

# **The Place Beyond The Pines**

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*"He linked the past with the present, and the eternity behind him throbbed through him in a mighty rhythm to which he swayed as the tides and seasons swayed."*

*Jack London,*  
THE CALL OF THE WILD

*"One cannot violate the promptings of one's nature without having that nature recoil upon itself."*

*Jack London,*  
WHITE FANG



LUKE

Hey!

ROMINA

(shifting, awkward)

I didn't know if you'd remember...

Luke looks at her like she's crazy. His fans tug on his clothing, vying for his attention. He pushes through them to get closer to Romina. They give each other a little hug, careful not to smush the youngsters all around them.

LUKE

You wanna go somewhere? You got plans tonight?

ROMINA

(shrugs)

I gotta go. I just wanted to see you again.

LUKE

Can I give you a ride home?

She remembers the thrill riding on the back of Luke's bike.

ROMINA

I'm fine. I can just take the bus.

4 EXT. ROUTE 5 - NIGHT

4

Luke tears away from the Arena. Everything around looks run-down, abandoned. We are in Schenectady; a smaller, upstate-New York version of Detroit. It is 1994.

Romina rides on the back of his bike, her arms holding tight around his abdomen. The wind blows hair into her indecisive face. She really should be on the bus right now. But the air is cold and Luke's body is warm. She buries her face into the back of his leather jacket.

5 EXT. TWO-FAMILY HOUSE - LATER

5

Luke pulls up in front of an old, two-family house. Romina gets off, looks over her shoulder; the living room light is ON. She says, "thanks" and gives Luke a peck on the cheek.

LUKE

That's it? You don't wanna talk, or anything...

ROMINA

(hiding something)

I can't. I think about you a lot.

LUKE

So then lets hang. We pack up after tomorrow night's show and I probably won't be back this way for another year. At least. Wanna get a beer or something?

ROMINA

(comes close, whispers)  
I'm with someone... I just wanted to see you again...

She kisses him again quick, wishing she could stay. Then runs away, not looking back, up the steps of her childhood home.

LUKE

Say 'hi' to your mom.

Luke starts his bike, tears out of the neighborhood, tires squealing smoke, blackening the street.

6 EXT. ALTAMONT FAIR. NIGHT. 6

Engine gunning, Luke circles the inside of the steel cage in a rage. He is on the verge of crashing. The audience rapt.

7 LATER 7

ROADIES and performers pack up the steel cage. Luke wanders through the activity and ignores the throngs of kids seeking autographs. He searches the fair for Romina. She is nowhere to be found. He mounts his bike.

8 EXT. ROUTE 5 - NIGHT 8

Raging, Luke drives fast through the night streets.

9 EXT./INT. TWO FAMILY HOUSE - LATER. 9

MALENA, 47, Guatemalan, opens the door in nurse's scrubs. Instantly, she recognizes Luke.

LUKE

Hello mama.

MALENA

She's no here.

LUKE

(sighs, resigned)  
Is the man of the house home?

Luke hears a BABY crying from inside. Malena tries to hide it by closing the door so only her head is visible.

MALENA  
 Nobody's home...

Malena is short. And Luke peeks over her into the house. SEES - a few baby toys scattered in the floor. Luke looks down. Malena relents. She can't keep him away from the truth any longer.

10 INT. TWO- FAMILY HOUSE- CONTINUOUS 10

He gets past her. Looks around the house. Follows the sound of the crying baby upstairs. He pushes open the door to Romina's bedroom.

A BABY wails in the center of a twin bed surrounded by pillows. Malena comes in, scoops him up, starts to bounce and "shush" him. Luke stands near the door, rocked.

MALENA  
 You wanna hold him?

Luke is unsure. He awkwardly, but gently accepts the baby into his arms. Luke and the baby stare at one another. Tears well in Luke's eyes as he falls in love with his son. Malena smiles.

LUKE  
 Romina still work at the diner?

Malena tries to give nothing away.

11 INT. OLYMPIC DINER - LATER 11

Luke walks into the diner. He's pissed, looks around but doesn't see Romina.

Luke doesn't sit. He waits. Romina exits kitchen with a tray of food. Sees Luke immediately.

ROMINA  
 What are you doing here?

LUKE  
 Oh, I don't know... You think we have anything else to discuss before I take off again tomorrow forever?

Romina is frozen for a second. She knows that Luke knows her secret. She walks to a table with her tray of food. Luke stands still. Waits for her to come back.

When she returns, she is flustered.

LUKE (CONT'D)  
 You weren't gonna tell me?

ROMINA  
 It was just a fling.

LUKE  
 Still... It's common courtesy.  
 Might even be the law.

ROMINA  
 I haven't heard from you in a year.

LUKE  
 I know it. It's not 'cause I  
 haven't thought about you...

ROMINA  
 I haven't been waiting to hear from  
 you, or anything.

LUKE  
 What's his name?

ROMINA  
 Jason.

Luke and Romina look at each other in silence.

ROMINA (CONT'D)  
 I'm going to school nights now.

LUKE  
 (quickly)  
 Good for you.

ROMINA  
 I don't have a lot of time for  
 anything except Jason and school  
 and work. And my boyfriend.

Silence. A challenge.

LUKE  
 Great. Sounds like you got  
 everything you need.

Luke turns and walks away from Romina. She is crushed as she  
 watches him walk away. She gets back to work.

12 EXT. ALTAMONT FAIR. TRAILER OFFICE. 12

The fair is packed up and ready to leave. Luke wheels his  
 bike up to a trailer office.

13 INT. ALTAMONT FAIR. TRAILER OFFICE- 13

JACK, weathered, 55, sips coffee & shoots Luke with venom  
 from his dilated pupils.

JACK  
 How many fuckin' times I have to  
 tell you?

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

"After the show, help everyone dismantle." Then you can go get your dick wet & whatever the fuck-else you need to do.

LUKE

When's this pay period end? Friday?

JACK

Why?

LUKE

I need whatever's coming to me now. You can cut off the next two days.

JACK

I don't give out advances.

LUKE

It's not an advance. I quit.

JACK

You can't quit.

LUKE

I'm taking the bike too.

JACK

You can't take the bike.

LUKE

It's my bike.

Jack sighs. He leans forward and pulls a wad of bills from his back pocket. He peels off some bills.

14 EXT. TURNPIKE. MORNING. SIDE OF THE ROAD. 14

Luke sits on his bike watching the Fair drive away.

15 EXT. BLUE BELL MOTEL - AFTERNOON 15

Luke's bike is parked in front of an old, run-down motel.

16 INT. BLUE BELL MOTEL- CONTINUOUS 16

Luke sits on his bed, eats McDonald's. The TV is on playing a news report from 1994. He counts his pay-out, folds it, slips it in his boot.

17 EXT. TWO-FAMILY HOUSE - MORNING 17

Luke rings the doorbell, bag of BISQUICK under his arm. Door opens. Romina stands there, wearing her Sunday's best. She is speechless and stares at Luke through the screen door.

LUKE  
Wow. Look at you. You look like a princess.

ROMINA  
What are you still doing here?

LUKE  
I'm here.

He holds out the bag of BISQUICK.

LUKE (CONT'D)  
You like pancakes? I like to make people pancakes. I got a special way with 'em. You wanna know my secret ingredient? Huh? LOVE. They're not the kind of pancakes you get at that greasy place you work. You know?

Romina nervously looks back into the house.

LUKE (CONT'D)  
And anyway... I'd like to make you and Jason some of my special pancakes. Would you allow me to do that?

ROMINA  
This isn't a good time.

KOFI (O.S.)  
Ready?

Romina turns. Sees KOFI CANKAM - 28, black, wearing a suit come down the stairs carrying Jason in his arms.

ROMINA  
(back to Luke)  
We're going to church.

Kofi opens the door. Steps out onto the porch. Faces Luke.

KOFI  
I know who you are.

LUKE  
Well you got me at a disadvantage.

Luke sees his son, Jason, dressed in a white baptismal gown. He is less frightened of his own son now. In fact, he wants to hold him. He gestures to Kofi.

LUKE (CONT'D)  
Do you mind?

Kofi doesn't want Luke to take Jason away from him.

ROMINA  
It's okay. Let him.

Kofi hesitates. Concedes that he really has no choice in this matter. He hands Jason to Luke.

KOFI  
Watch his neck.

Luke and the baby stare at one another.

LUKE  
Whoa. He looks like a little prince.

Romina watches Luke and Jason, smiles. Tears well in her eyes. Kofi sees it all happen.

KOFI  
So, when do you leave town?

Luke doesn't answer. Instead, he asks his own question.

LUKE (TO KOFI)  
How long you lived here?

Kofi has had enough but is playing along.

KOFI  
Couple months.

LUKE  
Little cheaper than having your own place, I suppose...

ROMINA  
Kofi's helping us buy this house.

LUKE  
Wow. You move fast huh?

KOFI  
I'm not moving at all actually.

LUKE  
How much they want for a place like this anyway?

KOFI  
Bout a hundred and twenty five thousand. Why? You in the market?

Romina reaches in and takes Jason from Luke.

ROMINA  
Okay we have to go. Or we're gonna be late.

LUKE  
I'd like to come.

18 INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH. JASON'S BAPTISM. DAY. 18

Kofi holds Jason at the altar. Romina and Malena stand next to him. A PRIEST pours holy water over Jason's head.

Luke stands in the pews, watching, seething.

19 EXT. FRIENDLY'S RESTAURANT - DAY 19

Luke pulls his bike into the parking lot, gets off, walks into the restaurant.

20 INT. FRIENDLY'S RESTAURANT - DAY 20

MR. FEINSTEIN, the manager of the restaurant peruses Luke's neatly handwritten resume. He looks up, smiles.

MR. FEINSTEIN  
So why do you want to work at  
Friendly's, Mr. Glanton?

LUKE  
I don't really want to in  
particular. I need to. You were the  
first to get back to me.

MR. FEINSTEIN  
You shouldn't answer like that.

LUKE  
Just being honest, sir.

MR. FEINSTEIN  
An answer like that won't get you  
the job.

LUKE  
I need this. For my boy.

MR. FEINSTEIN  
Now, see? That's better and you  
didn't even have to lie.

21 INT. STOCKROOM, FRIENDLY'S - LATER 21

Luke sits in front of a television hooked up to a VCR. Mr. Feinstein puts a tape in the machine, presses 'play.'

MR. FEINSTEIN  
This is only a few minutes long.  
Take a look, then come find me.

Mr. Feinstein leaves the room. VIDEO BEGINS - instructs new employees how to make the various types of sundaes. Everyone in the video is 19 or younger. Everyone smiles.

22 INT/EXT. FRIENDLY'S RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS 22

Luke strolls briskly out the front door. Feinstein catches him leaving out of the corner of his eye. Watches Luke straddle his bike and roar away.

23 EXT. PINE BARRENS - DAY 23

Outside of town, thousands of tall, thin pines stand cheek by jowl. Luke speeds between them with reckless abandon and joy. He catches sight of an ATV through the pines, plotting a parallel course, as if in unspoken friendly competition.

24 EXT. PARKING AREA OFF THE ROAD NEAR PINE BARRENS - LATER 24

Luke comes to a parking area adjacent to the main road. Sees - ROBIN VAN DER ZEE, 48, white, working hard to get his ATV onto the trailer behind his pickup. Luke trots up to help.

They roll the ATV onto the trailer, secure it with nylon straps. Robin makes note of Luke's bike.

ROBIN  
Mean machine.

LUKE  
I built it myself. Mostly.

ROBIN  
You handle it like a pro.

LUKE  
Yessir.

ROBIN  
You headed back to town?

LUKE  
I suppose...

ROBIN  
Give you a ride. Save you some gas.

They strap his bike next to the ATV. Robin notices one of Luke's prison tatoos.

25 EXT. BLUE BELL MOTEL - LATER 25

Robin pulls up to the Esquire, surveys the run-down motel.

LUKE  
Thank you kindly.

ROBIN  
You're staying *here*?

LUKE  
Temporarily.

ROBIN  
Just passing through, huh?

LUKE  
Naw. I'm transitionin' in.

ROBIN  
What are you doing for work?

Luke looks around... not many opportunities in his sights.

ROBIN (CONT'D)  
You know your way around an engine?

LUKE  
I do.

ROBIN  
I run a little service station back down route 5. I could use a good, you know, American worker like you, you know what I mean? Good people. At least, that's what you seem like. I can put you up, too. Got a little apartment above the garage. It's modest, but its got what you need. Better than this shit-hole.

Luke considers the offer. Robin flashes a wry smile.

ROBIN (CONT'D)  
Did I catch you at a busy time or something?

26 EXT. VAN DER ZEE'S STATION - LATER 26

They pull up to into a run-down service station. Busted cars crowd the bays. A JUNKYARD DOG named TONY barks at Luke.

27 INT. APARTMENT ABOVE SERVICE STATION - CONTINUOUS 27

Robin opens the door to a tiny studio. A tiny fridge sits next to a tiny stove, next to a twin bed.

ROBIN  
It's not much. We'll take the rent out of your pay, okay?

LUKE  
I'm not sucking your cock.

Robin laughs, awkward.

ROBIN  
 Okay... This isn't jail. This can  
 be your home. You ever been in  
 jail?

Luke has. But he's not about to tell Robin about it.

ROBIN (CONT'D)  
 You don't have to be coy with me,  
 son. See this?

Robin pulls out his top row of teeth. Dentures. Just gums  
 remain. He pops the teeth back in.

ROBIN (CONT'D)  
 I had too many postage stamps.  
 Contraband, they said. They tell me  
 their gonna put me in solitary for  
 a month. Problem is, I had this gum  
 infection. Doc ordered 2 weeks of  
 antibiotics before they would put  
 me in solitary. But the warden...  
 he saw no need for postponement. So  
 he orders the prison dentist to  
 pull all my top teeth. Then put me  
 in solitary. Damn near starved to  
 death. Mom smuggled in crushed  
 penicillin pills.

Robin punctuates his story by clacking his teeth.

ROBIN (CONT'D)  
 Ten years in Attica. Ten years  
 probation. I'm clean as a whistle  
 now. You ever been in jail?

LUKE  
 Yes, sir.

ROBIN  
 I knew it when I first saw you.  
 Birds of a feather... Wanna flock?

Luke has a mind to knock Robin's block off. Robin starts  
 laughing at him, deep belly laughs.

28 EXT. ROAD - DUSK

28

Luke tears down a winding road. The low sun creates a long  
 shadow of him on his bike on the road in front of him.

29 EXT. TWO FAMILY HOUSE, NIGHT

29

Luke sits on the side of his bike. Across the street is  
 Romina's house. The kitchen is brightly lit and Luke can hear  
 the sound of talking and laughter. From his bike he sees Kofi  
 lifting Jason over his head and talking to him.

30 INT. ROBIN'S SERVICE STATION - DAY

30

Luke, covered in grease, works diligently under a 1988 Ford Taurus. He notices Robin's feet approach. Slides out from under. Robin peels a few bills and hands them down to Luke.

ROBIN

Payday, my boy. Less room & board.

Luke counts his paltry sum. Sighs.

31 EXT. PINE BARRENS - DAY

31

LATER. Luke and Robin sit an old tree stump drinking beer.

ROBIN

All my people were Dutch. This town, the whole area started Dutch.

LUKE

I need to earn more money. Any chance you give me a raise?

ROBIN

Believe me, kid. If I could give anyone a raise, it would be you. You're a real asset. And good company too. The big chains bleed me a little bit more each month. The only regular work I get into the shop is souping up low-riders for niggers and spics.

LUKE

My kid is half spic. Or half something south of the border...

Robin toasts Luke with his beer. They drink.

ROBIN

I like you, boy. You remind me of me. A lo-o-o-o-ong time ago.

LUKE

You ain't so old.

ROBIN

Not so old I'm throwing in the towel. I'm not just gonna sit there and wait around til someone tell's me I'm a dead duck. I have a feeling you're the same way. Right?

LUKE

I don't like waiting around for other people to give me permission to live.

ROBIN

You're like me. You're a chisler.

LUKE  
I ain't no chisler. What's that,  
anyway?

ROBIN  
You play all the angles... I know  
you've been to jail. More than  
once, right?

Luke puts down his beer and stares at Robin hard.

ROBIN (CONT'D)  
Course you have. You've stolen  
before.

Luke gets up and starts to walk away.

ROBIN (CONT'D)  
Now don't be like that. You know  
I'm not judging you. Hell, I admire  
a thief. It takes a man to steal.

LUKE  
You don't know a thing about me.

ROBIN  
Oh, please do pardon me. I  
certainly hope my misjudging you in  
this way didn't hurt your feelings  
too deeply. Tell me you've stolen!

LUKE  
I've stolen.

ROBIN  
But you did it stupid, right? You  
got liquored up and knocked over a  
convenience store or something?

LUKE  
I didn't need to be liquored up.

ROBIN  
Fair enough. But you got caught...  
I know you like you're my own flesh  
and blood. Your problem wasn't your  
lack of courage. It was your lack  
of foresight. Your plan failed you.  
Look, how would you like to do it  
right? With me? What do you say?

LUKE  
I got two things to say. First of  
all, thank you, for considering me.  
Second of all, fuck you. I got a  
kid!

ROBIN  
Well that's why we're talking here,  
isn't it. I never had children,  
that I know of, but I do watch a  
lot of TV. Nature shows mostly.

(MORE)

ROBIN (CONT'D)

Providing for your family, that's something I understand. It's animal. It's instinct. You get a mouth to feed and all of a sudden you got a purpose, you have a goal. And you focus everything you have, everything you are like a laser on that goal, right? You gotta edge out the competition with whatever you have to offer. With whatever talents are at your disposal. And you're a man with some very, very unique talents.

32

INT. OLYMPIC DINER - DARKEST HOUR BEFORE DAWN

32

The middle of a long shift. Romina steps from the kitchen carrying several plates. She drops off the breakfast specials at their destination and sees Luke - slumped in a booth. Romina stares at the back of his head for a while.

MOMENTS LATER. They look at one another over cups of coffee.

LUKE

Marry me.

Romina tries to repress her laughter.

LUKE

Why are you laughing?

ROMINA

You're corny. You don't even know me.

LUKE

I know I love my boy. He's definitely my boy, right?

ROMINA

...Yeah... But you didn't even know he existed until a few days ago.

LUKE

...Don't matter.

ROMINA

You say you want to marry me. You don't mean it. You might think you do. But it's not true. You're just excited...

LUKE

How can you sit there, and tell me what I do and don't feel? What're you, Carnac? I'm saying "I love you." I'll learn to. Even when you hurt my feelings. And I'm saying, "I love him." That's it. There's nothin' left to say. That's truth.

Romina soaks up his words.

LUKE (CONT'D)  
I can take care of you.

ROMINA  
Oh, really?

LUKE  
Yes.

ROMINA  
How are you gonna do that? You don't even have a job.

LUKE  
That's not true. I have a job now. I'm making money. That's not a problem. I'm saving up. I was thinkin' we could buy a RV or something. And get out of this god-forsaken town. And in style, ya know? I could show you the country. We could raise Jason in home of the brave. Ya know? Let our boy smell freedom.

ROMINA  
You're crazy.

LUKE  
Why? Why do you say that? You're the one who's crazy to question it.

ROMINA  
I'm not leaving my mom.

LUKE  
She can come. Bring her. We'll make room. Not a problem.

Beat.

ROMINA  
What about Kofi?

LUKE  
He can stay home.

Romina gets up from the booth.

LUKE (CONT'D)  
So what do you think?

ROMINA  
Sounds like a nice dream for you.

She sets the check, \$1.50 face down, in front of him.

ROMINA (CONT'D)  
I need to get back to work.

She walks away. Luke scans the check, digs in his pocket.

33 INT. ROBIN'S KITCHEN - LATER

33

Robin and Luke sit at the kitchen table. A map is spread out before them. On it - several locations marked with red dots.

ROBIN

These are a few prospects, but I'm sure we could find some more.

Robin places something swaddled in old flannel rags on the table. He pushes it toward Luke.

ROBIN (CONT'D)

Don't ask me where I got it from.

Luke slowly unwraps the flannel - a .38 snub-nosed pistol sits on the table.

ROBIN (CONT'D)

We'd split everything fifty-fifty.

LUKE

Seems like I'm taking most of the risk. I should get most of the reward.

ROBIN

I'll just find someone else who will be happy with an even split.

LUKE

Really? You're gonna get someone else to *rob a goddamned bank with you*? Okay Robin.

ROBIN

Come on! Don't get lawyerly on me.  
(beat)  
Sixty-forty.

LUKE

Seventy-thirty.

ROBIN

Sixty-five-thirty-five or go to hell.

Luke picks up the pistol.

34 EXT. ROBIN'S SERVICE STATION - LATER

34

Robin and Luke inspect a beat-to-hell cube truck. It's white and nondescript. The windshield has a crack across it.

ROBIN

Doesn't look like much, but it runs fine. And the back is big enough.

LUKE  
You bought this? For this?

ROBIN  
You gotta spend \$ to make \$.

35 INT. ROBIN'S SERVICE STATION - NIGHT

35

Robin clicks the button of a stop-watch.

ROBIN  
Go.

Halfway across the garage bay stands an old bureau. Luke runs up to the bureau and vaults it.

ROBIN (CONT'D)  
Ten seconds. Let's go.

Luke stands behind the bureau and grabs Monopoly money that had been placed in the bureau's drawers.

ROBIN (CONT'D)  
You didn't tell anyone what to do.  
People are getting panicked.

Luke halfheartedly speaks into the empty garage.

LUKE  
Everyone get down on the floor.

ROBIN  
Aw, Jesus. You sound like you're  
asking some jerk off for  
directions. Twenty seconds.

Luke grabs the rest of the money and leaps over the bureau. He runs for the bay's door. Robin clicks his stopwatch.

ROBIN (CONT'D)  
Pathetic.

Robin places his hand gently on Luke's chest.

ROBIN (CONT'D)  
Listen, kid. You're a performer,  
right? These folks in the bank,  
they're your audience. They're  
expecting a show. They want to see  
a real live bank robber. Give 'em  
what they want, and you won't get  
any trouble.

36 INT. BANK - MORNING

36

Robin and Luke step up to the young, female TELLER and smiles.

TELLER  
How can I help you today?

ROBIN  
Hi there, sweetheart. I need to  
break this hundred. One fifty, two  
twenties and a ten, please.

Robin watches the teller use a set of keys she has wrapped around her wrist on an elastic band to open up three separate drawers. The drawers contains different bills.

37 INT. ROBIN'S SERVICE STATION - NIGHT

37

Robin starts his stopwatch.

ROBIN  
Go.

Luke bounds past him into the bay like Gene Kelly.

LUKE  
Ladies and Gentlemen! I ask that  
each and every one of you lay  
yourselves down on the Goddman  
floor, if you please!

Luke vaults the 'counter' grabs the money, vaults back and runs to Robin who clicks his stop watch.

ROBIN  
You're making me proud.

A bit out of breath, Luke pulls the gun from his waistband.

LUKE  
This thing gotta be loaded?

ROBIN  
What?

LUKE  
Just sayin'. I'm not gonna hurt no  
one.

ROBIN  
Well hell's bells. Why don't we  
just get you a squirt gun instead?

Not a bad idea. Luke laughs. Robin doesn't. He grabs the gun.

ROBIN (CONT'D)  
You understand fully what we've  
engaged here, correct?

LUKE  
Yeah, I do.

ROBIN

I don't want anything to happen to you. And if God forbid it does, I don't want the other guy walking away like it's no big deal.

Luke looks down at the ground and smiles, like a kid reacting to a compliment from his proud father.

38 INT. APARTMENT ABOVE SERVICE STATION - NIGHT 38

Luke sits on his bed and inspects the pistol. He swings open the cylinder, methodically removes the bullets. He lines them up meticulously on his night stand.

39 INT. ROBIN'S SERVICE STATION. BAY. NIGHT. 39

Luke uses a spray gun to paint his bike black.

40 EXT. ROBIN'S SERVICE STATION - MORNING 40

Luke and Robin eating breakfast together.

ROBIN

Good pancakes.

Luke collects his plate, rinses it in the sink. He heads out the door for his bike. He climbs on his black bike.

41 EXT. TURNPIKE - MIDDAY 41

Luke wears a motorcycle helmet as he bolts down the turnpike; an empty child's school backpack on his back.

42 EXT. BANK - LATER 42

Luke parks, climbs off, leaves his bike running right outside the front door of a bank. He checks the time and performs his OCD ritual before bursting through the door.

43 INT. BANK- CONTINUOUS 43

INSIDE - Luke, still wearing his helmet, pulls the pistol from his front jacket pocket and points it theatrically into the air. He strolls through the bank with measured strides.

LUKE

Ladies and gentleman, listen up. This is gonna be the fastest bank robbery you've ever witnessed.

Clipped screams of shock echo through the bank.

LUKE (CONT'D)  
 Now if you'll all please oblige me  
 and get on down onto the floor  
 there, I'd really appreciate it.

The bank falls silent with fear. Luke runs up to the counter and vaults it, slips off the backpack. 3 female tellers huddle behind the counter. Luke squats down on his haunches and finds the one who served Robin before. He pulls the keys off her wrist and opens the top drawer at her station.

LUKE (CONT'D)  
 Open up the top two drawers all the  
 way along.

Luke tosses his backpack to another teller.

LUKE (CONT'D)  
 Hold the bag so she can fill it.

They fill the bag with money, hand it to Luke, back away, hands raised. Luke vaults the counter to the other side.

LUKE (CONT'D)  
 Thank you all kindly for your  
 attentive cooperation.

Luke walks out the door calmly and quickly.

44 EXT. BANK PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS 44

Sound of sirens approach. Luke gets on the bike, takes off.

45 EXT. TURNPIKE - CONTINUOUS 45

Luke tears down the road, passes cars in front of him, The cops can't catch up.

Luke takes a dangerous and wild right turn onto a small country road. After a few more turns, Luke drives up to Robin's old cube truck which is parked on the side of the road. Its back is open and its loading ramp down.

46 INT. REAR OF CUBE TRUCK - CONTINUOUS 46

Luke drives into it, hops off, shuts the door. The truck lurches forwards, pulls a U-ey.

47 EXT. TURNPIKE - CONTINUOUS 47

Cop cars scream by the truck. Robin drives the other way.

48 INT. REAR OF CUBE TRUCK - CONTINUOUS 48

Luke turns on a fluorescent camping lamp and secures his bike. He gets thrown around a little bit by Robin's driving. His adrenaline rushes. His breathing heavy. He puts his hands on his knees and pukes all over the truck's floor. Sits down.

49 EXT. ROBIN'S SERVICE STATION - LATER 49

Robin pulls into the station, opens up the back of the truck. The stink of warm vomit hits Robin.

ROBIN  
Jesus! Phew!

Luke sits against the wall, dazed and tired, and laughing.

LUKE  
I puked on my boots.

50 INT. ROBIN'S KITCHEN - NIGHT 50

Luke and Robin lay out the money in neat piles.

ROBIN  
It's not a million dollars or anything. But we do this a few more times...

Robin pushes Luke's cut to him and stands up and walks around the table. He plants a big phoney kiss on Luke's check.

ROBIN (CONT'D)  
Are you kidding me? We did it!

51 EXT. DINER. MORNING. 51

Romina gets off work, walks into the parking lot. SEES Luke in the early morning light, leaning against his bike. His aura is magnetic. He holds a DISPOSABLE BOX CAMERA. Takes her picture with it. She suppresses a smile. Moves to him.

52 INT. MOTEL. MORNING. 52

Luke and Romina lay naked on a bed, postcoital, sheets on the floor. They smoke. The mood is bright.

LUKE  
Let me take you guys out for ice cream. He's never had it, right? You get to have all his firsts. First steps, first words. I want some firsts. Do you remember the first time you ate chocolate ice cream? Remember what it was like?

(MORE)

LUKE (CONT'D)

I wanna be there when he first tastes it.

ROMINA

He don't even eat solid food yet.

LUKE

They have soft ice cream.

Laughs.

LUKE (CONT'D)

I want him to see my face when he tastes chocolate ice cream for the first time. Can you give me that?

53 EXT. BUMPY'S ICE-CREAM STORE. 7 IN THE MORNING.

53

Luke holds a sugar cone of chocolate ice cream up to Jason's mouth, presses it gently on his lips. Instinctively, the baby licks the ice cream, gets a taste. His eyes light up & he starts "cooing." Excited, he wants more.

Luke is so happy, probably the happiest he has ever been in his whole life. His eyes well up with big, heavy tears. Romina is conflicted, but infected by the joy of the moment.

Luke goes up to the LADY WORKING IN THE ICE CREAM SHOP and asks her if she will take a picture of the 3 of them. She agrees.

The family poses on his motorcycle. And the Lady working in the ice cream shop takes their family picture.

54 I/E BANK - DAY

54

LUKE walks into the bank brimming with confidence and charm.

LUKE

Ladies and Gentlemen... This is a robbery. I know you might be peeing your pants now. Trembling with fear. Don't be scared. I'm a blessing in your boring, average lives. Just think about the story you are gonna be able to tell.

He hands a bag to the teller.

LUKE (CONT'D)

Please fill it up.

55 INT. REAR OF CUBE TRUCK - LATER

55

Luke rides up into the back of the truck, slams the door closed.

56 INT. DUANE'S TOYLAND - DAY 56

Luke fills his cart with every colorful toy, game & book that catches his eye. He rolls by a frazzled YOUNG MOTHER & CHILD.

LUKE  
You got a lively one there. Mine too. He's very lively. I suppose they all are. Unless something's wrong with 'em.

57 EXT. TWO-FAMILY HOUSE - AFTERNOON 57

Luke stands on Romina's porch, waits. He frequently looks over his shoulder. The door opens and Malena stands there.

LUKE  
She's not home, right?

MALENA  
No.

LUKE  
What about the man of the house?

Malena shakes her head. Luke turns around, whistles through his fingers. A delivery van pulls up in front of the house.

58 INT. TWO-FAMILY HOUSE - LATER 58

Jason swings back and forth in the new free standing swing that Luke has bought for him. Luke assembles a crib on the floor Romina and Kofi's bedroom.

He talks to Jason as he works, about the importance of being brave in a mean ole world.

He HEARS the front door open downstairs, then Romina's voice.

ROMINA (DOWNSTAIRS)(IN SPANISH)  
Hello Mama. Where's Jason?

MELENA (DOWNSTAIRS)(IN SPANISH)  
Up stairs...

ROMINA (DOWNSTAIRS)(IN SPANISH)  
He's sleeping?

MELENA (DOWNSTAIRS)(IN SPANISH)  
Luke's up there with him.

ROMINA (DOWNSTAIRS)(IN SPANISH)  
You let him in?

Luke HEARS the trunk to a car slam outside.

LUKE  
 (to Jason)  
 Uh oh.

Luke LOOKS out the window, SEES Kofi hefting many bags of groceries up toward the house.

MELENA (DOWNSTAIRS) (IN SPANISH)  
 He brought a lot of stuff.

Luke HEARS Romina coming up the stairs.

LUKE  
 (to Jason)  
 When your mom comes in here, do you think she's gonna be bummed? Or do you think she's gonna be psyched?

Jason just swings. Romina enters the room.

ROMINA  
 What's this shit? What is all this?

LUKE  
 (to Jason)  
 She's bummed.

ROMINA  
 What are you doing here? You are gonna screw up my life.

LUKE  
 Just calm down. Don't be so dramatic. OK.  
 (to Jason)  
 You needed this right? You can't be sleeping at night in a bed with two huge people, worrying about being crushed the whole time if they roll over or something. You need some space to dream, right?

Romina turns and looks down the stairs, SEES Kofi coming up. She resigns herself to be a spectator.

KOFI  
 What's going on?

Luke continues to work.

KOFI (CONT'D)  
 (to Romina)  
 This okay with you?

Romina is frozen, staring at the stuff on the floor.

KOFI (CONT'D)  
 Cause I'm not really sure if all this THREE'S COMPANY shit is working for me.

Kofi looks at the stuff littering his bedroom.

KOFI (CONT'D)  
 If you come in to my house. You  
 gotta come with a little more  
 respect, ya heard?

Kofi steps over boxes as he makes his way into the room.  
 Luke is not responding but his eyes are peripherally aware of  
 Kofi as he moves to sit on the bed.

KOFI (CONT'D)  
 I'm not going to say you can't give  
 this to your son. You're his  
 father, you have the right to  
 provide for him as you see fit. But  
 in my house, I have the right to  
 raise him as I see fit. And you  
 can't just bust in here, in this  
 house, and do it like this. Not  
 this way. Not to me. Not to my  
 family.

Luke doesn't stop working.

KOFI (CONT'D)  
 I want you take all this stuff out  
 of here. All this...

Kofi, anger building, stands.

KOFI (CONT'D)  
 Take it away.

Kofi reaches down to grab the frame of the crib that Luke is  
 working on and, in an instant, Luke grabs a wrench, springs  
 forward and cracks Kofi's forehead open with it.

Kofi is knocked out. He crashes to the floor, hitting the  
 back of his head. Concussion. Romina screams and so does  
 Jason.

In a rage, Luke takes Kofi's body by the shirt and pulls it  
 down the stairs. Romina does anything to try and make him  
 stop.

LUKE  
 You want me to take this shit out?  
 I'll take it out.

59

EXT HOUSE- CONTINUOUS

59

Luke pulls Kofi's body out onto the porch, drops him like the  
 saber-tooth tiger does to FRED FLINSTONE. Romina shoves past  
 him to tend to Kofi. He watches as Romina cradle Kofi's head.

ROMINA (O.S.)(IN SPANISH)  
 (to Malena)  
 Mama call an ambulance.

Luke just stands there, invisible. Malena dials 911.

MALENA  
(to Luke)  
Leave!

Luke walks back up stairs and into the bedroom. SEES - Jason swinging back and forth, still screaming. Luke puts his arms over the side of his head in an effort to block out the noise and the mess that he made. Sound of sirens approaching.

60 INT. SCHENECTADY POLICE STATION - LATER 60

The Police book, fingerprint and photograph Luke.

61 INT. SCHENECTADY POLICE HOLDING CELL - LATER 61

Luke sits, wearing prison orange, touching each bar in succession firmly with his fore-finger.

62 INT. SCHENECTADY COURTHOUSE - DAY 62

Luke sits in a courtroom in his prison orange with his STATE APPOINTED COUNCIL. He fidgets as he waits.

THE JUDGE sets the court date, posts the bail at five thousand dollars. Luke can pay it.

The Judge then suggests and sets a court date that will put in affect a restraining order for Kofi against Luke.

63 INT. ROBIN'S KITCHEN - NIGHT 63

Luke smokes a cigarette in the Kitchen. Robin watches him. Knows something has changed. Long moment of awkward silence.

LUKE  
I was thinkin' maybe we could do 2  
in 1 day. The big Trustco on  
Brandywine and the other First  
National Rotterdam.

Robin eyes him warily.

ROBIN  
You know what they say about people  
who rob banks?

Luke takes a drag. Waits for Robin to answer his own question.

ROBIN (CONT'D)  
They say they always do one too  
many. The trick is to know how many  
is too many, and do one less.

Luke sucks on his cigarette absorbed in deep negativity.

64 EXT. BANK PARKING LOT - DAY 64

Luke runs from a bank with a bag of cash. Another job 1/2 completed. He hops on his bike, peels out onto the main road.

65 EXT. MAIN ROAD- CONTINUOUS 65

The police are on him quicker this time. He can't shake them. He nears the rendezvous point with Robin, sees the truck waiting patiently up ahead, but a glance back confirms he hasn't lost the heat yet. He makes a slicing gesture across his throat to signal Robin the rendezvous is off. Robin watches Luke take a right turn, leading the cops away from the truck. Robin hops out, closes the rear door, drives off.

66 EXT ROAD- CONTINUOUS 66

The cops try to stay with Luke, but his maneuverability daunts them. He cuts hard onto a path that cuts next to the train tracks. The cops do not follow. He follows the tracks until he comes to a clearing which leads into the woods.

67 EXT. WOODS- CONTINUOUS 67

Luke drives through the tall pines. He goes deep into the woods as fast as he can.

68 E/I ROBIN'S SERVICE STATION/KITCHEN - NIGHT 68

Luke comes in - finds Robin sitting at the table, a pack of cigarettes smoulder in the ashtray before him.

ROBIN

Get in and close the Goddamn door.

LUKE

(manic, adrenalized)

It's okay, I lost em. I'm like the fucking Road Runner. BEEP BEEP!

Luke dumps the bag of money on the table, squats down and pets Tony the dog. Tony licks his face. Robin tugs on a smoke, his hands shaking from a combo of nerves and nicotine. He surveys the money, wont touch it.

ROBIN

You do realize, we're done here.

69 EXT. OLYMPIC DINER - DAWN 69

Luke waits for Romina outside the diner. Romina comes out, sees him.

LUKE  
I'm sorry.

She makes a b-line for her car. Luke intercepts her, hands her a sugar bag which is filled with cash.

LUKE (CONT'D)  
It ain't sugar in there.

Keeps moving.

LUKE (CONT'D)  
Look. I know that you think lowly of me. I do. I know you hold it against me that I wasn't there for you when you were going through everything. I know that.

She gets to her car. Fumbles with the keys.

LUKE (CONT'D)  
You can't run from me now. I'm here. I'm a person. And I want you to treat me like a person. Like I'm here. Like I'm not nothing. Like I'm not a piece of shit. Hey!

She finds her keys, opens her car door. Gets in. Luke moves his body into place so she can't close her door.

LUKE (CONT'D)  
Listen to me you fucking lunatic. This money, it's not yours. OK?

He throws the bag of money in her car.

LUKE (CONT'D)  
You don't buy yourself anything with that, OK? None of those diamond studded jeans that you wear, no make-up, no jewelry, no perfume. No nothing. Don't buy yourself a thing. You hear me? This money is not for you. It's for Jason. You give every penny to him. OK? He needs it. Say OK. Say OK... Say OK!

ROMINA  
...OK.

She starts the car.

LUKE  
I'm his father. I'm his. Ya hear me? He's not mine. I'm *his*. You understand? And there's nothing you're gonna do to keep him from me.

ROMINA  
 You broke it. You're not his  
 father. You're an animal. If I ever  
 see you again, I'm calling the  
 police.

She drives away. He is left alone. He gets into the cube  
 truck, drives away.

70 INT. ROBIN'S SERVICE STATION - LATER 70

Drunk, Robin has taken an acetylene torch to Luke's bike and  
 cuts it to pieces. Only the engine is intact. He ponders his  
 next cut when - Luke walks in - can't believe his eyes.

LUKE  
 What the fuck! What're you doing?!

ROBIN  
 We had a good thing going. We kept  
 it up as long as we could, made a  
 nice little score, now it's over.

Luke reacts as if Robin put down his horse. He storms out of  
 the garage. We follow him to...

71 INT. APARTMENT ABOVE SERVICE STATION - CONTINUOUS 71

Luke picks up the bullets from his nightstand, fights against  
 his better judgement, loads the gun.

72 INT. ROBIN'S SERVICE STATION - CONTINUOUS 72

Robin is still cutting up the bike. Luke comes in and sticks  
 the barrel of the pistol against the back of Robin's head.  
 Luke is out of his fucking mind here, close to squeezing the  
 trigger.

LUKE  
 You fucking killed my fucking  
 bike?! Open your mouth.

Luke sticks the gun inside Robin's mouth. Turns it against  
 his teeth. Robin pisses his pants. Luke pulls the gun out.

LUKE (CONT'D)  
 You owe me for a new bike.

73 INT. CREST MOTORS - MORNING 73

Luke and a DEALER stand over a red 1994 Honda Fireblade.

DEALER  
 It's a sport bike. Honda calls it a  
 'super-bike.' It's a racing model  
 with a few changes for the street.

LUKE  
How's the balance?

DEALER  
What are you used to riding?

LUKE  
Nevermind. You take cash?

74 EXT. GAS STATION - CONTINUOUS 74

Luke fills the tank. A pickup truck at the pump next to him blares Bon Jovi's 'Dead or Alive' from its speakers.

75 INT. PAYPHONE - LATER 75

Robin, out of breath, runs to a payphone - dials 911.

ROBIN  
I want to make an anonymous report.

76 INT. 911 CALL CENTER. DAY. 76

An OPERATOR types the info from Robin into her computer.

"SUSPECTED ROBBERY IN PROGRESS", color-coded RED, comes up on the DISPATCHER'S screen.

77 INT. SCHENECTADY POLICE CRUISER. DAY. 77

AVERY CROSS, 28, rookie, patrols the western district.

RADIO DISPATCH (ON RADIO)  
ADAM-22. 211 in progress at Trustco  
bank at 320 State St.

AVERY (INTO RADIO)  
ADAM-22. Copy that. Enroute.

Avery flips a u-ey. Accelerates toward the bank.

78 E/I TRUSTCO BANK - CONTINUOUS 78

Luke gets off his bike. Enters the bank, gun above his head.

Luke kicks the bank door hard. The patrons, confused, stop what they're doing and take notice. Luke is all rage and animal. He is intimidating and dangerous.

LUKE  
Every last one of you get down on  
the Goddamn floor! Right now!!!

He goes to the teller, SEES that the counter has a Lucite window which rises up to the ceiling. He turns white.

He takes the empty bag, shoves it through the teller's slot.

LUKE (CONT'D)  
Fill it up and pass it back.

TELLER  
We can't open the vault.

LUKE  
From the drawers then! With some urgency! Come on!

The teller reluctantly does as she is instructed. Luke looks around to make sure no one is sneaking up on him. The teller finishes, tries to pass the bag through the slot.

TELLER  
It won't fit, sir.

LUKE  
What're you an ignoramus? Take some damn money out. I got to think of everything?

The teller pulls out some of the cash. She tries to fit the bag back through. Still won't fit. She takes out some more cash. Luke hears sirens. Goddamnit.

He tries to force the bag back through the slot. It opens and most of the money spills out on the teller's side. He is left with an empty bag. Fuck. He bolts out the door.

79 INT. SCHENECTADY POLICE CRUISER OUTSIDE BANK-CONTINUOUS 79

Sirens blare. Avery turns the corner, SEES Luke take off, trying to quickly master his unfamiliar bike.

AVERY (INTO RADIO)  
ADAM-22. In pursuit of a possible suspect on a motorcycle. ADAM-21 make contact with the bank.

80 EXT. SCHENECTADY STREETS. CONTINUOUS 80

Luke has the cruiser on his tail. He blasts through an intersection and turns hard down a small, residential street. He blasts through two more intersections in the wrong lane; barely avoiding oncoming traffic.

81 EXT. SCHENECTADY RESIDENTIAL STREETS- CONTINUOUS 81

Luke takes another hard right, runs up onto a lawn, and tries to head back to the street. Avery's car runs up onto the lawn and comes to a jarring halt. Luke tries to maneuver but can't keep the bike under him. He ditches further up the road.

Luke pushes the wrecked bike off of his scraped up leg, limps away, looking for a way out. Behind him, 3 houses away, Avery pursues on foot.

82 INT. TWO FAMILY HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

82

Luke enters through a screen door, looks around the house for a place to hide. SEES - a MOTHER and her young BOY staring at him wordlessly from the kitchen. They had been making a cake.

LUKE  
Anyone else home?

The mother and her boy barely move. Luke shows them his gun.

LUKE (CONT'D)  
Take me upstairs. COME ON! LETS GO!  
(softens)  
I won't hurt you. Come on!

83 INT. TWO FAMILY HOUSE STAIRS/BEDROOM- CONTINUOUS

83

Luke corrals the scared family up the stairs to a bedroom. He closes the door behind them, and waves the gun at the bed.

LUKE  
Sit down.

The mother and boy sit on the ground in the corner by the bed and bury their faces into each other, making themselves as small as possible.

Desperate, Luke looks out the window. It would be a long drop to the ground. He opens the window. He starts to climb through. His leg is in pain and hard to move. HEARS Avery downstairs calling, "POLICE! DROP YOUR WEAPON!" He is cornered.

LUKE (CONT'D)  
Aw, hell. Do you have a phone?

The mother nods, tells him it's on the nightstand. He picks up the phone, dials information.

OPERATOR (OVER THE PHONE)  
What city and listing please?

LUKE  
Schenectady. Her name is Romina.

OPERATOR (OVER THE PHONE)  
Romina. Last name?

LUKE  
Guitierrez... I think...

While the operator checks, he sits down on the window sill, sets his gun down between his legs.

OPERATOR (OVER THE PHONE)  
 I have a Romina Guitierrez on  
 Brandywine. I have the number.  
 Would you like me to connect you?

LUKE  
 Yes! Connect me!

The phone rings. Luke swings one leg out the window, but he can barely move it. He can't jump out.

LUKE (CONT'D)  
 Pick up...

84 INT. TWO FAMILY HOUSE- AT THE BOTTOM OF THE STAIRS. 84

Avery can HEAR Luke talking upstairs. Back to the wall, gun drawn, he slides quietly up the stairs. He gets outside the door.

AVERY  
 POLICE! Put the weapon down!

85 INT. TWO FAMILY HOUSE BEDROOM 85

The phone continues to ring. A realization and a deep despair creep upon Luke.

LUKE  
 Please answer.

He hears the cop outside his door.

CLICK. The phone picks up.

ROMINA (ON PHONE)  
 Hello.

LUKE  
 Romina?

Avery hears Luke's voice. Weapon aimed, he bursts through the bedroom door, sees Luke with the phone in one hand, and his body halfway out the window. He shoots. The shot makes a loud, sharp noise. A small cloud of blue smoke rises from the muzzle and floats toward the ceiling.

Luke is hit in the abdomen, he drops the phone. Avery sees it, lowers his gun, thinks, "did I just shoot a man with a phone in his hand?"

Luke looks down at the blood spreading through the fabric of his shirt.

He grabs the gun on the sill, shoots back: hits Avery in the knee. The kickback from the gun pushes Luke's body back and he falls out the window like a rag doll: ass over teakettle.

Avery clutches his leg; agony. FUCK! Avery tries to get himself up off the floor. He can't. His knee is destroyed.

AVERY (INTO RADIO)  
ADAM-22. Officer down. Suspect  
escaped through window. Request  
paramedics and backup at the scene.

The young mother grabs her son, shields his eyes from the carnage, and bolts out of the room.

Avery is left alone. He stares at the window. Blood splatter on the wall. A curtain blows gently in the breeze. He can hear ROMINA's VOICE screaming, "Luke!" out of the speaker of the phone.

He crawls to the window using his 3 functional limbs; Sirens in the distance. He uses his arms to prop himself up on the window; SEES; Luke splayed out on his back on the ground below. His body is contorted in an impossible awkward position. A pool of blood forms around his head. It is a nightmarish image. Cop cars and ambulances descend on the scene.

86 INT. ELLIS HOSPITAL - LATER

86

Avery lies on a moving gurney. His pant-leg is being cut away from his skin. A nurse sedates him. A DOCTOR explains.

DOCTOR  
We're giving you a mild sedative  
now and saline for shock, okay?

87 INT. ELLIS HOSPITAL - LATER -

87

The ER staff rolls Avery into the operating theater. Another team in there already frantically works on Luke.

Avery hears Luke's heart monitor beep erratically. He watches the doctors act more frantically. Finally, the heart monitor emits a flat, even tone.

The sound of screaming. Avery looks and sees Romina wailing and fighting with ER staff. Kofi helps to restrain her.

An INTERN straddles Luke and starts to give him CPR. A nurse closes a curtain around Luke.

DOCTOR  
Officer? We need to operate now.

Behind the curtain, the other team tries to shock Luke's heart back to life before the SURGEON finally gives up.

SURGEON (O.S.)  
Time of death four thirty-nine.

DOCTOR  
(To Avery)  
Don't be afraid.

An anesthesiologist fits a mask over Avery's mouth and nose.

88

INT. HOSPITAL RECOVERY ROOM. LATER THAT NIGHT.

88

Balloons, flowers & cards fill Avery's room. CHIEF GORDON WEIRZBOWSKI, 50's, enters the room followed by DA BILL KILLCULLEN, mid-40's. Both are reverent and respectful.

They greet Avery, who is lying in bed. His father AL, late 60's is there, along with his wife JENNIFER, 27, who holds Avery's baby boy A.J. Gordon kisses Jennifer and offers his understanding.

CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI  
How's our hero?

JENNIFER  
I don't know.

She squeezes Avery's hand.

AL  
No more than a scratch really.

CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI  
Your Honor. Pleasure... I believe you two know each other...

Killcullen comes in to shake Al's hand.

AL  
Of course, Bill. Nice to see you.

KILLCULLEN  
We miss you at the court house.

AL  
Well, I hate to break it to you, but I don't miss you (he he). Swinging that gavel was starting to interfere with my golf game.

Little laughs.

CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI  
Whatdaya think - with Avery, injured, and you out of work, maybe you'd consider joining the force. We could use a good man.

AL  
I'm afraid you're only recruiting one from this family.

CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI  
 (to Avery)  
 They give you any idea when you  
 might get outta here?

AVERY  
 Can't be soon enough.

CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI  
 (to Al)  
 Boy's got ambition. Give him that.

AL  
 That's one word for it.  
 (to Jennifer)  
 We better be taking you home.

He takes Jennifer's hand and leads her out.

CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI  
 We'll take care of your husband.  
 Don't you worry Jenny.

Weirzbowski kisses A.J.'s little hand, then Jennifer's cheek.

JENNIFER  
 (to Avery)  
 Are you going to be Okay?

AVERY  
 Yeah. You guys go.

They leave. Gordon pulls up a chair next to Avery's bed.  
 Killcullen stands.

KILLCULLEN  
 How's the knee?

AVERY  
 Fucked.

CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI  
 It'll heal. You're young. Young  
 body bounces back. I want to  
 introduce you to Bill Killcullen,  
 Schenectady DA. Bill needs to ask  
 you some questions. You up for it?  
 Good to do it before the paint  
 dries, know-whatimean?

AVERY  
 So you're effectively putting me on  
 trial?

CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI  
 Mister sensitive... Don't get your  
 panties in a bind. You're gonna be  
 our poster boy. This is a  
 formality. Best get it outta the  
 way.

Weirzbowski puts his hat on, gets up to leave.

CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI (CONT'D)  
I'll leave you two to get to know  
each other. Shouldn't be too hard.  
You both speak lawyer talk.

89

INT. HOSPITAL RECOVERY ROOM- ELLIPSE.

89

They are deep into Avery's recounting of the events.  
Killcullen records everything on tape deck and jots notes.

KILLCULLEN  
So what happened when you were  
outside the door?

AVERY  
I heard him on the other side.  
Sounded like he was talking on the  
phone. But I couldn't tell who he  
was talking to. So, I made my  
presence known.

KILLCULLEN  
How'd you do that.

AVERY  
(piecing it together)  
Announced myself. "Police. Drop the  
weapon." And when he didn't  
respond. I kicked the door open...  
and I saw him sitting on the ledge  
of the window with... he was  
holding a phone...

KILLCULLEN  
... and he had a gun?

AVERY  
Yeah...  
(deep sigh)  
...I saw him drop the phone.

KILLCULLEN  
And when did he fire?

AVERY  
After he dropped the phone...

KILLCULLEN  
And then you returned fire?

AVERY  
...Yeah...

KILLCULLEN  
And then he fell out the window?

Avery nods.

AVERY

Yeah.

KILLCULLEN

Good riddance.

90

INT. AVERY AND JENNIFER'S HOME - EVENING

90

ON THE TV: A local NEWS ANCHOR sits at her studio desk.

NEWS ANCHOR (ON T.V.)

A triumphant moment for a young  
Schenectady Police officer today.  
He left the hospital after  
recovering from gunshot wounds.

ON TV: Footage of the day Avery shot Luke.

NEWS ANCHOR (ON T.V.) (CONT'D)

Officer Avery Cross hadn't been on  
the force for a full year before he  
ran head-on into the alleged  
MOTOBANDIT. Reporter Ed Dague was  
there as officer Cross left Ellis  
hospital.

ON TV: Avery is wheeled out of the hospital. Dozens of cops stand around and cheer him as he rolls past &amp; pumps his fist.

ED DAGUE (V.O.) (ON T.V.)

Facing the danger and fighting the  
brave fight, Avery Cross accepting  
the praise of his fellow officers  
as he is wheeled through a gauntlet  
of cheers and applause. Turning a  
corner in his recovery, he's  
leaving Ellis hospital, well enough  
to return home - happy to be alive.

ON TV: Cops lift his wheelchair into an ambulance.

AVERY (ON T.V.)

I'll be back before you know it.

ON TV: File footage from the day of the shooting.

ED DAGUE (V.O.) (ON T.V.)

This young officer's life flashed  
before him in a flash of gunfire.  
Responding to a bank robbery, Avery  
Cross pursued alleged motor-cycle  
bandit Luke Glanton through the  
streets of Schenectady.

Avery sits on a sofa in his comfortable but not fancy home,  
his leg elevated in a cast. Jennifer sits next to him trying  
to calm A.J.

ED DAGUE (V.O.) (ON T.V.) (CONT'D)  
Glanton then fled into this house,  
took Melissa Majack & her son Gabe  
hostage, & came face to face with  
Officer Cross. Glanton shot Officer  
Cross in the knee before officer  
Cross returned fire, killing the  
suspect and saving the hostages.

ON TV: DAGUE stands in front of the hospital, holding a mic.

ED DAGUE (ON T.V.) (CONT'D)  
Officer Cross was rushed here to  
Ellis hospital and listed in  
critical condition. He has made a  
swift recovery, but doctors say the  
bullet that struck him has caused  
nerve damage in his leg.

ON TV: Police CHIEF GORDON WEIRZBOWSKI, 50's greying,  
fireplug, talks to the reporters at the scene.

CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI (ON T.V.)  
He's a hero. Plain and simple.  
There's one thing he wants to do  
more than anything else; that's  
slide behind the wheel of a radio  
car and go back out there and do  
the same thing he was doing that  
day. Hopefully with better results.

ON TV: Avery sits on the same couch he is sitting on as he  
watches himself on TV.

AVERY (ON T.V.)  
I've only ever wanted to be a cop.  
Ever since I was six.

The baby's cries drown out the TV. Jennifer stands, trying to  
calm him down by bouncing. Jennifer doesn't look so calm  
herself. Avery turns up the volume.

ED DAGUE (ON T.V.)  
We talked with Officer Cross for a  
moment about the high crime rate in  
Schenectady.

AVERY (ON T.V.)  
It's an epidemic. And it's up to  
the police to do the heavy lifting.  
That's our job. But also something  
the community has to help with.

ED DAGUE (ON T.V.)  
We also asked Cross how he feels  
about ongoing allegations of  
corruption dogging the police.

AVERY (ON T.V.)  
Schenectady deserves better.

A.J. Is wailing. Avery is numb to it. Jennifer can't take any more. She retreats with the baby to their bedroom.

ON TV: Luke's mug-shot.

ED DAGUE (V.O.) (ON T.V.)  
Glanton, a drifter and sometime motor-cycle stunt-rider, had a violent history and a long record. Police say he moved here last spring and it only took him a month to start robbing local banks. He leaves behind a infant son. I'm Ed Dague, WNYT, Schenectady.

A commercial begins on TV. Avery is alone.

91

INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT.

91

A.J. sleeps in a crib in the corner of a small bedroom. Avery and Jennifer talk softly, lying in bed next to one another.

JENNIFER  
Was it scary?

AVERY  
It happened so fast. Wasn't time to be scared.

JENNIFER  
It's scary for me.

AVERY  
I'm okay.

JENNIFER  
I just can't really believe that we're dealing with this you know? It's just so weird...

AVERY  
What do you mean weird?

JENNIFER  
I guess the fact that you're in this position. I just never imagined our life like this.

AVERY  
Yeah well it's just part of the job unfortunately.

JENNIFER  
Haven't you had enough, now?

Avery sees tears welling in her eyes.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)  
I mean there's so many things you could do.

AVERY

Why are you making me feel like I'm doing something wrong? I'm a cop. And I don't know why I have to apologize for that.

JENNIFER

We are just worried about you...

AVERY

Who's "we?"

JENNIFER

I talked to your dad today...

AVERY

Oh Jesus Christ. Leave him OUT of it Jenny. He made his decisions and now I'm making mine. OK.

Avery turns away from Jennifer. She looks at the ceiling.

92 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

92

MONTAGE. Physical therapy. Avery literally learns to walk all over again. We HEAR the doctor's prognosis over these images.

DOCTOR (V.O.)

You're going to be extremely weak on this leg for a while, so don't push too far too fast.

AVERY (V.O.)

How long before I'm back to normal?

DOCTOR (V.O.)

I'd rather not give you any unrealistic expectations.

93 INT. LIVING ROOM. EVENING.

93

The SOUND of the SHOWER RUNS in the background. Baby A.J., irresistibly cute, plays on a blanket, cooing. Avery sits on the floor, legs set wide apart. He doesn't look at his son, doesn't want to. His mind is somewhere else completely. The doorbell rings. Avery gets up to answer it. It is Scott.

SCOTT

Hey partner. We thought you might like a little distraction.

Avery looks past Scott, sees PAUL DELUCA and his partner CROTTY idling in a cruiser out front.

94 INT. UNMARKED POLICE CAR - EVENING

94

Avery and Scott ride in the back. DeLuca and Crotty up front.

AVERY  
You are aware I'm not back on  
active duty yet.

PAUL DELUCA  
We're aware. This is our gift to  
you.

95 EXT. TWO FAMILY HOUSE - AFTERNOON

95

Avery and Scott stand at the base of the steps and watch -  
DeLuca and Crotty ring the bell to Romina's house. Malena  
opens the door. DeLuca flashes his badge.

PAUL DELUCA  
Is Romina Gutierrez at home?

Malena turns her head into the house.

MALENA  
Romina!

Kofi and Romina come to the door. Avery recognizes her from  
the hospital. DeLuca flashes his badge.

PAUL DELUCA  
Good afternoon, ma'am. We're here  
to search the house.

ROMINA  
For what?

PAUL DELUCA  
Evidence.

KOFI  
Evidence for what?

PAUL DELUCA  
We're looking for the money Luke  
Glanton may or may not have given  
to you.

ROMINA  
You supposed to have a warrant or  
something, right?

DeLuca leans in close to Romina, quietly.

PAUL DELUCA  
How about you assume I have a  
warrant, and I assume she has a  
green card.

DeLuca nods toward Malena. Romina is out-manoeuvred. She  
lets them in. DeLuca nods to Scott and Avery to head  
upstairs.

Avery reluctantly enters. Romina recognizes him from TV.

AVERY  
I'm sorry for your loss.

Romina feels violated by his presence. Avery side-steps around her, nodding.

96 INT. TWO-FAMILY HOME- UPSTAIRS.

96

Aided by a cane, Avery follows Scott as he heads into the first room on the left. They speak in hushed tones.

AVERY  
I don't think I like this.

SCOTT  
We're safe. Come on.

97 INT. TWO-FAMILY HOME -DOWNSTAIRS.

97

DeLuca and Crotty sit across from Kofi and Romina. Malena brings out coffee and Hostess donuts.

PAUL DELUCA  
Thank you, ma'am.  
(to Romina)  
Mostly this is just a formality. I believe you when you tell me you don't have the money, I really do.

KOFI  
(To Romina)  
Don't say anything 'til we got a lawyer.

PAUL DELUCA  
Relax, pal. You're not under arrest yet. Nothing you say matters.

ROMINA  
We don't got the money.

PAUL DELUCA  
This guy was a real piker. 10G from this bank, 7 from that one. To them it's peanuts. It's all covered by the FDIC anyways.

ROMINA  
He offered us the money but we never took it.

KOFI  
Romina.

PAUL DELUCA  
It's okay, really. It's my boss see, the chief. He's very concerned about appearances.

(MORE)

PAUL DELUCA (CONT'D)  
 We gotta harass good people so he  
 looks like he's doing his job. It's  
 all politics.

98 INT. TWO-FAMILY HOUSE- UPSTAIRS. 98

Scott and Avery search Jason's room quietly. Scott begins to lift the crib mattress.

SCOTT  
 Hold the baby.

AVERY  
 This is too much.

SCOTT  
 Come on. I don't wanna wake him.

Avery picks up Jason, stares at his little, sleeping body and contemplates the fact that he killed this kids father. Meanwhile, Scott lifts the mattress.

SCOTT (CONT'D)  
 Bingo.

He pulls out a stack of cash, shows it to Avery, hides it on his person. Avery rests Jason back into the crib.

99 INT. TWO-FAMILY HOUSE- DOWNSTAIRS. 99

Avery and Scott come down the stairs. Scott approaches DeLuca, whispers in his ear. DeLuca smiles.

100 INT. UNMARKED POLICE CAR/EXT HOME - CONTINUOUS 100

Avery, Scott and Crotty wait in the car, WATCHING. Romina and Kofi see them off from the porch. DeLuca is the last to leave. He lingers for a second on the lawn.

PAUL DELUCA  
 I gave you my card, right? If you  
 remember anything regarding that  
 money, you call me first, OK?

KOFI  
 Of course. Have a good evening  
 officer.

101 INT. UNMARKED POLICE CAR- CONTINUOUS 101

DeLuca climbs into the car and drives off. Avery watches Romina and Kofi head back inside.

PAUL DELUCA  
 So, what's our haul?

Scott produces the money and all the cops except Avery hoot. Scott starts to flip through the bills.

PAUL DELUCA (CONT'D)  
Where'd you find it?

SCOTT  
Under the fucking crib.

PAUL DELUCA  
Ha! Perfect.

SCOTT  
When do you think they'll notice it's missing?

PAUL DELUCA  
They're noticing it right now.

Crotty grabs the bills from Scott.

CROTTY  
You're too young to count.

SCOTT  
It's over fourteen grand!

PAUL DELUCA  
It's not gonna be an even split. The lion's share is going to you.

DeLuca looks at Avery in his rearview mirror.

PAUL DELUCA (CONT'D)  
A little unofficial hazard pay.

Crotty counts out the money. He gives a little of it to Scott and a lot of it to Avery.

SCOTT  
*Thank you!*

Avery is slow to say something as he is handed the money.

AVERY  
Wow.

DeLuca stares at him in the rearview. Avery can't meet his gaze.

102

EXT. AVERY AND JENNIFER'S HOME. DAWN.

102

Avery puts the money in an old shoe box and stashes it somewhere in the shed.

Jennifer stands in the upstairs window. She sees him come out of the shed and turn off the light.

CORY (V.O.)  
I know you're probably feeling a  
little disoriented by all that has  
happened.

103 INT. POLICE STATION. OFFICE. DAY.

103

CORY GILBEAU, 37 female police psychologist interviews Avery.

CORY  
I'm here to start a conversation  
with you. And although I will  
ultimately make a recommendation as  
to whether you're ready or not to  
return to duty. I want you to know  
that the details of what we discuss  
together will never move beyond  
these walls. OK?

AVERY  
Sure.

CORY  
OK. So how are you Avery?

AVERY  
OK. Other than my knee, I'm OK.

CORY  
What are the doctors saying about  
your knee?

AVERY  
I'll never be able to bend it  
properly. But that's just what it  
is.

CORY  
That doesn't bother you?

AVERY  
I haven't had much time to think  
about it yet.

CORY  
What have you been thinking about?

AVERY  
Since the shooting?

Cory nods.

AVERY (CONT'D)  
Well... you know... it's just been  
such a crazy time with physical  
therapy and everything you know...  
getting everything back on track.

CORY  
What do you have to get on track?

AVERY  
Everything.

Cory waits for him to elaborate.

AVERY (CONT'D)  
I mean like the job and relearning  
to walk and everything at home.

CORY  
What do you mean 'everything at  
home?'

AVERY  
Well you know it's a shock for my  
wife and it doesn't help that  
there's a baby around but it's OK.

CORY  
You say it doesn't help that  
there's a baby around...

AVERY  
Well I just mean that it's just  
another thing you know? I think I  
just need time to get everything  
else sorted out first.

CORY  
First before what?

AVERY  
Before I can deal with that I  
guess...

CORY  
You mean before you can deal with  
your baby?

Avery doesn't respond. Cory waits.

CORY (CONT'D)  
What happened Avery? Is this hard  
to talk about?

AVERY  
It's just been hard I guess.

CORY  
Hard to what?

AVERY  
Hard to look at him. I can't look  
at him.

CORY  
What about your wife? Are you  
having the same problems with her?

AVERY  
...I'm having a hard time...

He looks at her after he says it. Silence.

CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI (V.O.)  
We are gathered here today to  
celebrate a cop who makes other  
cops proud.

104 INT. PROCTOR'S THEATER - DAY

104

Avery, propped up by a cane, is in uniform for the first time in weeks. He stands on stage at Proctor's Theater. His dad, Jennifer and A.J. sit in the audience along with members of the community and reporters. Local news videotapes it. Chief Weirzbowski, in his best dress uniform, grips a podium.

CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI  
...Officer Avery Cross. We can all  
rest a little easier at night now  
that he's on the path of recovery.

The crowd spontaneously applauds.

CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI (CONT'D)  
Officer Cross is the first member  
of his family to join the force.  
And not just any force. He joined  
the Schenectady Police Department.  
He said he wanted to go where the  
action was. Well, careful what you  
wish for, right?

Gordon beams and the audience laughs. Gordon lumbers over to Avery and officially affixes a decoration on Avery's uniform.

MOMENTS LATER. Photo ops. Avery in center is surrounded by Weirzbowski, Jennifer, A.J., and Avery's dad.

105 INT. STEAKHOUSE. NIGHT.

105

DeLuca raises a glass and the other cops follow.

PAUL DELUCA  
To hero boy. Lucky fuck. I been on  
the force 22 years, only pulled my  
weapon once. You been on less than  
6 months you already got one in the  
bag. And he's white! (har har)  
Lucky fuck! How's that feel?

AVERY  
Better him than me, right?

PAUL DELUCA  
Speedy recovery. Next time, duck!

SCOTT  
You mean, "jump!"

Everyone laughs, cheers. Al sits at the head of a large table filled with people from the ceremony - Weirzbowski, Deluca, Crotty, Stevens, Jennifer and Avery and Al.

AL  
(to Avery, privately)  
Hell of a group.

Avery doesn't quite know how to respond to his Father's veiled insult.

106 EXT. GOLF COURSE. DAY. 106

Avery watches his dad set up the tee and prepare for his drive. Al swings. Hits a beautiful shot.

107 EXT GOLF COURSE- LATER 107

LATER. Avery and Al are PUTTING. Avery lines up his shot but has trouble navigating his bum knee.

AL  
How's it feel to be a hero, Avery?

AVERY  
Honestly, I'm ready for it to end.

AL  
Well don't worry it will. You can be sure of that. Police always put on a big show when something like this happens. Because other than this, what else is there to keep people motivated? The hero card is the only one they have to play. It's the same thing that gets people signed up for the army.

AVERY  
I'm not thinking about all that. I just want to get back to work.

AL  
Well, you can go back. Or you can go forward. Truthfully Avery if you had planned this you couldn't have orchestrated it any better. But you're not going to make it work for you within the police department I promise.

Avery putts. The ball goes... (well that's up to the putt!)

AL (CONT'D)  
Depends what you want, really. It's your choice. But if your smart you ride this wave into some kind of office.

Al putts.

AL (CONT'D)  
Look at Roosevelt - A limp goes a  
long way in politics.

108 INT. SCHENECTADY POLICE STATION - DAY 108  
Avery slips into the station. Everyone greets him reverently.

109 INT. OUTSIDE CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI'S OFFICE - LATER 109  
Avery sits outside of the Chief of Police's office.

CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI (V.O.)  
I received a call today from Bill  
Killcullen. He wanted me to convey  
to you some words which should come  
as a relief to you -

110 INT. CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI'S OFFICE - LATER 110  
Avery sits across from the Chief.

CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI  
The state's internal investigation  
into the shooting of Luke Glanton  
has been deemed lawful.  
Congratulations Officer. Put it  
behind you and let's get back to  
police work. OK?

AVERY  
(relieved)  
OK. That's the question I wanted...

CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI (V.O.)  
The question is can you go back out  
on patrol anytime soon? And if you  
went out, could you be effective?

AVERY  
No, I know. I can't.

CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI  
I'm glad you're being clear-eyed  
about this. A lot of guys think  
there's only one way to be a cop.  
You know, out there busting heads.

AVERY  
I've never been interested in that.

CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI  
There are a lot of jobs that need  
to be done around here that in  
ways, and you know this, in ways  
are more important than what  
happens out on the street.

AVERY  
I want you to make me a Lieutenant.  
Put me in charge of special  
investigations.

CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI  
(laughs)  
I can't fucking do that.

AVERY  
Yes you can. You're the boss.

CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI  
You paid too much for your  
education to act so stupid, kid.

AVERY  
I deserve it. But more importantly,  
I have ideas that could turn that  
whole division around.

CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI  
That's one mighty healthy sense of  
entitlement you got there Cross.  
There's guys here who have been  
waiting 4 or 5 years to make  
Sergeant. Good cops. You're on the  
force barely a year, get lucky, &  
think you deserve to jump steps?

AVERY  
I deserve something.

CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI  
How about you trade in your fifteen  
minutes of fame for a piece of  
pussy, okay? In the meantime, back  
here in real life, you got two  
choices. Retire on disability, or  
reassignment at your current rank.

AVERY  
Reassignment?

111 INT. EVIDENCE ROOM - DAY

111

Avery works behind the desk at the evidence room. It's in the  
basement. Behind him are rows of wire-caged shelves. Scott  
Stevens, in plain-clothes, approaches the desk.

SCOTT  
Hey, man, heard you were down here.

AVERY  
What's with the street clothes?

SCOTT  
You didn't hear? I'm vice now.

AVERY  
No shit?

SCOTT  
I'm actually paired up with DeLuca.  
Crotty retired last month.

Scott hands over a folder with 2 bags of marijuana.

AVERY  
Thanks for the drugs.

SCOTT  
Any time.

Scott pauses a beat, he's got something on his mind.

SCOTT (CONT'D)  
We should get a bite sometime. Talk  
about things...

AVERY  
Hey, sure. Anything to get me outta  
this cage. Name the time...

SCOTT  
...You name the place.

They shake. Scott leaves, says, "see ya."

Avery heads back into the lockers. Puts the evidence inside. Once done, he heads deeper into the room, stands in front of another locker, opens it up. He takes out a cardboard box, sits on the floor, spreads out evidence: gun, key to his motorcycle, empty backpack, wallet. Inside the wallet, he finds a picture of Luke, Romina, and Jason.

112 EXT. OLYMPIC DINER - DAY 112

Avery is parked in his unmarked Cavalier across the street from the diner where Romina works. He watches her through the window, going about her job. Avery can't seem to assuage the guilt he feels for this woman.

113 INT. OLYMPIC DINER - DAY 113

ROMINA  
What can I get you?

Romina looks up from her pad, sees Avery sitting in a booth. She tries to hide her contempt for him, looks around for help, but she is the only waitress on duty. Awkward beat.

AVERY

How are you? How's your boy, Jason?

ROMINA

Do you really care about my boy?  
You care about my family? Or is  
this just small talk?

Avery can't keep eye contact, her eyes full of venom. He looks down, notices that Romina is pregnant.

AVERY

I'll just take a coffee...

Romina walks back into the kitchen. Avery watches her go. Scott Stevens approaches and sits down. Both men shake hands.

SCOTT

Thanks for meeting me. You order?  
I'm starving.

Scott puts his hand up and waves for Romina. "Ma'am!"

SCOTT (CONT'D)

We're dealing with a case, DeLuca  
and me. And it's pretty sensitive.  
I'm hoping this can stay private.

Avery is listening. Romina comes back to the table, trembling with fear and rage. She pours Avery's coffee.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Tuna melt. Large iced tea.

Scott hands her the menu, notices who she is, makes big eyes at Avery. She turns to Avery, waits for his order. Avery can't tell if she is terrified or angry. Probably both.

AVERY

I'm fine with coffee.

She takes his menu, walks away. Scott looks at Avery like a kid who has just gotten away with something.

SCOTT

Small fucking world.

AVERY

What'd you want to talk about?

SCOTT

Right. I knew I could come to you.  
You could really help us bust this  
thing wide open.

AVERY

I don't know what I can do, but I'm  
here for you.

SCOTT

We have an operation going with these low level pushers. Kids. It could lead to their higher-ups, but we need to convince them we're legitimate. Now, you know how it is. You want to sign out drugs or money for an operation and the list of regulations... It's insane. As long as your arm, right?

Romina returns with the ice tea. Scott adds 4 sugars.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

(stirring his drink)

DeLuca and I thought, you know, you're a stand-up guy. If we can arrange something where we can have, you know, temporary access to the evidence room, and we could borrow some stuff.

AVERY

I'm listening...

114 INT. ELAN'S STRIP CLUB - NIGHT

114

Girls on stage grind to music and will do anything for a dollar. Avery and DeLuca share a booth with Scott.

PAUL DELUCA

We'll give you a list of what we need and you pull it out for us. We'll use it and then get it or something exactly like it back to as soon as we can.

AVERY

For this one investigation?

Scott and DeLuca look at one another.

SCOTT

Well, yeah, for this investigation. But we were hoping this could be like something we're all involved in. Periodically. If we need it.

A COKE-HEAD moves quick through the club and ducks into the bathroom. DeLuca eyes him, lets it slide.

AVERY

Like an open-ended thing?

PAUL DELUCA

What the hell? Scott told me you wanted to help us do some real police work.

SCOTT

Take it easy, Paul. Avery is helping. We're just working it out.

Paul smiles. He points to Scott with his thumb.

PAUL DELUCA

My better half.

AVERY

What happens if somebody comes up for trial and the evidence isn't there?

SCOTT

That's not a problem...

PAUL DELUCA

You just fudge the paper work. We'll give you cover from the DA.

PAUL DELUCA (CONT'D)

Also, you should file the occasional report about how disorganized the evidence room is. It's a good hedge if something surprises us.

AVERY

Why? Why would I do this? What do I get out of it?

PAUL DELUCA

What are you saying? You want us to bribe you or something? To do your fucking job?

AVERY

I'm not asking for fucking bribes. Just assurances. I want to do what's right, but I need assurances.

PAUL DELUCA

The fuck? You need fucking assurances? I don't even know what that means. Assurance? You get that in law school? Listen, pal, if this blows up we're all fucked. But you, see, you make sure it doesn't blow up. You can walk around all day looking down your self-righteous fucking nose at everybody, but you say you wanna be a cop. Do you?

AVERY

Yes, but...

PAUL DELUCA

You wanna see what we're dealing with? C'mere.

DeLuca stands, walks into the bathroom where the Coke-head disappeared minutes earlier. He beckons Avery and Scott to follow. Anticipating the adventure ahead, Scott stands, sighs. Avery follows his lead.

115 INT. ELAN'S BATHROOM. CONTINUOUS.

115

DeLuca sees feet standing inside one of the stalls. Pants aren't down. DeLuca kicks open the door. SEES the guy snorting a line.

COKE-HEAD  
What the fuck, man?

DELUCA  
Gimme your dope.

COKE-HEAD  
I'm not doing nothing, man.

DeLuca grabs the man by his hair, jerks his head back, looks up his nostrils. He pulls the man out of the stall, head still pulled back.

DELUCA  
You're full of shit.  
(to Avery)  
See this? No fucking nose hair.  
It's the absolute tell-tale sign of  
a fucking coke-head.  
(to the Coke-head)  
Who's your source asshole?

COKE-HEAD  
I don't know what the fuck you're  
talking about!

The man is scared, doesn't say anything. DeLuca looks at Avery and Scott, before yanking him out of the joint.

116 INT. DELUCA'S CAR - NIGHT

116

DeLuca and Scott are in front and Avery sit's in the back with the Coke-head. He looks at Avery. Avery looks away.

117 EXT. PINE BARRENS - LATER

117

DeLuca leads the cuffed Coke-head into the pines with a flashlight. Scott and Avery follow. DeLuca stops.

DELUCA  
Okay shitbag, walk ahead of us and  
stand by that tree.

The Coke-head is petrified. DeLuca takes Avery aside.

DELUCA (CONT'D)  
Okay hero go find out who his  
source is.

AVERY  
This is crazy. What are we doing  
here?

DELUCA  
This is the fucking job.

Avery looks at Scott. Unspoken, Scott urges him on. Avery  
walks to the Coke-head, tries to be a human being.

AVERY  
What's your name?

JUNKIE  
Fuck you motherfucker.

Avery leans in and whispers.

AVERY  
Listen. You have any idea what kind  
of trouble you're in here? I need  
to know the name of your source so  
i can get you outta here.

Junkie doesn't say anything. He's not scared of Avery.

DELUCA  
What's taking so long? Do the right  
thing, hero.

AVERY  
This is your last chance.

JUNKIE  
Or what? Fuck you bitch.

The other cops hoot with laughter. Avery is mortified by the  
man's defiance and the ultimate ghetto insult - no man calls  
another man a bitch without a fight. Avery slams the junkie  
up against the tree.

AVERY  
Give me a fucking name.

Avery's presses the mans face against the tree. He pulls his  
head back and slams against the tree again. Deluca puts his  
hands on Avery's shoulder.

DELUCA  
Whoa, whoa... No need to hurt the  
guy for Christ sake.

Avery's breathing hard. He steps back.

DELUCA (CONT'D)  
 Apologies for my colleague here...  
 He's still learning how to be a  
 cop.

Deluca produces a bag of crack cocaine. He holds it up with  
 the flash light on it.

DELUCA (CONT'D)  
 See this... It's the real deal.  
 Give it a taste. It's all yours. We  
 just need one name from you. And  
 there's more where this came from.

The junkie is interested. He takes the bag. Avery learns.

118 EXT. AVERY AND JENNIFER'S HOME. NIGHT. 118

Avery can't sleep. He stares at the ceiling. He gets out of  
 bed, very quietly.

119 EXT. AVERY AND JENNIFER'S HOME. SHED. PRE-DAWN 119

Avery digs out the shoe box with the plastic bag of money he  
 took from Romina's place. He quietly walks back to his car.

JENNIFER (O.S.)  
 Avery?

Jennifer opens the back porch screen door, and comes out in  
 her nightgown. She sees the bag of money in his hand. He  
 tries to hide it. They stand there for a minute.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)  
 Do you wanna talk?

AVERY  
 I have to go.

JENNIFER  
 OK.

AVERY  
 OK.

He goes for his car.

JENNIFER  
 This stuff you're doing doesn't  
 feel good.

AVERY  
 What stuff am I doing?

JENNIFER  
 Are you in trouble?

Avery sighs. At a loss on how to answer.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)  
I've never seen you like this.

AVERY  
Like what?

JENNIFER  
So distant.  
(beat)  
I just don't feel like I can trust  
you right now and I never thought  
I'd feel that way about you.

AVERY  
Then maybe I shouldn't be here.

JENNIFER  
Will you just come inside? I miss  
you, Avery.

AVERY  
...I can't... I can't do this...

Jennifer gathers the courage to ask...

JENNIFER  
Are you leaving me?

AVERY  
I'm sorry.

Avery gets in his car. Shuts the door. Starts it up.

120

EXT. OLYMPIC DINER - MORNING

120

Romina gets off of her shift. Avery climbs out of his car.

AVERY  
Excuse me. Don't worry. I'm not  
here as a police officer. I'm just  
a regular guy.

Avery holds out the money for her. Romina won't touch it.

AVERY (CONT'D)  
I don't judge anything you've done.  
This is yours, not mine. Please.

ROMINA  
I don't know where that money is  
from. And what you're doing is very  
inappropriate.

Romina walks over to her car and gets in. Avery follows.

AVERY  
I'm not trying to entrap you. Take  
it. You need it. For the baby.

ROMINA

What do you know about what my baby needs?

Romina backs out and almost runs over Avery's foot. Avery watches her drive away.

121

INT. POLICE STATION. WEIRZBOWSKI'S OFFICE. DAY.

121

The end of another long day. But Avery has been waiting a long time. Weirzbowski calls him in. Avery walks in, sees the chief gathering his things to leave for the day.

AVERY

Chief.

Avery closes the door behind him. Chief finds it curious.

CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI

What's up, Cross? Don't tell me you're gonna ask for another promotion.

AVERY

No. Something else...

Avery reaches in his jacket, pulls out the bag of money.

CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI

What's that doing up here?

AVERY

It came from one of the houses. During a search. And it's not just this...

CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI

(interrupting)

Don't say another word.

Avery puts the money down on the chief's desk. They both look at it, then at each other.

CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI (CONT'D)

What do you want me to do with this? What do you want me to do. What do you expect me to do?

Silence. Avery wishes he would have never brought it up with the chief. He stands up to leave.

CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI (CONT'D)

Whoa. Wait a minute. I want you to know that this is not good business. This is not the way to build a career.

The chief takes a couple of tissues from a box, uses them to pick up the bag of money (so as not to get his fingerprints on it). He throws it at Avery. Hard.

CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI (CONT'D)  
 Take this shit outta my office.

AVERY  
 What should I do with it?

CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI  
 Shove it up your fucking ass! I  
 don't care! You figure it out.

Avery retreats out of the office. Moves through the station with increasing determination.

122 INT. EVIDENCE ROOM. DAY. CONTINUOUS. 122

Unlocks door. Takes out Luke's box. Unzips the backpack. Stuffs the money in there.

123 EXT. POLICE STATION. PARKING LOT. LATE AFTERNOON. 123

Avery walks out of the station, with paranoid urgency. "Chirp chirp" Unlocks his car. He looks to the left, SEES - Weirzbowski talking to DeLuca. They turn and watch him. Shit!

He get's into his car - kind of a lengthy process with his bum knee - has to stick his bad leg in first without bending it. He's nervous and impatient. Finally gets in.

124 INT. AVERY'S CAR. DUSK. 124

His heart is racing from the adrenaline. He drives down ERIE BLVD toward home. Not much traffic. He talks to himself.

Suddenly. The lights from a cruiser flash behind him. "What the fuck?" He doesn't know what to do. He keeps driving.

The cruiser gets closer. Sirens bleat.

125 INT/EXT AVERY'S CAR- CONTINUOUS 125

Avery is covered in sweat. He pulls over to the side. Watches in the rear-view. The cruiser is parked behind him. Lights still flashing. He can't make out who is driving, just hazy silhouettes. The driver's door cracks open. Beat. DeLuca steps out. Pulls up his pants. Approaches Avery's window.

He rolls down his window.

PAUL DELUCA  
 License and registration.

Avery's thrown off. He reaches into his pocket. DeLuca starts laughing (deep laugh of a smoker).

PAUL DELUCA (CONT'D)  
 What the fuck is wrong with you? If  
 I tol' ya to bend over so I can  
 fuck ya up the ass would you do it?

Avery feels like snapping.

PAUL DELUCA (CONT'D)  
 It's a fucking joke. Have a sense  
 of humor. You okay?

Avery nods.

PAUL DELUCA (CONT'D)  
 You sure? 'Cause you don't look so  
 good.

AVERY  
 I'm good.

PAUL DELUCA  
 Scott told me he talked to you  
 about that thing. You know, that  
 thing? We need to talk it over. Get  
 a little game plan together - if  
 you know what I'm sayin'.

AVERY  
 When? Now?

PAUL DELUCA  
 Now? No last week. Whatdaya mean,  
 "now?" Yeah now. Follow me.

He returns to his cruiser, pulls up next to Avery, rolls down  
 his passenger side window.

PAUL DELUCA (CONT'D)  
 We're gonna go out a little ways.  
 Get away from the ears in this  
 city. Follow me.

Avery rolls up his window and nervously goes along with it.

126

INT. AVERY'S CAR INTO THE PINES- CONTINUOUS DRIVING

126

The headlights of Avery's car illuminate endless rows of  
 lonely pine trees. Deluca's tail lights hover ahead, leading  
 Avery deeper and deeper into the darkness. Avery's heart is  
 in his throat. He takes his gun out of his holster, sets it  
 next to him. "where the fuck are you going?"

Deluca turns down a dirt road, and Avery has no choice but to  
 follow. "oh my fucking god." Avery stops. Sees, Deluca's  
 brakes light. DeLuca's door opens. Abject terror.

Avery does a super fast and messy 3-point turn to get out of  
 there. He is nearly hyperventilating.

He peels out sending a cloud of gravel and dirt into the atmosphere. He straightens out on the main road and drives like hell out of the forest.

127 EXT/INT. AVERY'S FATHER'S HOME - GE PLOT - NIGHT 127

Avery pulls into his father's driveway. Stately mini mansion - now all dark. Avery rings the bell. Knocks.

Porch light turns on. Al Cross, in robe, opens the door. He looks into his son's desperate eyes. Nods. "Come in..."

128 INT. AVERY'S FATHER'S HOME- LATER 128

They sit in a large kitchen, drinking scotch. We pick up in the middle of their conversation.

AL  
There's always a way out. And  
there's a way out of this... but  
you're not going to like it. Do you  
want to hear?

AVERY  
I want to hear.

AL  
OK Let's start at the precinct.  
Who, if anyone, still trusts you?

Avery knows that this is the moment he can't turn back from. He knows who trusts him...

129 INT. CRUISER. THE NEXT DAY 129

Avery balances 2 cups of coffee and opens the passenger's side door. Scott sits in the driver's seat.

SCOTT  
You really gave Deluca quite the  
scare...

AVERY  
That's one way to look at it.

SCOTT  
What the fuck were you thinking?  
He's ready to dump you and give up  
on the whole thing. What happened?

AVERY  
I just wasn't in the mood to get  
fucked around.

SCOTT  
Look. I know. He's very difficult  
to deal with sometimes. But that's  
just him.

(MORE)

SCOTT (CONT'D)

He needs to get comfortable. He's just testing you. He needs to know you're on board. And it's getting a little hard for me to keep vouching for you. Especially when you act so fucking weird all the time.

AVERY

Well enough with the fucking tests. You tell me what you want me to do or just fucking leave me alone.

SCOTT

Damn, you're touchy.

Avery is all nerves.

AVERY

Okay fuck it. I'm out.

Avery opens his car door to get out.

SCOTT

Hey come on partner.

Avery stops. Wants to just walk away, but he can't leave.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Remember the MacInnis case? The kilo? We need you to pull that out for us. Deluca will make the pick up. We'll get it, or something exactly like it, back to as soon as we can.

AVERY

Not a problem.

SCOTT

I knew I could count on you.

They slap "five."

130

INT. SCHENECTADY COUNTY D.A.'S OFFICE - DAY

130

Avery, in uniform, sits across from D.A. Killcullen. He holds a small tape-recorder up & plays his conversation with Scott which he secretly recorded. Killcullen leans in to listen.

SCOTT (ON TAPE RECORDER)

I knew we could count on you.

Avery clicks off the tape, hands the recorder to Killcullen.

AVERY

I have more. Much more.

Killcullen studies the recorder and puts it on his desk.

BILL KILLCULLEN  
Have you shown this to IA?

AVERY  
No way.

BILL KILLCULLEN  
What's that supposed to mean?

AVERY  
I have no interest in being a  
martyr. I can give you this whole  
case on a silver platter.

Killcullen smiles. He presses a button on his intercom. His  
receptionist STACY answers on the other end.

BILL KILLCULLEN  
Stacy? Is it Christmas?

STACY (OVER THE INTERCOM)  
What?

BILL KILLCULLEN  
Can you check for me and see if  
it's Christmas?

STACY (OVER THE INTERCOM)  
I'm busy.

The intercom clicks off.

BILL KILLCULLEN  
To the best of my knowledge, it's  
not Christmas. Therefore, I assume  
this isn't just a gift you want to  
give me?

AVERY  
No. I have conditions.

BILL KILLCULLEN  
And what are these conditions?

AVERY  
First off, you need to give me your  
word you're going to follow  
through. Second, I want immunity if  
you do follow through. And third,  
whether you follow through or not,  
I want you to make me an assistant  
D.A. I have a law degree and I  
passed the BAR.

BILL KILLCULLEN  
I already have an assistant D.A.  
Two, actually.

AVERY  
Make room.

BILL KILLCULLEN  
 Officer Cross. Avery, right? Can I call you Avery? Avery, you're obviously someone I can be candid with. No bullshit. Well let me ask you straight, just on the face of this proposition, why the hell do you think I'd be willing to reward you for this shit sandwich? I have to work with the guys on this tape. I'm not going to make it my business to screw them.

AVERY  
 You can say no to me and I'll walk out of here and walk right into the Gazette. Only when I play the tapes for them, they'll be some new material.

Avery pulls another little recorder from his inside coat pocket and shows it to Killcullen. It's recording. Killcullen leans back in his chair and smiles. Avery smiles back.

BILL KILLCULLEN  
 Wow. You're a real asshole, huh?

AVERY  
 Act now, and I'm your asshole.

131 EXT. DELUCA RESIDENCE - DAY 131

Federal agents arrest Paul DeLuca at his home and lead him down his sidewalk in cuffs.

ANCHOR (ON T.V.) (V.O.)  
 Drugs, corruption and gangs. It's not an investigation by the Schenectady Police it's an investigation *into* the Schenectady Police.

132 INT. PRISON CELL - DAY 132

Scott Stevens is put into a cell. The door closes behind him.

ANCHOR (ON T.V.) (V.O.)  
 Earlier today, DA William Killcullen announced that his office, in conjunction with the F.B.I. would be handing down indictments that would lead to the arrests of Schenectady Police officers.

133 INT. POLICE STATION. NIGHT. 133

Chief Weirzbowski stands, watching the TV, seething.

REPORTER 2 (ON T.V.)  
 The D.A. is making allegations  
 today that Schenectady vice  
 officers acted like the gangs they  
 were supposed to be busting.

134 INT. AVERY AND JENNIFER'S HOME. NIGHT 134

ON TV: A REPORTER stands in front of the Police station.

REPORTER 2  
 Officers allegedly stole drugs,  
 money and even guns from the police  
 department's evidence room. With  
 the stolen evidence, officials say,  
 the cops allegedly paid criminals  
 to help set up their rivals which  
 lead to headline grabbing arrests.

Jennifer watches the news report on TV, bounces A.J.

135 EXT/INT. AVERY'S FATHER'S HOME - GE PLOT - NIGHT 135

Avery and his father watch the local news. His father takes a  
 phone call, and Avery is left alone, in the kitchen.

REPORTER 2 (ON T.V.)(V.O)  
 The D.A. Announced a star witness  
 in the case, hero-cop Avery Cross,  
 who just under a year ago was shot  
 in the line of duty while saving  
 two Schenectady residents from the  
 alleged "motobandit."

136 INT. LEGAL OFFICE. CONFERENCE ROOM. MONTHS LATER. DAY. 136

Avery and Jennifer enter a room with their LAWYERS and a  
 MEDIATOR. Avery sits on one side of a big conference table  
 with his Lawyer and Jennifer sits on the other with hers. The  
 mediator sits at the head. Awkward. Little eye contact.

MEDIATOR  
 It's always nice when two parties  
 can come to an agreement on their  
 own without having to enter a  
 courtroom because we all know where  
 that can lead. That being said I  
 just want to remind all parties  
 present that we're not locked in  
 yet and there's still time to  
 revise the specifics of this  
 agreement but after these divorce  
 documents are signed of course that  
 window closes. Ok? Mr. Cross, do  
 you fully understand that in  
 signing this document you are  
 willingly giving away sole custody  
 of your son A.J.

(MORE)

MEDIATOR (CONT'D)

Cross to your former wife Jennifer Cross and in so doing you understand that you are relinquishing all rights going forward to make decisions regarding the parenting of you son. Do you fully understand the implications of what you're signing?

Avery leans over to his lawyer.

AVERY'S LAWYER

Yes he does.

MEDIATOR

And do you, Jennifer Cross understand the terms of this agreement?

Jennifer is heart-broken. She looks at Avery, hoping that he'll put up a fight. He doesn't. Defeated, disappointed, disillusioned, she looks down and says "yes."

JENNIFER'S LAWYER

Yes she does.

ELLIPSE. Documents are signed.

137

EXT. CEMETARY. DAY. 16 YEARS LATER.

137

The cemetery is natural, hilly and wild. Pall-bearers remove a casket from the back of a Hearse.

PREACHER (V.O.)

Albert Cross was someone who brought justice and strength to all aspects of his life.

People awkwardly mingle as they find their seats. This is a big funeral. A preacher stands at a podium next to an tent and an open grave. People sit and stand, listen and remember.

PREACHER

He was not only a father to his beautiful family but also a father to our entire community.

Avery, now the distinguished looking statesman (a little grayer at the temples, but still in great shape), sits next to a now 16-year old A.J. Jennifer sits next to A.J.

PREACHER (CONT'D)

I would like to welcome his son, who I know he was extremely proud of, to say a few words. DA Cross?

Avery stands. People watch him with sympathetic expressions as he quietly makes his way to the podium.

AVERY

Let me start by saying thank you to everyone who has come out today to honor my father's life. I know Al had a tremendous impact on so many of you here. He was not exactly what you would call a low impact man. I remember as a boy looking at him in his judges gown and thinking my dad is a super hero. Now looking back I think I was not so far off. My father had that all important quality as a judge of being both compassionate and ferocious at the same time. He was not afraid to make enemies and because of that he made many friends. Before he fell into a coma I was able to tell him that I was dedicating my run for Senate to him.

(chokes up)

He shook his head no. I didn't understand why he did this. And so I leaned in close and he managed to whisper... and he said to me, "I'll take the win not the run."

People laugh. Jennifer doesn't.

AVERY (CONT'D)

That was Al.

138

EXT/INT. AVERY'S FATHER'S HOME - GE PLOT - LATER

138

Well dressed folks gather at Al's house for a reception. Pot luck dishes cover the grand dining room table. A.J. wears headphones as he fills a plate with food. Avery makes the rounds accepting condolences with the grace of a politician. Jennifer watches him finish one conversation and move quickly to another. She hangs back until the opening reveals itself.

JENNIFER

Avery.

Avery turns around and Jennifer gives him a meaningful hug.

AVERY

I guess this day had to come at some point right?

Jennifer nods.

JENNIFER

I know how hard this must be for you.

Avery knows that Jennifer knows the true depth of how hard it is. He works to stay composed.

AVERY

Thank you.

Avery averts his eyes from Jennifer's stare.

JENNIFER  
So I know this is not the ideal  
time but I need to talk to you  
about A.J. a little bit.

AVERY  
Okay.

It's hard for Jennifer to say this...

JENNIFER  
He wants to live with you... He  
won't stop asking me about it.

AVERY  
Really? Well I think he should at  
some point.

Jennifer looks at him sadly. She would do anything to keep  
him at home.

JENNIFER  
This is his senior year Avery.  
There isn't going to be another  
point.

AVERY  
It's just... a tough time for me  
right now. With the campaign and...  
I'm totally unprepared you know?

JENNIFER  
Is that what you want me to tell  
him? That it's a tough time for  
you?

AVERY  
Jennifer...

139 EXT. AVERY'S HOME. POOLSIDE. DAY.

139

Avery is sitting in an patio chair, trying to lead a  
conference call with his political advisors. They discuss  
details of his campaign.

A.J. walks out of the house with a big beach towel, sets it  
on a chair. He takes off his shirt and stands on the edge of  
the pool, watching his dad talking on the phone.

Avery looks at his son, shirtless, skinny, pale, standing on  
the edge of his pool. As if A.J. senses his dad's inspection,  
he jumps and cannonball's into the pool.

He makes a big splash and lots of noise. Avery takes the  
conference call inside. A.J. is left in the pool alone.

141 EXT LINTEN HIGH SCHOOL. DAY. 141

A.J. parks his nice car in the student lot of the school.

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR (O.S.)  
Let's see... Avery Cross?

A.J.  
A.J.

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR  
Oh okay.

A.J. passes by other students on his way into school.

142 INT. GUIDANCE COUNSELOR'S OFFICE - LATER 142

A.J. sits across from the GUIDANCE COUNSELOR. He looks over his schedule.

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR  
I saw your dad on TV the other day.  
He's really good in front of those  
cameras.

A.J.  
Yeah. We're really proud of him.

143 INT. LUNCHROOM. 143

A.J. wanders around the lunchroom with a tray of pizza - doesn't know anybody, doesn't see a place to sit. Sees a big, rebellious looking kid - JASON sitting alone. A.J. walks over and puts his tray down across from him.

A.J.  
What's up?

Jason eyes A.J., then nods. A.J. opens his milk carton. Looks around at GIRLS walking by.

A.J. (CONT'D)  
Must be extra hormones in the  
chicken here cuz these girls are  
developed. N'aw mean?

Jason looks around and smiles.

A.J. (CONT'D)  
Damn...My dad wanted me here for my  
senior year - I don't know why. I'm  
so fucking glad to get out of  
fucking Troy though man.

JASON  
Yeah?

A.J.  
That fucking town sucks dude. Way worse than here.

Jason eats.

A.J. (CONT'D)  
You have any good distractions 'round here?

JASON  
(thinks)  
Some.

144 EXT. GROUT PARK. AFTERNOON. 144

A.J. takes the first drag of a marijuana pipe. Holding the smoke in his lungs he passes it to Jason. Jason does the same.

145 EXT. TRAIN TRACK MONTAGE- LATER 145

They tell jokes, get high, wrestle lost in the hot autumn friendship. The characters literally get to know each other before our eyes.

146 EXT. TRAIN TRACK- LATER 146

A.J.  
You live with both of your parents?

JASON  
Yeah.

A.J.  
That's cool they're still together.

JASON  
Yeah well it's not my real dad but...

A.J.  
Where's your real dad at?

JASON  
Died. In a car accident. I was still a baby though.

A.J.  
That's fucked up right?

JASON  
That's the way it is.

Beat. A.J. looks at him. They walk.

A.J.  
This is kind bud dude - but you  
know where we can score some X?

147 INT. SUV. NIGHT

147

A.J. drives his dad's SUV through Hamilton Hill section of Schenectady.

JASON  
Take a right. And then pull over up  
there.

A.J. puts on his blinker, turns the corner, & pulls over. It's a rough part of town. He gives Jason a pile of cash, and leaves the engine running.

JASON (CONT'D)  
K wait here.

A.J. cranks his head to see Jason run/walk down the block to a shitty looking house. A.J. waits, looks around, nervous.

Jason is back relatively quickly. He hands A.J. a package of 20 tabs.

A.J.  
Yeah son!

A.J. takes his X.

A.J. (CONT'D)  
What you waiting for?

Jason thinks twice. Then pops his tab. A.J. hoots and hollers, pumps his stereo, then pulls away from the curb.

Suddenly. Cop lights flash behind them.

A.J. (CONT'D)  
(freaking out)  
What the fuck? Oh fuck. Holy shit.

A.J. keeps driving. Jason turns down the music.

JASON  
Shit. Just pull over.

A.J.  
What the fuck, dude?

JASON  
Just chill out. Just pull over.

Finally, A.J. does.

A.J.  
What the fuck did you do?

148 EXT. SCHENECTADY POLICE STATION - CONTINUOUS 148

Avery gets out of his car and walks into the station.

AVERY (V.O.)  
Where have you got him?

CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI (V.O.)  
Downstairs.

149 INT. POLICE STATION. CONT 149

Chief WEIRZBOWSKI briefs Avery as they walk through the halls of the station.

AVERY  
What happened?

CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI  
He was buying ecstasy from some Schenectady kid.

AVERY  
Who arrested him?

CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI  
Beat cop. Central district patrol.

AVERY  
Anyone see him come in other than him?

CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI  
No. I made sure of that.

AVERY  
And what about the arresting officers? Stand up guys?

CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI  
They'll sit on this. If they hear it from me.

150 INT. VIDEO MONITOR ROOM- CONTINUOUS 150

They arrive at a video monitor which is split into quadrants. Avery looks at the screen, SEES - A.J. sitting alone in an interrogation room, & Jason, with his head down in his folded arms on the table, sitting alone in a separate room.

AVERY  
Who's the other kid?

CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI  
Jason Kancam. Got caught a few years ago on some vandalism charge. Another aimless youth.

Avery can't believe it. He tries to hide his surprise.

AVERY  
Cut the mic in room 2.

151 INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

151

Avery enters the room, takes off his jacket, uses his jacket to cover the hidden camera; obscuring the surveillance feed. A.J. is rolling.

A.J.  
I'm really sorry dad. It was my fault. I shouldn't have been there. I know you don't have time to deal with this kinda stuff right now. It won't happen again. You have my word.

Avery holds a stare at his son. His apology falls on deaf ears.

AVERY  
Not him.

Awkward beat.

A.J.  
What?

AVERY  
Leave that kid alone.

A.J.  
(smiles)  
Why?

Avery pushes him into the wall. Gets up in his face. Avery's voice is full of malice but he keeps it at a raspy whisper.

AVERY  
Wipe that fucking smile off your face.

A.J.'s smile has become a terrified quiver.

AVERY (CONT'D)  
You hear me? Not him.

A.J. doesn't respond - tears are now coming out of his eyes. Avery releases him, stands up.

AVERY (CONT'D)  
Stay away from him, you understand me?

A.J. nods his head slightly. He puts his jacket on and resumes the face of a politician. A.J.

follows him out of the room wiping the tears from his eyes with the sleeve of his sweatshirt.

152 INT. OTHER INTERROGATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

152

Jason sits alone in the other interrogation room. A COP opens the door and enters the room. The cop takes a seat across from Jason.

COP

Okay. You are under arrest. I'm supposed to advise of your rights. You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say can and will be used against you. You have the right to an attorney. If you can't afford an attorney, one will be appointed for you.

Jason swallows hard. His eyes dart around the room.

COP (CONT'D)

You okay?

Jason nods, rapidly.

COP (CONT'D)

We're gonna book you now, okay?

JASON

'kay.

153 INT. SCHENECTADY POLICE STATION - LATER

153

Jason is fingerprinted and photographed. His personal possessions are taken from him and cataloged.

COP

Do you want to call someone?

JASON

I don't know.

COP

What's not to know?

JASON

I don't want my mom to find out.

COP

She's gonna find out anyway. If you don't call someone, you're gonna spend the night in jail.

Jason thinks about it.

154 INT. HOLDING CELL - LATER 154

Scared, Jason sits in a holding cell with 1 or 2 DRUNKS.

DRUNK

I look where I want to look. I'm looking at you and if you say anything about it, I'll defend myself.

Jason tries to look away. Tries to make himself disappear.

DRUNK (CONT'D)

Don't ignore me. Don't you fucking ignore me.

INT. AVERY'S HOME. DAY.

A.J. sits alone on the living room couch. He eats a piece of pizza and watches a news report. The report shows Avery campaigning at the local BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB.

ANCHOR

... The senatorial candidate even took time to play a few innings with the local youth.

We see Avery at bat, swing, hit and run the bases (his limp slowing him down of course).

155 INT. COURT ROOM - DAY 155

Jason sits alone in the gallery of a court house with a PUBLIC DEFENDER.

Kofi and Romina, both 16 years older, enter the room, shake hands with the public defender. Jason can't really make eye contact with them because he knows how ANGRY they are.

PUBLIC DEFENDER

So, Jason. Seems like you have some friends in high places?

Jason is visibly confused.

PUBLIC DEFENDER (CONT'D)

Just lucky, I guess. I'm getting some pretty strong signals from the prosecutor that if you plead guilty, we can bargain this down to almost nothing.

ROMINA

What do you mean? Like it will be dismissed?

PUBLIC DEFENDER

No. If he pleads guilty he'll have a record.

(MORE)

PUBLIC DEFENDER (CONT'D)  
 But if we bargain down to  
 misdemeanor possession we can get  
 some time served from the night in  
 jail and at worst maybe a fine and  
 some probation.

ROMINA  
 And we get that if we plead guilty?

Defender gets up to leave, stacking folders as he goes.

PUBLIC DEFENDER  
 It's your lucky day, I guess.

Romina stares at her son. He looks to her, finds no approval.

156 INT. KOFI'S CAR. DAY. 156

They drive home. Nobody says a word. You could cut the  
 tension with a knife.

157 INT. TWO-FAMILY HOUSE. DAY. 157

Jason enters the house and runs up to his room. Kofi and  
 Romina enter behind him. HEAR him shut his door.

158 INT. TWO FAMILY HOUSE, JASON'S ROOM - LATER 158

Knock at the door.

JASON  
 Yeah.

Romina enters the room and looks around. Jason closes his  
 notebook and looks at her. He knows how fucked he is.

She walks over to Jason and slaps him across the face. It's  
 the kind of slap that makes your eyes water.

ROMINA  
 Don't you ever do that to me.

Jason looks up at his mom. It's the first time she's hit him.

ROMINA (CONT'D)  
 No call? No nothing? You were  
 afraid we'd be angry?  
 (Beat)  
 Well guess what. We're angry.

JASON  
 Sorry.

ROMINA  
 You need to start acting like  
 you're a part of this family.  
 (MORE)

ROMINA (CONT'D)  
 Not just some guy who lives in the  
 same house. Okay?

Nothing.

ROMINA (CONT'D)  
 Say "okay."

JASON  
 Okay.

Jason puts his head down.

ROMINA  
 I will not watch this happen.

She leaves his room, slamming his door shut.

159 INT. CHRISTIAN BROTHERS ACADEMY. WAITING ROOM. 159

Jason and Romina sit in the waiting room.

SERGEANT (V.O.)  
 We see kids like yours every day  
 Mrs. Cankam. Young men who come  
 here and think that somehow the  
 laws of the land don't apply to  
 them.

160 MONTAGE. CHRISTIAN BROTHERS ACADEMY. 160

A SERGEANT gives Jason and Romina a tour of the facilities.

SERGEANT (V.O.)  
 Boys who have been through  
 countless schools, jails, foster  
 homes, you name it.

161 INT. CHRISTIAN BROTHERS ACADEMY. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS 161

Jason and Romina sit across a desk from the SERGEANT.

SERGEANT  
 I've spoken to countless mothers  
 just like your self who feel with  
 out hope for their sons and all I  
 have to tell you is that what we do  
 here at the Christian Brothers  
 Academy works. We do not deviate  
 from our routine for anything or  
 anyone. Every cadet does physical  
 training starting at 6:05 sharp.  
 Then chores, then formation,  
 advisory, academics and so on until  
 chores and lights out at 10 pm.  
 Cadets have 35 minutes per day of  
 free time.

(MORE)

SERGEANT (CONT'D)

If this is not respected it will be promptly retracted. We believe, Mrs. Cankam, that freedom is earned. It all comes down to the character of the individual.

They both look to Jason.

ROMINA

Well, I honestly don't know what else there is for us to do.

Jason is shocked. He's not going here in a million years.

SERGEANT

Well let's talk to the young man himself. How do you see yourself fitting in here, Jason?

JASON

I don't. I'm not coming here. No way.

The sergeant is not surprised by Jason's answer. He turns and speaks to Romina as if Jason is not there.

SERGEANT

This kind of resistance to the program is typical Mrs. Cankam.

162

INT. CAR. MOVING. CONTINUOUS.

162

Romina drives. Jason is very distant.

ROMINA

I'm doing this only because I love you.

JASON

How can you say that? How can you say you love me when you're gonna kick me out of your house?

ROMINA

You can be mad at me all you want. But you have made your own choices here, Jason.

JASON

That's a funny way to love someone.

ROMINA

Jason...

JASON

This is my last year at home, and you're gonna send me away? You must really love me.

ROMINA

Jason. Jason. No one's sent you away yet...

Jason looks away from his mom, yanks on the strings on his hoodie until his face disappears into a black hole.

ROMINA (CONT'D)

The application process takes 2 weeks. You can change my mind about this. But you're gonna have to prove it to me. You have 2 weeks. But I need you to try really really hard. OK?

She puts out her hand to shake.

ROMINA (CONT'D)

Jason... Do we have a deal? Jason?

JASON

Yeah

ROMINA

You gotta shake on it.

Jason does. A little bit of the tension is lifted.

163

EXT. LINTEN HIGH SCHOOL. MORNING.

163

Kofi pulls his SUV up into the student lot. Vanessa gets out of the passenger's seat, Jason gets out of the back seat. Kofi gets out of the driver's seat, pops the back hatch, retrieves a diorama. He brings it to Vanessa, kisses her on the top of her head. Then, pulls Jason by neck, and kisses him on the top of his head. Embarrassed, Jason swings a playful punch at Kofi.

A.J., surrounded by other kids, watches the scene from the fancy tail of his SUV.

Jason sees that A.J. has been watching him. He waves at A.J. A.J. turns away from him. Jason, a little perplexed, walks into school with his sister.

164

INT. SCHOOL. POOL - DAY

164

Loud echoing yells and laughter fill the pool area. Students enjoy free time. Jason stands on the edge, reticent to get in.

GYM TEACHER

Gotta get wet, Cancam. Only way to get credit is to get in the pool.

Jason slowly descends the stairs into the pool. The water is cold. He holds onto the wall because he can't swim. Looks up, SEES A.J. run on the diving board do a sick flip into the pool. Big splash. Kids cheer.

Using the wall, Jason makes his way over to A.J., who is talking and goofing off with a group of guys.

JASON  
Sup?

A.J.  
Sup dude?

JASON  
That was a sick dive.

Jared comes up behind A.J. and dunks him. A.J. retaliates and gets Jared back. Jason watches, a bit uncomfortably, hoping they don't try and do the same to him.

GYM TEACHER  
Hands off the side, Cancam.

Jason lets go of the edge. Tries desperately to stay afloat.

165 INT. LOCKER ROOM. LATER

165

Students get dressed. Loud. Commotion. Jason sits near A.J. who sits with other kids.

JASON  
Hey, sorry man. I didn't mean to get you busted.

A.J.  
Fuck that, dude. My dad had me outta there in like 5 minutes. I wasn't gonna stay there and get fucked up the ass all night.

JASON  
You get grounded or something like that? What was your punishment?

A.J.  
(Laughs)  
My punishment is I can do no wrong. What about you?

JASON  
I'm OK.

A.J.  
Really? Cause I saw that guy today.

JASON  
What guy?

A.J.  
Your dad... That's your fucking dad? Dude, he looks like fucking linebacker.

Jared laughs. A.J. enjoys the attention.

JASON  
Kofi's cool.

A.J.  
He's fucking ridiculous, bro.  
When'd he move in?

JASON  
What? He didn't move in.

A.J.  
He's always been there? Did he at  
least wait until your dad died to  
move in on your momma?

Laughter. Jason is rip shit. Gets in A.J.'s face.

JASON  
What the fuck are you talking  
about, A.J.?

A.J.  
Dude. Chill. Only playin. Don't be  
so serious. You got a fucking  
temper, man. You need to get that  
shit under control. Or you're gonna  
get into trouble, b.

A.J. and gang get up, leaving Jason alone in the locker room.

166

INT. JASON'S HOUSE, DINING ROOM - EVENING

166

Jason and his family eat dinner. Kofi and Vanessa talk about her day at school. Jason won't make eye contact with anyone in his family. He's deep in his own thoughts.

JASON  
(blurting)  
What's the deal with my dad?

Everyone in the house goes quiet. Kofi looks to Romina to see how she wants to answer this. This question takes her aback, bringing to surface many conflicting emotions. She becomes a wall.

JASON (CONT'D)  
Did you hate him or something?

Romina can't look at Jason. She can't look at anyone.

JASON (CONT'D)  
I'm just wondering, because, I'm  
just - I don't even know what color  
his eyes were...

ROMINA  
I told you everything there is to  
know Jason.

JASON  
You haven't told me shit.

She gets up with her plate. Disappears into the kitchen. Kofi watches, then looks toward Jason. Jason looks dejected. Kofi takes a bite of his food.

167 INT. JASON'S ROOM. NIGHT. 167

Jason doodles in a notebook - violent pictures. KNOCK at the door. Kofi appears in the doorway.

KOFI  
Feel like going for a ride?

JASON  
Not really.

KOFI  
I do. Let's go. Come on.

168 EXT. FRIENDLY'S RESTAURANT - PARKING LOT - LATER 168

Kofi and Jason lean against his SUV. Kofi drinks a shake. Jason licks an ice cream cone.

JASON  
Can we drive around?

KOFI  
With ice cream? Come on. I'm trying to keep that car nice.

JASON  
That car is older than you.

Kofi laughs in spite of himself.

KOFI  
Wait til you have your own. Which at the rate you're going will be never.

Kofi and Jason enjoy their ice cream in silence.

JASON  
How come mom won't talk to me about my dad?

Another silence. Kofi searches...

KOFI  
(like DARTH VADER)  
I'm your father. Search your feelings, you know it to be true.

Jason laughs.

KOFI (CONT'D)  
 It's your mom's business to talk  
 about or not talk about, you know?

JASON  
 Grandma used to tell me some.

KOFI  
 Oh yeah? What'd she say?

JASON  
 (beaming)  
 She said he was a bad man. An  
 outlaw or something.

KOFI  
 (unimpressed)  
 That sound cool to you?

JASON  
 I don't know. Was he really messed  
 up?

Jason licks his ice cream and tries to look unmoved.

KOFI  
 He's not your father. Not really.  
 He's some guy who had a baby. I'm  
 your father. I been there since you  
 were born. I love you. I'll always  
 love you.

JASON  
 Will you tell me his name?

Kofi considers this request.

KOFI  
 Your mom is gonna murder me.

169

INT. SCHOOL LIBRARY. DAY.

169

Jason GOOGLES the name 'LUKE GLANTON' on the school computer.  
 A list of links to old news articles comes up. Jason clicks  
 on one - a text only article. READS:

"MOTO-bandit LUKE Glanton was shot and killed yesterday in a  
 shoot-out with Schenectady Police..."

Jason is floored.

He continues discovering more details on his father's life,  
 and death. Nearing the end of the article he READS:

"Glanton, a former motorcycle stunt rider had been working at  
 Van Der Zee service station in Rotterdam. His former boss,  
 ROBIN VAN DER ZEE, declined to be interviewed for this  
 article."

170 EXT. NISKAYUNA STREETS/SCHENECTADY STREETS - AFTERNOON 170  
Jason rides away from school down Route 5 toward ROTTERDAM.

171 EXT. VAN DER ZEE SERVICE STATION - LATER 171  
Other than the assortment of cars parked out front, not much has changed in the last 15 years. Jason leans his bike against an old pay phone out front.

172 INT. VAN DER ZEE SERVICE STATION 172  
Jason walks INTO THE FRONT OFFICE. It's empty. He sits down, waits & can see into the busy garage bays from where he sits. DEAN THE MECHANIC walks into the office, startles Jason.

DEAN  
Can I help you?

JASON  
(clears throat)  
Yeah. I'd like to talk to Robin Van Der Zee?

DEAN  
He's busy right now. What can I do for you?

JASON  
I just need to talk to him. It's not about a car.

DEAN  
Alright... Wait here.

Dean walks back into the bays. Jason watches him talk to Robin, who is working over the engine of a Ford Focus. Robin looks at the office. Comes out, wiping the grease off his hands?

ROBIN  
Do I know you?

Jason shakes his head, "no."

JASON  
My name's Jason.

ROBIN  
OK.

JASON  
I was wondering if I could talk to you about Luke Glanton.

Robin hasn't heard that name in a long time. It registers a change on Robin's face. He tries not to betray it. However, Jason sees it.

JASON (CONT'D)  
I'm not a cop.

ROBIN  
(laughs)  
Clearly.

JASON  
I'm his son.

A change comes over Robin's face again.

ROBIN  
No shit... Goddamn. You kinda look like him.

JASON  
Really?

ROBIN  
A little bit, I think.

Jason is warmed by this.

ROBIN (CONT'D)  
You drink beer?

Jason nods.

ROBIN (CONT'D)  
Come on in.

Jason follows Robin into the back.

ROBIN (CONT'D)  
How old are you anyway?

JASON  
17.

ROBIN  
17. Goddamn.

173 INT. BACK ROOM. LATER.

173

Robin pulls out a box of papers, memorabilia.

ROBIN  
Gotta be in here somewhere... there we go.

Robin pulls out dusty newspaper from the stack. Above the fold headline reads, '**Moto Bandit Killed by Sch'dy Cop.**' He hands it to Jason.

ROBIN (CONT'D)  
There he is. That's him. That's Luke.

Jason stares in awe at LUKE'S MUGSHOT. It is the first time he has ever seen his father.

ROBIN (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
He was a crazy son of a bitch. But he had a big heart.

Next to Luke's picture is Avery's portrait in his police uniform. Robin points to it.

ROBIN (CONT'D)  
And there's the pig who tagged him.

Jason looks up at Robin. Angry and confused.

ROBIN (CONT'D)  
Shame it went down that way. Didn't anyone ever tell you about any of this?

Jason shakes his head, "no." Looks back into the newspaper.

ROBIN (CONT'D)  
That's just bullshit. Plain and simple. Shouldn't be scared of the truth. Gotta confront it, straight on.

JASON  
Will you tell me about him?

Robin thinks about it. Kills his beer.

ROBIN  
Why not? Y'need another beer?

174 INT. ROBIN'S SERVICE STATION. LUKE'S OLD ROOM. AFTERNOON. 174

Robin, spins tales and opens the door to reveal the dusty old room where Luke used to sleep.

ROBIN  
Not much of a room. Then again, he didn't need much. Didn't take up much space. I appreciated that about him. I truly did.

JASON  
Was he good at anything?

ROBIN  
You're dad was good a LOT of things. Riding a bike for one. It was like it was *attached* to him. Like part of his body. An appendage. Never saw anyone ride like him. Unfuckingbelievable. And he knew his way around an engine. Oh boy, did he...

Jason is beaming with pride.

JASON  
Do you still have his bike?

ROBIN  
No. In fact I don't. Police probably cut it up, & used it for scrap.

Jason goes back into the rabbit hole of his mind.

ROBIN (CONT'D)  
He used to talk about you.

Jason is listening.

ROBIN (CONT'D)  
Quite a lot, actually. You changed his life in many ways. Just a shame he couldn't slow down enough to fully appreciate it. But I know, and this is a fact, that he loved you. That he truly did. And I know if he could see you now, he'd be proud.

Jason is crying. Not slobbery sobbing cries. But the cries of a kid who is feeling more than he's ever felt. He tries to drown it out with a slug of beer. Robin stands in the doorway, watching him.

175 EXT. ROBIN'S SERVICE STATION. LATE AFTERNOON. CONTINUOUS. 175

Robin closes up garage doors, locks up. He walks Jason to his bike.

ROBIN  
I'm glad you came by. Don't let those people keep you in the dark anymore. Ya hear me?

Jason gets on his bike, pops a wheelie, rides away.

176 EXT. SUBURBAN STREETS - LATER 176

Jason rides reckless and drunk through the streets of Schenectady, narrowly missing traffic.

177 INT. CONVIENIENCE STORE - LATER 177

Jason walks down the brightly lit aisles looking at the array of food options. The woman behind the counter glances up at him as he shops. Jason turns his body slightly away from the woman's gaze and loads a couple of candy bars in his pockets. He stands up and looks at the woman behind the counter before walking out.

178 EXT. JASON'S HOUSE - LATER 178

Jason walks through the front door, still a bit tipsy. Romina and Kofi are watching TV. Romina gets up to intercept Jason. She SEES Jason close the door, somewhat drunkenly, behind him.

Jason turns and looks at her, takes a big bite of his candy bar, keeps his eyes on her, as he walks past her and up to his room.

Romina doesn't say anything. She can tell something in Jason has changed. Silent moment of reckoning between them.

179 INT. JASON'S HOUSE VANESSA'S ROOM- CONTINUOUS 179

UPSTAIRS. Jason knocks on Vanessa's door. He opens it. She's in there, with her headphones on, listening to music and doing homework.

VANESSA  
Oh my god Mom has been freaking out.

Jason produces a ring pop from his pocket, tosses it to her.

VANESSA (CONT'D)  
A ring pop? What is going on with you Jason?

JASON  
Eat it up. It was a steal.

He leaves, closes the door behind him.

180 INT. HIGH SCHOOL. STAGE. LATER 180

Jason stands in a class. In front of them a kind of quirky, earthy looking DANCE TEACHER in her mid 30's.

DANCE TEACHER  
So to swing dance you only really need 3 things. 1 - a partner. 2 - endurance cause it's really like a sport in a way. And 3 a sense of humor. OK? So let's get started. I need one brave volunteer please.

A beat. No one volunteers. The teacher points to Jason.

DANCE TEACHER (CONT'D)  
How 'bout you? What's you're name?

JASON  
Jason.

Kids snicker.

DANCE TEACHER  
K Jason. So come up here. Stand  
facing me and... Hold my hands.

Jason does it, despite onlookers.

DANCE TEACHER (CONT'D)  
This is called open position. And  
for now follow me Jason.  
Eventually you'll be leading but  
for now follow me. Basically you'll  
be my mirror image.

Dance teacher starts to mover her feet and count. 1 and 2 and  
1 and 2 and. Jason does his best to follow. He's surprisingly  
quick to pick it up. She smiles at him.

DANCE TEACHER (CONT'D)  
Ope. We've got a natural here.  
Let's try with music.

She presses play on a portable CD player. Music starts.

A.J. watches. Tries to make fun with others but it doesn't  
affect Jason at all. Jason playfully tries to spin the  
teacher. Gets tangled.

181 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY. - LATER

181

Jason shuts his locker and makes his way down to the exit.

A.J.  
Yo!

A.J. catches up to Jason.

A.J. (CONT'D)  
Wow dude. Didn't know you had it in  
ya.

Jason is over A.J. at this point, and he doesn't really want  
to talk to him right now.

A.J. (CONT'D)  
That was cool though. She was hot.  
I saw you check out her titties  
though, that was hilarious.

JASON  
(stops)  
What do you want, man?

A.J.  
OK. So. Dude, I'm sorry I was kinda  
a dick to you yesterday and  
everything. I was just kinda rip  
shit with you about losing my \$500  
bucks, you know. But it's cool. I'm  
over it.

(MORE)

A.J. (CONT'D)  
 And I hope you're over it, as well.  
 So, what do you think? We cool?

JASON  
 Yeah, whatever, man.

Jason walks off. A.J. gets up along side him.

A.J.  
 Hey dude. Dude. I'm having a party  
 at my house tonight - my dad's  
 house is seriously ridiculous.  
 Anyway. I was thinking you should  
 come over. I know you have the sick  
 connection and everything. And I  
 was thinking, if you brought the  
 skittles or something, I could just  
 forget about the money you lost me.

JASON  
 Yeah? I thought we were cool, bro?

A.J.  
 We are, man. You know. We're just  
 making it correct.

JASON  
 I got shit to do tonight, A.J.

Jason keeps going. He seems in a hurry.

A.J. (CALLING OUT)  
 What do you have to do?  
 (to himself)  
 Play scrabble with your family?

182 EXT. ROBIN'S SERVICE STATION - LATER

182

Jason walks inside the FRONT OFFICE. No one is in there.  
 Jason waits for a couple beats and looks around. He ventures  
 into the garage. Dean looks out from under a car.

DEAN  
 Can I help you?

JASON  
 Is Robin around?

Dean yells loud for Robin. "KID'S BACK!"

Jason waits, hands in his pockets, looking around the shop,  
 trying to get a feel for it. It feels good.

ROBIN (O.S.)  
 What're you doing back here?

Jason turns, SEES: Robin, with cigarette, approach him. Not  
 so cordially this time.

JASON  
Sorry. Just coming to say "hi."

Robin ushers Jason out of the bay with a whistle and a snap of his finger.

ROBIN  
Come on. Let's get out. Can't have you back here. Regulations.

They snake through the office and out into the front of the shop. Robin keeps it moving the whole time.

ROBIN (CONT'D)  
I can't have you just walking in on me like that. It's not professional. I have a lot of work on my plate, and I am in no position to fall behind. I wish I could spend my days reminiscing and getting all nostalgic with you about your dear old daddy. All misty eyed and shit. But I just can't. See you down the road, though.

Robin has walked Jason to the edge of his property.

ROBIN (CONT'D)  
Oops. Hang on a beat.

He turns and walks to where Jason has parked his bike. Grabs it. Walks it back to Jason.

ROBIN (CONT'D)  
Can't leave without your wheels. Gotta outrun the woodchucks.

He holds it up for Jason, ensuring he gets on. Jason does. Robin pats his ass and sends him on his way. Jason feels pretty dejected. He pedals away.

183 INT. CVS - LATER

183

Jason enters a pharmacy. Surveys nervously. He knows what he wants and he scans the aisles until he finds the cough medicine section. Scans the cough medicine until he finds boxes of little red Coricidin pills. Looks nervously around - puts a bunch of boxes in his sweatshirt. Now he's really nervous but tries to play it cool. A CLERK stands in front of the door as Jason walks towards it.

CLERK  
Take the shit outta your pockets.

Jason keeps going. The guy tries to stop him. Jason breaks free and runs out the door. Outside Jason grabs his bike and tries wildly to run with it as he's jumping on. The guy chases after him. Jason peddles like mad. Barely gets away.

184 EXT. AJ'S HOUSE/AVERY'S MANSION HOUSE - NIGHT 184

Sound of music, bass thumping. Jason rides his bike up to a large, palatial, suburban McMansion. Cars are parked all over. Music spills out of the windows. Kids are streaming in and out of the front door. Jason, covered in sweat, goes in.

185 INT. AJ'S HOUSE/AVERY'S MANSION- CONTINUOUS 185

The MUSIC is so loud that you cannot have a conversation without screaming in someone's ear (ala FIRE WALK WITH ME).

Jason makes it through the crush of dancing bodies, finds A.J. in a crowd of kids. They shout to talk.

A.J.

Oh shit! You made it!

They give hugs. Jason is all wet and sweaty.

A.J. (CONT'D)

Damn, bro. You stink!

JASON

What?!

A.J. leans in to shout in Jason's ear.

A.J.

You got the skittles?!

Jason produces the boxes of Coricidin from his hoodie pockets. A.J. is beyond psyched. He grabs the boxes and immediately shows off the score to friends around him.

A.J. starts handing out the skittles to party goers. An adoring group forms quickly around him. Jason looks on somewhat dejected. He approaches the group and waits his turn to receive.

He holds out his hand. A.J. pops 6 little red pills in his palm. Jason eats them like candy. Someone hands him a beer. He takes a long slug.

186 INT. AJ'S HOUSE/AVERY'S MANSION- LATER 186

In time the party starts to slow down. Lights blur. Music seeps deep into his consciousness. He goes and sits down on a couch. Watches ASHLEY, a girl with an endless mid-riff, dance before him: so beautiful, so sensual. Jason falls into the spell of everything.

The girl beckons him up off the couch. He gets up. She keeps dancing so good. He does his swing two step from earlier that day. She giggles at him. He's cute to her. She moves closer.

The room is slowing down around him and her hips and pierced navel swallow his focus.

She pulls him towards her and their bodies grind together. A.J. checks them out from across the crowded room.

Jared approaches & starts grinding her from behind. Her movements have changed. She seems to be enjoying the crude grindings of this other guy. Jason can't get her back. It disgusts him. His moment is being torn from him. Jason lets go and moves away. Leaving his girl in an animal embrace.

Drugs really setting in now, Jason's unstable. He winds his way through the party, losing his equilibrium. He finds a staircase, sees a few people up the stairs. He moves towards them in a moment of pure exploration.

187

INT. AJ'S HOUSE/AVERY'S MANSION- CONTINUOUS

187

THE HALLWAY UPSTAIRS is crowded with dark figures. Jason can't make out anyone's face, as hard as he squints.

He looks down at the floor to try and center himself, but the rug is vibrating. Jason steadies himself against the wall. The wall is covered with photos. Jason zeroes in on a photo of A.J. when he was young sitting in Grandpa Al's lap. Jason is sucked in, he moves to the next and the next; pictures of a fractured and empty family.

Jason finds himself at the end of the hall looking at Avery's rookie cop photo - the same one paired with Luke from the paper at Robin's. The drugs are doing their thing but the power of the picture is undeniable. Ashley walks up behind.

ASHLEY

Boo!

JASON

Is that A.J's dad?

Jason doesn't take his eye off the photo.

ASHLEY

Duh... He's like the mayor or something.

She produces a pipe.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

Do you want to smoke this with me?

Jason looks back at the picture of Avery on the wall. He's trying to piece it together, but the pull of Ashley wins out.

JASON

OK.

She puts the pipe in his mouth. Brings up a lighter, lights. He inhales. Bubbles. He holds in his hit.

ASHLEY

Your name is Jason, right?

He nods. Lets out a cough.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)  
Hi. I'm Ashley.

She lights up for herself. The world is getting more trippy.

JASON  
This house is pretty insane. Do you  
live in an insane house?

ASHLEY  
(lets out a cough)  
My house is normal.

Jason is getting more and more woozy. She leans in and gives him a long, deep kiss.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)  
You taste good.

He kisses her forehead and eyebrows and down to her waiting lips. He doesn't ever want it to stop.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)  
Not here. Not here.

She leads him down the hall to a bedroom. He can barely walk.

188

INT. AJ'S HOUSE/AVERY'S MANSION- LATER

188

Jason is asleep on the bed alone. He is under the covers and completely naked. A.J. jostles him repeatedly.

A.J.  
Come on, dude. Wake up.

Jason struggles to come back to full consciousness.

A.J. (CONT'D)  
Come on. Party's over. Get your  
clothes on, dude.

Jason takes stock of where he is. The house is very quiet. His clothes are scattered. He reaches for his pants. A.J. WATCHES him get dressed. Jason turns for some privacy.

A.J. (CONT'D)  
Good party, right?

A.J. sees Jason to the door. They shake hands.

JASON  
Yeah thanks man.

A.J.  
Go take a shower dude.

JASON

Okay.

189 EXT. NISKAYUNA STREETS - LATER

189

Jason, unable to ride competently, walks his bike home. Behind him, without him realizing it, a police cruiser slowly catches up with him. Once it's nearby, its siren bleats and lights flash. Jason barely notices. He slows to a stop, turns to face the blinding searchlight. 2 COPS climb out.

COP

Good evening, young man. Why don't you lay the bike down on the lawn there.

Confused, Jason complies slowly. The cop moves in.

COP (CONT'D)

What's your name?

JASON

Jason Cankam.

COP

Have you got any ID on you, Jason?

JASON

I don't have a driver's licence.

COP

Where are you headed tonight?

JASON

Home.

COP

Where's that?

JASON

1412 Balltown Road.

COP

Where are you coming from?

Jason looks around, knows this is no good.

JASON

A friend's house.

COP

What's the address of your friend?

JASON

Not sure. It's on, uh, Myron?

COP

Have you been drinking this evening? Have you been using any illegal drugs?

JASON  
No. I had a beer.

COP  
If I search you, am I going to find  
any illegal drugs?

JASON  
No.

COP  
Am I gonna find any weapons?

Jason shakes his head 'no', and intuitively puts his hands on the back of his head before anyone asks him. The cops laugh at how Jason jumps the gun.

COP 2  
(To his partner)  
Now there's someone who's been  
processed before.

COP  
Can I search you?

JASON  
Yeah.

COP  
Come on over here.

JASON  
That's not mine.

COP  
Whose is it?

JASON  
I have no idea.

The cops also discover a small-bladed knife.

COP  
This also not yours?

JASON  
Not mine.

COP  
Put your hands behind your back.

Jason feels trapped. He tries to run. And the cop takes him to the ground, smashing his face into the dirt. Jason continues to resist, and the cops twists his arms behind his back to control him. Knee in the back, they cuff him, lift him up, and put him in the back of a police cruiser.

190 EXT. A.J.'S HOUSE. NIGHT. 190

The cruiser is parked in the drive-way of A.J.'s house. Jason sits in the backseat, his face red and swollen from the struggle with police. Light from the house shines on his face.

He watches A.J., up by his front door, talk to the 2 cops. He can't HEAR what he's saying, but he SEES A.J. pointing at him in the backseat. Jason is seething.

191 INT. POLICE STATION - LATER 191

Jason is booked, printed, photographed and put in a cell.

192 INT. HOLDING CELL - LATER 192

Jason tries to clear the lingering fogginess in his head.

JASON  
Aw fuck. Aw goddammit! God damn it!

Jason is alone in the holding cell. It looks more like an asylum than a jail.

193 INT. LAW OFFICE - LATER 193

Jason, Kofi and Romina sit at a conference table with CLAIRE MULFORD, 40's, attorney.

CLAIRE  
Among the many complications of this case is Jason's prior conviction.

ROMINA  
The lawyer at that time told us to plead guilty.

CLAIRE  
I'm gonna tell you to do the same.

JASON  
I didn't do it.

KOFI  
Shut up! No one wants to listen to you right now. You need to shut up and listen to the expert here!

CLAIRE  
This is not about right or wrong. It's about what's best for you in the long run. You plead innocent, and take this trial, I guarantee you a conviction for a class E felony.

ROMINA  
Can you tell us... how long...

CLAIRE  
At least a year in jail. Probably  
more.

KOFI  
Jesus.

The family sits in silent contemplation.

194

EXT. COURT HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON SUN.

194

Romina and Jason stand on the sidewalk in front of the court house. Romina, still shaken up, stares at what has become of her son. She reaches up to touch his bruised face. Jason doesn't react.

ROMINA  
Does it hurt baby?

Jason doesn't look at her.

ROMINA (CONT'D)  
It's going to be okay Jason.

Still no reaction.

ROMINA (CONT'D)  
Why won't you talk to me Jason?

Jason turns his head and looks at his mother.

JASON  
You're a liar.

They stare at each other. Kofi pulls up his SUV. Jason gets in the back seat, shuts his door. Looks at his mom standing, frozen on the sidewalk.

195

INT. JASON'S ROOM - NIGHT

195

Jason watches a news clip on his computer.

ANCHOR (V.O.)  
... The senatorial candidate's son reported the robbery, which allegedly took place during an unsupervised party. When asked about whether or not the party involved drinking or drugs, Cross said he was unsure, but then went on to take responsibility if that were the case.

AVERY (ON T.V.)(O.S.)  
 Even if there were no drinking at the party, the fact that it was unsupervised is not acceptable. I take responsibility for this. It seems my son made a mistake. But I'm his father. And I take responsibility for what he does.

ON TV: File footage from the Luke Glanton incident.

ANCHOR (V.O.)  
 Cross's career has been defined by dramatic events. As a young police officer he was launched into the spotlight when, acting on an anonymous tip he shot and killed a wanted bank robber known as the Motobandit.

Jason processes the information that is coming at him.

196 EXT. JASON'S HOUSE. NIGHT. 196

He pulls his bike, quietly out of the garage, rides away.

197 EXT. WEED SPOT. DEEP NIGHT. 197

Jason knocks on the door of a two-family house.

VOICE BEHIND DOOR  
 What's the word?

JASON  
 It still peanut?

The door opens. BENNY, 22, stares at Jason, bruised and soaking wet.

BENNY  
 The fuck happened to you?  
 (he calls up behind him)  
 Yo, Dri, check this nigga out.  
 (back to Jason)  
 Son, you get hit by a bus?

JASON  
 I need a gun.

BENNY  
 Maybe this isn't the time for that killer. I don't need to ask you why you need one but you sure this is a good time?

JASON  
 I need some protection.

BENNY

I see that. Ok my man. You know  
'bout the neighborhood gun?

JASON

Neighborhood gun?

198 EXT. SCHENECTADY CEMETARY - JUST BEFORE DAWN.

198

Jason walks through the graves, comes to the edge of the cemetery, where he finds 3 large dumpsters. He checks under all three & finds an irregular lump under the last one. He digs at the lump and unearths a metal case. Etched crudely onto the front cover are the words '**Brandywine Ave Burner.**'

Jason opens the box, finds a pistol. He hefts the beat-up pistol in his hand. On the bottom of the box is etched a simple request: '**Reload when you done, son**'

Jason flips out the cylinder. Someone has clearly not followed the request; the gun is loaded with only 3 shells.

199 E/I ROBIN'S SERVICE STATION - EARLY MORNING

199

Jason walks slowly up the driveway to Robin's service station. His new clothes and messed up face give him the aura of a completely different person. He walks into the front office, looks around. It's empty.

Jason notices a long hallway leading to the back of the station. Jason walks down it slowly, comes to a half open door.

Through the door, Jason sees Robin. Robin stares with deep concentration at his computer. Jason stands and stares at him until he suddenly looks up, startled by the sight of Jason... He pushes himself back in a protective instinct.

ROBIN

The hell you doing back here?

Robin's still trying to recover from the scare.

ROBIN (CONT'D)

What're you doing sneaking up like that, boy?

JASON

I was wondering something.

ROBIN

Were you now? Well wonder your way outside my fucking garage and maybe I'll come out and entertain your musings.

Jason looks around, decides not to move, breathes in courage.

JASON  
Do you know who called in the tip  
on my dad?

ROBIN  
(hesitates)  
You insinuating something son?

Jason pulls out the revolver. He doesn't point it at Robin, he just shows it to him.

ROBIN (CONT'D)  
Decided to grow a pair did ya? You  
putting the old misty eyed kid away  
and jumping into the man act?

Jason can't bring himself to point the gun at Robin. Robin sniffs his weakness.

ROBIN (CONT'D)  
You think you're a fucking man?  
Cause you look a lot like a fucking  
kid to me Jason.

Jason raises the gun at Robin, without conviction, bottom lip trembling.

JASON  
How come you're still alive?

ROBIN  
Oh, I get it now. This is where you  
come to settle your old man's  
score. Well, you got the wrong guy.  
I stupidly tried to help that sorry  
sonofabitch. If it weren't for me  
he would've been living in the Y  
and giving blow jobs at the bus  
station for a living.

Robin laughs.

ROBIN (CONT'D)  
You need someone to blame for  
making you a bastard, look no  
further than your father.

Jason holds back the urge to cry. He can't stop himself and his embarrassment is obvious.

ROBIN (CONT'D)  
Chip off the old block, aren't ya?!  
Another gutless wonder. Only a  
Glanton would pull a gun on an  
unarmed fucking man who's minding  
his own fucking business. Put that  
away before you hurt yourself.  
Chickenshit.

Jason lowers the gun. He wishes he never came in here. Robin stands, approaches him.

ROBIN (CONT'D)  
 You know, Jason. Sometimes people die for a reason. I'm looking at you, Jason... And I'm realizing, I'm looking at that reason. Look at yourself. You're the reason your dad died. And I'm thinkin' - what a Goddamn tragedy.

Jason is frozen.

ROBIN (CONT'D)  
 You want a little piece of advice? Put that gun to good use. Stick the barrel in your mouth, pull the trigger.

Robin turns his back on Jason.

ROBIN (CONT'D)  
 Because listen - if you're too pussy to do it... I can certainly arrange a meeting between you and your dad.

Jason scared now. He retreats, down the hall.

200 EXT. ROBIN'S SERVICE STATION - CONTINUOUS 200

Jason hobbles away as fast as his injured body will take him. He looks back at Robin who watches through the front window.

201 EXT. SCHENECTADY HIGH SCHOOL - LATER 201

Jason hides outside the school, waiting. He sees his sister, VANESSA, walk into school. Her face is innocent and beautiful although she looks consumed with worry. Jason watches her.

202 INT. SCHENECTADY HS- BELL RINGS. SCHOOL IS OUT FOR THE DAY 202

Kids file out of their classrooms. We find A.J. walking down the hall with some friends. He places his books in his locker. His friends ask him to go with them to hang.

A.J.  
 I can't. I got that thing with my dad.

They are disappointed. He walks with a spring in his step.

203 EXT. NISKAYUNA STREETS - AFTERNOON 203

A.J. walks home through the sun dappled suburban streets.

204 EXT. A.J.'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON 204  
 A.J. walks the long driveway to his dad's house. Key turns in the lock. He goes inside.

205 INT. AJ'S HOUSE- KITCHEN. 205  
 AJ Drinks juice out of the container.

206 INT. AJ'S HOUSE STAIRS/ UPSTAIRS ROOM- CONTINUOUS 206  
 AJ walks upstairs, goes to his closet, pulls out a suit and tie.

207 INT. AJ'S HOUSE/AVERY'S SHOWER/BEDROOM- CONTINUOUS 207  
 AJ showers in his dad's shower. He turns off the water.  
 Pulls on his dress pants, dress shirt. He stands in front of the mirror tying his tie. He catches something in the reflection. TURNS QUICKLY!

Jason is standing there with the gun pointed at his face. A.J. screams, scared shitless.

Jason, pale, out of a nightmare, closes the door with the heel of his shoe.

JASON  
 Get on the floor. On your face.

A.J.  
 What're you doing? Jason!

JASON  
 On the floor.

A.J. takes a little step towards the door.

JASON (CONT'D)  
 GET ON YOUR FUCKING FACE!

A.J. startled, breaks into sobs. He lies down on the floor. Pleading for his life. He is sobbing, "Don't! Don't!"

JASON (CONT'D)  
 You want someone to rob you? Bitch.  
 That what you want, bitch?

A.J. can't stop crying.

A.J.  
 I'm so sorry Jason. Please. Please!

Jason walks slowly over to the drawer and grabs the hand cuffs he saw earlier. He comes back to A.J. Mounts him.

JASON  
Put your hands behind your back.

A.J. continues to cry as he complies. Jason puts the cuffs on him. A.J.'s moans are getting to Jason. He presses the gun to the back of his head.

JASON (CONT'D)  
Stop it.

A.J.  
(more frantic)  
I don't want to die! Please!

JASON  
Stop it! Just fucking stop it!

A.J. is in hysterics. Jason swings the gun sideways and fires a shot into the floor beside A.J.'s head. It tears through the hardwood floor, kicking up a cloud of sawdust and smoke. The muzzle flash burns A.J.'s face and deafens him. He goes silent his ears ring with deafness.

208 EXT./INT AVERY'S HOUSE, DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS 208

Avery is in his car, slowly driving up the driveway. The garage door is automatically moving up.

Avery, on the phone, steps out of his car, stares up at his house - he thought he just heard a gunshot. He forgets to close the car door behind him.

AVERY (INTO PHONE)  
Gotta call you back.

He pockets the phone, deep concern in his eyes. He runs under the garage door and opens the door to his house.

AVERY (CONT'D)  
(calls out)  
A.J.!

209 INT. A.J.'S PARENT'S ROOM. 209

Jason hears Avery calling for A.J. downstairs.

A.J.  
(screams)  
Dad!

Jason hits A.J. in the head with the butt of his gun and he stops screaming

210 INT. AVERY'S HOUSE, STAIRS- CONTINUOUS 210

He cautiously moves up his stairs, the old police training coming back to him. Only now, he's unarmed.

He SEES - The door to his bedroom OPEN - Jason comes out - He's holding a pistol.

Both stop. Jason levels the gun at Avery. The two stare at one another.

JASON  
Are you alone?

Avery says nothing, confused, shocked.

JASON (CONT'D)  
Are you alone!?

AVERY  
Yes.

JASON  
You're gonna drive me away from here. Now.

AVERY  
What's going on?

JASON  
Turn around. Down the stairs. Now.

AVERY  
What's happened?

JASON  
If you don't start walking, I'll just shoot you in your face.

211 INT. AVERY'S CAR - LATER

211

Jason is crouched down in front of the passenger seat with the pistol pointed up at Avery.

JASON  
Go to route 7.

AVERY  
How did you get in without setting off the alarm?

Jason does not respond.

AVERY (CONT'D)  
Did someone let you in?

JASON  
Your son let me in.

AVERY  
Is my son okay?

Jason doesn't answer. Avery is immediately concerned.

AVERY (CONT'D)

If you don't tell me if my son is okay I'll pull over right now. I don't care.

JASON

He's fine.

AVERY

Where is he?

JASON

Your son is fine.

AVERY

I don't believe you. I heard a shot.

JASON

You should be more worried about yourself.

212

EXT. PINE BARRENS - EVENING

212

Avery's car is parked away from the side of the road. Jason pushes Avery deep into the woods. Avery limps.

AVERY

You'll be in jail for the rest of your life if you do this. You understand that?

JASON

What do you think I'm going to do?

AVERY

Tell me about my son. If he's hurt let me please call an ambulance. I'll give you the phone. You can call it. That way you don't have to worry about me tricking you.

JASON

Gimmie your phone.

Avery gladly complies. Jason wings the device against the nearest pine tree. It shatters into a hundred pieces.

AVERY

Oh Jesus.

JASON

Take off your jacket.

Avery hesitates.

JASON (CONT'D)

Take off your fucking jacket!

Avery complies. Hands his jacket to Jason. Jason digs into the pockets, grabs Avery's keys and his wallet. Pockets them.

JASON (CONT'D)  
Keep going.

Avery turns, continues to limp into the woods, his hands up.

JASON (CONT'D)  
I know who you are, but you don't know who I am, do you?

AVERY  
I don't know... I'm sorry. Just please let me know if my son is okay. Is A.J. okay?

Jason hits Avery in the head with the pistol. He topples over.

JASON  
Shut up! I told you! I told you!  
He's fine! Don't you fucking listen? He's fine!

AVERY  
Oh, my son! My son!

Avery wails. Jason tries to get a hold of himself and the situation.

JASON  
Shut up! Stop crying!

Jason puts the muzzle of the pistol against Avery's head.

You're not crying for him. You're crying for yourself.

Avery stops wailing for moment. He stares at Jason, and with a flush of realization, it all come clear to him.

AVERY  
I know who you are. I'm sorry. I'm so sorry! You shoulda just killed me, not my son.

Jason points the pistol at him.

AVERY (CONT'D)  
I deserve it. I should die. But not my son. Not my poor son.

Avery wails. Jason aims at Avery, prepares for the rapport of his pistol.

AVERY (CONT'D)  
You shoulda killed me.

Jason lowers the pistol to his side. He can't do it. He's not a killer.

AVERY (CONT'D)  
My boy. My poor boy. I'm so sorry.

Jason backs away from Avery. Soon, Avery's wails get more and more faint.

AVERY (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Oh, my boy. My boy.

213 EXT PINES- EDGE OF THE PINES 213

Jason can still barely hear the sound of Avery wailing. He rifles the money from Avery's wallet. Tosses the wallet. Counts as he walks. Something catches his eye. He stops.

Notices the faded photo booth picture of his family.

214 EXT. PINE BARRENS - CONTINUOUS 214

Avery's wails become slow and more quiet until they transform into a somber moan. Finally, he goes silent. His ashen face expresses grief and bewilderment. He stands and finds himself in the woods. He is alone.

215 INT. AVERY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS 215

Jason drives for a long time, further and further away from Schenectady.

216 EXT. TURNPIKE - CONTINUOUS 216

Avery starts the long walk back to Schenectady. Over this lonely image, we HEAR...

APPLAUSE come up.

AVERY (V.O.)  
Thank you... thank you...

217 EXT./INT. AVERY'S HOUSE - LATER 217

Avery's house is swarming with police cars, blocked off with crime scene tape. He walks toward his home like a ghost. The cops let him through, give him wide birth.

APPLAUSE AND CHEERING.

AVERY (V.O.)  
Thanks so much.

218 INT. AVERY'S HOUSE- CONTINUOUS 218

Avery heads up stairs. People talk to him, but he can't hear it. He heads into his bedroom.

MORE APPLAUSE.

Sitting on the edge of the bed, wrapped in a blanket and absentmindedly holding a bottled water is a dazed and exhausted A.J. His head is bandaged, but he is alive.

AVERY (V.O.)  
Thank you all so very much.

Avery is stunned. He thought his son was dead. It all feels like a dream. He runs over to A.J., Gathers his son in his arms. Both of them cry.

THE APPLAUSE SWELLS.

219 INT. HOTEL BALLROOM - EVENING 219

Avery stands at a podium. His name in red, white, and blue behind him. The crowd is cheering, endlessly.

AVERY  
Please. Thank you.

The crowd won't settle down enough to let Avery speak.

AVERY (CONT'D)  
Thank you.

The crowd goes crazy.

AVERY (CONT'D)  
I cannot tell you how truly humbled  
and honored I am to stand here  
today as a Senator of the great  
state of NY.

Applause. Applause. Applause.

220 EXT. ROMINA'S HOUSE. DRIVEWAY. EVENING. 220

Romina's car is stopped in the driveway, door open, engine running. We can HEAR the news report seeping out of her car radio.

AVERY (ON RADIO)  
Freedom... Is never more than one  
generation away from extinction. We  
didn't pass it on to our children  
in the bloodstream.

(MORE)

AVERY (ON RADIO) (CONT'D)  
 It must be fought for, protected,  
 and handed on for them to do the  
 same, or one day we will spend our  
 sunset years telling our children  
 and our children's children what it  
 was once like in the United States  
 where men were free.

Romina opens the mailbox. Sorts through letters. Finds one with no return address. She opens it.

INSIDE, she finds the old, faded picture. She sees herself in a happier time. Surrounded by love.

221 EXT. ROAD - DAY 221

Jason walks down a long, straight road surrounded by flat farm land in all directions. It's winter, and his coat is inadequate for the season. Behind him in the distance stand the Rocky Mountains. He turns left and heads down a long driveway which leads to a farm house.

222 EXT. SECLUDED HOUSE - CONTINUOUS 222

Jason rings the doorbell. An OLD MAN opens the door, waits.

JASON  
 Hi... We emailed? I told you I'd be coming today?

OLD MAN  
 Oh, right, of course. Wow, you're early.

JASON  
 There's only one bus out this way a day.

223 INT. SECLUDED HOUSE - LATER 223

Jason sits at the breakfast table, clutching a coffee cup for warmth, with the old man and his WIFE.

OLD MAN  
 You're not from around here, huh?

JASON  
 How do you know that?

OLD MAN  
 I'm as observant as the next guy. You just passing through?

JASON  
 (shrugs)  
 Headed out west I suppose.

OLD MAN  
A fine destiny for a young man.

JASON  
It's warm there. Sunny.

OLD MAN  
That's what I've been lead to believe. Well, you ready? It's down at the barn. We'll go take a look, okay?

224 EXT. GARAGE - LATER

224

Jason and the old man stand over a dirt-bike which is much like Luke's old Fair special.

OLD MAN  
Runs great. Gotta a lot of miles on it, but I kept the maintenance up.

JASON  
Can I take it for a test drive?

OLD MAN  
Okay. Go on ahead and take 'er down the driveway.

Jason hands the old man a stack of bills.

JASON  
Here. You can hold onto this. For like collateral.

OLD MAN  
That's okay.

JASON  
No, really. It's a little more than what you were asking.

Jason holds out the money until the old man accepts it. He then straddles the bike. He starts it up with confidence.

OLD MAN  
You ever ridden one of these before?

Jason can barely hear the old man over the engine. He does a tight donut and guns the engine as he takes it down the driveway. He turns left at the road and rides with the Rockies at his back.