaders to Cabinet members ...

*

CUT TO Travis: no expression. Palantine's words are barely distinguishable from a block away:

PALANTINE

(in distance)

...pit black against white, young against old, sow anger, disunity and suspicion-- and all in the name of the "good of the country." Well, their game is over.

(applause)

All their games are over. Now is the time to stand up against such foolishness, propaganda and demagogery. Now is the time for one man to stand up and accept his neighbor, for one man to give in order that all might receive. Is unity and love of common good such a lost thing?

ALL LIVE SOUND CEASES as Travis' narration begins. He is reading from a letter or card he has just written.

As he speaks we see shots of Palantine speaking, a seated row of young black Palantine red, white and blue bedecked cheerleaders, Secret Service agents examining the crowd and so forth. These shots have no direct relationship to the narration.

TRAVIS V.O.

(reading)

Dear Father and Mother,

June is the month, I remember, which brings not only your wedding anniversary, but also Father's day and mother's birthday. I'm sorry I can't remember the exact dates, but I hope this card will take care of all of them.

I'm sorry I again can not send you my address like I promised to last year, but the sensitive nature of my work for the Army demands utmost secrecy. I know you will understand.

I am healthy and well and making lots of money. I have been going with a girl for several months and I know you would be proud if you could see her. Her name is Betsy, but I can tell you no more than that.

(INTERRUPTED)

As Travis reads third paragraph, a POLICEMAN is seen walking from behind Travis' taxi to his window.

The policeman's voice comes during a pause in the narration.
LIVE SOUND RESUMES.

POLICEMAN
(standing near window)
Hey, cabbie, you can't park here.

TRAVIS
(penitent)
Sorry, officer

POLICEMAN
You waiting for a fare?

Policeman leans his head in window, inspecting the cab. As he does, Travis slides his right hand into the left side of his jacket, ready to draw his revolver.

TRAVIS
No, officer.

POLICEMAN
All right, move it.

Travis starts up his taxi and drives off.

LIVE SOUND again CEASES as Travis resumes reading letter as taxi drives away.

As Travis reads final paragraph, scene CUTS to INT. APARTMENT where Travis sits at his table.

TRAVIS V.O.
(resuming reading)
I hope this card finds you all well, as it does me. I hope no one has died. Don't worry about me. One day there will be a knock on the door and it will be me.

Love,
Travis

Travis, at his desk, examines the card upon which he has just written this letter.

C.U. cover of card. It is a 25¢ Wedding Anniversary card with a four-color embossed cover. The design could only be described as ur-kitsch. A cartoon Mr. and Mrs. All-America stand before an outdoor barbecuing grill, clicking salt and pepper shakers in a toast. Sentiment reads:

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY
To a Couple
Who Have Found
the Perfect Combination
For Marriage...

The card opens to read::

LOVE!

Underneath the word "Love!" begins Travis' short message to his parents, a message which extends to the back cover of the card.

CUT TO:

NIGHT on the LOWER EAST SIDE. Travis sits parked in the dark shadows of a side street. The lone wolf waits.

Travis watches the slum goddesses as they work the section of the street reserved for hippie hookers.

Travis' POV: some of the young street girls some arrogant, almost aggressive, others are more insecure and inexperienced.

A BLACK MAN charges down the sidewalk across the street from Travis. He walks at a fast, maniacal clip, looking only at the sidewalk in front of him. Out of his mouth comes a continuous stream of invective: "That-cock-sucking-crazy-no-good-asshole-bitch-when-I-get-my-fucking-fingers-on-her-nigger-tits-I'm-gonna-ring-em-and-shit-up-her-ass..." and so on. He is Out Of Control. Nobody seems to notice or care.

Travis takes a swig of peach brandy and continues his stake-out.

Finally, Travis spies the object of his search: IRIS walks down the sidewalk with her GIRLFRIEND.

Travis checks to see if his .38 is in place (it is), opens the door and exits from the cab.

Flipping up the collar of his Army jacket, Travis slouches over and walks toward Iris. He sort of sidles up next to her and walks beside her: Travis always looks most suspicious when he's trying to appear innocent.

TRAVIS

(shy)

Hello.

IRIS

You looking for some action?

TRAVIS

Well...I guess so.

IRIS

(eying him)

All right.

(a beat)

You see that guy over there?

(nods)

His name is Sport. Go talk to him. I'll wait here.

Travis' eyes follow Iris' nod until he spots the young man with the fringed suede jacket standing in a doorway. He walks toward him.

TRAVIS
Your name Sport?

SPORT
What of it?

Travis recognizes the voice of the man who threw the crumpled \$20 bill on the front seat of his taxi. Looking closer, Travis sees the face of a thirty year-old greaser pimp dressed in a hippie scarecrow costume. He may be shooting drugs now, he may not; whichever the case, his face bears the marks of past use. He has a rash covering one hand.

TRAVIS
I want some action.

SPORT
I saw. \$20 fifteen minutes.
\$30 half hour.

TRAVIS
Shit.

SPORT
Take it or leave it.

TRAVIS
I'll take it.

Travis digs in his pocket for money.

SPORT
No, not me. There'll be an
elderly gent to take the
bread.

Travis turns to walk away.

SPORT
Hey copper.

Travis freezes, not saying anything. He turns back toward Sport.

TRAVIS
I'm no copper.

SPORT
Well, if you are, it's
entrapment already.

TRAVIS

I'm hip.

SPORT

Funny, you don't look hip.
(laughs)

Travis walks back to Iris.

Iris motions for Travis to follow her and he does.

Iris and Travis turn the corner and walk about a block, saying nothing. Iris turns into a darkened doorway and Travis follows her.

At the top of the dark stairs Iris and Travis enter a dimly lit hallway. On either side are doors with apartment numbers. Iris turns toward the first door, No. 2.

IRIS

This is my room.

At the far end of the darkened corridor sits a huge old man. His face is obscured by shadow. Travis is about to enter the room when the old man speaks up:

OLD MAN

Hey cowboy!

Travis turns his head toward the old man who has stood up and is advancing toward him.

OLD MAN

(motioning to Travis'
jacket)

The rod.

(a beat)

Gimme the rod, cowboy.

Travis hesitates a moment, uncertain what to do. The old man reaches in Travis' jacket and pulls out the .38 Special.

OLD MAN

This ain't Dodge City, cowboy.

You don't need no rod.

(glances at watch)

I'm keepin' time.

Travis enters No. 2 with Iris.

Travis looks around Iris' room: although dimly lit, the room is brightly decorated. There is an orange shag carpet, deep brown walls and an old red velvet sofa. On the walls are posters of Mick Jagger, Bob Dylan and Peter Fonda. A Neil Young album is playing on a small phonograph. In the far corner is a double bed covered with a dark red Indian print bedspread.

This is obviously where Iris lives: it bears the individual touch of a young girl.

TRAVIS

Why you hang around with them greasers?

IRIS

Young girls get beat up.

TRAVIS

Yeah. By the likes of them.

IRIS

(shrugs)

It's your time mister. Fifteen minutes ain't long.

Iris sits on the edge of the bed, taking off her floppy hat and coat. In the light, and without the paraphernalia of adulthood, Iris looks like the little girl she really is. She's 14, maybe 15.

TRAVIS

What's your name?

IRIS

Easy.

TRAVIS

That ain't much of a name.

IRIS

It's easy to remember. Easy Lay.

TRAVIS

What's your real name?

IRIS

I don't like my real name.

TRAVIS
(insistent)
What's your real name?

IRIS
Iris.

TRAVIS
That's a nice name.

IRIS
That's what you think.

Iris unbuttons her shirt, revealing her small pathetic breasts--two young doves hiding from a winter wind. Travis is unnerved by her partial nudity.

TRAVIS
Don't you remember me?
Button your shirt.

Iris buttons only the bottom button of her shirt.

IRIS
(examining him)
Why? Who are you?

TRAVIS
I drive a taxi. You tried to
get away one night. Remember?

IRIS
No.

TRAVIS
You tried to run away in my
taxi but your friend--Sport--
wouldn't let you.

IRIS
I don't remember.

TRAVIS
It don't matter. I'm gonna
get you outa here.
(looks toward door)

IRIS
We better make it, or Sport'll
get mad. How do you want to
make it?

TRAVIS

(pressured)

I don't want to make it. I
came here to get you out.

IRIS

You want to make it like
this?

(goes for his fly)

Travis pushes her hand away. He sits beside her on the
edge of the bed.

TRAVIS

(taking her by the
shoulders)

Can't you listen to me? Don't
you want to get out of here?

IRIS

Why should I want to get out
of here? This is where I live.

TRAVIS

(exasperated)

But you're the one that wanted
to get away. You're the one
that came into my cab.

IRIS

I musta been stoned.

TRAVIS

Do they drug you?

IRIS

(reproving)

Oh, come off it, man.

Iris tries to unzip Travis' fly. This only unnerves Travis
more: sexual contact is something he's never really confronted.

TRAVIS

Listen...

IRIS

Don't you want to make it?

(a beat)

Can't you make it?

Iris works on Travis' crotch OFF CAMERA. He bats her hand away.

TRAVIS
(distraught)
I want to help you.

Travis is getting increasingly panicked, but Iris only thinks this is part of his particular thing and tries to overcome it.

IRIS
(catching on)
You can't make it, can you?
(a beat)
I can help you.

Iris lowers her head to go down on Travis. Travis, seeing this, jumps up in panic.

Travis stands several feet from Iris. His fly is still open, and the white of his underwear shows through his jeans. He is starting to come apart.

TRAVIS
Fuck it! Fuck it! Fuck it!
Fuck it! Fuck it! Fuck it!
Fuck it!
(a beat)
Don't you understand anything?

Iris says nothing. After a moment, Travis again sits on the bed beside Iris. She no longer tries to make him. Travis is near tears, on the verge of personal collapse.

There is a moment of silence. Iris puts her arm around his shoulder.

IRIS
You don't have to make it,
mister.

Travis rests a moment, collecting himself. Finally, he says:

TRAVIS
(slowly)
Do you understand why I came
here?

IRIS

I think so. I tried to get into your cab one night, and now you want to come and take me away.

TRAVIS

Don't you want to go?

IRIS

I can leave anytime I want.

TRAVIS

But that one night?

IRIS

I was stoned. That's why they stopped me. When I'm not stoned, I got no place else to go. They just protect me from myself.

There is a pause. Travis smiles and shrugs apologetically.

TRAVIS

Well, I tried.

IRIS

(compassionate)

I understand, mister. It means something, really.

TRAVIS

(getting up)

Can I see you again?

IRIS

That's not hard to do.

TRAVIS

No, I mean really. This is nothing for a person to do.

IRIS

Sure. All right. We'll have breakfast. I get up about one o'clock. Tomorrow.

TRAVIS

(thinking)

Well tomorrow noon there's a ...I got a....

Iris is interfering with Travis' assassination schedule.

IRIS

Well, you want to or not?

TRAVIS

(deciding)

O.K. It's a date. I'll see you here, then.

Travis turns; Iris smiles.

TRAVIS

Oh, Iris?

IRIS

Yes?

TRAVIS

My name's Travis.

IRIS

Thank you, Travis.

TRAVIS

So long, Iris.

(a beat)

Sweet Iris.

(smiles)

Travis exits.

Travis closes the door to No. 2 and stands in the corridor for a moment.

The old man slowly walks from the dark end of the hallway with Travis' .38 in his hand. Old man stands near Travis, and checks his watch.

OLD MAN

(holding gun)

I think this is yours, cowboy.

Travis reaches in his jacket pocket and pulls out the familiar crumpled \$20 bill. He makes a big show of stuffing the wrinkled bill into the old man's hand. The old man doesn't understand the significance of it.

TRAVIS
(restrained anger)
Here's the twenty bucks, old
man. You better damn well
spend it right.

Travis turns and walks away.

Old man says as Travis walks down stairs:

OLD MAN
Come back anytime you want,
cowboy. But without the rod--
please.

Travis does not respond.

CUT TO:

LATE BREAKFAST

Travis and Iris are having late breakfast at a middle-class EAST SIDE COFFEE SHOP. It is about 1:30 P.M.

Iris is dressed more sensibly, wearing jeans and a maroon sweater. Her face is freshly washed and her hair combed out.

Seen this way, Iris looks no different than any young girl in the big city. Other patrons of the coffee shop most likely assume she is having lunch with her big brother.

They are both having an All-American breakfast: ham and eggs, large glasses of orange juice, coffee.

We cut into their conversation.

IRIS

...After that Sport and I started hanging around together. I just kept getting broker and broker, so one thing led to another. I ain't complaining--much.

TRAVIS

Where is home?

IRIS

Pittsburgh.

TRAVIS

I ain't ever been there, but it don't seem like such a bad place.

IRIS

(voice rising)

Why do you want me to go back to my parents? They hate me. Why do you think I split? There ain't nothin there.

TRAVIS

But you can't live like this.
It's hell. If you ain't sick
now, you'll soon get hooked or
die or something or another.
Girls need protection.

IRIS

(playfully)

Didn't you ever hear of women's
lib?

There is a short, quick silence; Travis' eyes retract. He
goes on:

TRAVIS

(ignoring her question)

This ain't no place for a young
girl to live. Young girls are
supposed to dress up, go to
school, play with boys, you know,
that kinda stuff.

IRIS

God, are you square.

TRAVIS

(releasing pent-up tension)

At least I don't walk the streets
like a skunk pussy. I don't screw
and fuck with killers and junkies.

Iris motions him to lower his voice.

IRIS

Who's a killer?

TRAVIS

That fella "Sport" looks like a
killer to me.

IRIS

He never killed nobody. He ain't
much, but he never killed nobody.

TRAVIS

How do you know?

(a beat)

And he's a dope-shooter, too.

IRIS

What makes you so high and mighty?
Did you ever look at your own
eyeballs in the mirror? You don't
get them lines from drinking Coca-
Cola. I know that much.

TRAVIS

(ignoring her)

He's worse than an animal. Jail's
too good for scum like that.

There is a brief silence. Iris picks up the thin thread of
conversation and continues. She welcomes this opportunity to
unburden herself on a member of the straight world.

IRIS

Well, the scene around here aint'
much anymore. I can tell you that.
A year ago it was fantastic--everybody
was crashing, cruising, hanging out
at the Fillmore, gettin stoned.
It was unbelievable--rock stars were
everywhere. But now all the kids
have split or got sick or busted. I
think I'll move to one of them communes
in Vermont. That's where all of the
smart ones went. I stayed here.

(a beat)

But now all the little kids are coming
in. They don't know nothing. They
get the clap in two weeks, or O.D.--
it just makes your stomach sick.

TRAVIS

I never been to a commune. I don't
know. I saw pictures in a magazine,
and it didn't look very clean to me.

IRIS

Why don't you come to a commune
with me?

TRAVIS

Me? I could never go to a place
like that.

IRIS

Why not?

TRAVIS

(hesitant)

I...I don't get along with people like that.

IRIS

People like what?

TRAVIS

(evasive)

Well, you know, people like... they just wouldn't, you know...

(a beat)

Besides, I've got to stay here.

IRIS

Why?

TRAVIS

I've got something important to do. I can't leave.

IRIS

What's so important?

TRAVIS

I can't say--it's top secret. I'm doing something for the Army. The cab thing is just part time.

IRIS

You a narc?

TRAVIS

Do I look like a narc?

IRIS

Yeah.

Travis breaks out in his big infectious grin, and Iris joins his laughter.

IRIS

God, I don't know who's weirder, you or me.

TRAVIS

(pause)

What are you going to do about Sport and that old bastard?

IRIS

When?

TRAVIS

When you leave.

IRIS

Just leave 'em. They've been wanting to give the room to another girl who would work more, anyway.

TRAVIS

You just gonna leave 'em?

IRIS

(astonished)

What should I do? Call the cops?

TRAVIS

Cops don't do nothin.

IRIS

Sport never treated me bad, honest. Never beat me up once.

TRAVIS

You can't leave 'em to do the same to other girls. You should get rid of them.

IRIS

How?

TRAVIS

(shrugs)

I don't know. Just should, though.

(a beat)

Somebody should kill 'em. Nobody'd miss 'em.

IRIS

(taken back)

God. I know where they should have a commune for you. They should have a commune for you at Bellview.

TRAVIS

(apologetic/sheepish)

I'm sorry, Iris. I didn't mean that.

IRIS

You're not much with girls, are you?

TRAVIS

(thinks)

Well, Iris, I look at it this way. A lot of girls come into my cab, some of them very beautiful. And I figure all day long men have been after them: trying to touch them, talk to them, ask them out. And they hate it. So I figure the best I can do for them is not to bother them at all. So I don't say a thing. I pretend I'm not even there. I figure they'll understand that and appreciate me for it.

It takes Iris a moment to digest this pure example of negative thinking: I am loved to the extent I do not exist.

SLIGHT TIMECUT. Travis and Iris are finishing their second cups of coffee. Their dirty plates have been taken away. Travis has the money ready to pay the check.

IRIS

Do you really think I should go to the commune?

TRAVIS

I think you should go home, but otherwise I think you should go. It would be great for you. You have to get away from here, quick, before you're beat up or killed. The city's a sewer, you gotta get out of it.

IRIS

Sure you don't want to come with me?

TRAVIS

I can't. Otherwise, I would.

IRIS

I sure hate to go alone.

TRAVIS

I'll give you the money to go. I don't want you to take any from those guys.

IRIS
You don't have to.

TRAVIS
I want to--what else can I do
with my money?

IRIS
When will I see you again?

TRAVIS
I'll come by the day after
tomorrow. But if I can't make
it, I'll send you a letter.
You may not see me again--for a
while.

IRIS
What do you mean?

Close on C.U. of Travis:

TRAVIS
My work may take me out of
New York.

CUT TO:

GOD'S LONELY MAN

FIRING RANGE. DAY. Travis stands at the firing range blasting the .44 Magnum with a rapid-fire vengeance.

He sets down one gun, picks up the next, then the next. Quickly reloading, he fires again.

The targets spin and dance under his barrage. The piercing sound of GUNSHOTS ring thorough the air.

CUT to INT. APARTMENT. Travis is again writing at the table. His western shirt is open, exposing his bare chest.

A note of despair and doom has entered into Travis' normally monotone narration voice: this will be the last entry in his diary.

TRAVIS V.O.

My whole life has pointed in one direction. I see that now. There never has been any choice for me.

(CONT'D)

CUT to lengthy P.O.V. shot from Travis' taxi: we see New York' nightlife as Travis sees it. Camera TRACKS down midtown sidewalks in SLIGHTLY SLOW MOTION. There we see:

Couples, walking in SLOWING MOTION, young couples, middle-aged couples, old couples, hookers and johns, girlfriends, boyfriend business friends--the whole world matched up in pairs, and Travis left wandering alone in the night.

Others would notice the breasts, the asses, the faces, but not Travis: he notices the girl's hand that rubs the hair on her boyfriend's neck, the hand that hangs lightly on his shoulder, the nuzzling kiss in the ear.

TRAVIS V.O.

(cont'd)

Loneliness has followed me all my life. The life of loneliness pursues me wherever I go: in bars, cars, coffee shops, theaters, stores, sidewalks. There is no escape. I am God's lonely man.

(CONT'D)

MATCHCUT to P.O.V.: another neighborhood, LATER IN THE NIGHT. Still in SLIGHTLY SLOW MOTION.

The crowds are more sparse here, the streets darker. A junkie shudders in a doorway, a wino pukes into a trash can, a street-walker meets a prospective client.

TRAVIS V.O.

(cont'd)

I am not a fool. I will no longer fool myself. I will no longer let myself fall apart, become a joke and object of ridicule. I know there is no longer any hope. I cannot continue this hollow, empty fight. I must sleep. What hope is there for me?

CUT to INT. APARTMENT. Travis, his shirt fastened, stands beside table.

C.U.: he lays a brief hand-written letter on the table. We read it:

Dear Iris,

This money should be enough for your trip. Take the trip immediately. Do not delay. By the time you read this I will be dead.

Travis

Travis stacks five crisp hundred dollar bills beside the letter, folds them up with the letter, and puts them into an envelope.

TIMECUT: A SHORT WHILE LATER. Travis has cleaned up his apartment. Everything is neat and orderly.

Camera PANS across room: the mattress is bare and flattened out, the floor is spotless, the cans and bottles of food and pills put out of sight. The wall is still covered with Palantine political paraphernalia, but when we reach the desk we see only four items there: an open diary and three loaded revolvers: .44, .38, .25.

Travis, freshly shaved and neatly dressed, stands in the middle of his clean room. The empty holster hangs on his shoulder. metal .25 gliders can be seen under the slit in his right sleeve. He turns toward table.

CUT to EXT. Travis places the envelope to Iris in his mail box where the mailman will pick it up.

BACK in APARTMENT. Camera CLOSES ON revolvers lying on the table in neat array.

CUT TO:

THERE IS AN ASSASSIN

FADE IN:

SOUND of a political rally: cheer ing, laughing, a band playing, talking.

AFTERNOON. A crowd of about 500 persons is assembled before a platform outside a Brooklyn union hall. A Dixieland band is playing on the platform.

C.U. CHARLES PALANTINE's feet climb out of a limousine. There is a ROAR from the nearby crowd.

Palantine, a bulky Secret Service man to the right and left of him, pushes his way through the crowd toward the platform. Still cameras click, and TV cameras purr.

SLIGHT TIMECUT: Palantine is speaking on the platform.

CUT: Travis' empty taxi sits parked a few blocks away from rally. At this distance, the rally sounds are almost indistinguishable.

C.U. of Travis' boots walking. They make their way past one person, then two, then a cluster of three or four. SOUNDS of rally increase.

We see a full figure shot of Travis: he is standing alone in an opening near the fringes of the crowd.

Travis looks like the most suspicious human being alive. His hair is cropped short, he wears mirror-reflecting glasses. His face is pallid and drained of color, his lips are pursed and drawn tight. He looks from side to side. One can now see the full effect of Travis' lack of sleep and sufficient diet--he looks sick and frail.

Even though it is a warm June day, Travis is bundled up in a shirt, sweater and Army jacket buttoned from top to bottom. Under his jacket are several large lumps, causing his upper torso to look larger than it should. He is slightly hunched over and his hands shoved into his pockets.

Anyone scanning the crowd would immediately light upon Travis and think, "There is an assassin."

Travis pulls the vial of red pills from his pocket and swallows a couple.

CUT to SECRET SERVICE MAN standing beside the platform, scanning the crowd. It is the same Secret Service Man Travis spoke to at the first rally. TOM, dressed in a conservative suit, stands beside him.

PALANTINE is wrapping up his short speech:

PALANTINE

...and with your help we will
go on to victory at the polls
Tuesday.

(applause)

(CONT'D)

Travis begins moving up into the crowd.

PALANTINE

(cont'd)

on to victory in Miami Beach
next month

(building applause)

and on to victory next November!

Palantine steps back, smiling and receiving the applause. Then, nodding, at the Secret Service Man he descends the stairs and prepares to work his way through the crowd.

Travis unbuttons the middle two buttons of his jacket, opening access to his holster. With the other hand he checks the .44 hooked behind his back.

Palantine smiles and shakes a few of the many hands outstretched toward him.

The Secret Service Man, scanning the crowd, spots something that interests him. He looks closely.

Secret Service Man's P.O.V.: Travis, his face intense, pushes his way through the crowd.

Palantine works his way through crowds and cameras.

Secret Service Man motions to SECOND SECRET SERVICE MAN and points in Travis' direction.

Travis slips his hand into his jacket.

The second Secret Service Man converges on Travis from the side.

Travis and Palantine draw closer to each other.

Secret Service Man, walking just behind Palantine, grabs the candidate's hand and pulls him backward. Palantine looks sharply back at Secret Service Man who motions for him to take a slightly altered route.

Travis sees this: his eyes meet the Secret Service Man's. He recognizes the situation. To his right he spots the Second Secret Service Man.

Travis' eyes meet Palantine's: candidate and would-be assassin exchange quick glances.

Travis hastily works his way back through the crowd. He hears the Secret Service Man's voice call out:

SECRET SERVICE MAN
Detain that man!

OVERHEAD SHOT reveals Travis has the jump on his pursuers. He is breaking free of the crowd while they are still mired in it.

Travis, free of his pursuers, quickly makes his way down the sidewalks. The Secret Service Men look futilely about.

Travis jumps in his cab. Sweat covers his face.

CUT TO:

TOWARD THE KILL

The film is moving fast now; it pushes hard and straight toward its conclusion. We're moving toward the kill.

LATE AFTERNOON. Travis' taxi skids around a corner and speeds into Manhattan.

Travis checks his mail slot: the letter to Iris has already been picked up by the mailman.

Travis, stripped to the waist, walks back and forth across his INT. APARTMENT, wiping his torso with a bath towel.

Travis begins dressing:

--He straps the Army combat knife to his calf.

--He refixes the metal gliders and the Colt .25 on his right forearm.

INTERCUT: SPORT stands in his doorway on the LOWER EAST SIDE shot with LONG DISTANCE LENS. It is EARLY EVENING.

INTERCUT: A pudgy middle-aged white PRIVATE COP walks up to Sport. The two men laugh, slap each other on the back and exchange a soul shake. They discuss a little private business and the Private Cop walks off in the direction of Iris' apartment.

--Travis straps on holster and fits the .38 Special into it.

INTERCUT: Private Cop walks down block.

--Travis hooks the huge Magnum into the back of his belt. He puts on his Army jacket and walks out the door.

INTERCUT: Private Cop turns up darkened stairway to Iris' apartment.

NIGHT has fallen: Travis' taxi careens down 10th Ave. He speeds, honks, accelerates quickly. The glare of speeding yellow and red lights flash through the night.

TRAVIS' P.O.V.: pedestrian attempts to flag down Travis' taxi, but quickly steps back up on the curb when he sees Travis has no intention of stopping for anything.

INTERCUT: Sport maintains his post in the dark doorway. He waves to a girl who passes, and she waves back.

Travis' taxi screeches to a stop and parks obliquely against the curb.

CUT TO:

THE SLAUGHTER

Travis walks down the block to the doorway where Sport stands.
Camera TRACKS with Travis.

Without slowing, Travis walks up to Sport and puts his arm
on his shoulder in a gesture of friendliness:

TRAVIS

Hey, Sport. How are things?

SPORT

(shrugs)

O.K., cowboy.

TRAVIS

(needling him)

- How are things in the pimp
business, hey Sport?

SPORT

What's going on?

TRAVIS

I'm here to see Iris.

SPORT

Iris?

Travis pushes Sport back into the dark recesses of the
corridor.

SPORT

Wha--?

TRAVIS

Yeah, Iris. You know anybody
by that name?

SPORT

No.

(a beat)

Hillbilly, you'd better get your
wise ass outa here and quick, or
you're gonna be in trouble.

Travis is being propelled by an inner force, a force which
takes him past the boundaries of reason and self-control.

TRAVIS

(restrained anger)

You carry a gun?

Sport looks into Travis' eyes, saying nothing: he realizes the seriousness of the situation.

Travis pulls his .38 Special and holds it on Sport, pushing him even further back against the wall.

TRAVIS

Get it.

SPORT

(submissive)

Hey, mister, I don't know what's going on here. This don't many any sense.

TRAVIS

(demanding)

Show it to me.

Sport reluctantly pulls a .32 caliber pistol (a "purse gun") from his pocket and holds it limply.

Travis sticks his .38 into Sport's gut and discharges it. There is a muffled blast, followed by a muted scream of pain.

TRAVIS

Now suck on that.

Agony and shock cross Sport's face as he slumps to the floor. Travis turns and walks away before Sport even hits.

As Travis walks away, Sport can be seen struggling in the b.g.

Travis, his gun slipped into his jacket, walks quickly up the sidewalk.

AROUND THE CORNER, Travis walks into the darkened stairway leading to Iris' apartment.

As he walks up the stairs, Travis pulls the .44 Magnum from behind his back and transfers the .38 Special to his left hand. He walks up the steps, a pistol dangling from each hand.

AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS, Travis spots THE OLD MAN sitting at the far end of the dark corridor. The old man starts to get up when Travis discharges the mighty .44 at him. BLAAM! The hallway reverberates with shock waves and gun powder.

The old man staggers at the end of the corridor: his right hand has been blown off at the forearm.

There is the sharp sound of a gunshot behind Travis: his face grimaces in pain. A bullet has ripped through the left side of his neck. Blood flows over his left shoulder.

Travis' .44 flies into the air.

Travis looks down the stairway: there Sport lies choking in a puddle of his own blood. He has struggled long enough to fire one shot.

Falling, Travis drills another .38 slug into Sport's back but Sport is already dead.

Travis slumps to his knees. Down the corridor the old man with a bloody stump is struggling toward him. Travis turns his .38 toward the old man.

The door to No. 2 opens: Iris' scream is heard in the b.g. The bulky frame of the PRIVATE COP fills the doorway. His blue shirt is open, in his hand hangs a .38 service revolver.

The Private Cop raises his gun and shoots Travis. Travis, blood gushing from his right shoulder, sinks to the floor. His .38 clangs down the stairs.

The old man grows closer. Travis smashes his right arm against the wall, miraculously, the small Colt .25 glides down his forearm into his palm.

Travis fills the Private Cop's face full of bullet holes.

The Private Cop, SCREAMING, crashes back into the room.

The old man crashes atop Travis. The .25 falls from Travis' hand.

Both men are bleeding profusely as they thrash into Iris' room. Iris hides behind the old red velvet sofa, her face frozen in fright.

Travis, trapped under the heavy old man, reaches down with his right hand and pulls the combat knife from his right calf.

Just as Travis draws back the knife, the old man brings his huge left palm crashing down on Travis: the old man's palm is impaled on the knife.

Old man SCREAMS in pain.

Police SIRENS are heard in b.g.

With great effort, Travis turns over, pinning the old man to the floor. The bloody knife blade sticks through his up-turned hand.

Travis reaches over with his right hand and picks up the revolver of the now dead Private Cop.

Travis hoists himself up and sticks the revolver into the old man's mouth.

The old man's voice is full of pain and ghastly fright:

OLD MAN

Don't kill me! Don't kill me!

Iris screams in b.g. Travis looks up:

IRIS

Don't kill him, Travis! Don't kill him!

Travis fires the revolver, blowing the back of the old man's head off and silencing his protests.

The police sirens screech to a halt. Sound of police officers running up the stairs.

Travis struggles up and collapses on the red velvet sofa, his blood-soaked body blending with the velvet.

Iris retreats in fright against the far wall.

First uniformed POLICE OFFICER rushes in room, drawn gun in hand. Other policemen can be heard running up the stairs.

Travis looks helplessly up at the officer. He forms his bloody hand into a pistol, raises it to his forehead and, his voice croaking in pain, makes the sound of a pistol discharging.

TRAVIS
Pggheh! Pggheh!

Out of breath fellow officers join the first policeman. They survey the room.

Travis' head slumps against the sofa.

Iris is huddled in the corner, shaking.

LIVE SOUND CEASES.

OVERHEAD SLOW MOTION TRACKING SHOT surveys the damage:

--from Iris shaking against the blood-spattered wall

--to Travis blood-soaked body lying on the sofa

--to the old man with half a head, a bloody stump for one hand and a knife sticking out the other

--to police officers staring in amazement

--to the Private Cop's bullet-ridden face trapped near the doorway

--to puddles of blood and a lonely .44 Magnum lying on the hallway carpet.

--down the blood-speckled stairs on which lies a nickle-plated .38 Smith and Wesson Special

--to the foot of the stairs where Sport's body is hunched over a pool of blood and a small .32 lies near his hand

--to crowds huddled around the doorway, held back by police officers

--past red flashing lights, running policemen and parked police cars

--to the ongoing nightlife of the Lower East Side, curious but basically unconcerned, looking then heading its own way

SCREENWRITER'S NOTE: The screenplay has been moving at a reasonably realistic level until this prolonged slaughter. The slaughter itself is a gory extension of violence, more surreal than real.

The slaughter is the moment Travis has been heading for all his life, and where this screenplay has been heading for over 100 pages. It is the release of all that cumulative pressure; it is a reality unto itself. It is the psychopath's Second Coming.

FADE TO:

LETTER FROM PITTSBURGH

FADE IN:

EXT. Travis' APARTMENT. DAY. It is EARLY FALL. The trees are losing their leaves.

CUT to SLOW TRACKING SHOT across INT. APARTMENT. Room appears pretty much the same, although there is a new portable TV and an inexpensive easy chair.

visual

TRACK begins at table and works across room to the mattress.

We see these items:

--On the table rests the diary, closed. A desk calender stands on the table: it is October.

--Across the wall where the Palantine clippings once hung there are now a series of new newspaper clippings. Right to left, they read:

1. The first is a full back page from the N.Y. Daily News. Headline reads: "CABBIE BATTLES GANGSTERS". There are large photos of police standing in Iris' room after the slaughter, and a picture of Travis' cabbie mug shot.

2. Underneath there is a more discreet clipping without photo from the N.Y. Times. Two-column headline reads: "Cabbie Shootout, Three Dead."

3. A follow-up story from the News. Two-column photo shows plain middle-aged couple sitting in middle-class living room. Two -col head reads: "Parents Express Shock, Gratitude."

audio

THROUGHOUT THE TRACK, we hear the voice of a middle-aged uneducated man reading in voice over.

It is the voice of Iris' father and he is reading a letter he sent to Travis, and which Travis has tacked to his wall.

IRIS' FATHER V.O.

Dear Mr. Bickle,

I can't say how happy Mrs. Steensma and I were to hear that you are well and recuperating. We tried to visit you at the hospital when we were in New York to pick up Iris, but you were still in a coma.

There is no way we can repay you for returning our Iris to us. We thought we had lost her, but now our lives are full again. Needless to say, you are something of a hero around this household.

I'm sure you want to hear about Iris. She is back in school and working hard. The transition has been very hard for her, as you can well imagine but we have taken steps to see

(CONT'D)

4. A two-column Daily News story without photo. Headline reads: "Taxi-Driver Hero to Recover."

5. A one-column two-paragraph News story stuck on an obscure page. Headline reads: "Cabbie Returns to Job."

--At the end of the clippings, a letter is tacked to the wall. It is a simple letter handwritten on plain white paper. The handwriting makes a conscious effort to appear neat and orderly. We recognize from some of the words that it is the same letter that is being read in voice over.

--When we finally arrive at the mattress, we find it is barren. A pillow and blanket (new purchases) are folded at the head of the mattress.

IRIS' FATHER V.O.
(cont'd)

She never has cause to run away again.

In conclusion, Mrs. Steensma and I would like to again thank you from the bottom of our hearts. Unfortunately, we cannot afford to come to New York again to thank you in person, or we surely would. But if you should ever come to Pittsburgh, you would find yourself a most welcome guest in our home.

Our deepest thanks,

Burt and Ivy Steensma

CUT TO:

OLD FRIENDS

EXT. PLAZA HOTEL. NIGHT. Four cabs stand in the waiting line in front of the hotel.

Near the entrance, Travis and WIZARD stand in the light talking.

Travis' hair is almost fully grown back to its normal length. Travis wears the same clothes--cowboy boots, jeans, western shirt, Army jacket--but he isn't wearing a gun. There is a thick scar on the left side of his neck.

CHARLIE T parks his cab in line and walks toward Travis and Wizard.

CHARLIE T
Howdy Wizard, Killer
(CONT'D)

Charlie T points his pistol/finger at Travis, fires, says "Pow" and laughs.

CHARLIE T
(cont'd)
(casual joking)
Don't mess with the Killer.

TRAVIS
(smiles)
Hey Charlie T.

WIZARD
Howsit, Charlie?
(pause)
Hey Travis, I think you got a fare.

They all turn. P.O.V. of doorman closing rear door of Travis' taxi.

TRAVIS
Shit.
(runs off)

CHARLIE T
Take it slow, Killer.

Travis waves back to Charlie T and Wizard as he runs around cab and jumps in the driver's seat.

Travis' taxi pulls away.

C.U. Travis at the wheel. A female voice says:

FEMALE VOICE
34 East 56th Street

Travis recognizes the voice. He looks in the rear-view mirror: it is Betsy.

Travis says nothing: he heads toward 56th Street.

After a silence, Betsy speaks:

BETSY
Hello, Travis.

TRAVIS
Hello, Betsy.

There is an uneasy pause.

TRAVIS
I see where Palantine got
the nomination.

BETSY
Yes. It won't be long now.
Seventeen days.

TRAVIS
Well, I hope he wins.

There is another pause.

BETSY
(concerned)
How are you, Travis? I
read about you in the papers.

TRAVIS
Oh, I got over that. It
was nothing, really. The
papers always blow these
things up.
(a beat)
A little stiffness. That'll
go away. I just sleep more,
that's all.

EXT. Travis' taxi pulls up to 34 East 56th Street.

TRAVIS

Here we are.

Betsy digs in her purse.

TRAVIS

(protesting)

No, no, please. This fare's
on me. Please.

BETSY

Thank you, Travis.

Betsy gets out of the cab and stands by the right front
window, which is open.

Travis prepares to drive away.

BETSY

Travis?

TRAVIS

Yeah.

BETSY

Call me up sometime, huh?

TRAVIS

(thin smile)

Sure.

Betsy steps away from the curb and Travis drives off. She
watches his taxi.

Camera follows Travis' taxi as it slowly disappears down
56th Street.

SUPERIMPOSE TITLES: THE END