The Place Beyond The Pines

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Official White 6/14
Official Blue 7/5
Official Pink 7/13
Official Yellow 7/26
Official Green 8/16
Official Goldenrod 9/12
Official Buff 9/15
Official Final 9/26
"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
INT/EXT. ALTAMONT FAIR - NIGHT

LUKE GLANTON, 28, handsome; is in his trailer. Deep breath. He obsessively works with a butterfly knife in front of his mirror, before sticking it into a table. His OCD. He zips up a motorcycle jacket over faded prison tattoos, strides from his trailer into the crowded fairgrounds - rides, people, lights. He makes his way into a crowded tent.

INT. ALTAMONT FAIR MAIN RING - CONTINUOUS

Luke climbs onto his bike, revs the engine. Roadies slap his back, give him high 5's. He is joined by 2 motorcyclists.

ANNOUNCER OVER P.A.
And now, ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, get ready to be rocked by the motorcycle mayhem of...

A spherical, metal cage sits under the Big-Top.

ANNOUNCER OVER P.A. (CONT'D)
Handsome Luke and the Heartthrobs!


Luke drives into the cage where the other riders make long, lazy loops. Luke guns it, guides his bike over the inside walls of the cage. He defies gravity while weaving his way around the other two stunt riders. He makes it look easy. But it isn't. It is a death-defying act of bravado.

The other two drivers leave the cage and Luke performs his finale; a slow inside loop where his bike leaps from one facet of the cage to another. The crowd goes wild.

ANNOUNCER OVER P.A. (CONT'D)
Let's hear it for Luke Glanton and his Rough Riders, folks!

LATER

Lights are up. Luke sits on his bike, signing autographs and taking pictures with a gaggle of extremely psyched 8-year old boys. ROMINA GUTIERRES, 26, Hispanic walks against the surge of people exiting the arena. Luke catches sight of her; he drops what he's doing.

LUKE

Hey!

ROMINA

(shiftiing, 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.

EXT. ROUTE 5 - NIGHT

Luke tears away from the Arena. Everything around looks run-down, abandoned. We are in Schenectady. 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.

EXT. TWO-FAMILY HOUSE - LATER

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 let's 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.

EXT. ALTAMONT FAIR. NIGHT.

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

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LATER

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.

EXT. ROUTE 5 - NIGHT

Raging, Luke drives fast through the night streets.

EXT./INT. TWO FAMILY HOUSE - LATER.

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.
INT. TWO- FAMILY HOUSE- CONTINUOUS

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.

INT. OLYMPIC DINER - LATER

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


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. She walks him OUTSIDE.

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.

LUKE
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.

EXT. ALTAMONT FAIR. TRAILER OFFICE.

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

INT. ALTAMONT FAIR. TRAILER OFFICE-

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

JACK
How many fuckin' times I have to tell you? "After the show, help everyone dismantle." Then you can go get your dick wet and 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 OMITTED
14

15 EXT. KARL'S MOTEL - AFTERNOON
Luke's bike is parked in front of an old, run-down motel.

16 INT. KARL'S MOTEL- CONTINUOUS
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
Luke rings the doorbell. Door opens. Romina stands there,
wearing her Sunday best. She is speechless and stares at Luke
through the screen door.

LUKE
Wow. You look like a princess.

ROMINA
What are you still doing here?

LUKE
I'm here. I thought I would come
over and take you guys to the park.

Romina nervously looks back into the house.
ROMINA
This isn’t a good time.

KOFIG (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.


KOFIG
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.

KOFIG
Watch his neck.

Luke and the baby stare at one another.

LUKE
Whoa. He’s a prince.

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

KOFIG
So, when do you leave town?

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

LUKE (TO KOFIG)
How long you lived here?

Kofi has had enough but is playing along.

KOFIG
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 forty-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 stands on the porch, watching his family pile into Kofi’s car and pull away.

INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH. JASON’S BAPTISM. DAY.
Kofi holds Jason at the altar. Romina and Malena and KOFI’s FATHER stand next to him. A PRIEST pours holy water over Jason’s head.
Luke walks into the church, finds a seat in the pews, and watches, planning his next move.

EXT. PINE BARRENS - DAY
Outside of town, thousands of tall, thin pines stand cheek by jowl. Luke speeds between them with reckless abandon.
He catches sight of an ATV through the pines, plotting a parallel course, as if in unspoken friendly competition. Luke blows Robin away.

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

Luke comes to a clearing, overlooking the parking area adjacent to the main road. SEES -ROBIN VAN DER HOOK, 42, white, working hard to get his ATV onto the trailer behind his pickup. Robin sees Luke watching him from his perch.

Robin finishes loading and gets in his cab, fires up the engine. He drives in a big circle, comes back to just underneath Luke. Leans out his window.

ROBIN
Can I give you a lift?

Luke thinks about it.

INT. ROBIN’S TRUCK. CONTINUOUS.


ROBIN
It has been a long time since I’ve seen anyone ride like that.
(beat)
You’d think you could make that work for ya...

LUKE
You’d think...

EXT. KARL’S MOTEL - LATER

Robin pulls up to the motel, 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 Washout road. 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.

Luke considers the offer. Robin flashes a wry smile.

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

EXT. VAN DER HOOK’S STATION - LATER

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


ROBIN
This is it. I can’t promise you a lot of hours but you can keep looking for other gigs in the mean time.

LUKE
Sounds like fucking poverty.

Robin thinks on it. In the distance, an old trailer parked under forest canopy.

ROBIN
I could offer you a place to stay...

INT. TRAILER BEHIND SERVICE- CONTINUOUS

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

ROBIN
It ain’t much but probably beats that shit-hole you’ve been staying at.

Luke looks around.
ROBIN (CONT’D)
Anyway if this is helpful to you you’re welcome to it.

LUKE
I’m not sucking your cock.

Robin laughs, awkward.

ROBIN
Okay.
(beat)
Have you been locked up?

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 points to his teeth.

ROBIN (CONT’D)
I had too many postage stamps. Contraband, they said. They tell me they’re 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.

EXT. ROAD - DUSK

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.
EXT. TWO FAMILY HOUSE, NIGHT

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.

EXT. STATE STREET. NIGHT.

Luke stops at a red light, red light in his face. Light turns green. He doesn’t move. He is staring at the Trustco bank across the street.

INT. ROBIN’S SERVICE STATION - DAY


ROBIN
Payday, my boy. Less room and board.


EXT. ROBIN’S. PINE BARRENS - DAY

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. You remind me of me. A lo-o-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 is quiet.

ROBIN (CONT'D)
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. 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.

INT. OLYMPIC DINER - DARKEST HOUR BEFORE DAWN

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.

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

LUKE
You know I never knew my dad.

ROMINA
I'm sorry about that. Me neither.

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

LUKE
He didn't give a shit about me.

ROMINA
But you turned out fine, right?

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

INT. ROBIN'S KITCHEN - DAY

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.

Luke slowly unwraps the flannel - a .38 snub-nosed pistol sits on the table. Tells him he doesn’t need a gun necessarily. Tells him that he robbed 7 banks with a note.

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, tucks it into the back of his sweat pants. Now he has the power.

34  
EXT. ROBIN'S SERVICE STATION - DAY  
Robin opens his fence and pulls in a beat-to-hell cube truck. It's white and nondescript.  

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 money to make money.

35  
EXT. BANK PARKING LOT. MORNING.  
Luke and Robin sit in the cube truck and discuss the plan.

36  
INT. BANK - MORNING  
Luke walks in the bank. There is a sign that says, "FREE DONUTS" on the wall. Luke takes a donut. Looks around. He walks up to the counter.  

TELLER  
How can I help you today?  

LUKE  
Hi there, sweetheart. I'd like to start an account.  

Luke sets his money down on the counter. The teller counts it. He then watches the 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.
INT. ROBIN'S SERVICE STATION - NIGHT

Luke and Robin disseminate their plan. To Luke, it’s like taking candy from a baby. To Robin, it’s a bit more intricate.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Luke sits outside and inspects the pistol.

INT. ROBIN'S SERVICE STATION. BAY. DAY.

Luke uses a spray gun to paint his bike black.

EXT. ROBIN’S. WOODS. LATE DAY.


EXT. MALENA’S. NIGHT.


EXT. ROBIN'S SERVICE STATION KITCHEN - MORNING

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

EXT. TURNPIKE - MIDDAY

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

EXT. BANK - LATER

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.
INT. BANK—CONTINUOUS

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.

EXT. BANK PARKING LOT—CONTINUOUS

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

EXT. TURNPIKE—CONTINUOUS

Luke tears down the road, passing 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.
INT. REAR OF CUBE TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

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

EXT. TURNPIKE - CONTINUOUS

Cop cars scream by the truck. Robin drives the other way. We hear Luke puking in the back. Retching.

OMITTED

EXT. ROBIN'S SERVICE STATION - LATER

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.

INT. ROBIN'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

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

EXT. DINER. MORNING.

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.

INT. LUKE'S TRAILER. MORNING.

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? 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?

EXT. DAIRY CIRCUS ICE-CREAM STORE. 10 IN THE MORNING.

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 and 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.

I/E BANK - DAY

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.
EXT. SCHENECTADY STREETS - LATER.

Luke tears down the road.

INT. REAR OF CUBE TRUCK - LATER

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

OMITTED

EXT. TWO-FAMILY HOUSE - AFTERNOON

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.

INT. TWO-FAMILY HOUSE - LATER


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?

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

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

MALENA (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.

MALENA (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.


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

Malena runs out, dials 911. Luke just stands there, invisible to Romina. She is now unattainable to him.

Luke scoops up Jason in his arms. Walks out of the room with him. He takes him down and sits with him on the steps. HEARS the sound of sirens approaching. Waits for the cops to come.

61  INT. SCHENECTADY POLICE HOLDING CELL - LATER  61
Luke sits, touching each bar in succession firmly with his fore-finger. The SOUND of other PRISONERS.

A62  INT. SCHENECTADY POLICE STATION - TRANSFER HALLWAY - LATER A62
Luke sits on a bench awaiting his arraignment. He speaks with his COURT APPOINTED LAWYER about the case.

62  INT. SCHENECTADY COURTHOUSE - DAY  62
Luke sits in a courtroom with his STATE APPOINTED COUNCIL. He fidgets as he waits. A COURT OFFICER calls out the docket number and name of the case: “State of NY VS. Luke Glanton.”

THE JUDGE asks Luke’s Lawyer to enter a plea.

STATE APPOINTED COUNCIL
Not guilty.

Judge then posts the bail at two thousand dollars.

The Judge gives Luke a date to return to court and issues a “criminal order of protection” against Luke, instructing him to stay away from Romina Gutierres.

A63  INT. SCHENECTADY POLICE STATION - LATER A63
Luke calls Robin on a pay phone. Waits restlessly for Robin to pick up. Finally...

  LUKE
  I need you to pick me up at the police station...

Robin says something.

  LUKE (CONT’D)
  Yeah well that’s where I’ve been. And I need you to bring 2G for bail. I’ll pay you back when I get home.

Beat.

  LUKE (CONT’D)
  Well that’s the deal.

B63  INT. LUKE’S TRAILER. NIGHT. B63
Takes the remaining 7G, wraps it in a rubber band, and puts it in a plastic bag, tucks it into his pants.

INT. ROBIN'S KITCHEN/SERVICE STATION - NIGHT

Luke comes in, finds Robin smoking a cigarette in the kitchen. He hands Robin the 2G. Grabs something from the freezer. Eats it.

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 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 has little respect for what Robin is saying. He heads for the door.

ROBIN (CONT’D)
You do realize, we're done here.

LUKE
Don’t you turn into a big fucking pussy on me. Ya hear me?

ROBIN
If you’re gonna go out, don’t take the bike... use my truck.

Luke grabs Robin’s keys off the table.

INT/EXT. ROBIN’S TRUCK. NIGHT.

Luke drives down the streets, listening to the radio loud.

INT. ROBIN’S SERVICE STATION. NIGHT.

Robin gets drunk, goes to his garage, pulls out an acetylene torch. He lights it. Stands over Luke’s bike and begins cutting.

OMITTED
INT. DINER. DAWN.
Romina cleans up tables. The end of a long shift.

EXT. OLYMPIC DINER - DAWN
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, pulls out the bag filled with cash. She 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?

(MORE)
LUKE (CONT’D)
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’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 Robin’s
truck, drives away.

INT. ROBIN'S SERVICE STATION - LATER

Luke walks into the garage, only to find his bike cut into
pieces. Only the engine is intact. Luke can't believe his
eyes.

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

OMITTED

INT. ROBIN'S SERVICE STATION - CONTINUOUS

Robin is passed out on the couch. Luke comes in and sticks
the barrel of the pistol against Robin’s head. Robin wakes
up. Luke is out of his fucking mind here, close to squeezing
the trigger.

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
Open your mouth.

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

LUKE (CONT’D)
You owe me for a new bike.
INT. M&S MOTORCYCLES - MORNING

Luke and a DEALER stand over a used Honda CR250.

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?

INT. ROBIN'S SERVICE STATION - LATER

Robin, out of breath, dials 911. He makes an anonymous tip that the TRUSTCO on BRANDYWINE is going be hit in the next motobandit robbery.

INT. E/I TRUSTCO BANK - CONTINUOUS

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.

Once outside, Luke gets on his bike, hears an impending siren approach. He waits a beat, sees a police cruiser turn the corner. He guns it, leading the officer through the intersection and down Brandywine Ave.

INT. SCHENECTADY POLICE CRUISER OUTSIDE BANK—CONTINUOUS

Sirens blare. OFFICER JEFFERSON, late 40’s, chases Luke down the moderately busy residential street, all the while he gives a play by play on the radio letting other officers know where they are.

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

After a half mile or so, Luke takes a sharp left into Vale cemetery.

A80
EXT. VALE CEMETERY. CONTINUOUS.

Luke leads the officer on a crazy chase through narrow dirt paths. Luke makes serious gains in here. Luke comes to a concrete barrier which separates the cemetery from adjoining neighborhoods. He maneuvers his bike through a shallow gap in the barrier, and drives away into the neighborhood. Officer Jefferson can’t go past the barricade. He calls in the location of the suspect.

B80
INT. POLICE CAR. CONTINUOUS.

avery cross, 28, rookie, patrols the western district. He hears Jefferson on the radio give the whereabouts of Luke.
AVERY (INTO RADIO)


80

EXT. SCHENECTADY STREETS. CONTINUOUS

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

Luke leads the cruiser through a series of sharp and dangerous turns through a residential neighborhood. A car backs out of its driveway and Luke tries to maneuver but can't keep the bike under him. He crashes ahead of Avery. Avery can't pursue through traffic. 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

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! LET'S GO!
(softens)
I won't hurt you. Come on!

83

INT. TWO FAMILY HOUSE STAIRS/BEDROOM- CONTINUOUS

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
Gutierres... 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 Gutierres 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...

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

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!

INT. TWO FAMILY HOUSE BEDROOM

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.


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. Avery stares into Luke’s eyes as the life force leaves Luke’s body. From the phone Avery can hear Romina’s distant voice calling out for Luke frantically. Luke is clearly dead now. He stares blankly up at the sky as a pool of blood forms around his head. It is a nightmarish image. Cop cars and ambulances descend on the scene. Romina’s voice drones on as the cops reach Luke. Paramedics pronounce him dead. Avery is stunned.

INT. HOSPITAL RECOVERY ROOM. LATER THAT NIGHT.

BLACkNESS. Avery HEARS himself breathing then the voice of a NURSE telling him where he is. Faint light, abstract shapes.

LATER. NIGHTTIME. Avery’s eyes open. He takes in his surroundings. Balloons, flowers and cards fill his recovery room.

JENNIFER (O.S.)
Avery...

SEES his son, A.J., in the arms of his wife, Jennifer.

JENNIFER (CONT’D)
Can you hear me?

Avery feels something. He looks down and sees Jennifer’s hand squeezing his hand.

JENNIFER (CONT’D)
Baby? Can you hear me?

Avery sees his leg, bandaged, propped up on a pillow. Tingles.

He looks up, into Jennifer’s eyes. Sees a girl that really loves him. Next to her, he sees his father, AL CROSS. He squeezes Jennifer’s hand. Looks back at the balloons moving in the slight air conditioned breeze...

LATER.

MORNING LIGHT illuminates the room. AVERY is awake. KNOCK at the door. He turns to see a nurse opening the door, letting in CHIEF GORDON WEIRZBOWSKI and DA BILL KILLCULLEN.

NURSE
Morning Officer. You have some visitors.

Chief and DA walk in the room.

CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI
How’s our hero?

WEIRZBOWSKI walks to his bedside, pulls up a chair.

CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI (CONT’D)
How you feeling? You all right? They treating you OK in here?

AVERY
I’ll be okay.
Chief Weirzbowski
You got the whole force pulling for you. Don’t you forget that. I spoke to the Doc, he says you’re damn lucky to still have your leg.

Avery
I know... What happened to the guy?

Chief Weirzbowski
The one you blew out the friggin’ window? He’s bagged and on ice – Won’t be disturbing the good people of this community anymore. Thanks to you.

Avery lets it soak in – the realization that he killed another human being. Chief turns to Killcullen.

Chief Weirzbowski
Look at these war wounds.

Killcullen
Quite the rookie performance. Outstanding.

Chief Weirzbowski
Avery, let me introduce you to Bill Killcullen, Schenectady DA.

Killcullen leans in to shake Avery’s hand.

Killcullen
I spent many years working with your father. He’s quite the man. And I can’t say I’d expect anything less from his son... It’s a pleasure to meet you Avery.

Chief Weirzbowski
(interrupting)
Killcullen needs to ask you some questions. You up for it?

Avery thinks on it.

Chief Weirzbowski (cont’d)
You don’t need to pull out your law degree. This is a formality. Best get it outta the way before the paint dries, know-whatimean?

Avery
Whatever I can do to help...

Weirzbowski puts his hat on, gets up to leave.

Chief Weirzbowski
I'll leave you two to get to know each other.
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.

KILLCULLEN
Could you tell who was he talking to?

AVERY
(shakes head “no”) Seemed emotional though.

KILLCULLEN
Fair enough. Then what?

AVERY
I made my presence known.

KILLCULLEN
How'd you do that.

AVERY
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...

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.

INT. AVERY AND JENNIFER'S HOME – EVENING

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

**NEWS REPORTER (ON T.V.)**

A triumphant moment for officer Avery Cross today. 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.

**NEWS REPORTER**

With dozens of supporters in his Schenectady PD family cheering him on, his father, State Supreme Court Judge Al Cross, was thankful to see his son alive.

ON TV: Avery’s father, AL CROSS, talks to reporters.

**AL**

This is the life of a cop. It’s the life my son chose. I’m just glad he’s gonna pull through it.

ON TV: Avery’s police HEAD SHOT is imposed on a news graphic.

**NEWS REPORTER (ON T.V.)**

29 year-old Cross hadn't been on the force for a full year before he ran head-on into the alleged MOTOBANDIT.

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

**NEWS REPORTER (V.O.) (ON T.V.) (CONT’D)**

Responding to a bank robbery, Cross pursued Luke Glanton through the streets of Schenectady.

Avery sits on a sofa in his home, his leg elevated in a cast. Jennifer sits next to him trying to calm A.J. HER MOTHER, who lives with them is also there...
NEWS REPORTER (V.O.) (ON T.V.) (CONT’D)
Glanton fled into this house, took
Melissa Majack and her son Gabe
hostage, and 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: 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.

Avery gets up from the couch and hobbles into the kitchen.
Jennifer watches him leave.

CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI (CONT’D)
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.

Avery’s face is illuminated by the light from the fridge as
he grabs a beer. He drinks it alone in the kitchen as the
news continues from the other room.

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


NEWS REPORTER (V.O.) (ON T.V.)
Glanton, a drifter and sometime
motorcycle stunt-rider, had a
violent history and a long record.

Avery, beer in hand, looks into the living room to see

NEWS REPORTER (CONT’D)
Police say he moved here last
spring and it only took him a month
to forge a trail of destruction and
violence, the effects of which
include leaving his own one year
old son fatherless.

Avery watches ON TV: Romina walks away from the crime scene.
She tries to shield her grief stricken face as she ducks
under the police tape.

ED DAGUE (V.O.) (ON T.V.)
The mother of Luke Glanton’s son,
Romina Gutierres declined to
comment. I’m XX, WNYT, Schenectady.
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
Oh, please.

AVERY
What does that mean?

JENNIFER
Don't give me these lines, Avery...

AVERY
What lines?

JENNIFER
...About this being part of the job.

AVERY
This is the job.

Uncomfortable silence. Jennifer is stuck.
JENNIFER
I’m not a news crew looking for sound bites about honor and sacrifice, I’m your wife and I just don’t get why you’re doing this. Nobody does.

AVERY
What do you mean? What am I doing?

JENNIFER
Nobody who knows you understands why you’re doing this.

AVERY
Who? Who are you talking about?

JENNIFER
Nobody. Look, there’s just 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
There it is. Now I get it. Jesus Christ.

JENNIFER
... and he agrees with me. AVERY
Of course he does. Of course he does.

JENNIFER
We’re all just worried about you.

AVERY
Is that what it is? You two are worried about me? Or maybe you’re just worried about yourselves. Maybe you’re just wishing you had a lawyer’s salary now?

JENNIFER
Oh come on...

AVERY
No you come on. You go and talk to my fucking dad about my life? What do you expect him to say? Huh?

(MORE)
What did you think he was gonna say? And why do you think that it’s OK for you to go and talk to him?

JENNIFER
I’m sorry Avery, I wasn’t...

AVERY
How ironic is it that I’m being celebrated everywhere except by the people who supposedly know me? The people that supposedly care about me. I’m a cop Jennifer. That’s it, there’s no more to discuss.

JENNIFER
Okay, I’m sorry. I just thought that after all this, that you’d have had enough. That’s all. Worried about you.

After a beat Jennifer reaches her hand to him. Avery turns away from Jennifer. She looks at the ceiling.

INT. LIVING ROOM. AFTERNOON.

Jennifer cooks dinner as Avery takes care of baby A.J. He multi-tasks by doing physical therapy. He tries to be a good dad, but his mind keeps taking him somewhere else completely. The doorbell rings. Avery gets up to answer it. SCOTT STEVENS, 30, PETER DELUCA, 50’S, and DOC CROWLEY, 40, stand on his doorstep. Avery is surprised to see them.

AVERY
Hey guys.

Jennifer comes out of the kitchen, having heard the doorbell.

DELUCA
How’s the gimp doing?

Avery turns to Jennifer quickly then back to the guys.

AVERY
Come on in.

SCOTT
No it’s okay we just came here to check up on you. How are you Mrs. Cross?

JENNIFER
I’m well. How are you Scott?

SCOTT
Good. Better than this guy.
AVERY
You know my wife, right? This is Jenny.

Jennifer comes to the door.

AVERY (CONT’D)
Jenny - DeLuca, Scott, Crowley.

She shakes hands with the 3 of them. Kisses Scott on the cheek. Crowley busts him that he got a kiss.

DELUCA
How do you do, ma’am?

AVERY
You guys hungry?

Quick awkward beat.

DELUCA
Naw naw. Let you two get back to it.

AVERY
Come on in and have some dinner.

Jennifer’s on the spot.

DELUCA
No we’re not here for dinner...

AVERY
Come on. We’ve got plenty.

Deluca looks at the other two men.

AVERY (CONT’D)
I insist.

DELUCA
We don’t want to intrude. You sure you have enough?

Jennifer’s not sure.

AVERY
Yeah yeah yeah, come on in.

The cops enter the house, looking around at the place.

AVERY (CONT’D)
Make yourselves at home. Let me get you guys a drink. Whatchu having?
A.J. sits in his high chair, Scott feeding him from a jar. Jennifer comes into the dining room carrying a big bowl of spaghetti and meatballs. Deluca helps her with the bowl. Jennifer’s mom is there too.

Avery fills every one’s glasses with some more red wine.

DELUCA
He’s a good looking kid. Gets that from his mom that’s for sure.

Avery looks at Jennifer as she smiles at Deluca’s charm. Jennifer serves.

CROWLEY
I don’t know, his papa’s kinda pretty too.

Crowley laughs at his joke. Deluca isn’t quite ready to go there.

DELUCA
This is a damn nice place.

JENNIFER
Thank you.

DELUCA
So how’s it living with a hero?

CROWLEY
Probably can’t wait for him to get back to work.

JENNIFER
I’m very happy to have Avery around.

Jennifer looks up at Avery. Deluca sees the look. Reads it clearly. He knows there is underlying tension in this house. He raises his glass.

DELUCA
To hero boy. Lucky duck. 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)

Clink and drink.

AVERY
Better him than me, right?

DELUCA
Speedy recovery. Next time, duck!

SCOTT
You mean, “jump!”
Everyone starts eating.

SCOTT (CONT’D)
Great macaroni Mrs. Cross.

Jenny smiles. Everyone continues to eat dinner. Scott feeds A.J. a meatball and relates how his son grew up on a meatball diet. “Pure protein diet. He’s 8 now. You should see the kid smack a baseball.” Laughter.

DELUCA
(to Jennifer)
You two have any plans tonight?

Jennifer looks at Avery, for a life line.

JENNIFER
No. I don’t think so...

DELUCA
You wouldn’t mind then if we steal the hero for a little police work do ya?

JENNIFER
Tonight?

Jennifer looks to Avery. Clearly, he wants to go. He’s itchin’ to get out of the house.

DELUCA
I promise we’ll have him home before curfew.

INT. UNMARKED POLICE CAR – EVENING

Avery and Scott ride in the back. DeLuca and Crowley up front. Deluca talks about how his wife has got him wearing a pair of panties. They all drink beer.

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

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

EXT. TWO FAMILY HOUSE – EVENING

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

DELUCA
Is Romina Gutierrezes at home?

Malena turns her head into the house.
Kofi and Romina come to the door. Avery recognizes her from the news report. Deluca flashes his badge.

**DELUCA**
Good evening, ma'am. We're here to search the house.

**ROMINA**
For what?

**DELUCA**
Evidence.

**KOFI**
Evidence for what?

**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.

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

DeLuca nods toward Malena. Romina is out-maneuvered. 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.

**INT. TWO-FAMILY HOME—UPSTAIRS.**

Aided by a crutch (crutches), 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.
DeLuca and Crowley sit across from Kofi and Romina. Malena brings out coffee and Hostess donuts.

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.

DELUCA

ROMINA
We don't got the money.

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.

DELUCA
It's okay, really. It's my boss see, the chief. He's very concerned about appearances. We gotta harass good people so he looks like he's doing his job. It's all politics.

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 kid’s 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.

INT. TWO-FAMILY HOUSE- DOWNSTAIRS.
Avery and Scott come down the stairs. Scott approaches DeLuca, whispers in his ear. DeLuca smiles.

INT. UNMARKED POLICE CAR/EXT HOME - CONTINUOUS
Avery, Scott and Crowley 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.

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.

INT. UNMARKED POLICE CAR- CONTINIOUS
DeLuca climbs into the car and drives off. Avery watches Romina and Kofi head back inside.

DELUCA
So, what's our haul?

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

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

SCOTT
Under the fucking crib.

DELUCA
Ha! Perfect.

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

DELUCA
They're noticing it right now.
Crowley grabs the bills from Scott.

CROWLEY
You're too young to count.

SCOTT
It's over fourteen grand!

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.

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

Crowley 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.

EXT. AVERY AND JENNIFER'S HOME. DAWN.

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.

INT. PSYCHOLOGIST OFFICE. DAY.

CORY GILBEAU, 37, female police psychologist interviews Avery. Gives him a personality test. (a real psychologist test).

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 wife and child?

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 them. I can't look at them.

CORY
Why is that?

AVERY
I don't know...

CORY
Well, is this a new feeling since the shooting incident?

AVERY
...Yeah... I guess...

CORY
Do you have any idea why that is?

AVERY
I don't know... I don't know...

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

INT. CITY HALL - DAY

Avery, propped up by a cane, is in uniform for the first time in weeks. He stands on stage. 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 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.

CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI (CONT’D)
We can all rest a little easier at night now that he’s on the path of recovery. Ladies and Gentlemen...
Officer Avery Cross.

The crowd spontaneously applauds. Gordon lumbers over to Avery and officially affixes a medal of valor on Avery’s uniform. Avery limps his way to the podium.

AVERY
Thank you.

The crowd wont stop cheering. Avery can’t help but smile to the adoring crowd.

AVERY (CONT’D)
Thank you Chief for your support...

 Raises his hand to quell the clapping.

AVERY (CONT’D)
What happened to me was not special or heroic... it’s what a police officer does. I want to thank my fellow Schenectady police officers for being here today.

Clapping...

AVERY (CONT’D)
I know, as I look out upon the faces of the men and women gathered here today, that each and every one of you would not hesitate to get in the way of a bullet in order to make our streets a safer place.
More clapping.

**AVERY (CONT’D)**
When I was in law school I was surrounded by the discussion of justice, but that’s just what it was, a discussion. I joined the police force because I wanted to work along side the brave men and women who know that there are some problems that simply can’t be solved by talking.

Avery glances at his father, AL in the audience.

**AVERY (CONT’D)**
No one wants to be in the situation that I found myself in a couple weeks ago. I wish it could have happened differently... and maybe some part of me wishes it wasn’t me called to that house that day... But that’s the job and for my part I can’t imagine a line of work I’d rather be in.

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

105 OMITTED
105
106 OMITTED
106
107 EXT. AL’S HOUSE. POOLSIDE. DAY.

Al is swimming laps. Avery steps slowly into the pool. The scar on his knee touches the cool water. He watches his dad, vital, crossing the length of the pool over and over again. Avery makes his way across the pool to the deep end where he rests against the wall. Al stops there too.

**AL**
How’s it feel?

**AVERY**
Not doing me much good.

**AL**
Give it time.

(beat)
**AL**
How’s the spotlight?

**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
What do you mean, make it work for me? I'm not looking for anything to work for me. Why does everything have to be such a calculation in your world? I'm in a different world. My life is not a campaign. I’m trying to give something to this community. Not get something from it.

AL
Depends what you want, really. It's your choice. But for someone not campaigning, you sure gave a hell of a speech yesterday. You certainly had my vote. Plus, that knee is a goldmine.

Avery doesn’t know what he means. Al pushes off the wall in a backfloat.

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

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

109 INT. OUTSIDE CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI'S OFFICE - LATER
Avery sits outside of the Chief of Police's office.
CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI (V.O.)
I received a call today from D.A. Killcullen. He wanted me to convey to you some words which should come as a relief to you -

INT. CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI'S OFFICE - LATER
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 what I wanted to hear...

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 don’t believe I can.

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 never saw it like 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
Make me a Lieutenant. Put me in charge of special investigations.

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

AVERY
Yes you can.

CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI
You paid too much for your education to act so stupid, kid.
AVERY
I have ideas that could turn that whole division around.

CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI
How you gonna do that?

AVERY
Make me lieutenant... I’ll show you.

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, and 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.

INT. EVIDENCE ROOM - DAY

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.

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. MALENA’S HOUSE TO OLYMPIC DINER - DAY

Avery is parked in his unmarked Cavalier across the street from Malena’s house. He watches Romina get in her car. He follows her as she drives to work. He can't seem to assuage the guilt he feels for this woman.

113 INT. OLYMPIC DINER - DAY

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
What’re you doing here?

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

AVERY
I’m sorry... I’ll just take a coffee...

Romina walks back into the kitchen. Avery watches her go. Scott Stevens approaches from behind. He jabs his finger into Avery’s ribs.

SCOTT
Stick em up.

Avery turns, a little startled.
SCOTT (CONT’D)
You’re a tough guy to track down...

Scott sits.

SCOTT (CONT’D)
You don’t call people back? I thought we were gonna meet up...

AVERY
Things have been crazy.

SCOTT
Yeah? 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
You trying to fuck her? You sick fuck...

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.

(MORE)
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.

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...

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

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?

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

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

Peter smiles. He points to Scott with his thumb.
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...

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

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.

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...

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.
INT. ELAN’S BATHROOM. CONTINUOUS.

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.

INT. DELUCA’S CAR - NIGHT

Deluca and Scott are in front and Avery sits in the back with the Coke-head. He looks at Avery. Avery looks away.

EXT. PINE BARRENS - LATER

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.

AYER
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?

COKEHEAD
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 presses the man’s 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. His hand, bloodied.

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 flashlight on it.

DELUCA (CONT’D)
See this... It’s the real deal.
Give it a taste. It’s all yours.
(MORE)
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.

A118 INT. AVERY AND JENNIFER HOME. BATHROOM. NIGHT.
Avery washes his bloodied hand in the sink. Wraps it in a cloth.

118 INT. AVERY AND JENNIFER'S HOME. NIGHT.
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
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
Are you in trouble?

Avery sighs. At a loss on how to answer.

AVERY
No.

JENNIFER
You can't even look at me. I feel like you don't like us anymore. You won’t even play with your son. What’s going on with you? You’re not even here.
AVERY
I don’t need your guilt right now. I’m here all the time. That’s all I am is here.

JENNIFER
Don’t give me that, Avery. I’m not a moron. Whatever it is that you’re doing... or whatever it is that’s going on with you... I don’t know... but this creeping around shit is not OK. You don’t need to hide from me or your son. We’re not the enemy, Avery.

Avery can’t respond.

JENNIFER (CONT’D)
Will you just come inside? And just tell me what’s going on?

AVERY
Nothing’s going on.

JENNIFER
What happened that day?

AVERY
What day?

Jennifer gives him a hard look.

JENNIFER
Avery.

AVERY
I don’t know what to tell you...

Avery gets in his car.

JENNIFER
Are you leaving me?

Shuts the door. Starts it up.

120  EXT. OLYMPIC DINER — MORNING
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
I know what they call you... they call you 'that hero cop'. But you wanna know what I see when I look in your eyes? I see the devil.

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

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

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 want me to do. What do you expect me to do?
AVERY
I expect you to deal with it.

Avery stands up to leave.

CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI
Whoa. Wait a minute. The fuck you think this is? My desk is not a place you come and deposit your problems. You want to take a shit somewhere then do it but I don’t want to see it or smell it. Unfucking believable!

Avery tries to tell him more. 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).

CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI (CONT’D)
I want you to know that this is not good business. This is not the way to build a career. Now take this shit outta my office.

He throws it at Avery. Hard.

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.

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

INT/EXT AVERY’S CAR- CONTINUOUS

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.

DELUCA
License and registration.

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

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.

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

Avery nods.

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

AVERY
I'm good.

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?

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.

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.

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

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 brake lights. 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.

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

Stately house - 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..."

INT. AVERY’S FATHER’S HOME - LATER

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...

INT. CRUISER. THE NEXT DAY

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. 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 you as soon as we can.

AVERY
Not a problem.

SCOTT
I knew we could count on you.
They slap "five."

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

Avery, in uniform, sits across from D.A. Killcullen. He holds a small tape-recorder up and 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, there'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. POLICE STATION - DAY

Police bring DELUCA out of a cruiser, lead him into the station in cuffs. News crews are there to try and get a sound byte from the perp walk.
NEWS REPORTER 2(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.

INT. PRISON CELL - DAY
Scott Stevens is put into a cell. The door closes behind him.

NEWS REPORTER 2(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.

INT. POLICE STATION. NIGHT.
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.

INT. AVERY AND JENNIFER'S HOME. NIGHT
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 led to headline grabbing arrests.

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

EXT/INT. AVERY'S FATHER'S HOME - GE PLOT - NIGHT
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."
INT. LEGAL OFFICE. CONFERENCE ROOM. MONTHS LATER. DAY.

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
There’s nothing nice about a divorce. Nothing. But it’s always better when two people can come to an agreement without a judge telling you how you are going to live your life. Because a judge doesn’t care about you after he or she goes home at 5 o’clock. They don’t care. It’s always better if you can craft or make your own deal. 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. 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 your son. Do you fully understand the implications of what you're signing?

AVERY
Yes I do.

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."

ELLIPSE. Documents are signed.

EXT. CEMETERY. DAY. 16 YEARS LATER.

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 a 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 Congress 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. CEMETERY - LATER

Well dressed folks get into their cars. A.J. wears headphones as he gets into his mom's car. 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...
Avery is sitting in an patio chair, trying to lead a meeting 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, pale, standing on the edge of his pool. As if A.J. senses his dad’s inspection, he gets into the pool.

Watches and listens to Avery’s conversation. Avery takes the meeting inside. A.J. is left in the pool alone.

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

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

A.J.

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR
Oh okay.

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

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.

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.

EXT. GROUT PARK. AFTERNOON.

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.

EXT. TRAIN TRACK MONTAGE- LATER

They tell jokes, get high, wrestle lost in the hot autumn friendship. The characters literally get to know each other before our eyes. And there is a sense of envy that seeps into A.J.’s feelings for Jason.

EXT. TRAIN TRACK- LATER

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...
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?

EXT. HAMILTON HILL. NIGHT

A.J. and Jason walk through the neighborhood. Come to a known drug house.

JASON
Wait here.

A.J. gives Jason a pile of cash and Jason leaves his bike with A.J. Jason is surprised at the amount of money that A.J. is giving him.

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. They walk away.

Suddenly. Cop lights flash behind them.

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

JASON
Just chill out.
A.J.
What the fuck did you do?

JASON
Sit still and calm down. You run
and you’re going to get shot.

A.J.
I know. Get your hand off me.

A.J. is totally panicked. He jumps on Jason’s bike and rides away. It’s too late. The cop nabs him. And Jason too.

147 EXT. SCHENECTADY POLICE STATION - CONTINUOUS
Avery gets out of his car and walks into the station.

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

CHIEF WEIRZBOWSKI (V.O.)
Downstairs.

148 INT. POLICE STATION. CONT
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.
INT. VIDEO MONITOR ROOM - CONTINUOUS

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, and 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 Cankam. 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.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

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.

INT. OTHER INTERROGATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

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 you 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.

INT. SCHENECTADY POLICE STATION - LATER

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.

153 INT. HOLDING CELL - LATER

Scared, Jason sits in a holding cell. HEARS other prisoners.
Jason tries to make himself disappear.

154 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.

A155 INT. COURTROOM DAY.

Jason sits in a courtroom with a PUBLIC DEFENDER. He fidgets
as he waits. A COURT OFFICER calls out the docket number and
name of the case: “State of NY VS. Jason Cankam.”

THE JUDGE asks Jason to enter a plea.

PUBLIC DEFENDER
Not guilty.

The public defender asks Jason to point out his parents in
the courtroom. He points to Kofi and Romina. She turns to
leave the courtroom and signals to them to follow her.

155 INT. COURT ROOM HALLWAY - DAY

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. 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 OMITTED

157 INT. TWO-FAMILY HOUSE. DAY.
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
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. 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. MILITARY ACADEMY. WAITING ROOM.
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. MILITARY ACADEMY.
A SERGEANT gives Jason and Romina a tour of the facilities. A class of uniformed students stand in attention in the gym.

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

161 INT. MILITARY ACADEMY. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS
Jason and Romina sit across a desk from the SERGEANT.
SERGEANT
I’ve spoken to countless mothers just like yourself who feel without 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. 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.

ROMINA
How much does it cost?

SERGEANT
Tuition for this year is 34 thousand dollars.

Moment of shock.

ROMINA
Wow. Is there any financial aid?
SERGEANT
Yes ma’am we do offer financial assistance to families in need and you are certainly free to apply for next year but I’m afraid that at this point all our funds have been allocated for this academic year.

Romina is silent for a moment.

162 EXT. CHRISTIAN BROTHERS ACADEMY. PARKING LOT. CONTINUOUS. 162

Romina walks ahead of Jason through the courtyard. Jason walks with his head down and hood on - angry. Romina turns the corner and turns to wait for Jason. Jason walks even slower.

ROMINA
Let’s go.

JASON
This is bullshit.

ROMINA
Whatch your mouth. You think I want to be here today?

JASON
Then why are we here?

ROMINA
I don’t know... You tell me... You think it has anything to do with you? Huh?

JASON
It’s stupid. We can’t even afford it.

Romina stops and turns.

ROMINA
No we can’t Jason. We really can’t. But we will. Everyone’s going to pay for the choices you’re making.

Romina gets in the car, closes her door. Jason waits outside the passenger’s door for his mom to open his door. She does. He gets in.

A163 INT. JASON'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - EVENING A163

Vanessa rinses dishes and puts them in the dishwasher loudly and angrily. Jason approaches carrying more dishes. He puts them in the sink and looks at his sister. Knows she’s mad at him.

VANESSA
This is so stupid.
JASON
Don't worry. We're not moving...

VANESSA
Yeah... we are.

JASON
Mom is just being dramatic. Don’t worry. I got this under control sis.

VANESSA
Why do you gotta be so stupid all the time?

JASON
I don't know. I'm just a fuck-up I guess.

VANESSA
That's stupid... Stupid.

JASON
You better watch who you're calling stupid...

VANESSA
(smiles)
You are stupid.

Jason reaches out, tenderly puts his whole hand over Vanessa's face and makes a downward wiping motion. He laughs.

EXT. LINTEN HIGH SCHOOL. MORNING.

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 he 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.

INT. SCHOOL. GYM CLASS - DAY

Physical aptitude test continues with the chin up bar. Kids sit on the floor waiting their turn. A.J. enjoys easy conversation with his group of friends.

GYM TEACHER
Let's go Cankam. Four chin ups.
Jason stands up, trying to block out the onlooking faces. He tries to get to the minimum.

INT. LOCKER ROOM. LATER


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? My dad?

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

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

166 INT. JASON'S HOUSE, DINING ROOM - EVENING

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.

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.

EXT. FRIENDLY’S RESTAURANT - PARKING LOT - LATER

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
Your mom is gonna murder me.

169 INT. JASON’S ROOM. NIGHT.
Jason GOOGLES the name 'LUKE GLANTON' on the school’s 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 Hook service station in Rotterdam. His former boss, ROBIN VAN DER HOOK, declined to be interviewed for this article."

170 EXT. NISKAYUNA STREETS/SCHENECTADY STREETS - AFTERNOON
Jason rides away from school down Route 5 toward ROTTERDAM.

171 EXT. VAN DER HOOK SERVICE STATION - LATER
Other then the assortment of cars parked out front, not much has changed in the last 15 years. Jason leans his bike against the fence out front.

172 INT. VAN DER HOOK SERVICE STATION
Jason walks INTO THE FRONT OFFICE. It's empty. He sits down, waits and 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 Hook?

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.

INT. BACK ROOM. LATER.

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)

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?

INT. ROBIN’S SERVICE STATION. LUKE’S OLD TRAILER. AFTERNOON

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 at 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, and 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.

(MORE)
ROBIN (CONT’D)
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 away from Robin’s.

177
OMITTED 177

178
EXT. JASON’S HOUSE – LATER 178
Jason rides his bike up his driveway. He can hear the sound of arguing coming from inside his house. He peeks through the window, sees, his mother and Kofi in heated conversation in the kitchen (presumably about his absence). Vanessa sits off to the side. Suddenly he doesn't feel a part of any of it. He stares for a long moment and then turns and rides away.

A179
INT. CONVIENIENCE STORE. LATER A179
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.

B179
EXT. STREETS. NIGHT. B179
Jason rides reckless and drunk through the streets of Schenectady, narrowly missing traffic. He eats his dinner – candy bars.
INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY.

Jason runs up to Vanessa in the hallway. She is so mad at him she won’t even speak to him.

VANESSA
Where the Hell were you last night? Mom is freaking out.

JASON
Tell her I'm fine.

VANESSA
What is going on with you Jason?

JASON
I just can't go home right now. Here take this. I got it for you.

Jason produces a ring pop from his pocket and hands it to her.

VANESSA
I'm not a baby I don't need your lollipop.

JASON
Eat it up. It was a steal.

Jason grabs her nose. She slaps his hand away without the slightest hint of humor.

VANESSA
You’ve fucked everything up. Do you even care?

JASON
Don't worry sister.

VANESSA
Who’s your sister? You’re not even one of us.

She walks away.

LATER. Location TBD...

A.J.

Yo!

A.J. catches up to Jason. Jason doesn’t really want to talk to him right now.
A.J. (CONT’D)
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. 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. My dad is gone this weekend and so, 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?

EXT. ROBIN'S SERVICE STATION - LATER

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." I was wondering if anybody was staying in my dad's old trailer... you might rent it out to me... or something...

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.

INT. AUMILLER'S PHARMACY - LATER

Jason enters a pharmacy. Surveys the greeting card section nervously. He knows what he wants and waits for the pharmacist to disappear around the corner. He makes his move and slides behind the counter. Finds a bottle of prescription OxyContin. Looks nervously around - puts it in his sweatshirt.
He makes a run for it. The pharmacist gives chase.

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.

EXT. A.J.'S HOUSE/avery'S - NIGHT

184

Sound of music, bass thumping. Jason rides his bike up to a large modern condo. 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. A.J.'S HOUSE/avery'S - CONTINUOUS

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 Oxy?!

Jason produces the bottle of OxyContin from his hoodie pockets. A.J. is beyond psyched. He grabs the bottle and immediately shows off the score to friends around him.

A.J. walks through the party to the back pool, handing out the drugs 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 the drugs into his hands. Jason eats them like candy. Someone hands him a beer. He takes a long slug.
INT. A.J.’S HOUSE/ARENY’S - LATER

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. 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.

A.J.’s friend approaches and 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.

INT. A.J.’S HOUSE/ARENY’S - CONTINUOUS

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.

Kids shove past him. He tries to stop a few who are too fucked up to be deterred. Jason manages to get the attention of a girl. He screams.

JASON

Is that A.J's dad?

GIRL

Yeah. He's like the mayor or something.

The girl keeps moving. Jason looks deeper and deeper into Avery's eyes, Avery's smile. Suddenly Jason starts to feel scared and uneven. Avery's face becomes more and more menacing to him.
Jason tears his gaze away from it. He moves deeper into the house opening doors and looking in as he goes. He looks in a room and finds 2 kids fucking on the carpet. He shuts the door and fights past kids to another door.

This is AVERY'S MASTER BEDROOM. Jason goes in, closes the door behind him. Music muffles. He explores the room, knows he shouldn't be here, but he can't stop himself from searching.

He opens Avery's drawers, sees a gun, handcuffs and an old badge buried beneath. Jason stares at them, HEARS the door open behind him.

A.J. (O.S.)
What the fuck, dog?

Jason closes the drawer, and turns and sees A.J. standing in the doorway. Jason looks at them as though possessed.

JASON
What the fuck dog?

He walks toward the group with madness in his eyes.

JASON (CONT’D)
Why don’t you tell me what the fuck A.J.?

Jason walks fast right up to A.J. and pushes him hard in the face and goes to follow up with a punch. The crowd clears out, surprised. Jason picks himself up off the floor and stumbles toward the door knocking into people, creating more and more animosity for him, as he desperately tries to escape. A posse forms behind A.J. like a wave forming and they follow Jason down the stairs to the driveway/yard.

Jason gets tripped up at the patio door and flails into the lawn. He quickly picks himself up, but A.J. is on him instantly. He turns to face his attacker, fists up, still running backwards. Jason is scared shit-less.


Jason falls to the pavement of Avery's long driveway, curls into the fetal position, tries to cover his body, but A.J.'s fists and feet are everywhere. Raging. Over and over again.

Someone must have called the police, because in the distance - sirens. Kids scatter leaving Jason nearly unconscious. Soon, flashing lights illuminate his coiled body. A bloody mess.

INT. HOSPITAL EMERGENCY WAITING ROOM - LATER
Kofi and Romina, wait on stained couches. The TV is on, low, in the corner. A DOCTOR comes out of double doors.
B188 INT. INTENSIVE CARE UNIT - LATER

Jason's in bed. His face looks like an eggplant. Tubes come out his nose, IV's in his arms, cables monitor his condition. His mom touches his bruised hand. Vanessa is destroyed. Kofi attempts to console her.

DOCTOR
Your son has suffered head contusions and multiple fractures throughout his body. Nothing is broken and from what we can see he shouldn't have any lasting brain injuries...

Romina has a hard time hearing the mention of brain injury.

ROMINA
Is he gonna be okay?

DOCTOR
If it were you or me that'd be one thing but he's healthy and I have no doubt that he'll bounce back quickly. It's the gift of the young body although we won’t know the magnitude of his brain injury until he wakes up. The thing he needs most at this time is rest and support from his family.

The doctor gives Romina a heartfelt two handed shake. She tries to hold it together. She goes over to Jason and holds his hand.

AA188 INT. HOSPITAL. PHONE. LATER.

Romina calls home to the neighbor who is staying with Vanessa. She tells about Jason’s condition.

C188 INT. HOSPITAL RECOVERY ROOM. DAYTIME.

Jason's eyes open. He takes in his surroundings. Inhales the cool light from the room. HEARS himself breathing. TV on in the corner. He looks down, sees his mother's hand holding his.

ROMINA (O.S.)
He's awake. Jason? Jason?

Jason keeps focused on the hands.

ROMINA (O.S.) (CONT’D)
Can you hear me? Jason? Jason. Look at me.
Jason looks at his mom.

ROMINA (CONT’D)
Can you speak? Baby?

Jason sees Vanessa behind her. Romina turns to her.

ROMINA (CONT’D)
Go get your dad. Go!

She turns back to Jason, rubbing his hands. Her face is a mystery to him, full of secrets, fears, and misunderstandings.

JASON
You're a liar.

There's nothing for her to say. She is frozen. Jason stares at her emotionless. Hears Kofi and Vanessa return to the room.

KOFI
He's awake? Did he say anything?

Romina can't speak. She has been devastated. Meanwhile, Kofi and Vanessa try to reach Jason, but he is unreachable...

LATER. LATE AFTERNOON/EVENING.

Vanessa's watch. She feeds her brother spoonfuls of clear tasteless soup and jello.

The TV is on in the room. ON TV: Evening newscast.

ANCHOR (ON T.V.)
Local hero and Senatorial candidate Avery Cross's campaign took an unexpected turn Friday night when authorities busted up an unsupervised party taking place at his home in Niskayuna.

ON TV: File footage of the night of the party. Flashing police lights and kids.

ANCHOR (V.O.) (CONT’D)
Police found large amounts of drugs and alcohol present at the house. Among the many teenagers brought in for questioning was Avery Cross's own son A.J. Cross.

ON TV: Avery talks to reporters in front of the police station.

AVERY (ON T.V.)
This is of course a big shock and a major disappointment for me. My son has made a mistake. But I'm his father.

(MORE)
His mother and I take responsibility for what he does. From now on, he won’t be far from my side.


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.

ANCHOR (O.S.)
Cross's career took another turn later that year when he personally exposed a massive corruption scandal...

E188    EXT. HOSPITAL. THE NEXT NIGHT.
Jason, in civilian clothes exits the hospital with his mother. His walk is a painful limp.

ROMINA
Why don’t you sit here and I’ll pull up the car.

Jason doesn’t respond. His face is unresponsive but he sits on a bench outside of the hospital. Romina is uncomfortable.

ROMINA (CONT’D)
Okay I’ll be right back baby.

Romina walks to get the car and Jason waits, staring forward as if in a trance before getting up and walking away the other direction.

F188    EXT. SCHENECTADY STREETS
Jason walks through the shadows on deserted Schenectady streets.
EXT. WEED SPOT. DEEP NIGHT.

Jason, in hospital gown, stands on the porch of a two-family house. He knocks on the door.

  VOICE BEHIND DOOR
  What's the word?

  JASON
  It still peanut?

The door opens. BENNY, 22, stares in disbelief at the freakish image of Jason before him.

  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
  That's not all you need boy.

  JASON
  Yeah I need your bike too.

  BENNY
  Maybe you should slow down killer.
  I don't need to ask you why you need a gun 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?

EXT. SCHENECTADY CEMETARY - JUST BEFORE DAWN.

Jason rides a borrowed bike from Benny through the graves, comes to the edge of the cemetery, where he finds 3 large dumpsters. He checks under all three and 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.

E/I ROBIN'S SERVICE STATION - EARLY MORNING

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.

(MORE)
ROBIN (CONT’D)
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.

EXT. ROBIN'S SERVICE STATION - CONTINUOUS

Jason hobbles away as fast as his injured body will take him. He looks back at Robin who watches through the front window.

EXT. SCHENECTADY HIGH SCHOOL - LATER

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.

INT. SCHENECTADY HS- BELL RINGS. SCHOOL IS OUT FOR THE DAY

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.
A.J. walks home through the sun dappled suburban streets.

A.J. walks the long driveway to his dad's house. Key turns in the lock. He goes inside.

A.J. Drinks juice out of the container.

A.J. walks upstairs, goes to his closet, pulls out a suit and tie.

A.J. 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!"

A.J.
I'm so sorry Jason. Please. Please!

A.J.'s moans are getting to Jason. He presses the gun to the back of his head.
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.

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EXT./INT. AVERY'S HOUSE, DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

A black town car slowly pulls into the driveway.

Avery gets out of the passenger side, tells his advisor he’ll see him later.

OMITTED

INT. AVERY'S HOUSE, STAIRS- CONTINUOUS

He moves up his stairs, looking at his phone.

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. Recognizes Jason.

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 is still.
INT. AVERY'S CAR - LATER

Jason is crouched in the backseat, gun pointed up at Avery.

AVERY
Where are we going?

Jason’s eyes betray confusion. He takes a quick glance out of the window. He doesn’t know where he’s going.

JASON
Just drive.

EXT. PINE BARRENS- EVENING

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
Keep going.

Avery 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 keeps walking. Further into the forest.

JASON (CONT’D)
Turn around.

Avery turns around. Looks at Jason and for the first time looks down at his blood stained shirt. A flush of fear overcome him.

AVERY
How did you get in to my house without setting off the alarm?

Jason does not respond.

AVERY (CONT’D)
Why is there blood on your shirt. Did someone let you in?

JASON
Your son let me in.
AVERY
Is my son okay?
Jason doesn't answer. Avery begins to panic.

AVERY (CONT’D)
Where is he?

JASON
You should be more worried about yourself.

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.
Deeper panic.

JASON
Take off your jacket.
Avery hesitates.

JASON (CONT’D)
Take off your fucking jacket!
Avery complies.

AVERY
Please let me know if my son is okay.

JASON
Hold it out with one arm.

Jason grabs the jacket and digs into the pockets, grabs Avery's keys and his wallet. Pockets them.

AVERY
Is A.J. okay?

JASON
Shut up!

Jason tries to get a hold of the situation.

AVERY
Oh, my son! My son!
Jason puts the muzzle of the pistol against Avery's head.

JASON
You're not crying for him. You're crying for yourself.

Avery tries to collect himself. He stares at Jason.

AVERY
I'm sorry Jason. I'm so sorry!

Jason's shocked that he knows his name.

AVERY (CONT'D)
I knew this day would come.

He looks at Avery with confusion.

AVERY (CONT'D)
I'm sorry.

Jason studies him.

JASON
What are you sorry for?

Avery stare at Jason. Jason looks back at him, hard. Avery lowers his gaze to the ground.

JASON (CONT'D)
Look at me.

Avery becomes lost in his own grief. Jason sees him clearly for what he is.

AVERY
I deserve it. But not my son. My poor son.

JASON
Don't follow me.

Jason turns his back on Avery and walks away.

AVERY
You should kill me.

Jason doesn't respond, just keeps walking.

AVERY (CONT'D)
My boy. My poor boy. I'm so sorry.
Oh, my boy. My boy.

EXT PINES- EDGE OF THE PINES

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 picture of his family.

EXT. PINE BARRENS - CONTINUOUS

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.

INT. AVERY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Jason drives for a long time, further and further away from Schenectady.

EXT. PINES - CONTINUOUS

Avery stands alone in the PINES. Over this lonely image, we HEAR...

MURMUR of a crowd come up and play out the preceding scenes.

REPORTER (V.O.)
It was a tight race for over a year between Cross and Kellerman. And then unprecedented events over the last month looked to threaten Cross's election bid...

INT. JENNIFER’S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Jennifer watches the real-time coverage of Avery’s victory from her living room. ON THE TV: an empty stage with Avery Cross’s name on a big banner, balloons etc.

REPORTER
...First allegations of underage drinking at his house and then a violent robbery from a yet unidentified intruder that left his son hospitalized with a concussion. (MORE)
REPORTER (CONT'D)
Remarkably Cross has managed to right his campaign and now as you see the attorney general has just one a seat in Congress by the slimmest of margins. And now we're getting word that the speech is just about to start. We go now live as Congressman Avery Cross prepares to address the crowd of supporters.

Avery walks onto the stage to thunderous applause. He tries to say thank you but the crowd’s to loud. He smiles and waves.

Jennifer can’t take it. She turns off the T.V. A moment of stillness in her home.

INT. CONVENTION CENTER - EVENING

APPLAUSE


A CAMPAIGN AIDE calls to him. It’s time to go on stage.

He takes a breath. Deeply. Walks to meet his father the crowd noise surges. He stands next to his father and together they take in the adoring crowd. A smile forms on his face as he accepts his position.

avery finally quiets the crowd. And begins his speech.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

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.

EXT. SECLUDED HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

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.

INT. SECLUDED HOUSE - LATER
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 led to believe. Well, you ready? It's down at the barn. We'll go take a look, okay?

EXT. GARAGE - LATER
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 guns the engine as he takes it down the driveway. He turns left at the road and rides with the Rockies at his back.