

A BETTER PLACE

by

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BLACK.

SOUNDS FADE IN. Wind HISSES. Tires roll over crumbling pavement. Worn brakes SQUEAL. A car door opens and shuts.

WE'RE STARING AT A PAY PHONE AT THE SIDE OF A 7-ELEVEN

TERRY EDNEY, 40, approaches, tilting his body against the wind and pulling his field coat tight for warmth. He's a thin, rat-faced man with a cold-chapped, pockmarked face.

He lifts the phone and feeds a quarter into the slot.

INT. DEN OF SHODDY ROW HOME — NORTH PHILADELPHIA

CLOSE ON A FUTURISTIC LAND MINE — BEEP-BEEP-BEEP — **KA-BOOM!**
The MINE EXPLODES, tearing a gaping hole in a titanium wall as a TEAM OF SOLDIERS storms an ALIEN SPACECRAFT. A GUNFIGHT ensues. Blood, brains and subhuman limbs paint the walls.

PULL BACK FROM THE TELEVISION to REVEAL —

DARYL WILKINS, 35, lazing on the floor, cigarette dangling precariously from his lips as he bangs away on an X-Box controller. He's a born-bad ex-con tattooed toes-to-neck. Bearded, intractable, prone to violent outbursts.

KURT SPROUSE, 23, short, wiry, sits on the couch. He doesn't look comfortable as he anxiously glances at his watch.

The phone begins to RING. Wilkins ignores it.

 SPROUSE
 The phone's ringin'.
 (a beat)
 Hey, man, that's the phone goin' off.

Wilkins doesn't respond.

ON THE TV: Wilkins' SOLDIER is blown apart by a grenade.

He puts the controller down, moves into the adjoining kitchen and lifts the wall phone.

 WILKINS
 Yeah?

INTERCUT TERRY AND WILKINS

 TERRY
 T'hell took you so long to answer?

WILKINS
Who's this?

TERRY
Who's this? Whudda you fuckin' kiddin'?

WILKINS
Who's this?

TERRY
It's Terry — who the fuck else is callin' you at 2:15 in the mornin'?

WILKINS
...Whudda you want?

TERRY
Change a plans. Carter's stayin' at his girlfriend's place. 2247 Lambert. On the corner. Yunno where you're going after?

WILKINS
Yeah.

TERRY
Don't call until tomorrow. Noon. I'll be at this number. Do you have this number?

Wilkins glances at the CALLER ID SCREEN, then hangs up.

EXT. 7-ELEVEN PAY PHONE

Terry hears the DIAL TONE.

TERRY
Hello...? Wilkins...?
(hangs up)
Fuckin' cunt.

Terry slips into a '98 Cadillac Deville. The car grumbles out of the lot as *Boston's 'More Than a Feeling'* RISES —

INT. TRANS AM — NORTH PHILADELPHIA — LATER THAT NIGHT

— from the CAR STEREO. The clock glows: **4:14 AM.**

Wilkins and Sprouse are parked on a street of ramshackle row homes. Quiet and deserted at this hour. Reaching into the backseat, Wilkins grabs a CVS bag. Inside are two HALLOWEEN MASKS — ZOMBIE and a SKELETON — which he removes from the packaging. Sprouse folds TWO NIKE DUFFLE BAGS under his arm.

They stub out their cigarettes. Wilkins cuts the engine. The MUSIC STOPS mid-refrain. They open the car doors and —

EXT. LAMBERT STREET

— WE FOLLOW THEM as they stalk towards the corner home. Around the street side to the backyard fence now. Somewhere in the night a DOG is BARKING. They pull the MASKS down over their faces and lift the hoods of their sweatshirts.

INT. ROW HOME — UPSTAIRS BATHROOM — NIGHT

TROY CARTER, 30, black, well-built, half-asleep, pisses into the toilet. Reflected in the window beside Carter a ZOMBIE MASK APPEARS. Wilkins quietly, stealthily nears with a .45 PISTOL in hand. Carter YAWNS, then turns — too late —

CRACK! — Wilkins PISTOL-WHIPS him! Carter reels backwards, grabs onto the shower curtain. The plastic rings SNAP OFF the rod and he crashes to the bathtub floor, bleeding badly from a deep gash above his eye.

WILKINS

Where are the drugs?

CARTER

Who the fuck are you — !?

CRACK! Wilkins brings the pistol butt across his face again.

WILKINS

Where are the fuckin' drugs?!

CARTER

(breathlessly)

Okay okay, just...they're in the closet...in that room over there...

(O.C.) A WOMAN SCREAMS as —

INT. MASTER BEDROOM

A TORNADO OF BED SHEETS. Wearing only her panties, Carter's GIRLFRIEND, white, freckled, thin, writhes wildly as Sprouse, one arm around her waist, tries to carry her out of the room.

GIRLFRIEND

Get your fuckin' hands off'a — Troy!

In a paroxysm of desperation, her long fingernails claw at Sprouse's mask. She pulls it off and GLIMPSES HIS FACE.

Enraged, Sprouse grabs her face and THROWS her to the ground.

SPROUSE
Dumb fuckin' bitch!

Sprouse puts his mask back on and drags her out of the room by her long hair, her legs kicking as they move into —

THE BATHROOM

Sprouse enters and tosses Girlfriend down beside Carter. Wilkins moves to exit. Sprouse pulls him aside, whispers —

SPROUSE
She saw my face.

Wilkins accepts the divulgement impassively, keeps moving.

INT. BEDROOM — MOMENTS LATER

BLOUSES, HANGERS AND HIGH HEELS are flying at us as Wilkins rummages the closet. He finally locates the WALL SAFE.

WILKINS
(calls out to Sprouse)
Ask him the combination!

Shouting and threatening from Sprouse, then —

SPROUSE (O.C.)
18-37-12. 18...37...12.

Wilkins spins the dial. *Right-Left-Right*. CLICK. He opens the safe revealing 30 KILOS of COCAINE WRAPPED IN PLASTIC AND RED TAPE. He begins stuffing the bricks into the DUFFLE BAGS as—

INT. BATHROOM

Sprouse, nervous and breathing heavily, keeps his .45 trained on Girlfriend and Carter who seems on the edge of passing out. Sensing a presence, Sprouse turns to find a YOUNG BOY, 9, in his pajamas standing in the bedroom doorway across the hall. Boy stares at his mother, scared, waiting to be told what to do.

A look passes between Sprouse and Girlfriend. A silent plea for mercy. Sprouse appears to be making a decision, then —

SPROUSE
(to Boy, quietly so
Wilkins won't hear)
Get back in your room an' stay there.

The Boy rushes back inside the room. Sprouse closes the bedroom door. Girlfriend's body slackens with relief.

INT. BEDROOM

Wilkins hefts the now-full duffle bags over his shoulders. Exits the bedroom and moves down the hall where he leaves the bags on the floor and removes his .45 and checks that it's loaded – *it is* – and he enters the –

BATHROOM

Where, without a moment of hesitation, he aims the pistol at Carter's head and – **BLAM!** A CRIMSON ERUPTION flashes onto the bathroom wall! Girlfriend emits a SCREAM of protest. It's cut short by – **BLAM!** Another shock of red on the white wall. Her body goes limp and she falls like she doesn't have bones.

Sprouse is shaken by the abruptness of it all. Wilkins isn't and quickly goes.

INT. STAIRCASE

Sprouse and Wilkins are halfway down the stairs when Wilkins freezes suddenly.

SPROUSE
What is it...?

Wilkins is looking past Sprouse to a SPLASH OF LIGHT against the upstairs hallway wall. Sprouse follows his stare and knows what it means. Thinking quickly –

SPROUSE (CONT'D)
Wilkins, we gotta move, man. This whole
thing is fucked already –

Wilkins tries to walk past Sprouse. Sprouse grips him by his coat, but Wilkins shoves Sprouse aside and moves into the hall where he sees light glowing under a bedroom door. He opens the door and peers into the YOUNG BOY'S ROOM where a NIGHT LIGHT is plugged into the wall socket.

INT. BEDROOM — UNDER THE BED

The frightened Young Boy lies on his belly, watching WILKINS' SNEAKERS move across the creaky wooden floor. A CLOSET DOOR OPENS and SHUTS. The sneakers stop at the edge of the bed.

A long moment passes.

The shoes become knees.

Wilkins peers under the bed.

Young Boy freezes at the sight of the horrific sideways eyes and sideways mouth of Wilkins' mask peering at him. Like a figure from his nightmares come to life.

BLACK.

PART I: OLD FRIENDS

NEWSRADIO fades in. PHILADELPHIA'S KYW 1060 JINGLE, then —

KYW NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)
*...KYW news time 4:38 PM. A cold and
 overcast thirty-four degrees at
 Independence Mall...*

INT. CARPENTERS UNION HALL — SPRING GARDEN STREET — AFTERNOON

A group of union carpenters sit on steel chairs waiting for jobs to be posted. Among them, we find CHRIS BORZELL, 30, a broad-shouldered Irish-Catholic with a ruddy face and thinning hair slicked back over his scalp. He wears a UNION LOCAL 8 sweatshirt, Dickies jeans and construction boots. Beside him are two carpenters, MANNY and GLENN, 40s. The NEWSRADIO is coming from a portable radio at Chris' feet.

KYW NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)
 (continuing)
*...Thirty-two down at the airport.
 Temperatures expected to fall into the
 low teens overnight. 76ers take on the
 Raptors in Toronto —*

MANNY
 Ya'hear about Karcher?
 (Chris shakes his head)
 Workin' an unapproved site over on
 Cottman Ave. Touched some electrical
 lines. Fell off the roof an' broke his
 back.

GLENN
Jesus Christ.

CHRIS
T'hell's he doin' workin' an unapproved
site?

MANNY
Needs the money. His daughter's got all
them medical issues, yunno.

GLENN
Mickey's daughter?

MANNY
Born with a hole in her heart. They do a
beef n' beer for her every Thanksgiving
over at Frankford Hall.

CHRIS
It's his own fault for takin' the job.

MANNY
Youd'a done the same thing you had a
daughter like that. Come on.

CHRIS
Workers Comp aint gonna cover a non-union
job. He'll be forkin' over every dime he
makes for the next fifty years to pay off
the hospital.

Chris lifts his coffee thermos and portable radio from the
floor. Slips on his Philadelphia Eagles jacket.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
I'm takin' off.

MANNY
Friend of mine's lookin' for help with
his snow removal business down in
Narbeth. Want me to give 'im your name?

CHRIS
I'm a carpenter, not a plow driver.

MANNY
Pays twenty an hour an' they're callin'
for a shit-ton'a snow this winter.

CHRIS
(thinks, then)
Give him my number. See yas Monday.

Chris exits.

INT. FATHER JUDGE CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL — CLASSROOM — NIGHT

CLOSE ON A TRIGONOMETRIC EQUATION: $2 \sin 3x + -$

BARRY ANDREWS, 30, six feet four inches tall, thin and gawky, scribbles away on the whiteboard. He wears a wool sweater, rumpled corduroys, and a pair of threadbare loafers.

BARRY

If we restrict the domain of the sine function, we can use the inverse —

BOY'S VOICE (O.C.)

Mr. Andrews?

(Barry keeps talking)

Earth to Mr. Andrews.

Barry turns back to a group of tired FRESHMAN BOYS.

FRESHMAN BOY

It's five o'clock... We were supposed to be done a half hour ago.

Barry observes a line of PARENTS' CARS waiting outside.

BARRY

Right. Okay. Well that's all for today.

The boys shoot up from their seats and rush to the door. Barry's call after them —

BARRY (CONT'D)

Finish the workbook exercises. And e-mail me the solutions to E-7, E-10 and —

But they're gone already. Barry SIGHS.

EXT. UPSCALE APARTMENT BUILDING — RITTENHOUSE — NIGHT

Standing out front in a long black overcoat and gloves is the building doorman, MIKE RILEY, 30. He's handsome, cocksure, never has a problem getting laid. Just ask him. He performs his job amiably, but always with an edge of resentment.

A late-model TOWNCAR arrives. One final drag and Mike flicks away his cigarette. Opens the car door for an attractive, PROFESSIONAL WOMAN, 40s, in a sleek Prada blazer and skirt.

MIKE

Evenin'.

Mike unloads her designer luggage, peering around the trunk to gape at her long legs.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Just moved into the buildin', right?
Seventh floor?

Feeling uneasy that he knows this much about her, she nods.

MIKE (CONT'D)
I'm Mike.

ATTRACTIVE WOMAN
(hesitates, then)
Katherine.

MIKE
You had a chance to check out the roof
deck yet?

KATHERINE
Not yet.

MIKE
Oh you gotta get up there. Bottle of
wine, few friends. The view's to die for.

KATHERINE
Bit cold for that, isn't it?

MIKE
No no, they got heaters. You ever wanna
go up there, call down to me.
(points to nametag)
Mike. I'll setcha up real nice.

She musters a smile. Mike hands off the luggage, holds the door open for her.

KATHERINE
Thank you.

Katherine wheels her luggage across the marble lobby floor. She looks back at Mike, if only to make certain he's not following her, then slips onto the elevator. He watches her disappear then enters the —

APARTMENT BUILDING LOBBY

where his co-worker, DENNY, 40, squat, surly, sits behind the front desk watching the 76ERS PREGAME SHOW.

MIKE

(to Denny, re: Katherine)
Wouldn't mind throwin' those legs over my
shoulders for a coupl'a hours, huh.

DENNY

Coupl'a hours or coupl'a minutes?

MIKE

See how she looked back? Gimme a month
an' I'll tell ya what she likes on her
pancakes.

Denny shakes his head: *what a bullshitter*. Mike moves behind
the desk, opens the coat closet and sets his hat on a hook.

DENNY

You got my fifty bucks?

MIKE

What fifty bucks?

DENNY

You took Notre Dame plus the points last
weekend.

MIKE

Buncha bums. Too white, yunno.

DENNY

Yeah. I do. S'why I took the other side.

Mike furtively glances into his wallet. A few \$20 dollar
bills sitting there. *But fuck Denny. Cheap sonofabitch.*

MIKE

I'm outta cash right now. I'll setcha
right next time I'm in.

Mike wraps a designer scarf around his neck, checks his look
in the mirror. If we didn't know better we'd assume he lived
in this building. That's the idea.

DENNY

You in tomorrow?

MIKE

Not til Monday. Headed up to the Poconos.
Old buddy a mine's got a place.

(re: the bottle of

Bushmills Denny's hiding)

Fix me one before I go, huh.

(off Denny's hesitation)

C'mon c'mon, it's Friday. I need a kick.

Denny grudgingly pours him a cup of whiskey and hands it off.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Take it easy, Den.

EXT. RITTENHOUSE STREETS — NIGHT

Mike exits the building and downs the whiskey in two gulps. It's warm. Feels good. A pretty pair of bundled up UPENN COEDS pass by on their way to the bars. Mike smiles at them. They smile back: a good start to a better weekend.

EXT. SULIMAY'S RESTAURANT — KITCHEN — EVENING

A RADIO plays amid a busy, hot short order kitchen. JUSTIN BORZELL, 28, pulls a tuna melt from the oven and slides it under the heat lamp. He's at the tail end of a double shift and his eyes are stung with exhaustion. His thin frame is disgraced with tattoos. The vestiges of his former life. An addict. A battle he still fights.

KYW NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)
...Just before 7:00 AM this morning, the bodies of Troy Carter, Alicia Rhodes and 10 year-old Brandon Carter were discovered inside their North Philadelphia home. While police haven't named suspects, they acknowledge that the murders appear to be drug-related...

A WAITRESS gathers her order from under the lamp.

JUSTIN
Careful, Shel, that plate's hot.

Justin glances at the clock, then moves to the order window and peers out to the diner floor. Waiting by the door is a simple, doe-eyed girl dressed in a duffle coat and a crochet beret. She is LEAH, 25, his love.

He watches her, caught in the current of coming-and-going patrons. Clumsily attempting to find a place to stand and finally ending up tucked away behind the coat rack. He smiles, unties his sullied apron.

INT. LEAH'S CHEVY CAVALIER, MOVING — FISHTOWN — NIGHT

Moving down Almond Street. Three-story row homes from the 1930s. Justin's changing out of his work clothes. The silence between them is uncomfortable.

JUSTIN

You're not talking to me now either?

LEAH

I just don't understand why you're going.

JUSTIN

We already talked about this. Mike gets a kick outta doin' it. Once a year. The four of us gettin' together.

LEAH

That's not what I mean.

But he already knew that. Justin puts on a flannel jacket and a knit cap. Lights a cigarette and lowers the window a slit. They arrive in front of a red-brick row home. Through the bay window kids are seen playing. A moment passes.

JUSTIN

What'm'I gonna do? Never talk to him again?

LEAH

I wouldn't.

JUSTIN

He's my brother, Leah.

He grabs a duffle bag and a bamboo FLY FISHING ROD from the back seat. Time to leave, but he doesn't want to leave angry.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

Listen, I just...there's a lotta stuff there, yunno. Lotta years. I gotta figure it out on my own, that's all.

LEAH

(still hasn't looked at him)

I just know how far you've come and I don't wanna see you slip back to that place again.

He reaches out to touch her face. She pulls away, angry.

JUSTIN

Hey hey. Look at me.

A beat. She gives in and faces him. He leans close. Their foreheads touch. A thing they do.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)
I don't wanna slip back to that place
either. And I won't.

LEAH
(beat, softening now)
I talked to my sister last night.

JUSTIN
Yeah?

LEAH
She said we could stay in her basement.
Just until we get on our feet out there.
I wanna go, J. I wanna go soon.

He smiles. She smiles because he smiles.

JUSTIN
Me, too. I love you. I'll call ya when I
get there.

He kisser her, then leaves the car. She watches him go.

INT. BARRY'S ROW HOME — FAMILY ROOM — EVENING

Domestic mayhem. Toys are strewn everywhere. A Nickelodeon
show blares on the television set as two girls, GRACE, 12,
and ALLIE, 10, jump across a hopscotch playmat wearing garish
Princess costumes.

Justin enters and stands unnoticed until — MICHAEL, 8, LEAPS
UP from behind the couch in a black Spiderman costume and
shoots invisible webs at Justin.

MICHAEL
WHAARRRRR!

JUSTIN
Whoa, who's that, Spiderman?

MICHAEL
No, I'm Venom!

JUSTIN
Alright, ya scared me there, Venom.
(to the girls)
Howya doin', girls?

Absent waves from the princesses. Barry's wife, SUSAN, 42,
enters from the kitchen, basket of laundry under her arm.
She's sweet, husky, harried by the demands of four children.

SUSAN
(to the kids)
Guys, start gettin' ready. Pizza at Aunt
Joan's in fifteen minutes. We're gonna
help plan your Grandpop's surprise party.
(no one moves)
Did you hear what I said?

The kids groan, then scurry up the stairs.

SUSAN (CONT'D)
Hi, J.

JUSTIN
Hey, Sooz.

She hugs him, kisses his cheek.

SUSAN
How've you been? Okay?

JUSTIN
Yeah, pretty good.

SUSAN
(seems to doubt this)
Yeah?

JUSTIN
Sure, I don't know, maybe. How the heck's
good feel anyway, right?

SUSAN
(smiles)
Don't ask me. Have fun this weekend. Your
brother an' Mike are in the kitchen.

Susan trudges upstairs. *Your brother*. Justin takes a moment
to steel himself, then heads toward the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN — NIGHT

Cramped. Dated wallpaper. Still heated by radiators. Mike and
Chris sit at the kitchen table, drinking bottles of Yuengling
Lager and watching the 76ers game on the counter TV.

MIKE
(re: the game)
Look at that pass! Jesus Christ — four
million a year for that fuckin' bum!

Justin enters.

MIKE (CONT'D)
 Heyyyy, there he is! Howya doin, Jaybird!

JUSTIN
 Hey, Mikey.

Mike stands, pulls Justin into a bear hug.

MIKE
 Ready for this weekend or what?

JUSTIN
 Yeah.

MIKE
 Yeah? Yeah? That's the best you can fuckin' do?

JUSTIN
 Whaddaya want, cartwheels?

MIKE
 I'm just breakin' balls.

Chris stands now as well. An awkward beat. A tension between the brothers. Chris moves first, pulls Justin close.

CHRIS
 Good ta see ya, J.

JUSTIN
 (perfunctorily)
 Yeah, you too.

They separate. Both glad that's over. Chris sits back down. Justin slides out a chair and sits as well.

MIKE
 (to Chris)
 Gimme your keys. I'm gonna toss my shit in your car.

Chris hands Mike his car keys. Mike exits out the side door. An awkward silence follows between Justin and Chris. Finally:

JUSTIN
 How's dad?

CHRIS
 Ah yunno. The same.
 (beat, sensing a chance to bridge the gap)
 I took him to the doctor's last week for his blood pressure, yunno.
 (MORE)

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Gives the guy a spiel 'bout how he's gonna change his lifestyle. Diet, exercise, more sleep. *I'm a reformed man*, he says... Next night I come downstairs. Four in the mornin' he's sittin' on the couch eatin' a bacon an' scrapple sandwich.

Justin chuckles.

That silence again.

Mike returns, blowing warmth into his cupped hands.

MIKE

Fuckin' freezin' out there. Barry come down yet?

JUSTIN

Haven't seen him.

Mike grabs a nearby broom. BANGS the ceiling with the handle.

MIKE

Hey, Professor! Quit shavin' your clam an' let's hit the road!

INT. MASTER BEDROOM

No larger than your average guest bedroom. Barry's in the overstuffed closet, tossing clothes into a duffle bag. The adjoining bathroom door is open and Susan showers behind the curtain. Mike's broom-pounding is heard below.

SUSAN

(loud, over the water)
Honey, do you hear a noise?

BARRY

It's just Mike downstairs. Have you seen my leather toiletry case?

SUSAN

I boxed a buncha your stuff an' put it down in the basement.

BARRY

What for?

SUSAN

(opens the curtain, leans out)

(MORE)

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Because we're married now. Because half
of that tiny closet belongs to me.

Barry manages a smile. Susan vanishes behind the shower
curtain again.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Did you have time to call about that
dental claim? We got another letter today
sayin' they're not gonna pay.

BARRY

Who's not paying what?
(re: the toiletry case)
It used to be right here.

SUSAN

Delta. They're only covering Allie's
braces up to \$500 dollars.

BARRY

I thought we picked the better of the two
plan options.

SUSAN

That was the better of the two options.

BARRY

Well how much is the bill for anyway?

SUSAN

Thirteen hundred.

Barry SIGHS. Another headache. Add it to the pile. He zips up
his bag, moves into the bathroom and peels back the curtain.

BARRY

We'll talk about it when I get back,
okay? I gotta get going.

Susan pulls him close and grabs his crotch. For a few moments
they neck like a pair of horny 15-year-olds.

MIKE (O.C.)

Hey Cinderella!

INT. BASEMENT

Barry switches on the lights. Gibson guitars are mounted on
the wall alongside posters of *Pearl Jam*, *Nirvana*, *Smashing
Pumpkins*, and other 90s rock icons. As he moves to the boxes
in the corner, GIGGLING is heard and a head pops up from the
couch.

KIRSTEN, 16, is a pretty girl, but the crimson streaks in her hair and the pierced lip tell us she's a teenager struggling to find herself and desperate to fit in.

BARRY

Oh. Didn't see ya there, Kirsten.

A second head pops up now. JESSE, 18, Hispanic, brash, sideways cap. Barry freezes, wondering what he interrupted.

JESSE

Hey.

BARRY

Hi. I'm Barry. Kirsten's stepdad.

JESSE

Good meetin' ya, Barry.

Kirsten CHUCKLES. Barry's insulted, but says nothing. He moves to the boxes in the corner and fishes out the toiletry case. Crosses back to the stairs now, then pauses.

BARRY

Are you uhh...going over to your Aunt's for dinner, Kirsten?

KIRSTEN

No, I have some homework I need to finish.

Barry knows what that means. He wants to say something. Tell her she has to go. Or tell this punk to get lost.

KIRSTEN (CONT'D)

Are you just gonna, like, stand there?

BARRY

I'll be home on Sunday.

Barry switches off the light and heads upstairs.

EXT. BARRY'S ROW HOME — MOMENTS LATER

WE HEAR Barry saying goodbye to the children and now the door opens and the men spill out, laden with duffle bags and fly fishing gear. Justin lights a cigarette and hands one to Mike who is full of excitement for the weekend ahead.

MIKE

Fifty bucks says I land the biggest brown this weekend.

CHRIS
I'll take some'a that.

MIKE
Oh you will, huh!?

Mike playfully gets Chris in a headlock. They reach Chris' CHEVY TAHOE in the street and load in their belongings.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Who else?! Huh!? They don't call me the Prince a the Delaware for nothin'!

BARRY
Judgin' by the goose egg The Prince laid last year, I'm in, too.

MIKE
Let's bump it to hundred then! Huh?!
(no response)
See that, Jaybird?! When the real money's on the line these chickenshits are tuckin' their dicks between their legs.

The trunk is closed and the men climb into the SUV. From the bay window, Michael watches the car vanish down the street with his Venom costume still on.

EXT. PA TURNPIKE/INT. CHEVY TAHOE, MOVING — NIGHT

Justin sits in the back row while Barry stretches out in the middle row with a beer. Chris and Mike are drinking beers in the front and Mike can be heard talking, describing someone as a *grade-A fuckin' phoney*.

JUSTIN
How's married life treatin' ya?

BARRY
Good, yunno.

JUSTIN
And the kids're doin' all right?

BARRY
For the most part... We've had our struggles with Kirsten lately.

JUSTIN
She in high school now?

BARRY

Freshman at Northeast. She's fallen in with the wrong crowd over there.

Barry shifts his body so Mike and Chris won't hear.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Got a call from the police last Friday. They caught her drinking outside the football game. So drunk they had to bring her over to Hahnemann. Fifteen years old, she drank half a bottle of vodka.

JUSTIN

Jesus. That's up there with some of my old performances... Where's her father?

Barry shakes his head: *that's not a good situation.*

BARRY

Sooz wants to pull her out, put her in private school. I don't disagree, it's just, yunno, I don't exactly have ten grand lyin' around for a rainy day.

(beat, takes a swig)

A hundred twenty boys coming through my room every day, you think I'd have a handle on this sorta thing.

JUSTIN

It's a tough age, that's all. She'll be alright.

BARRY

(unsure)

Yeah...

Mike turns back to Barry.

MIKE

Hey what're you hearin' on the diocese shuttin' down our alma mater?

BARRY

It's already done.

MIKE

(miffed)

Already done?

BARRY

Never saw a bump in enrollment. Plan is to merge with North beginning a next year.

Justin bunches his coat up, places it against the window as a pillow. WE STAY ON JUSTIN as the others talk around him.

CHRIS (O.C.)
So what, the school's just gonna sit there now?

BARRY (O.C.)
It's not gonna sit there. I'm sure the diocese will try to sell the land.

Justin's eyes close slowly and he sinks toward sleep.

MIKE (O.C.)
Know what we oughta do? Break into the gym one night and steal our championship banner.

BARRY (O.C.)
You're on your own there.

MIKE (O.C.)
Oh big-fucking-surprise there. Captain Pussy's not in.

BARRY (O.C.)
What are you gonna do with a six-foot football banner anyway, Mike?

CHRIS (O.C.)
What are they gonna do with it?

MIKE (O.C.)
Exactly! What are they gonna do with it? Hang it up for a high school that don't exist no more?

Streetlights intermittently illuminate his face, then fade.

MIKE (O.C.) (CONT'D)
Fuck 'em. It's not theirs to keep.

FADE TO BLACK.

SILENCE. For an uncomfortably long moment, then:

CLOSE ON JUSTIN, LATER

Lying across the back row, asleep. His eyes open and he looks outside. Streetlights have given way to towering white pines which pass in a blur. The 76ERS POSTGAME SHOW is heard on the radio: Sixers fall to the Raptors 98-94 in overtime and drop to .500 on the season...

Justin motions to sit-up, then reconsiders.

Chris glances at the rear view mirror. Sees the top of Justin's head rise above the seat, then sink back down again.

EXT. LAKE NAOMI — POCONOS — NIGHT — FROM ACROSS THE LAKE

A CHALET-STYLE HOME sits on the water's edge. Headlights glow as the Tahoe enters the loose gravel drive.

INT. LAKE HOUSE — DEN — NIGHT

The front door opens. Barry flips on the lights revealing a spacious home with a fusty, rustic decor. Antlers and oars. The men shuffle inside.

INT. SHOWER — NIGHT

Justin wears a shower cap. He's careful to avoid letting the hot water get too close to his head.

INT. BATHROOM — MOMENTS LATER

Standing before the mirror, Justin removes the shower cap, tilts his head down and reveals the cause of his caution. A DEEP GASH on the back of his head closed with TEN STITCHES. He reaches for a tube of prescription ointment and smooths a glob over the cut.

He appraises his reflection in the mirror. Eyes running over his copious tattoos. Stains that can't be wiped away. He meets his own gaze now. An older, wiser self peering into the eyes of its younger counterpart.

INT. DEN — NIGHT

Mike, Chris and Barry lounge on the couches around the TV. As is tradition, they're watching a videotape of a HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP GAME filmed from high up in the packed bleachers. BARRY'S VOICE provides commentary on the action:

BARRY'S VOICE (ON TV)
Get up to the line — get up to the line!

Following a short completion, the team (FATHER JUDGE) races to the line of scrimmage where the ball is spiked.

CAMERA ZOOMS ON THE QUARTERBACK. MIKE, 18, takes his helmet off and walks to the sideline to confer with the COACH.

CHRIS

What's he sayin' to ya there, Mikey?

MIKE

Askin' if he can still make happy hour,
the old drunk.

Chris LAUGHS.

CAMERA PANS to the scoreboard. 4th Quarter. Father Judge 17
LaSalle 21.

BARRY'S VOICE (ON TV)

We're uhh, we're down to the final eight
seconds here. Who knows, maybe we got one
more miracle up our sleeve...

Justin emerges from the hallway, dressed in jeans, a flannel
shirt and a knit cap. He joins the others on the couch.

ON THE TV: Mike takes the snap. A blitz penetrates the line.
He launches the football as he's hit, a missile which lands
perfectly, impossibly in the arms of a RECEIVER streaking
down the sideline. TOUCHDOWN! The CROWD ERUPTS!

Barry SWINGS THE CAMERA to his ecstatic, teenage face.

BARRY'S VOICE (ON TV) (CONT'D)

We won! We won! Oh my God! HOL-EEE SHIT!

MIKE

Who's 'we', Bar? You didn't make it past
the first cut.

Barry TOSSES a pillow at Mike.

CHRIS

Just the way McGarvey drew it up, huh,
Mikey?

Mike nods absently, transfixed by what's on the television.

THE CAMERA is now amid the MOB OF STUDENTS celebrating on the
field. Mike is on the shoulders of the other players.

CAMERA finds CHRIS in his linebacker pads, his arm around a
bubbly REDHEAD (KELLY). Barry hugs Chris.

CHRIS (ON TV) (CONT'D)

State Champions, baby! State fuckin'
Champs! Nobody thought we could do it!

KELLY (ON TV)

Hi, Barry!

The mood quiets. An elephant in the room suddenly. Justin looks at Chris who seems lost in his own thoughts.

JUSTIN

Let's get outta here, huh. I'm starvin'.

BARRY

Yeah me, too.

Barry reaches for the remote and switches the TV off.

INT. SPECTATOR'S SPORTS BAR — NIGHT

A flat-screen heaven crowded tonight with local roughnecks and out-of-town hunters here for the advent of the season. Pearl Jam's '*Daughter*' blares from a jukebox as Justin and Barry shoot a game of pool. Barry's feeling loose and buzzed, smoking a cigarette and SINGING along to the music. Justin ricochets a ball into the corner pocket.

BARRY

Nice shot, J. Jesus, you're handin' me my ass here... Mikey, you ever call April?

Mike and Chris lounge in a nearby booth littered with empty pitchers and shot glasses. Mike's preoccupied with someone across the room: a BLONDE, 40s, sitting alone at the bar.

MIKE

(absently)

April?

BARRY

Susan's bridesmaid from the wedding.

MIKE

Oh yeah. No, I uhh — I'll call her when we get back.

BARRY

Do me a favor: don't call her unless you're interested.

MIKE

Interested in what? Playin' jackhammer or puttin' a ring on her finger?

BARRY

Just not makin' her one of your pump-and-dump specials. Because when things go south I'm the one who's gonna hear it.

MIKE

Hear what? What're you gonna hear, Barry?
Horns? Fuckin' sirens goin' off?

BARRY

No, just, yunno, from Sooz. They're
close. Besides, April's not that type of
girl if that's what you're thinking.

MIKE

Oh she's not, huh?

BARRY

No, she's not.

MIKE

Well she was the night'a the weddin' when
I had her bent over the minibar.

Chris LAUGHS.

MIKE (CONT'D)

But look, fuck it, I don't want you to
hafta *hear it* – whatever the fuck that
means – so I'll tear up her number when I
get home.

Mike grabs the empty pitcher and heads off toward the bar.

BARRY

That's not what I'm saying.

But Mike's already gone.

AT THE BAR

Mike sidles up to the BLONDE as she lights a Parliament.
There's an experienced quality about her. A woman who's been
around a time or two and isn't looking to marry.

He slyly appraises her. *Figure, breasts, face.* It's not an
impressive package, but it beats the next best thing in this
shithole by a country mile. Mike leans over to her.

MIKE

Yunno I spent the last half hour tryin'
to think a something to say to you.

She just now notices him standing there. And she's pleasantly
surprised by his good looks.

BLONDE

And what'd you come up with?

MIKE

Nothing. Nada. Zilch. But I figured one a these other schmucks might get inspired so I'd better move quick.

A smile breaks on her face. Ice melted. He leans closer.

MIKE (CONT'D)

I'm Mike.

BLONDE

Vicki.

AT THE POOL TABLE

Justin looks on as Barry mounts a comeback. Sinking shot after shot. Feeling his oats, he PEACOCKS around the table.

BARRY

Uh-oh, Jaybird! I think Mr. Mo-Mentum has shifted sides here!

He sinks another ball now! Feeling the music, he plays the air guitar on the pool cue, hitting every note from memory. Justin SMILES, happy to see his friend revived and shaking away the domestic funk. Then —

MAN'S VOICE (O.C.)

Hey would you hurry the fuck up.

Justin turns to find —

WILKINS AND SPROUSE sitting at a high-top nearby. Wilkins is clearly stoned, but relaxed as he pulls on a cigarette. Sprouse, meanwhile, looks unhinged. Doped out of his head. Eyes bloodshot and burning from no-sleep.

BARRY

Is there a problem, pal?

SPROUSE

Is there a problem, pal? Yeah there's a fuckin' problem. I'm waitin' to play here an' you're puttin' on a goddamn concert.

A tense beat. Chris is clocking things from the booth. And Justin is clocking him. Barry stares blankly at Sprouse, confounded by the outburst and unsure how to respond.

JUSTIN

Let's just finish up, Bar.

Barry returns to the game, but he's clearly rattled as he lines up his next shot. As he's about to shoot, Sprouse THRUSTS a pool cue into his ass. Barry stiffens, tries to pretend it didn't happen. Refocuses. Ready to shoot when...Sprouse JAMS the cue into his ass again. Harder, deeper this time. Wilkins chuckles. Justin's seen enough.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

Come on, Bar. We're done here.

Justin sets his cue on the table and moves to Barry. Barry just stares at Sprouse.

SPROUSE

Keep starin' at me, faggot, I'll knock your fuckin' teeth down your throat.

Sprouse FLINGS a cup of beer into BARRY'S FACE. Then FIRES a basket of half-eaten chicken wings splattering him with hot sauce. Justin tries to pull Barry away, but he won't budge. Enduring the abuse his way of preserving a trace of manhood. He shakes with impotent rage. Seems on the edge of tears.

SPROUSE (CONT'D)

Keep starin', faggot!

BARRY

(nervously, choking on it)
Go fuck yourself.

The instant he says it he wishes he had it back. Sprouse SHOOTS UP from his stool and lunges for Barry's neck. Justin gets between the two men, trying to keep the peace.

SPROUSE

T'fuck did you say to me!?

JUSTIN

Hey hey hey! Go easy!

Sprouse PUNCHES Justin in the face! Justin FALLS. Sprouse CHARGES Barry now. Before he can reach him –

CRACK! CHRIS' FIST COMES ACROSS HIS TEMPLE! The sound is sickening. Like a log split in two by an axe.

Sprouse FLIES backward into a high-top table and CRASHES to the floor. A LARGE, HIDEOUS KNOT is already forming above his eye. He feels at it, then looks up at Chris, thunderstruck.

SPROUSE

What the fuck – !

Chris isn't finished. He's on Sprouse immediately. The two men GRAPPLE like a pair of rabid dogs, but the kid Sprouse is no match for Chris who PUMMELS HIS HEAD with his fists. It's a brutal beating.

AT THE BAR

Mike's hand is creeping up Vicki's leg when he notices the ruckus and RUSHES back to the pool table. Along with a few PATRONS, he manages to separate Chris and Sprouse.

MIKE

(to Justin, re: Chris)

Get him outta here. I'll get our jackets.

Wilkins, who has been smiling at Sprouse's comeuppance until this point, wraps his arms around him and walks him away. The knot has swelled above Sprouse's eye and he can barely see.

SPROUSE

(SHOUTING at Chris)

YOU MOTHERFUCKER I'll FUCKIN' KILL YOU -

WILKINS

Be smart, you dumb fuck.

Justin and Barry ferry Chris toward the doors. Barry's scared, stunned, high on adrenaline.

BARRY

Holy shit - holy shit - what just happened - ?!

CHRIS

(still SHOUTING at Sprouse)

Look at your face! Huh! Look at your face now, you fuckin' faggot!

JUSTIN

Let it go! He's a kid for chrissakes!

Chris turns sharply to Justin. Something in his Justin's eyes - *so-tired of this - so-tired of him* - sets Chris off. He SHOVES Justin into the wall. Hard. Chris storms outside into the lot. Barry follows.

Justin remains in the vestibule. His nose is bleeding and he wipes at it with a napkin. He wants to be anywhere but here.

Mike approaches, jackets on one arm, Vicki under the other. The BARTENDER'S VOICE BOOMS at him from across the bar -

BARTENDER (O.C.)

If you jagoffs come in here again I'm callin' the fuckin' cops -

MIKE
 (calls back at him)
 Don't worry about us comin' in this
 fuckin' dump again!

Vicki CHUCKLES, game for a bit of excitement.

MIKE (CONT'D)
 Come on, J.

He grabs Justin's shirt. Together they walk outside.

INT. LAKE HOUSE — DEN — LATER THAT NIGHT

Gin Blossoms 'Hey Jealousy' BLARES from the stereo as BARRY, CHRIS, MIKE & VICKI, arms linked over each others' shoulders, dance with wild abandon, SINGING ALONG to the music. They're falling-down drunk and Barry's wearing only his boxer shorts.

Barry LEAPS onto the armchair and shreds some air guitar.

Vicki pulls Mike close and they begin to MAKE-OUT like a pair of eighth graders at a school mixer. Mike squeezes her ass.

Barry and Chris crowd around the couple, JUMPING UP AND DOWN, and CHEERING them on. Chris dumps a can of beer out over their heads. Mike gulps it thirstily. Vicki ROARS with drunken laughter.

INT. BEDROOM

THE MUSIC AND CHEERS can be heard dully from down the hall as Justin lies in bed. He's looking at a PHOTO in his wallet. Taken some years ago. JUSTIN and his MOTHER, 50, sitting on the steps of the ART MUSEUM, her arms wrapped tightly around her son, as if afraid to let him go for fear he won't return. These were his using days and he's pale, gaunt, haggard.

His cell phone VIBRATES atop the night stand. He flips it open revealing a PICTURE of LEAH IN BED. Eyes that miss him and a message: **send me u**

He holds the phone above his head and takes a picture of himself, presses SEND.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LAKE HOUSE — HALLWAY — DAWN

Justin exits the bedroom with a bed sheet wrapped around him. He SHIVERS from the cold, walks down the hall into —

THE DEN

where he finds the culprit. An open window. He moves to close it when he NOTICES Chris asleep on the couch. Beer bottles litter the coffee table. He passed-out drunk here last night without a sheet to cover himself.

Justin closes the window, removes a quilt from a blanket chest and lays it over his brother.

EXT. LAKE HOUSE/FOREST — A SERIES OF SHOTS OF JUSTIN

-- He exits the COTTAGE, lights a cigarette and walks along the edge of the lake.

-- He treks along a path in the FOREST.

-- He moves charily down a rock-ribbed glen to the edge of a MODEST STREAM. He looks around, *all around*, keen to take in every angle of this unspoiled, transcendent place. Crouching at the bank, he lets his HAND GRAZE the cold, clear water. Off the WATER MOVING THROUGH HIS FINGERS...

INT. LAKE HOUSE — DEN — MORNING

Justin hangs his flannel jacket on the rack, crosses into —

THE KITCHEN

where a hung over Barry takes a mug down from the cabinet.

BARRY
(turns back)
Mornin'. Just gettin' up?

For a moment, Justin considers telling Barry about his walk, but decides against it.

JUSTIN
Uhh yeah.

BARRY
Coffee? I just brewed it.

JUSTIN
Sure.

Justin takes a seat at the table. Barry sets out two mugs and fills them from the Mr. Coffee. He hands one to Justin and sits across from him. Justin spoons some sugar in.

BARRY
Sorry about last night.

JUSTIN
What for?

BARRY
Acting like a jackass. Thirty years old
and I pissed the bed.

Justin SPITS UP his coffee. Barry shakes his head.

BARRY (CONT'D)
My parents room, too.

Mike enters wearing only a pair of sweatpants. He looks spry,
energized, no worse for wear.

MIKE
Mornin', boys.

BARRY
What time you get to bed?

MIKE
I didn't.

Mike fills a bowl with cereal and milk and begins to shovel
spoonfuls into his mouth like a starved castaway.

VICKI (O.C.)
Mike? Mike...?

FOOTSTEPS are heard approaching from down the hall. Mike puts
a finger to his mouth and WHISPERS to the others —

MIKE
I'm not here. Tell her I went out.

JUSTIN
What? Where? Mike —

But Mike's under the tablecloth before they get an answer.

Vicki enters dressed in the same outfit she wore last night.
Mornings weren't made for Vicki and what attractiveness she
possessed last night has vanished without a trace. Her hair
looks like she was caught in a windstorm and her mascara has
been smudged giving her eyes a racoonish quality.

VICKI
Oh. Hi, guys.

JUSTIN
(awkward)
Good morning.

BARRY
(just as awkward)
Hey, Vicki.

VICKI (CONT'D)
Have you seen Mike?

JUSTIN
He went fishing —

BARRY
No, I haven't seen —

Their voices trail off. Barry defers to Justin.

JUSTIN
He went fishing.

VICKI
Already?

JUSTIN
He likes to get an early start.

UNDER THE TABLE

Mike pulls the waistband of Barry's pajama pants out and dumps the cereal bowl in.

AT THE TABLE

Barry nearly leaps out of his seat —

BARRY
AH-AH! FUCK!

He SHOVES his chair away from the table.

VICKI
Everything alright down there?

BARRY
Yeah, I just... saw a mouse or...

VICKI
(beat, then to Justin)
You wouldn't happen to have a cigarette,
wouldja?

Justin fishes one out and offers her a light. She takes two quick drags and then, to everyone's surprise, crouches down, lifts up the tablecloth and FLICKS the cigarette at Mike's crotch. And with that she's gone.

MIKE (O.C.)
OWWW — fuckin' shit — !

The table SHAKES, the bowl RATTLES around on the floor and now Mike comes tumbling out.

Justin and Barry BUST OUT LAUGHING. Not Mike. He stalks out of the room, muttering vituperatively under his breath. On the couch, Chris wakes up and looks around groggily.

CHRIS
T'hell's goin' on?

EXT. POCONO MOUNTAINS — BACK ROAD — NIGHT

The Tahoe grumbles along a windy country road.

INT. CHEVY TAHOE, MOVING

The four friends sit inside. Tired, hungover, silent.

EXT. PARKING AREA ALONG THE DELAWARE RIVER — MORNING

The Tahoe is parked in a patch of grass. The men get dressed in their waders and vests alongside other FISHERMEN and HUNTERS who are readying their rifles. Mike is ready first and starts off down the slope toward the river, but in a different direction than Barry was expecting.

BARRY
Hey, where ya going?

MIKE
If I'm fishing, I'm fishing. Gailen Falls.

CHRIS
Oh come on, Mikey, that's an hour walk.

MIKE
At least an hour...

Mike presses on, undaunted.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Have fun landin' your dick-sized brookies. I'll see you when the sun's gone. And I'll bring dinner.

The others exchange looks, then reluctantly follow Mike.

EXT. FOREST — EARLY AFTERNOON

The men trek through the forest. The river is wider and the current stronger out here and there are no other fishermen in sight. Justin and Barry lag behind Mike and Chris. Something's on Justin's mind. Finally:

JUSTIN

I tell ya something, you're not gonna say nothin' to no one?

BARRY

(a bit offended)

When have I ever spilled anything?

JUSTIN

(he's right, *never*)

...Leah an' me are thinkin' a leavin'.

BARRY

Leaving?

JUSTIN

Sshh...

(signals Mike and Chris)

BARRY

(quieter now)

Leaving for where?

JUSTIN

Oregon. She's got some family over there.

BARRY

Yeah, well you got some family over here.

JUSTIN

That's right, I do... But if I went any further I'd'a been in the ocean.

Barry stops Justin a moment and studies his face.

BARRY

Jesus, J, you're serious about this?

(Justin nods)

Is this about what happened at the hotel?

JUSTIN

No no — it's not just that.

Justin starts walking again. Barry follows.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

It's all of it put together. It's my old man, it's Chris, it's... I gotta breakaway. I don't and it's just around the corner that I'm using again.

Barry's crestfallen, trying to process the news when —

MIKE (O.C.)

PSSSK!

Up ahead, Mike is waving them over to where he and Chris are standing. Justin and Barry near. Mike signals a COTTAGE high at the top of a slope across the river. Out back, SPROUSE IS CHOPPING WOOD. Under the hood of his sweatshirt we see that his eye has been heavily bandaged.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Anyone up for round two?

No one laughs. The bravura of last night has been replaced by a deep uneasiness, especially in Barry. But Mike's game for a little fun. He HOOTS like an owl. Spooked, Barry scurries behind a tree. The others crouch and duck.

SPROUSE

stops CHOPPING a moment and looks around for the source with his one good eye.

MIKE

SQUAWKS like a bird, really enjoying himself.

BARRY

(a scared whisper)

The fuck are you doing, Mike?

MIKE

Ah lighten up. The hell's Cyclops gonna do anyway? Stare us all to death?

A tense beat. Finally the dull CRACK of the chopping resumes. They stand and continue on through the woods.

EXT. GAILEN FALLS — DELAWARE RIVER — HIGH ANGLE

A GORGEOUS CASCADE flows into a large plunge pool where the water tarries before being carried down river.

(NOTE: There is no dialogue in this sequence. The only sound we hear is that of the waterfall. It is VERY LOUD. It sounds like a train and it doesn't let up. Not even for a moment.)

FISHING MONTAGE:

The men are spread out and we move freely among them, each an experienced fly fisherman, roll casting with ease and savvy.

Suddenly, JUSTIN'S ROD BENDS. He feels the weight of the fish on the other end, lifts the rod high in the air and takes up all the slack, pulling on the line to drive the hook in. The fish TUGS. He tightens his grip, bracing for a fight.

He adroitly maneuvers his way down the rocks flanking the waterfall now, and then wades into the pool, forcing the fish to battle not only his line but the current as well.

The others take notice.

Justin 'pumps' the fish. Raising his rod, then dropping it as he REELS UP. Over and over. It's masterful. Then —

A SILVER SPRAY! THE TROUT leaps out of the water like a blaze of light. It's a thing of beauty: brass and speckled.

JUSTIN bows and comes tight again, finally bringing in the fish, a 24-INCH BROWN. He quickly draws a pair of PLIERS from his vest and removes the HOOK from the trout's mouth. He holds it in the air for the others to see. Not vainglorious, just wanting to share this moment with them. He hears a faint sound over the water.

It's BARRY CALLING OUT TO HIM from the riverbank. Miming a camera. He wants a photo.

Camera slung around his neck, Barry moves into the river.

WE'RE UNDERWATER as his BOOTS proceed along the rocky bottom. He steps into a cavity suddenly and twists his ankle.

ABOVE THE SURFACE Barry WINCES and SCREAMS. A scream we can't hear. He COLLAPSES into the current and is CARRIED DOWNSTREAM. Chris RUSHES over and lifts him out of the water.

JUSTIN regards the trout a moment, its eyes frozen in silent terror. He holds it gently under the surface and points it upstream, moving it back and forth in the water. For a moment, the fish doesn't move and it appears maybe to have died. Then, slowly, its gills open and close. It waggles back and forth, splashing water, affirming life.

And Justin lets go...

EXT. GAILEN FALLS/RIVERBANK — LATE AFTERNOON

Barry stands in his long johns, shivering as he dries his clothes over a small fire of dead branches. Justin shakes the water out of the camera, but it's clearly fried.

Nearby, Mike and Chris, cigarettes hanging from their lips, fillet the fish they've caught. None nearly as impressive as Justin's brown beauty, a fact not lost on Mike.

MIKE
(to Barry)
Shoulda brought a change of clothes.

BARRY
No, Mike, what we *should've* done is fish closer to the car. Like we always do.

MIKE
(re: Barry's lack of output)
Did you fish today?

Fed up, Barry starts at Mike like he's ready to have a go at him. Justin holds him back.

JUSTIN
Come on. Forget it.

MIKE
Let him go, J. Whudda you gonna do, Captain Pussy? Have Chris knock me out?

Barry shrugs Justin off and returns to drying his longjohns. Mike CUTS OFF the head of a trout and slices its belly and removes its guts.

EXT. HARDWOOD FOREST — EVENING

A light rain falls under an anthracite gloaming as the men make their way back. Tired, wet and cold. Mike and Chris each have a handle of the cooler. Hobbled by his sore ankle, Barry falls behind. Justin slows and waits for him.

JUSTIN
Here.

He slips the equipment off Barry's shoulders and puts them on his own.

BARRY
I'm done comin' up here.

JUSTIN
Don't say that.

BARRY
No it's true. There are a lotta things I
could be doing with my time other than
listenin' to Mike's bullshit, yunno?

They walk for a few moments, then:

BARRY (CONT'D)
I'm gonna miss ya, J.
(off Justin's look)
I don't know...just feels like
everything's changin' these days.

For a moment, Justin seems ready to confute Barry's remark, or at least offer a few consolatory words. But Barry's right. *Everything is changing.* Justin keeps walking.

EXT. FOREST — LATER

Winter-dark now. The men are still trudging along when the BUMBLE OF AN ENGINE rises over the current. Everyone freezes, trying to localize the noise. Then, ACROSS THE RIVER —

A FOUR-WHEELER FLIES over a rise, SPEEDS downhill and SMASHES full-tilt into a hemlock tree — **CRASH!** The RIDER is flung from the seat and TUMBLES halfway down the slope.

A long beat. DULL, AGONIZED GROANS are heard.

Justin's first to move. He drops his gear, rushes across a ford in the river and kneels beside the rider. To his shock, IT'S SPROUSE. He's in dire shape, trying to talk but unable to form words.

The others arrive now. Chris feels a pang of guilt looking down at Sprouse and the hideous knot warping his face.

Justin peels back Sprouse's jacket. His grey sweatshirt is soaked with blood. He's been shot in the stomach. The mood changes, darkens. Anxious looks are exchanged. Finally —

JUSTIN
Call an ambulance.

Barry slips out his cell phone, dials. *No signal.*

BARRY
We're too far out.

JUSTIN
Here. We have to get him up –

MIKE
Wait a second...

Mike lifts a GLOCK PISTOL up from the ground. It must have fallen out of Sprouse's coat.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Let's be smart about this, okay?

JUSTIN
We don't have time to be smart.

MIKE
Who doesn't have time?

It's sharp and firm. Justin knows exactly where Mike stands.

JUSTIN
(ignoring Mike, to Chris)
Help me get him up.

Chris defers to Mike for approval. Mike shakes his head 'no'.

MIKE
He's been shot, J. Somebody shot him.

JUSTIN	MIKE
So what, we're just gonna let him die out here?	And I think we have a pretty fuckin' good idea why –

MIKE (CONT'D)
(continuing)
Now we're gonna go back to the car –

JUSTIN	MIKE
He's not gonna make it back to the car –	And we're gonna call him an ambulance –

JUSTIN
(frustration boiling over)
He's not gonna fuckin' make it back to the car! Take a look, Mike!

But Mike doesn't want to look at Sprouse again. Nobody does. Justin and Chris lift Sprouse to his feet. With Sprouse's arms slung over their shoulders they begin to walk him along the flatter land of the riverbank –

JUSTIN (CONT'D)
You two go ahead. Get to the car and call the police.

Taking no chances, Mike tucks the GLOCK into his jacket. Reluctantly, he and Barry RUN ahead.

EXT. HARDWOOD FOREST — WE CUT BETWEEN THE TWO PAIRS

Mike and Barry (grimacing with the bad ankle) race through the trees while —

Justin and Chris trudge forward carrying Sprouse whose breathing gets more shallow with each passing moment.

MIKE AND BARRY — MOMENTS LATER

Suddenly GUNFIRE ERUPTS nearby. They HIT THE GROUND, and SCRAMBLE to take cover behind a tree. Mike peers around the tree and sees WILKINS splashing his way across a ford in the river. He's sweating, frantic, eyes like those of a hunted animal. The TWO NIKE DUFFLE BAGS hang from his shoulders.

BARRY
(whispers)
What's goin' on, Mike? Mike —

MIKE
Sshh!

WILKINS

staggers out of the river and labors up to the top of the slope. A strap on one of the duffle bags RIPS. BRICKS OF COCAINE spill out. He quickly stuffs them back in, but knows he won't get very far hauling the heavy bags. He spots a CLUSTER OF LARGE ROCKS nearby and starts that way.

MIKE

watches as Wilkins HIDES the two duffle bags under the large rocks. Sensing a presence, Wilkins turns to him. Mike quickly pulls back, unsure if he's been spotted or not.

WILKINS

finishes covering the duffle bags, then walks towards Mike and Barry. He raises his pistol — **POP! POP! POP! POP! —**

MIKE AND BARRY

cower as BULLETS KICK UP DIRT near their feet. Mike slips the Glock from his jacket and braces himself when —

WILKINS

stops suddenly, 30 yards from Mike and Barry. He crouches and looks down on the river where THREE MEN wearing BLACK SKI MASKS make their way across the same ford in the river he crossed. Two men (#1 and #2) are dressed in parkas and carry SHOTGUNS. The third and smallest (#3), wears a field coat.

He needs to move — *fast* — and DARTS back up the slope when —

BOOSH! BOOSH! SHOTGUN BLASTS tear a hole in Wilkins' back. He collapses to his knees. His limp body tumbles down the slope and into the river where the current carries it away before the MASKED MEN can reach it.

MIKE AND BARRY

observe the THREE MASKED MEN making their way across the ford in the river towards them.

THE THREE MASKED MEN

Masked Man #1 bends down and picks up a BRICK OF COCAINE from the ground. He tucks it into his jacket.

MASKED MAN #1
Spread out. The bags are here somewhere.

The men disperse, moving up the slope towards Mike and Barry.

JUSTIN AND CHRIS

have heard the shotgun blasts ahead and have stopped walking. Sprouse is fading, his breaths short and shallow.

CHRIS
(calls ahead)
MIKE!? MIKE, WHAT'S GOING ON UP THERE!?

MASKED MAN #1

hears CHRIS'S VOICE and gestures to MASKED MAN #2 that he's going to check it out.

JUSTIN AND CHRIS

are still waiting for an answer when they see a BODY IN THE RIVER floating towards them. The body gets caught up in a patch of overhanging branches. A look passes between the brothers: *Mike? Barry?*

CHRIS

Over here.

Chris and Justin set Sprouse down by a tree. Justin stays with Sprouse while Chris crosses to the riverbank.

MASKED MAN #1

walks along upper section of the forest slope when he sees Justin and Sprouse below. He RAISES THE SHOTGUN, then observes CHRIS standing at the river's edge, and reconsiders.

He leans his shotgun against a tree now, removes a FOLDING KNIFE from a boot holster and starts down towards them.

MIKE AND BARRY

Mike peers around the tree. Masked Man #2 closes in. They'll be spotted for sure. It's move or die.

MIKE

(whispers to Barry)

Follow me. We're goin' over there.

He signals the other side of the river. Masked Man #2 gets closer, his FOOTFALLS LOUDER and LOUDER and —

Mike and Barry DART OUT from behind the tree! Mike FIRING the Glock wildly in the direction of Masked Man #2 who is taken by surprise and scurries for cover.

MIKE (CONT'D)

(shouting to Chris and Justin downriver)

RUN, J! CHRIS! RUN!

BARRY

(also shouting)

GET OUTTA HERE! GET OUTTA HERE!

CHRIS

can't hear their SHOUTING VOICES over the current. He stretches out over the river and reaches for the dead body.

MASKED MAN #1

closes in on Justin, knife in hand. Ten feet away and —

CHRIS

frees the body from the branches and flips it over revealing WILKINS. He exhales his fear, TURNS BACK to Justin as —

MASKED MAN #1

is a foot away from Justin. He raises his knife when —

THWOOMP! — CHRIS TACKLES HIM TO THE GROUND, knocking the knife from his grip. The two men struggle on the ground, pummeling one another for a few moments when —

POP! POP! POP! — GUNSHOTS ring out! —

It's MASKED MAN #3. Fifty yards out and RUNNING towards them, FIRING A PISTOL —

Chris and Justin takes off up the slope, leaving Sprouse behind.

Masked man #1 clambers to his feet. He and Masked Man #3 chase after Chris and Justin. They reach the ridge and look around. Darkness. Then, TWO DARK FIGURES in the distance. Man #3 FIRES — **POP! POP! POP! POP!** — only to watch as TWO MULE DEER lope off.

MASKED MAN #1
Motherfucker...

MIKE AND BARRY

are running through the forest. They hear the FOOTFALLS of Man #2 tracking them. Barry's limping badly. Mike knows he won't make it much longer.

MIKE
Over here.

He drags Barry toward a FALLEN OLD-GROWTH OAK, as large as a train. They burrow themselves under its scraggy roots.

MIKE'S POV: two legs come into view. MASKED MAN #2 stands directly before them. Close enough to touch.

MASKED MAN #2

scans the forest, listening for FOOTFALLS. Hears none and knows they're hiding close. He FIRES his shotgun *once, twice*, hoping they'll startle and give themselves away.

MIKE AND BARRY

remain impossibly still. A long, tense beat. Finally, Masked Man #2 moves along...

MASKED MAN #1 AND MASKED MAN #3

return to Sprouse who is slumped against a tree, near death. Masked Man #1 finds his knife on the ground.

MASKED MAN #1
(to #3, re: Sprouse)
Take care of it.

Masked Man #3 crouches down beside Sprouse and removes his ski mask. WE RECOGNIZE HIM AS TERRY EDNEY, the man from the pay phone in the opening scene. He stares at Sprouse a long sad moment, then sticks his pistol into Sprouse's gut — **POP!** **POP!** Sprouse's head slumps to his shoulder and he dies.

EXT. HARDWOOD FOREST — NIGHT — A SERIES OF QUICK SHOTS

-- Rain continues to fall as TERRY AND THE TWO MASKED MEN search the forest for the duffle bags. Growing more and more desperate to find them.

-- Through the snake-like roots of the fallen tree, we see the haunting, pale faces of MIKE and BARRY peering out at us.

-- LARGE BOULDERS form a grotto of sorts. CHRIS AND JUSTIN are hidden among them, huddled close for warmth, shivering violently under Justin's drenched flannel jacket. VOICES are heard around them. MEN arguing.

EXT. COTTAGE — DRIVEWAY — NEAR DAWN

The cottage where Sprouse was chopping wood. Terry and the two masked men approach Terry's Cadillac.

INT. CADILLAC DEVILLE

The men climb in and remove their masks. Men #1 and #2 we'll come to know as SHAWN SAYERS, 30s, white, mustached, stout, and REGGIE NANCE, 30s, black, wiry.

Terry searches for the car keys. In the backseat, Sayers DABS at the large CUT above his eyes he earned while fighting Chris. Suddenly and unexpectedly, Sayers begins to viciously PUMMEL the back of Terry's head with his fists —

SAYERS

Motherfucker — I should fuckin' kill you!

Terry covers himself. Sayers relents finally.

TERRY

Jesus Christ! How the fuck was I s'pose to know they'd kill those people?!

SAYERS

Cause that was your job! Your *only* fuckin' job, you stupid fuck!

Slowly the dust settles. Terry starts the car and reverses out of the drive as we —

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DELAWARE RIVER — DAWN

A clear, quiet morning. Deer drink from the rocky shoals.

EXT. ROCK GROTTO — DAWN

Justin has passed-out, but Chris remains vigilant for both of them. His burned-out eyes search the forest before him, darting to every leaf crackle, every icicle trickle.

FOOTFALLS are heard CRUNCHING the frozen ground. Chris leans forward with a SMALL HUNTING KNIFE in hand, ready to defend. A face peers around the rocks at him. An ALASKAN HUSKY.

MAN'S VOICE (O.C.)

Jake. Jake, come here, boy.

The dog BARKS excitedly. Its owner, an ELDERLY MAN, nears and observes Chris holding the knife. He retreats, arms raised.

ELDERLY MAN

Whoa, fella, now what's that for?

CHRIS
 (weakly, so so cold)
 C-c-call...call the police...

Unable to stop himself, Chris lurches forward and falls into the ground.

EXT. FALLEN OLD-GROWTH TREE

LOCAL DEPUTIES and PARAMEDICS help Mike and Barry out from under the tree. So cold and stiff they can barely walk.

RIVER'S EDGE

WILKINS' DEAD BODY swirls in an eddy. A CORONER'S TEAM wades into the water to retrieve it.

ON JUSTIN

wrapped in blankets, carried on a stretcher by PARAMEDICS. He glances over as TWO MEN cart SPROUSE'S BODY past and notices his hand dangling out from under the sheet.

He turns his head and stares wearily up at the treetops and the cloudless sky.

ON MIKE

walking along the river beside paramedics. Something up ahead catches his attention. LOCAL DEPUTIES mill about the forest. Mike's not concerned with them. He's focused on a PATCH OF LARGE ROCKS. The same patch where he observed Wilkins bury the duffle bags.

Off Mike staring, thinking...

FADE OUT.

PART II: WEDDING VOWS

MUSIC UP: *Kanye West 'Gorgeous'.*

THREE WEEKS EARLIER

TIGHT ON COCAINE — QUICK DETAIL SHOTS

As it's dumped into a mixing bowl. Cut with Inositol. Weighed on an electronic scale. Funneled into baggies. Tied up.

WIDER REVEALS — THE BASEMENT OF A WEST PHILADELPHIA ROW HOME

TROY CARTER and THREE 'RUNNERS', 20s, sit at a table bagging cocaine. The Kanye song BLARES from a nearby stereo system. Troy seals the last baggy and appraises the night's work. All the dope has been packaged for sale.

INT. DEN — LATER THAT NIGHT

A JOINT is passed around as Troy and RUNNERS drink beer and watch an NBA game on the 60-inch flat screen. A KNOCK at the door. Carter moves that way and looks through the peephole. SAYERS AND NANCE stand outside dressed in overcoats.

The mirth runs away from Carter's face. He's not excited to see these two. A beat. More KNOCKING. Finally —

CARTER
(to Runners)
Turn that shit down, yo.

RUNNER 1 kills the volume down on the TV. Carter reluctantly opens the front door.

CARTER (CONT'D)
(playing it cool)
Heyyy, what's happenin', fellas?

He gives Nance a familiar 'homeboy' handshakes. Sayers isn't having any of it.

SAYERS
(re: RUNNERS)
Get 'em out.

CARTER
(turns back to Runners)
Go take a walk, yo.
(no one moves, then)
I said get the fuck out!

RUNNERS stand and exit the home through the kitchen. Sayers and Nance enter now. Nance sits on the couch, Carter in the armchair. Sayers ambles, making Carter nervous.

CARTER (CONT'D)
What brings you boys over this way?

NANCE

Friend of ours on the street. He's been hearing your name a lot lately, Troy. Sounds like business is good.

CARTER

Yeah, yeah bizness alright.

NANCE

More than alright. This friend says you're a big noise on the West side now.

CARTER

Naw, man, jus' keepin' my head above water same as erry'one else, yunno.

A tense beat.

SAYERS

Do you think I'm a faggot, Troy?

CARTER

T'fuck you talkin' 'bout?

SAYERS

Am I a faggot?

CARTER

Naw, man, you aint no faggot —

SAYERS

Then why are you trying to put your dick in my ass?

A beat. Sayers sits on the couch. Lights a cigarette and releases a smooth trail of smoke.

CARTER

Shawn, man, whatever you been hearin', you got it all wrong. Aint no one tryin' to play you out. We in this together.

SAYERS

Together?

CARTER

Yeah.

SAYERS

You promise?

CARTER

Yeah man. Fuck...

A beat. Sayers seems to be making a decision. A smile flashes to life on his face, bright as a struck match. It's scary.

SAYERS

Okay. Alright, alright. As long as you say so, Troy.

CARTER

(tension ebbing away)

Shit, yo! You 'bout ta gimme a fuckin' heart attack or summin...

Carter takes a private stash of cocaine from his pocket and dumps a small pile onto the table. He cuts it, takes a bump. Passes the straw to Sayers who hits it as well then offers the straw back to Carter. When Carter reaches for it —

Sayers pulls it away and SMASHES HIS HEAD down against the table — **KLINK!** — COBWEBBING the glass!

He SLAMS Carter to the floor and PINS his head down under his knee. Sayers' eyes are filled with wild light. He looks like a fucking killer. Carter reddens, writhes. Sayers waits until Carter relents, and then leans close to his ear —

SAYERS

Are you forgetting what we've done for you? Huh? You were a worthless nigger pitching brick dust for Twisty Roberts. Waiting for your nuts to drop while the netheads paid five bucks to dick your mother two-at-a-time... We saw your potential and gave you an opportunity. Became your adoptive fathers and all we ask for in return —

CARTER

Shawn man — !

Sayers presses down harder, his teeth clenched.

SAYERS

I will bash your head so fuckin' hard...

(Carter quiets, stills)

How long do you really think a dumb motherfucker like you lasts out there without us?

Finally, Sayers climbs off.

NANCE

We'll be seeing ya around, Troy.

Sayers and Nance exit. A shaken Carter sits up. His son, the YOUNG BOY from the opening scene, stares at him from the stairwell.

INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH – NIGHT

A funeral mass in progress. Justin is among the mourners. As the PRIEST reads the Gospel, he stares at the YOUNG MAN inside the open casket. Maybe 30, thin with the sunken cheeks of an addict.

INT. ESTATE HOME ON THE MAIN LINE – NIGHT

The funeral reception. Well-to-do guests mingle quietly. Justin makes his way through the crowd feeling out of place among the highbrows. He nears an easel on which a COLLAGE has been set. PHOTOGRAPHS of the deceased young man over the years. Playing lacrosse, swimming, skiing, standing at the edge of the Grand Canyon. Young, healthy, vibrantly alive.

Justin notices the man's well-heeled PARENTS nearby and approaches.

JUSTIN

Hi Mr. and Mrs. Connor. Justin Borzell.

MOTHER

Hi.

JUSTIN

I'm so sorry for your loss. Billy was one'a the kindest people I ever met.

Mother manages a smile. Father remembers Justin and turns away. The moment turns uncomfortable.

MOTHER

Thank you for being here.

Justin continues to the sun room. Inside is a GROUP OF ADDICTS. Twelve in total, men and women in their twenties. These are Justin's friends from his using days. Justin approaches a man with dreadlocks. GAVIN, 30, is the group leader, a lifetime addict.

JUSTIN

Hey Gav.

GAVIN

Hey, brother. So great ta see ya, man.

JUSTIN
Thanks for letting me know.

GAVIN
Of course.

Justin warmly greets the others. Lastly, he hugs SHERRY, 27, a pretty, waifish junkie. She holds him in her arms a long moment. Finally the embrace is broken. She looks at him the way old lovers do.

SHERRY
You look so handsome, J.

JUSTIN
You changed your hair.

SHERRY
Do you like it?

JUSTIN
It's pretty.

SHERRY
Don't lie. You fell in love with me when I was a blonde...

JUSTIN
It's pretty.

SHERRY
So how's your new life?

JUSTIN
Different. Good. I got a job.

SHERRY
Yeah? Doin' what?

JUSTIN
Flippin' omelets.

SHERRY
You were always good at that.
(Justin smiles)
It's true. You used to get up early every Sunday an' make one for me. Remember?
Sherry's Special.

She touches his face lovingly.

SHERRY (CONT'D)
I miss you, J.

Gavin nears.

GAVIN
We're gettin' outta here.

SHERRY
Already?

GAVIN
The old man's givin' me looks. I don't
wanna be around this shit no more. We'll
celebrate our way. The way Billy woulda
wanted. You comin' J?

JUSTIN
No, I can't. I gotta be someplace.

Gavin goes. Sherry kisses Justin's cheek then leaves with the
others. Justin watches them go.

EXT. LIVINGSTON STREET — FISHTOWN — EARLY MORNING (PREDAWN)

Pallid row homes as far as the eye can see.

INT. BORZELL ROW HOME — BEDROOM — MORNING

Shelves crowded with old football trophies. Walls adorned
with newspaper clippings of Chris' football heyday. One
article shows a photo of Chris and Mike, arms around each
other, racing off the field, victorious.

Chris is asleep on the too-small twin bed. The door opens and
his father, VINCE BORZELL, 65, peers in. He's a stout, bald
man with a roughened face and calloused hands earned from
thirty years of work as a steamfitter.

VINCE
Chris? Christopher, you awake?

CHRIS
...whudda you want?

VINCE
Have you heard from Justin? He was
s'posed to stop over last night. I didn't
hear nothin' from him.

CHRIS
...What time is it?

VINCE

It's early. Around six. Did he leave a message on your phone?

Chris climbs out of bed, groggy and hungover, and ferries Vince out of the room. He locks the door, then climbs back into bed.

INT. JUSTIN'S APARTMENT — NORTHEAST — EARLY MORNING

A simple space. Queen bed, IKEA dresser, and a record player with crates of vinyls beside it. Justin sits by the window, smoking. Leah stirs in the bed, looks over at him.

LEAH

Babe, what're you doin' up so early?

JUSTIN

Watching my dad drive around the lot.

Leah climbs out of bed and drapes an afghan over her shoulders. She wraps her arms around Justin and watches out the window as a FORD TRUCK prowls the lot below.

LEAH

Why's your dad here?

JUSTIN

He used to do this all the time when I was using. Wake up in the middle of the night, scared that I'd died. He wouldn't be able to fall back asleep, so he'd ride around for hours lookin' for me... I remember this one night. A group of us use'ta crash behind the YMCA on Christian Street. I saw his car drive past the alley and I pretended to be asleep. Then I felt him come up behind me and just kinna stand there. After awhile I realized I was so wrapped up inside the sleepin' bag that he couldn't tell if I was breathin' or not... And I felt his hand reach under an' feel over my heart. To see that it was beating. That I was alive. And then he left.

The truck rolls up beside Justin's Honda, pauses a moment, then exits the parking lot. Leah squeezes Justin tightly.

LEAH

That was your old life.

INT. BORZELL HOME — BEDROOM — LATER THAT MORNING

The clock reads 9:00 AM and Chris is already drinking a bottle of Rolling Rock beer as he puts on a gaudy tuxedo. He slips the black shoes from the Men's Warehouse suit bag and tries them on. *Way too small.*

CHRIS
(sotto)
Jesus fuckin' Christ.

He sighs and grabs his Eagles jacket out of the closet.

EXT. LIVINGSTON STREET — MORNING

Chris exits the home and walks down the sidewalk. A few of his NEIGHBORS are out walking and he waves to them. Two blocks later he arrives at a row home and KNOCKS on the door. As he waits, he glances down at the welcome mat: **The Borzell's est. 2005. Bless This Family.**

The door opens. Chris' wife, KELLY, 30, stands in a bath robe, curlers in her red hair. We recognize her from the video of the football game. The girl Chris had his arm around during the celebration. But the glow of youth has faded and the once-vibrant redhead now looks wearied by life.

CHRIS
Mornin'.

KELLY
Mornin'.

CHRIS
They uhh, got my shoe size wrong. I need ta see what I got in the closet.

KELLY
Let me see the suit.

Chris unzips his jacket.

KELLY (CONT'D)
Looks nice on you.

CHRIS
I feel like a casino dealer.

KELLY
(smiles)
It looks nice. Come in.

INT. HALLWAY/KITCHEN

Chris enters. A yellow labrador races up to him, barking excitedly. He kneels and pets the dog.

CHRIS

Hey, Murph. How ya doin', buddy?

KELLY

I talked to the bank manager yesterday.

CHRIS

Didn't I tell you I was handlin' all that.

KELLY

Yeah, well, he called sayin' we missed our mortgage payment didn't come in for the second month in a row. I asked him about a mortgage extension -

CHRIS

(a guilty beat, then)

I told you I was handling all that.

Angry at Kelly for going behind his back, Chris brushes past her and heads up the stairs.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Chris searches the closet for a pair of dress shoes when he notices a box tucked away in the corner. He slides it close. Inside are FRAMED PHOTOS of Chris and Kelly over the years. Weddings, vacations at the Jersey shore, ball games, et al.

Turning back to the bedroom, he notices the top of the dresser is strangely empty.

INT. KITCHEN

Kelly warms her hands around a mug. She seems nervous, her thoughts elsewhere. FOOTSTEPS are heard coming down the stairs. She pretends to read the newspaper. Chris arrives.

KELLY

Did you find a pair'a shoes?

Chris lifts a pair of Oxfords. A beat. He wants to ask her about the pictures and why they were stuffed into some box like trash. But he loses his nerve.

CHRIS

I'll see you at Barry's house then?

Kelly nods. Chris moves into the hallway and exits. Kelly shakes slightly at the sound of the door closing.

INT. BARRY'S ROW HOME — LATE MORNING — VARIOUS ANGLES

WE MOVE INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE HOME as PREPARATIONS for BARRY & SUSAN'S WEDDING are underway.

BACKYARD

A bright and warm fall day. The twins, GRACE and ALLIE, practice tossing flower pedals in their gowns. MICHAEL runs around like a headless chicken, kicking the pedals up.

ON THE PORCH, the GROOMSMEN are drinking beers. MIKE holds court, entertaining BARRY and the others with stories from his glory days.

MIKE

— Coach calls us over an he's got this whole fuckin' scheme drawn up, right? X and O's all over the board like a buncha fuckin' chicken scratch. As I'm walkin' back to the huddle, I pull Jimmy Quinn over an' say, *Whatever the fuck he said, forget about it. Beat your man down the sideline an' I'll put the ball there.* Coupl'a seconds later we're celebrating on the sideline an' fuckin' McGarvey's yellin' to everyone, *Way to follow the gameplan, boys! Attaway!*

The men bust out LAUGHING.

IN THE KITCHEN

Barry's MOTHER and TWO AUNTS chat as they prep food for the reception. Potatoes boil, chicken stews, sausage browns.

A BUTCHER arrives at the side door with TEEN BOYS in tow. He opens the door and the teens carry in trays of beef and pork which they set on the counter.

BUTCHER

Hey, Kath, that's the beef there. Sausage and peppers. And the roast pork's here.

MOTHER

Ok. Thanks, Andy.

BUTCHER

Listen, tell Bar I said congratulations,
alright?

MASTER BEDROOM

The BRIDESMAIDS, including KELLY, help Susan slip on her lace gown. (Ad-lib compliments, all the Bridesmaids making a fuss over how beautiful Susan looks.)

KIRSTEN sits off in the corner, bored and disinterested. She has blonde streaks in her hair.

LIVING ROOM

Barry's GRANDMOTHER, 80, affixes a boutonniere to Justin's jacket. Chris sits nearby, drinking a beer as he waits his turn. He seems agitated, that box of pictures still swirling around his mind like a bee that cannot be shooed away.

GRANDMOTHER

Shoot, I picked up the wrong ones. I'll
be right back.

Grandmother shuffles off. A beat.

CHRIS

What happened to you last night? Dad said
you were s'pose to come by.

JUSTIN

(doesn't want to tell him
the truth)
I uh, I got held up at work.

CHRIS

Do me a favor and pick up the phone next
time, huh. He's in my room six this
morning' askin' if I heard from ya.
Prolly been up all night.

Justin doesn't respond. His silence only angers Chris more.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I'm tired of your shit blowin' into my
life.

JUSTIN

I called him three times. He doesn't know how to check the answering machine —

CHRIS

He's sixty fuckin' years old. He barely knows how to change the TV channels. If he doesn't answer, keep callin'...

Grandmother returns before things can go further. She lines the flower up on Justin's lapel, inserts the pin —

GRANDMOTHER

There we go. That looks better.

INT. UPSTAIRS BEDROOM

Kirsten sits at her desk, texting on her iPhone. Barry knocks on the door frame. Kirsten looks up.

BARRY

All set?

KIRSTEN

I guess. I mean, I just have to stand there, right?

BARRY

Yeah, yeah the priest will walk us through everything. Don't worry about that.

A moment. Barry slips a jewelry box out of his pocket. Offers it to Kirsten. She stares at it like it's toxic.

KIRSTEN

What is it?

BARRY

(proudly)

Open it and find out.

She opens it revealing an amethyst pendant necklace. Nothing fancy. \$75 dollars at Macys.

BARRY (CONT'D)

The woman at the store said they're pretty popular. Lotta girls wearing them to homecoming, prom. Things like that.

KIRSTEN
 (I will never ever fucking
 ever wear this)
 ...Thanks.

A beat.

BARRY
 I just want you to know that I'm here for
 you. Your mother and I —

KIRSTEN
 You're not like my dad now. Just because
 you're marrying my mom.

BARRY
 I know that. I'm not trying to replace
 your dad, I'm just... I want you to know
 you can count on me if you ever need
 anything.

KIRSTEN
 ...Well if something comes up, I'll let
 you know.

Kristen sets the necklace aside and goes back to texting.
 Barry stands there a moment, then goes.

DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY — WE'RE MOVING WITH A BRIDESMAID

APRIL, 30, an attractive, plucky blonde, as she walks toward
 the back door. She slides it open and calls out to the
 GROOMSMEN gathered on the patio —

APRIL
 Sorry, boys, time to clear out! The bride
 wants to get some pictures in the yard!

Sarcastic GROANS and MOANS.

APRIL (CONT'D)
 I know I know. Take your complaints to
 the suggestion box in the front yard.

Mike tries to get inside. April impedes his path.

APRIL (CONT'D)
 (flirting)
 I was given specific instructions not to
 allow anyone a view of the bride.

MIKE
 And I need a beer.

Mike tries to squeeze past. April doesn't budge. It's a standoff. Mike ends it by scooping April off her feet. She SQUEALS with laughter as he carries her inside —

MIKE (CONT'D)
I'm Mike by the way.

APRIL
April. Susan's friend from Massachusetts.

MIKE
Susan tell you we're sharin' a bed tonight?

APRIL
Is that your best line?

MIKE
Depends. Is it workin'?

APRIL
Depends. Do ya snore?

MIKE
Only when I'm sleepin'.

April smiles. He sets her down and removes a beer from the refrigerator. She watches him head outside, trying to hide her smile.

(O.C.) Bach's 'Air on the G String' begins as —

WE MOVE WITH SUSAN

down the UPSTAIRS HALLWAY, the BRIDESMAIDS trailing behind, fussing over her unwieldy train. She pauses at the top of the stairs. Below, APRIL waves her down: *the coast is clear*. Susan floats down the stairs.

EXT. BARRY'S ROW HOME HOME

As the Groomsmen make their way out of the backyard towards the limousines waiting by the curb, Barry pauses at a window and glimpses Susan descending the stairs.

Sensing she's being watched, Susan turns and SEES Barry in the window. A girlish smile awakens on her face. She raises a finger to her mouth: *It's our secret*.

The MUSIC CONTINUES over —

INT. SAINT ANNE'S CATHOLIC CHURCH — AFTERNOON

An ORCHESTRA plays. VARIOUS CLOSE-UPS OF FACES IN THE CONGREGATION. LEAH. WORKING-CLASS FRIENDS, FAMILY AND MEMBERS OF THE PARISH COMMUNITY. Some dabbing their eyes, others taking photographs.

ON THE ALTAR (DETAIL SHOTS)

BARRY'S PARENTS and SUSAN'S PARENTS light tapered candles from the PASCHAL CANDLE.

Together, they walk to where the new family stands. BARRY, SUSAN, KIRSTEN, ALLIE, GRACE AND MIKE. One-by-one they light their tapered candles from those of the PARENTS.

THE NEW FAMILY approaches the UNITY CANDLE.

THE SIX TAPERED CANDLES move toward one another and become a single light symbolizing separate lives now joined.

THE FAMILY bow their heads before THE PRIEST. He extends his hand over them and whispers a blessing.

CHRIS looks at Kelly across the altar.

KELLY meets his gaze. It's a moment that lasts much longer than a moment. So many years between them. Finally, she turns away.

INT. PHILADELPHIA NARCOTICS FIELD UNIT — NIGHT

WE'RE FOLLOWING AN UNSEEN MAN DOWN A CORRIDOR, passing POLICE OFFICERS and DETECTIVES. A door ahead reads *Narcotics Field Unit*. The man enters, crosses the busy SQUAD ROOM, and arrives at desk where a SECOND MAN is on the phone with his back to us, puffing away on an e-cigarette.

MAN ON PHONE

— Why dontcha stop over later?... I don't care, bring her, too. More the merrier.

Unseen Man TAPS on the desk. The Man on the phone spins his chair around. We recognize him as SAYERS, one of the masked men from the scene in the forest. He's known in the Narc Field Unit as LIEUTENANT SHAWN SAYERS.

SAYERS

(into phone)

Listen I'll call ya back.

He doesn't wait for an answer, hangs up.

REVERSE REVEALS the man we've followed in is NANCE, the third masked man from the forest and Sayers' partner in the Narc Field Unit.

NANCE

Just got off the phone with our favorite orphan.

SAYERS

(lights a cigarette)

Yeah? Crisis of conscience?

NANCE

That or he's gotten too used to the lifestyle we've provided him. Said he wants to make it up to us.

Sayers grins, keen to discuss. *Just not here.* He slips his jacket off the chair and they're off.

INT. TERRY EDNEY'S DUPLEX — KITCHEN — NIGHT

CLOSE ON: TWO KILOS OF HEROIN slid across a kitchen table.

Terry sits at the table eating a can of soup, watching as GAVIN stuffs the drugs into a backpack and zips it up. We recognize Gavin as the dreadlocked man from the funeral reception the previous night.

TERRY

Yunno where you're goin'?

GAVIN

Turnpike. Get off at Lehigh Valley.

TERRY

I wanna check the car before ya leave.

GAVIN

The car's good. It's clean.

TERRY

Did I stutter? Come on, let's go.

EXT. TERRY'S DRIVEWAY — NIGHT

Terry and Gavin exit the home and approach Gavin's Mustang in the driveway. Gavin climbs inside, starts the engine. Terry circles the car checking the headlights, blinkers.

TERRY

Hit the brakes.

Gavin does. Red lights glow. Terry TAPS on the driver's window. Gavin rolls the window down.

TERRY (CONT'D)
 Call em when ya get there.
 (hands Gavin some cash)
 Half now, half when you get back.

Terry lights a cigarette.

GAVIN
 (re: the cigarettes)
 Lemme bum a few for the ride?

TERRY
 Get the fuck outta here you fuckin' mooch.

Gavin drives off. Terry starts back towards the front door. His phone VIBRATES. He glances down at a text: **NEED TO TALK. YARD @ 7PM.**

EXT. SEPTA SWITCHING YARD — NIGHT

Sodium lights illuminate a maze of tracks. Two cars, Terry's Cadillac and an unmarked Crown Victoria, are side-by-side.

Terry leans out the driver's window, talking to Sayers and Nance inside the Crown. He works as a 'fence' for Sayers and Nance, moving product in exchange for a cut of the profit.

NANCE
 — Carter's gettin' a package in the next few weeks. A very large package he plans on bringin' in through the port.

TERRY
 How large we talkin'?

NANCE
 30 kilos. Uncut.

TERRY
 (mulls it a moment,
 impressed)
 Street value you're lookin' seven, maybe eight hundred k.

NANCE
 He wants to bring us in for half cause he knows he's been fuckin' us over on what he promised.

TERRY

So what's the problem?

SAYERS

(leans over Nance)

The problem is: fuck him. He don't make the rules. We tell you where the package will be and you whisper it to a few friends. Can you move it through your guy in Pittsburgh?

TERRY

Sure. And if the price aint right, I got another guy. And one after that. That's the thing about me, boys, I don't got friends, only ambition.

(grins)

SAYERS

The split's the usual. And when it's over we send Mr. Carter a note reminding him how the chain of command works in this city. There but for the grace of us goes your dumb black ass.

ON TERRY, counting the money in his head as he watches the Crown drive off down the tracks.

EXT. CLARION HOTEL — NIGHT

A dated hotel located near the airport.

INT. CLARION HOTEL — BANQUET HALL — NIGHT

A tacky space with floral-patterned banquet chairs and orange drapes. The reception has a decidedly homespun quality to it, as if every cost-saving measure has been exhausted from the fake centerpieces, to the brought-in food we saw being prepared earlier at Barry's house, to the Coleman coolers on the edge of room holding wine, beer, liquor and soda.

The WEDDING GUESTS sit at circular tables, the BRIDAL PARTY on a dais. All eyes are focused on Justin in the center of the room delivering his best man speech. He's not a polished speaker and his nerves are evident.

JUSTIN

— and uhh, when I was young I used to run away from home a lot.

(MORE)

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

Yunno I'd get into it with my dad or my brother and, uhh, there used to be this movie theater down on Lawrence Street where they'd forget to lock the door after the movies ended. And Barry would meet me there. He'd bring me dinner an' a blanket an' we'd sleep in the seats or the aisles... An' I can remember the two a us stayin' up all night long, yunno. Talkin' about girls. What type'a girl we were gonna marry. What her name would be. What color hair she'd have... And uhh, I can tell ya', Sooz, that before Barry ever met you, he dreamed about ya.

Moved, Susan pulls Barry close and kisses him.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

But uh, but for all the happiness that today brings... it's kinda a sad day for me. I lose my best friend. I give him to you, Sooz.

SUSAN

What if I don't want him?

Guests LAUGH. Barry raises her hand, displaying her ring.

BARRY

Too late for that.

More LAUGHS. Justin stays the course.

JUSTIN

(to Sooz)

And I want you to know how lucky you are. Cause God knows I been through some ups and downs in my life. More downs than ups...

(to Barry now)

You stood by me even when you prolly shouldn't have... I love ya like a brother, Bar. I'd do anything for ya. I wish you two all the happiness in the world and more.

He raises his glass. Lots of HERE-HERE'S and CLAPPING and all the glasses are raised now and Mike FINGER-WHISTLES and —

IT'S LATER NOW AND WE'RE ON THE CROWDED DANCE FLOOR —

— MOVING AMONG OUR COUPLES as THE EIGHT-MAN BAND performs a rollicking rendition of 'Come on Eileen'..

WE SEE: BARRY & SUSAN, JUSTIN & LEAH, MIKE & APRIL (they've quickly gotten close), KELLY & THE BRIDESMAIDS.

CHRIS dances with a group of old football TEAMMATES. They hoist one FRIEND onto their shoulders and parade him around.

MIKE

needing a breather, whispers to April, then leaves the dance floor. He moves to the liquor table, pours himself a shot of whiskey. Downs it, then grabs a Budweiser from a cooler when

MAN'S VOICE (O.C.)

Mike Riley.

Mike turns to find a handsomely-dressed GUEST approaching. He doesn't recognize the man at first.

GUEST

(offers his hand)

Tim Hannigan.

MIKE

Jesus Christ — Timmy Hannigan. What's it, like, ten years?

TIM HANNIGAN

At least.

MIKE

(patting Tim's belly)

All slim an' fit now, huh. Where'd the other half a you go?

TIM HANNIGAN

Stopped eating that cafeteria food.

MIKE

No shit. What're you doin' with yourself?

TIM HANNIGAN

Just moved back to the area. Spent the last seven years down in DC with a wealth management firm. Decided it was time to go out on my own. I got an office in Cira Centre over on Arch.

MIKE

Oh yeah? Nice buildin' over there.

TIM HANNIGAN

What about you? What's the great Mike Riley do for an encore?

MIKE

Ah just, yunno. In between a few things right now.

Tim's smart enough to know what that means and not to canvass it further. He WAVES a woman over. She's slender, elegant, sophisticated. A pro among a crowd of single A players.

TIM HANNIGAN

Mike, I want you to meet my wife Angela. This is the guy I'm always telling you about. Best high school quarterback I ever saw. Would've played ten years in the pros if he didn't blow out his knee.

ANGELA

(pleasant, but not friendly)

Very nice to meet you.

MIKE

Yeah, good to meet you.

TIM HANNIGAN

Remember that North game? Christ I can see the newspaper headline now! Kid Clutch does it again! We carried you off the field!

ANGELA

Honey, we should get going. We have to meet James and Olivia.

TIM HANNIGAN

Oh. Right. We have to drop by another party. Really great seeing ya, Mike.

MIKE

Yeah. Nice to see ya'.

Mike watches as Tim and Angela exit the hall and he's still looking that way long after they're gone.

ON STAGE — THE BAND

'Come on Eileen' comes to an end. The LEAD SINGER steps up to the microphone and addresses the guests.

LEAD SINGER

For those of you who don't know, Barry and I started this band together in my parent's garage when we were nineteen.

(MORE)

LEAD SINGER (CONT'D)
He left the band four years ago cause he
wanted a normal job.

BOOS from the crowd!

LEAD SINGER (CONT'D)
Wanted to buy a house.

More BOOS!

LEAD SINGER (CONT'D)
Wanted to become an adult.

The LOUDEST BOOS yet!

BAND LEADER
That's what I told him! Now you might
know him as a quiet, polite, math
teacher. But I know him as something much
much different. Ladies and gentleman,
welcome to the stage, Mr. Barry 'The
Fishtown Hammer' Andrews!

The CROWD CHEERS as Barry is carried onto the stage on the
shoulders of Chris and Mike. Band Leader hands him a guitar,
a blues brother hat and dark glasses. The band walks into a
version of Bruce Springsteen's '*She's The One*'. Barry stands,
very still, head down, until it's his cue.

Then he JOLTS TO LIFE like someone's dropped a snake down his
pants. He hammers away on the guitar to the delight of the
rowdy crowd, then joins the Lead Singer at the mic as they
sing together, ala Bruce and Miami Steve.

CHRIS AND HIS FOOTBALL TEAMMATES

are more drunk and raucous than ever. They BELT OUT the song
and dance with their arms around each others' shoulders.
Chris playfully HIGH-KICKS and stumbles backwards, falling
into a table. Glasses are knocked off and SHATTER.

GUESTS take notice.

JUSTIN watches as Chris clambers to his feet. Teammates help
him into a chair. Justin turns to KELLY. She slips away from
the dance floor and exits the hall.

INT. CLARION HOTEL LOBBY

Justin looks around for Kelly and notices KIRSTEN standing
alone outside. A CAMARO arrives.

JESSE, the punk we saw in the basement earlier, behind the wheel. Kirsten excitedly hops into the car. It speeds off.

Justin continues down a corridor to the indoor pool and notices Kelly sitting on a deck chair.

INT. INDOOR POOL

Justin enters.

JUSTIN

There you are. Been lookin' all over.

She turns to him with a sad smile, eyes swollen with tears.

KELLY

Hi, J.

He sits down on the chair beside her.

JUSTIN

How ya holdin' up?

KELLY

(long beat)

...I filed for divorce yesterday.

If Justin's surprised by this divulgement he doesn't let on.

JUSTIN

...Chris know?

KELLY

(shakes her head)

I tried to tell him this mornin', but I couldn't bring myself to do it... We've been together since we were fourteen years old.

(a sad chuckle)

I don't remember my life without him.

Despite her attempts against it, her stomach quakes and she begins to CRY. Justin pulls her close.

KELLY (CONT'D)

(sobbing, years of pent-up
emotion rushing forth)

I couldn't stop shakin' when I had to sign the papers... I'm just so scared about what's gonna happen to him without me. I'm so scared, but I can't do it anymore. I can't stay with him anymore...

JUSTIN

It's okay. I understand.

Finally, she breaks the embrace and looks at him earnestly, as desperate as a woman drowning.

KELLY

Promise me that you'll help him without me. Will you promise me, J? Please...?

JUSTIN

...Sure, Kel... I promise.

GIGGLING is heard as DRUNKEN COUPLE spill into the room, kissing and groping. DRUNK MAN notices Justin and Kelly.

DRUNK MAN

Shit. My bad.

They LAUGH and head off to find another room.

Kelly takes a moment to pull herself together. She stands now and regards Justin, touching his face gently, *thank you*. Then she's gone and he is alone with her secret.

A FLOOR BURNISHER

whirs across a shiny linoleum floor. PULL BACK TO REVEAL — KURT SPROUSE guiding the machine down a vacant, endless HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL — CUSTODIAN'S OFFICE — NIGHT

The HEAD CUSTODIAN, round, unctuous, watches an episode of *Cheaters*. Sprouse enters and moves to clock out.

HEAD CUSTODIAN

Forgot the third floor shitters.

Sprouse replaces the time card.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL — BOYS BATHROOM — NIGHT

Finished cleaning the sinks, Sprouse wheels the mop bucket over to the stalls. Opens one to find a toilet splattered with shit. He SIGHS, then moves inside and gets to work.

INT. SPROUSE'S CRUMMY APARTMENT — NIGHT

The front door opens and Sprouse backs in with a bag of KFC in one hand and a basket of laundry under the other.

SPROUSE

They forgot the barbecue sauce, hon. I can drive back over if ya want.

Turning back to the den, his girlfriend, LEANNE, 20, a homely girl, eight months pregnant, sits on the couch wearing a Mickey Mouse sweatshirt. To his surprise, Terry is entrenched in the Lazy-Boy.

SPROUSE (CONT'D)

Terry? Jesus Christ, what're you doin' here!?

TERRY

How ya makin' out, kiddo?

Terry stands. The two friends share a hug.

TERRY (CONT'D)

Heard ya got out. Figured I'd buy ya a beer to celebrate.

SPROUSE

(to Leanne)

Terry an' me were cellmates over in Graterford.

LEANNE

Yeah, that's what he was sayin'.

SPROUSE

This is my girlfriend, Leanne.

TERRY

Yeah we met.

(re: her belly)

She told me all about little Eddie in there.

SPROUSE

Four weeks from yesterday. Fuckin' crazy, huh.

A beat. Leanne glares at Sprouse with eyes that want Terry gone.

SPROUSE (CONT'D)

Lemme just wash up real quick an' we'll head out, okay?

INT. BEDROOM — NIGHT

Sprouse changes out of his janitor uniform. Leanne enters and closes the door behind her.

LEANNE
I thought we talked about this.

SPROUSE
Talked about what? What'd we talk about?

LEANNE
About you not goin' back to that life.

SPROUSE
I'm goin' out for a goddamn beer, Leanne.
Whaddaya think, I'm gonna rob the fuckin'
bar?

LEANNE
I don't like that man, Kurt.
(beat)
You made a promise to me.

He looks at her a moment... her protruding belly. He buttons his jeans and brushes past her on his way out.

SPROUSE (O.C.)
Ready?

TERRY (O.C.)
Ready ready, champ.

Leanne hears the door slam shut.

INT. CLARION HOTEL — 5TH FLOOR — NIGHT

WE HEAR DRUNKEN VOICES SINGING. The elevator doors glide open as Justin, Leah, Mike, April and Chris stagger out while Barry and Susan stay on.

CHRIS
(turns back)
Hey where're you two goin'?

BARRY
They gave us a suite.

SUSAN
Where do you think we're going?

Susan playfully dry-humps Barry.

CHRIS
I'm goin' with you two.

Barry pushes Chris out of the elevator. The doors shut. Chris stumbles down the hall, drunk, pinballing between walls. He SEES Mike and Justin entering their rooms.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Whoa whoa whoa what's goin' on?!

MIKE
Callin' it a night.

CHRIS
Fuck that. I'm goin' to the bar.
He starts back toward the elevator bank.

JUSTIN
Go to bed.
Chris stops in his tracks, turns to Justin.

CHRIS
What'd you say?

JUSTIN
Go to bed. Ya had enough to drink.

CHRIS
Fuck you. FUCK YOU - !

Chris starts toward Justin like he's ready to have a go at him. Mike steps in front of him.

MIKE
Okay okay - come on, let's go. We'll go over to Monk's for a beer, huh?

Mike waves April over. She SIGHS, slips off her heels and reluctantly follows. But Chris isn't finished with Justin.

CHRIS
You don't put me to bed! I put you to bed you fuckin' junkie piece a shit!

Leah's seen this behavior before from Chris. She's unnerved.

LEAH
Let's just go inside, J.

CHRIS
How many times did I find you in some fuckin' alley an' put you to bed?!

MIKE
Easy easy, come on –

CHRIS
No fuck him!

JUSTIN
You shoulda left me out there!

CHRIS
(a building rage)
What!? What'd you say!?

Mike struggles to restrain an incensed Chris.

MIKE
(unable to hold him back
much longer)
Jesus Christ! Get in your room, J!

CHRIS
(continuing)
I wanted to leave you out there!

MIKE For fuck's sake, J – get in your room!	CHRIS I wanted you to drown in a puddle out there, but mom wouldn't let me!
--	--

Leah takes the room card from Justin, inserts it in the slot.
CLICK – she opens the door. They're about to enter when –

CHRIS (CONT'D)
It shoulda been you in that car. It
shoulda been you!

That strikes a nerve in Justin deep and central. He pauses.

LEAH
(desperately)
Justin, please. Let's go.

Leah's tugging at Justin's shirt, trying to pull him inside the room. But Justin can't hold it in any longer. He RUNS to the elevator bank and –

DING! The elevator arrives. Before Chris can step on –

CRACK! JUSTIN PUNCHES HIM ACROSS HIS FACE!

The punch doesn't land well and Chris is quickly on the attack. The fight spills into the hallway.

Amid the SCREAMING PLEAS of Mike, April and Leah, they fight messily and desperately. Shirts are torn. Wild punches miss badly. Others strike ears and skulls.

They fight with their hearts.

They fight like only brothers can fight.

Alarmed HOTEL GUESTS emerge from their rooms.

Mike attempts to break the two men apart to no avail.

Finally... Chris lands a PALE-HORSE PUNCH which sends Justin to the floor with a bloody lip.

CHRIS
(breathless)
Stay down...

JUSTIN
Fuck you.

CHRIS
Stay down, goddamn you!

But the pain is too great for Justin. So much old hurt. He has nowhere else to put it anymore.

He CHARGES Chris. Chris SHOVES him away and Justin FALLS BACKWARD through the STAIRWELL DOOR. He TUMBLES DOWN a flight of concrete stairs and HIS HEAD WHIPS BACK against the wall. A dazed beat. His head has split open and he feels the cold of the blood rushing down his neck. It stains his shirt.

Leah arrives now. She GASPS at the sight of Justin, then rushes down the stairs and holds him in her arms.

LEAH
Oh God, J... Oh my God...

She sees Chris at the top of the stairs and pulls Justin tighter, protecting him.

LEAH (CONT'D)
(to Chris)
Get away! Just stay away from him!

Mike and April arrive and see the blood.

MIKE
Jesus Christ...
(to Chris)
What'd you do?

Chris, dazed, doesn't answer.

April rushes off to phone for help.

Chris backs out of the stairwell. Stumbles down the hall amid the frightened stares of the Guests peering out of their rooms. He reaches the elevators and presses 'down'. For a long moment, he's alone with what he's done.

DING! The elevator arrives. Chris steps on. The doors close.

INT. BRASS EAGLE — NEIGHBORHOOD TAVERN — LATER

A SMOKY CAVE. Sprouse and Terry sit in a booth. They've sunk a few whiskeys to smooth the edges and the mood is light —

SPROUSE

— fuckin' McGarrity. 'Member his wife mailed him those pics? Butt-nude, fuckin' his own brother just to spite him for gettin' tossed back in.

TERRY

Boy she had a bush, didn't she?
(Sprouse nods, LAUGHING)
Holy Shit. Like a monkey died in her snatch.

The laughs fade. Sprouse considers Terry a long moment.

SPROUSE

What're you doin' here, Terry?

TERRY

What're you talkin' about? Ran into Jimmy Keevers last week. Told me ya got out.

Sprouse knows better and stares at him. Finally, conceding...

TERRY (CONT'D)

You lookin' for work?

SPROUSE

Not your kind.

TERRY

Even a sure thing?

SPROUSE

(scoffs)
Last sure thing landed me twenty months in the can. Forgive me if I got no interest in that arrangement again.

TERRY

I wouldn't be here if there were any questions, kiddo.

(beat to let that sink in)

You wanna at least hear it?

SPROUSE

...I got a choice?

TERRY

Y'always got a choice. Just my job to make one look better than the other.

Sensing Sprouse is considering the bait, Terry offers him a cigarette and a light.

TERRY (CONT'D)

(leans in, low)

I partner ya with a friend. Simple as the two a you walkin' into a house an walkin' out with a package. Anyone inside gives you bullshit, you knock 'em around. Nothin' serious an' no report ever gets filed. For your services you walk away with ten grand... You could use it, kiddo. I saw that girl a yours. Few weeks an' you got three mouths to feed on a wage that aint fit for two. Ten grand paints a very different fuckin' picture.

Off Sprouse considering Terry's proposal...

INT. BORZELL ROW HOME — STAIRWELL — NIGHT

Dark. Quiet. The labrador sleeps under the kitchen table.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! loud knocking at the door.

The dog leaps up and starts BARKING.

Kelly appears at the top of the stairwell in her nightgown. The noise has awakened her. She sees Chris standing just outside the door below. She descends and guardedly opens the door a sliver.

KELLY

What're you doing here, Chris?

He pushes the door back aggressively and moves into the home.

KELLY (CONT'D)

Where are you going? I don't want you here like this.

WE TRACK him as he moves UP THE STAIRS. Kelly follows —

KELLY (CONT'D)
Are you listening to me?

Ignoring Kelly, Chris continues into —

THE MASTER BEDROOM

And into the CLOSET where he drags the box of photographs out of the corner.

CHRIS
What the hell's that?

KELLY
...a box.

He points his finger in her face threateningly.

CHRIS
Don't get smart with me!

She backs off, knowing his temper. And perhaps his violence.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
I wanna know why those pictures aren't on the dresser like they used to be?

KELLY
I don't like it when you get this way.

CHRIS
Oh you don't like it when I get this way?

KELLY
You need to leave —

CHRIS	KELLY
I'll leave when you answer my question. Why aren't those pictures —	If you don't leave I'm calling the cops, Chris.

CHRIS
(LOUD to drown her out)
— ON THE GODDAMN FUCKIN' DRESSER!? WHY!?

Kelly doesn't answer. Chris EXPLODES! He begins tossing everything in the closet to the ground. The shoes off the shelves, shirts off the rods. Kelly just stands there watching impassively.

Finally Chris lifts the box of pictures and carries it into the bedroom and begins setting the frames on top of the dresser. Working from memory so that each finds its proper place.

Drained, defeated, Kelly sits on the edge of the bed.

KELLY
 (quietly, almost to
 herself)
 I don't love you anymore.
 (louder now, clearer)
 I don't love you anymore.

The words hang in the air. Heavy. Immovable.

Chris drops the box on the ground. Stands there a moment, then stumbles out of the bedroom.

Kelly listens to his HEAVY FOOTFALLS moving slowly down the stairs and then the sound of the door slamming shut.

She doesn't shake this time.

She doesn't even hear it.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM — UPENN HOSPITAL — NIGHT

A TV hangs in the corner of the room. An episode of *Everybody Loves Raymond* plays. High jinks at a family Christmas.

Leah lies beside Justin on the bed. His head is bandaged. Narcotized and febrile, he stares into the sterile hallway blankly watching the second-shift NURSES mill about.

LEAH
 Why did your brother say it should have
 been you in that car?

JUSTIN
 (long beat)
 I called my mother that night. I needed
 money to get high. She was drivin' out to
 pick me up when a car hit her. Some drunk
 kid. Some teenager comin' home from a
 party. They airlifted her to the hospital
 but she was already gone.

They are quiet for a long moment. The LAUGH TRACK swells on the television. The reconciled sitcom family sits down for a holiday feast together.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)
I can't stay here anymore.

FADE OUT.

PART III: THE PASSING

WE'RE FLYING DOWN THE STREETS OF LAS VEGAS. A kaleidoscope of neon lights race past us in a blur. 100 mph...110...120 and then — **THOOMP!** We crash into an oncoming car and skid out into a throng of tourists.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL — a motorcycle arcade game inside a DAVE & BUSTER'S. CLAIRE, 9, a pretty tomboy, turns back to MIKE.

CLAIRE
Can I try again, daddy?

MIKE
(instructs)
You gotta swing your body like this when
you go 'round the turns. Otherwise you're
you're gonna —

CLAIRE
I know I know. Can I go again now?

Mike can't resist her smile. He swipes a 'points card' and the racing game begins away — *Welcome Rider!*

INT. DAVE AND BUSTER'S RESTAURANT — AFTERNOON

Mike and Claire sit in a booth. French fries and hamburgers. Mike's staring a piece of construction paper Claire has decorated with stickers and stars. Pasted in the center is an article from the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. There's an old photo of Mike, Justin, Chris and Barry and the headline reads:
Local Friends Survive Deadly Encounter in Woods.

MIKE
You made this for class?

CLAIRE
Mmm hmm. We had to pick an Everyday Hero
and write about them.

MIKE
What's that mean, Everyday Hero?

CLAIRE

The teacher said it couldn't be like an actor, or a singer or, like someone wanted to do One Direction and the teacher said she couldn't.

MIKE

One Direction?

CLAIRE

They're like the most famous band in the world. Duh.

MIKE

(smiles, then)

So you picked me?

CLAIRE

Mmm hmm.

MIKE

What'd your mother say about that?

CLAIRE

She said it was a good choice.

MIKE

Now you're lyin', kiddo.

Claire betrays herself with a smile.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Your mother would never say I was a hero.
A hobo, maybe. Not a hero.

Mike peruses the article a moment. Phrases stand out: ***Pike County detectives haven't named any suspects...both of the men found shot had extensive criminal records...***

Off Mike, thinking...

INT. FRANKLIN MILLS MALL — AFTERNOON

Easy listening music plays as families stroll the plaza. Justin stands outside a SALON, watching Leah inside color a customer's hair. She glances over at Justin, smiles.

INT. MALL FOOD COURT — LATER

Justin and Leah share a plate of bad Chinese. She's harboring a secret, battling the urge to spill. Justin notices.

JUSTIN
What is it?

LEAH
Nothin'.
(off Justin's look, a
smile breaks)
I got a job.

JUSTIN
Yeah? Babe, that's great.

LEAH
It's just a colorist position, but my
cousin said the salon's nice and it's not
too far from her house out there.

He leans over and kisses her. A moment.

LEAH (CONT'D)
Did you tell your family we're leavin'?

JUSTIN
Not yet. I'm gonna tell them, it's just,
yunno, with everything that's happened...
(shakes his head)

LEAH
We're leavin' in three weeks, J. You
can't just stop at a pay phone on our way
outta town and say, *Oh by the way, I'm
moving 3,000 miles away.*

JUSTIN
I can't? Shit, there goes that plan.

Leah doesn't laugh. Justin sighs.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)
I'll tell 'em this weekend. I promise.

Off the doubt on Leah's face...

INT. FATHER JUDGE HIGH SCHOOL — CLASSROOM — AFTERNOON

Barry sits at his desk, staring outside at a group of bundled up TEENAGE BOYS playing touch football in the courtyard. He looks frazzled and dark circles plague his eyes. FRAN, 40, a friend and fellow teacher, sits across from him.

BARRY

I haven't been able to sleep. Every time I close my eyes, I feel like someone's in the room standin' over me.

FRAN

You try takin' anything?

BARRY

Sooz gave me an Ambien the other night. Did somethin' funky to my stomach. Spent the whole night bent over the toilet.

FRAN

Jesus, Bar. That's a helluva thing you guys went through up in those woods.

BARRY

(a dark chuckle)

I've started doin' sit-ups.

FRAN

Sit-ups?

BARRY

Hundreds of 'em. All hours of the night. Just tryin' to tire myself out so I can shut my eyes.

FRAN

Listen, if you ever need to talk to someone. Just to, yunno, get it out. My sister's a therapist over in Chestnut Hill. I'll make a call, no problem.

Barry nods absently, a faraway look in his eyes as he watches the boys sprint around the yard. The PA BOX crackles —

PA ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Mr. Andrews, there's a phone call for you in the Main Office.

INT. MAIN OFFICE — MOMENTS LATER

Barry accepts the phone from a SECRETARY —

SECRETARY

It's Susan.

BARRY

(into phone)

Hey, what's up?

INT. BARRY'S ROW HOME — KITCHEN

A flustered Susan gathers her jacket, purse, and car keys as she talks on the portable phone —

SUSAN

Can you pick the kids up at school?

INTERCUT BARRY & SUSAN

BARRY

I have a department meeting. Why?

SUSAN

Kirsten got into an argument with another girl. The principal had to separate them.

BARRY

An argument over what?

SUSAN

I don't know. I'm on my way over there now.

BARRY

Jesus Christ. I guess I can try to get out of it.

SUSAN

I was on her Facebook page the other day.

BARRY

Sooz, what'd I tell you about gettin' involved in that stuff?

SUSAN

Well what am I supposed to do? I wanna know what's goin' on with my daughter an' she won't talk to me... Yunno that guy she's been seein', that Jesse?

BARRY

Yeah.

SUSAN

Apparently he's someone else's boyfriend. And all these girls are writin' stuff, callin' her a whore and a slut. You should see some'a the things. It's awful. I hafta get her outta that school.

The school bell RINGS.

BARRY

I gotta go. I'll see ya back at the house.

SUSAN

Love you.

BARRY

(the slightest hesitation,
then)

...I love you, too.

Barry hands the phone back to the Secretary.

Susan slides on her jacket and leaves the home.

INT. TERRY'S DUPLEX — LIVING ROOM — AFTERNOON

Terry sits on the couch watching an episode of *Judge Judy*. A KNOCK at the door. He stands, looks out the peephole and sees TWO DETECTIVES on his front step. He hesitates, wondering whether or not to answer. Finally he opens the door.

TERRY

Can I help you?

DETECTIVE CHURCH

Terry Edney?

(Terry nods)

I'm Detective Church, this is Detective Tomkins. We're with the Pike County Police Department. Mind if we come in?

(Terry hesitates)

It won't take long.

Terry opens the door. The Detectives step inside and find seats in the living room. Terry plops down on the couch.

TERRY

Pike County? What're you doin' all the way down here?

DETECTIVE CHURCH

We wanted to ask you a few questions about Kurt Sprouse.

TERRY

Aw Christ, what'd the kid do now?

DETECTIVE TOMKINS

Kurt's dead. His body was found in a stretch of forest along the Upper Delaware River last weekend.

Terry feigns surprise, then sadness. He reaches for his cigarettes, lights one.

TERRY

Jesus Christ. Good kid, good heart, just could never keep his nose clean, yunno. When you say his body was found, you mean...he was murdered...?

DETECTIVE CHURCH

We just spoke to Kurt's fiancée, Leanne Slaboda. She told us on the night Kurt left he was going out to meet up with you.

TERRY

Which night was that?

DETECTIVE TOMKINS

Friday, the 11th.

TERRY

(pretends to think)

Friday, Friday, Friday... Yeah, we were, uhh, we were supposed to grab a drink. He never showed.

DETECTIVE TOMKINS

Grab a drink where?

TERRY

...Shepherd's Tavern.

DETECTIVE CHURCH

You went to Shepherd's Tavern and he never showed?

(Terry nods)

So if we ask around the bar someone'll tell us you were there?

TERRY

I was there. Whether they tell ya that or not, that's a whole other thing. Buncha degenerates in that place.

DETECTIVE CHURCH

You didn't talk to Kurt after that?

TERRY

No.

DETECTIVE TOMKINS

(reading from notes)

He called your phone at 4:00 AM on Saturday morning. The call lasted for twelve minutes. Remember what you two talked about?

TERRY

(caught in a lie, adjusts)

No.

DETECTIVE CHURCH

You get a lotta calls at four in the mornin' you don't remember?

A tense moment. They know Terry's lying but they don't have enough on him yet.

TERRY

Are we finished here? I'm supposed to meet up with a friend.

DETECTIVE CHURCH

Would you mind coming up to the precinct to answer some more questions for us?

TERRY

Am I under arrest?

DETECTIVE CHURCH

Should you be?

(beat)

We'll be in touch, Terry.

The Detectives stand and exit. Terry locks the door behind them, then nervously watches through the peephole as the Detectives drive off.

INT. NORTHERN LIBERTIES ROW HOME — NIGHT

The door opens. Mike and Claire step inside. Mike sets her overnight bag on the floor.

CLAIRE

I'm home, mom!

ANGELA, 30s, Mike's ex-wife, approaches from the kitchen. A former Homecoming Queen, her natural beauty remains all these years later, only now it's trapped beneath a baggy Flyers sweatshirt, worn Levis and a pair of Nike sneakers. Angela scoops Claire up into her arms, kisses her.

ANGELA

Hi, my beauty. Didja have fun with your dad?

CLAIRE

Mmm hmm. Look what I won.

She holds up her wrists, covered in bracelets. Mike looks into the family room where Angela's new HUSBAND, a local laborer, sits at the kitchen table watching a football game. The two men exchange a polite, but not friendly, wave.

ANGELA

(re: the bracelets)

Wowwww. Pretty cool.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

Why don't go up and get started on your homework?

CLAIRE

Can I watch TV first?

ANGELA

Not until your homework's done.

MIKE

Gimme a hug, sweetie.

Claire hugs Mike, then races up the stairs.

ANGELA

Did she eat?

MIKE

Yeah we got somethin' there.

ANGELA

How's your mom?

MIKE

Okay. Not great. She got this uhh, new wheelchair that reclines. So she can sleep without me havin' to lift her up and put her in bed all the time.

ANGELA

That's good. Well tell her we were askin' for her. I might pick up some sandwiches an' bring Claire over a day next week.

MIKE

Yeah, she'd like that.

ANGELA
Well thanks for takin' her.

MIKE
Alright. See ya' next weekend.

Mike goes.

INT. BARRY'S ROW HOME — EVENING

Barry enters with GRACE, ALLIE and MIKE who are lugging their backpacks. SCREAMING can be heard. Barry looks into the kitchen. Susan and Kirsten are engaged in a shouting match.

BARRY
Come on. Let's go upstairs.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

Barry escorts the kids down the hall.

GRACE
What are they fighting about?

BARRY
I don't know.

ALLIE
Kirsten said the 's' word.

MICHAEL
What's the 's' word?

ALLIE
Shit.

BARRY
Hey hey, come on. We don't say that word.

ALLIE
Kirsten does. She says it all the time.

BARRY
Grace, will you watch them while I go downstairs, please?

GRACE
I don't want to.

BARRY
Just for a few minutes. Okay?

Grace SIGHS as Barry ferries the kids into her room.

INT. KITCHEN

Barry enters. Susan and Kirsten are mid-argument —

SUSAN

— Did you steal her boyfriend? Is that why you two were fightin'?

KIRSTEN

I didn't steal her boyfriend! Okay?! He came after me! Would you freakin' open your ears!

BARRY

Hey hey hey. Don't scream at your mother, Kirsten.

KIRSTEN

I don't have to listen to you. You're not my dad.

BARRY

Yes you do have to listen to me. Because this is my house. I pay the bills here.

KIRSTEN

Fine. Then I'll leave. I'll go live with my real dad.

Kirsten stands and marches out of the kitchen, muttering *asshole* as she passes Barry.

BARRY

Asshole? Is that what you said?

Angered, Barry follows her up the stairs. Susan chases after him.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Okay. Good. Good! Go to Atlantic City and live with that deadbeat.

SUSAN

Barry, stop it.

KIRSTEN

(whips back to Barry)

I'm gonna tell him you said that. And then he's gonna come here and kick the shit out of you!

BARRY

Yeah?!

KIRSTEN

Yeah!

BARRY

Good luck gettin' a hold of him.

SUSAN

Barry, don't talk about her
father —

BARRY

I'd call before Happy Hour
otherwise you won't
understand a word he's
sayin'.

BARRY (CONT'D)

And when you talk to him ask him why he
never calls you! Ask him why he doesn't
give a shit about you!

Kirsten enters he bedroom, SLAMS the door shut in Barry's
face. Barry tries to knob. Locked. He shouts at the door.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Ask him why I'm the one payin' for his
goddamn kids! Cause he's a scumbag!

Susan pulls Barry away.

SUSAN

Stop it! Are you crazy!? That's her
father!

Barry turns and sees Grace peering out from her open bedroom
door. Hurt. Scared.

INT. MIKE'S ROW HOME — NIGHT

Mike hangs his coat on the rack and walks into the family
room where his mother, PEGGY, 75, sits in a wheelchair by the
old box television watching *Wheel of Fortune*. She has severe
rheumatoid arthritis. Her hands and feet are shrunken and
deformed and she can no longer walk without assistance.

MIKE

Hey ma.

PEGGY

Oh. Hi, Michael. How was Claire?

MIKE

Good. We had fun. Took some pictures on
my phone for ya.

He hands her the phone. Peggy slides her reading glasses on. Her crooked fingers flip through the photos of Mike and Claire while Mike reviews the day's mail.

PEGGY

Her hair's gettin' so dark. It's almost as dark as your father's.

MIKE

Ang said they're gonna try an' stop over to see ya' next week.

PEGGY

Oh I'd love that.

MIKE

I'm gonna go get ready for work. Want me to take you to the bathroom first?

PEGGY

Yeah, I think that would be good.

He approaches and scoops her into his arms and carries her down the hall into the —

BATHROOM

which has been outfitted to suit her needs. The toilet seat is raised and there are hand rails for support. Mike sets her down on the toilet and helps her take down her pants.

EXT. FOREST, POCONOS — DIRT ROAD — NIGHT

A light snow falls. Terry's Cadillac and the unmarked Crown Victoria roll down a dirt road and park at the edge of the forest. TERRY, SAYERS, and NANCE step out of the cars dressed in knit caps, gloves and parkas in expectation of a long, cold night in the woods.

SAYERS

(to Terry)

You hear from anyone?

TERRY

...about what?

SAYERS

Detectives from Pike County come down sniffin' your ass yet?

Terry hesitates a moment, then shakes his head, 'no.' Sayers isn't sure he believes him. A tense beat. Terry switches on a flashlight and enters the forest.

EXT. UPSCALE APARTMENT BUILDING — RITTENHOUSE — NIGHT

Mike's on-duty, smoking a cigarette as he tries to keep warm. Denny opens the door behind him.

DENNY

Jimmy wants to see ya'.

Mike flicks away his cigarette, follows Denny inside.

INT. BUILDING MANAGER'S OFFICE — EVENING

JIMMY DUNN, 60s, watches the LOCAL NEWS on a small TV set. He's an ex-cop quietly passing the gloaming of his career. Mike KNOCKS on the door frame. Jimmy looks up.

MIKE

Den said you wanted ta see me.

JIMMY

Yeah, Mike. Come in. Siddown.

Jimmy switches off the television. Mike sits across from him. A long moment, then:

JIMMY (CONT'D)

We're lettin' ya go, Mike. Management made the decision today.

MIKE

(a disbelieving chuckle)
T'hell you talkin' about lettin' me go?

JIMMY

We got a complaint from one of our tenants. Did you invite a woman up to the roof deck with you?

MIKE

The roof deck — what're you...
(thinks, remembers the incident now)
I didn't invite her up there, I said if she wanted to check it out that I'd set out some heaters and, yunno —

JIMMY
 (lifts a report)
 She cites multiple instances where you
 made advances towards her —

MIKE Advances!? What fuckin' advances?!	JIMMY (continuing) that she felt were inappropriate —
--	---

JIMMY (CONT'D)
 (continuing)
 — and made her uncomfortable.

MIKE
 What made her uncomfortable, Jimmy? Me
 openin' the door? Sayin' hello?

JIMMY
 So you didn't tell Denny that you were
 gonna try an' sleep with her?

Mike's silent. He looks outside the office door at Denny,
 absorbing the betrayal.

MIKE
 I get one complaint and they're cannin'
 me?

JIMMY
 You think they fire people over one
 complaint? Come on, get smart.

A long beat. Mike just sits there, quietly seething. He wants
 to hit someone. Burn something down. Rage.

MIKE
 Go to bat for me here, Jimmy. I got child
 support payments, I'm takin' care'a my
 mother. Tell 'em I made a mistake.

JIMMY
 Decision's already been made. You wanna
 talk to someone, talk to management.

MIKE
 Come on, don't make me go an' sit in
 frunna those fuckin' people. Those
 fuckin' people, they aint like me an'
 you, Jimmy. Yunno? Come on, don't fuck me
 like this.

JIMMY

You really think this is me fuckin' you?
 (shakes his head)
 You fucked yourself, Mike. Leave your
 badge an' keycard at the front desk an'
 get outta here.

Jimmy switches the TV back on. Mike sits there, apoplectic.
 Finally he stands and exits.

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT — NIGHT

Chris' Chevy Tahoe plows an elementary school parking lot.

LATER

Chris is on break, sipping a coffee and he listens to his
 voicemails on his cell phone —

VOICE ON PHONE (V.O.)

Hi, Chris. This is Dale Howard with Bank
 of America Home Loans. I need to speak
 with about your loan payments. It's
 urgent and I'd appreciate it if you
 called me back as soon as possible —

Chris pressed 'delete.'

EXT. FOREST IN THE POCONOS — NIGHT

The snow is heavier now and the air colder as Terry trudges
 through forest. We recognize these woods as the spot where
Sprouse and Wilkins encountered our four friends.

Terry runs his flashlight over a patch of rocks and notices a
 swatch of material peeking out of the snow. He hurriedly
 drops to his knees and digs the snow away with his hands
 uncovering a BACKPACK. He excitedly unzips it, but all he
 finds inside are empty beer cans and a few *Hustler* magazines.

He deflates.

EXT. DIRT ROAD AT THE EDGE OF THE FOREST — NIGHT (LATE)

Post-search. A dejected Terry, Sayers and Nance remove their
 layers.

INT. CROWN VICTORIA

Sayers and Nance climb in. Nance starts the car and blasts the heat. Sayers watches through the windshield as Terry scrapes the snow off his shoes.

SAYERS

(re: Terry)

The minute we find the drugs, I'm gonna bury that motherfucker.

Nance drills the gas and heads right at Terry.

EXT. DIRT ROAD

The Crown ZIPS PAST Terry, so close it skims his jacket.

TERRY

The fuck — !

Terry watches the taillights fade into the darkness, knowing exactly where he stands.

INT. JUSTIN'S APARTMENT — DAWN

Justin sleeps with Leah wrapped in his arms. ZZZ.ZZZ.ZZZ. His cell phone VIBRATES on the night stand. He stirs, answers the call.

JUSTIN

Hello..? Jesus, Mike, what time is it?

EXT. PENN TREATY PARK — LOT — MORNING

Rainy and cold. Justin's Honda enters the lot and parks beside Mike's Oldsmobile.

INT. MIKE'S OLDSMOBILE ACHIEVA

Mike sits behind the wheel, Chris in the passenger seat, and Barry in the back. There's an uneasy silence between them. CLUNK — Justin enters and quickly shuts the door. He shakes off the rain and settles in. When no one speaks —

JUSTIN

Someone wanna tell me what we're doin' here?

Mike turns back to Justin and hands him an article from the *Pike County Courier* online edition detailing the crimes in the woods. PHOTOS of SPROUSE AND WILKINS are featured.

MIKE

Read that.

Justin quickly scans the article.

JUSTIN

No one thought these guys were Good Samaritans, did they?

(to Mike)

This what you called me here for?

MIKE

The bearded one... he hid somethin' in the woods that night. The article doesn't say nothin' about anythin' bein' discovered.

JUSTIN

Okay. So he hid something in the woods – something coulda been anything.

BARRY

That's what I tried to tell him.

MIKE

Not anything. Two duffle bags. This big, each of 'em.

A beat.

JUSTIN

...You saw this an' you didn't say nothin' to the police when they talked to us?

MIKE

They didn't ask.

JUSTIN

They need to?

Another beat.

MIKE

Think about it, J: What's in them bags?

JUSTIN

You tell me.

MIKE

Three guys in ski masks chasin' you with shotguns an' you're gon' take the time to stop an' hide somethin'? Money. Or drugs.

JUSTIN

(to Chris, accusatory)

You know about this, too?

CHRIS

(offended)

Don't put this one me. I got called here same as you.

MIKE

Nobody knew anythin' til right now.

JUSTIN

...And what if it is drugs?

Mike turns around, looks at Justin expectantly, confirming what Justin already assumed.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

Jesus Christ.

MIKE

Come on, J, all them years. You gotta still know someone...

(leans forward, pressing)

You're tellin' me you couldn't use the money?

JUSTIN

That's not what I'm tellin' you -

MIKE

What about your brother - all the shit he's got goin' on - could he use a lift?

CHRIS

Fuck you, Mike -

JUSTIN

That's not what I'm tellin' you -

MIKE (CONT'D)

The bank's gonna take his house -

JUSTIN

That's not what I'm tellin' ya, Mike. I'm sayin' I can't go back there -

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

I go back there and it opens all them doors I closed -

MIKE

When are we ever gonna have a chance like this again -

JUSTIN (CONT'D)
I got a new life now, Mike!

MIKE
What life you got!? Huh!? This!?

JUSTIN
That's right!

MIKE
(overflowing)
THIS AINT A LIFE! THIS IS SHIT!

Enraged, he SHAKES HIS SEAT furiously.

MIKE (CONT'D)
CAN'T YOU SEE THAT!? GODDAMNIT!

Mike faces forward again. We can hear his heavy breathing as he catches his breath.

BARRY
Whatever you got goin' on, Mike, this
isn't the way to fix it.

MIKE
It's not about fixin' anything. It's
about opportunity. It's about makin' life
a little less fuckin' hard. Okay?

BARRY
I don't know — it's like I don't even
wanna be here talkin' about this.

MIKE
All's I'm sayin' is we drive up an' take
a look around. If nothin's there, we
forget we ever had this conversation.

CHRIS
(turns back to Justin)
Could you do it, J? I mean...are there
still people you know...?

Justin stares at Chris. Feeling somehow guilty. Like he owes
it to his brother.

JUSTIN
Yeah, I know some people.

BARRY
I'm not doin' this.

Barry opens the car door, but doesn't leave right away.

MIKE

If we do this, we all do it.

BARRY

Bullshit! Bullshit, Mike! You're doin' this, not me! And I'm not lettin' you drag me into it!

MIKE

Good! You don't wanna be in, then get the fuck outta here! Close the fuckin' door and get outta here!

BARRY

(turns to Justin)

You comin', J?

Justin doesn't move. Barry looks at him like he doesn't know him anymore, then SLAMS the door shut. Justin watches Barry climb into his minivan and drive off.

WHOOSH-WHOOSH-WHOOSH — GHOSTLY, SKELETAL PINES

fly past us in a blur. Through the forest, WE SEE CHRIS' TAHOE barreling down the deserted Pocono road at night.

EXT. PARKING AREA ALONG THE DELAWARE RIVER — POCONOS — NIGHT

HEADLIGHTS APPEAR as the Tahoe crawls to a stop on the grass. The men step out of the car. Mike tests a flashlight.

INT. FOREST/DELAWARE RIVER — WIDE ANGLE — NIGHT

The current thunders as the channel steepens. Across the river, three flashlights move in the forest.

JUSTIN

stops walking. The cold is getting to him. He pulls his knit cap down to cover his stung ears and lifts his collar.

MIKE (O.C.)

Over here!

Up ahead, a FLASHLIGHT BLINKS. A CRACKLING startles Justin. He turns back to find CHRIS not far behind. A look passes between them, both afraid of what's next. They set off towards the blinking light.

EXT. FOREST — GROUP OF ROCKS

Mike and Chris are on their knees, clearing away the large rocks. Justin holds his flashlight high to provide light. It doesn't take long for Mike to see a SWATCH OF CANVAS.

MIKE

There's something here.

Mike uses his hands to clear away the remaining dirt and, with Chris' help, unearths the FIRST DUFFLE BAG. Chris sees the handle of the SECOND and exhumes it as well.

Mike unzips the first bag revealing BRICKS AND BRICKS OF COCAINE. Off the men, staring down at their discovery.

INT. BARRY'S LAKE HOUSE, SHOWER — NIGHT

Justin showers with his eyes closed. WE NOTICE the stitches have been removed from his head, but a scar remains. He shuts off the faucet, opens his eyes and —

SPROUSE'S DEAD BODY IS ON THE FLOOR OF THE TUB!

Frighteningly, inhumanly white. Large bullet holes in his chest. Justin STARTLES AND —

INT. CHEVY TAHOE, MOVING — NIGHT

— JUSTIN SHOOTS UP in the back seat. Sweating, breathless. Mike's asleep, head against the window. Chris turns back.

CHRIS

You alright?

JUSTIN

Yeah, just... I don't sleep too good anymore.

Justin sits up, lights a cigarette. A long moment of silence between the two brothers.

CHRIS

Thanks for doin' this, J.

Justin nods, then watches the trees pass by outside.

INT. CHEVY TAHOE, MOVING — NIGHT

The SUV pulls into Mike's drive. Mike climbs out, turns back to the others.

MIKE

What're we doin' with the bags?

Looks are exchanged. Finally:

JUSTIN

I don't want 'em at my place. Not with Leah around.

CHRIS

I'll keep 'em. Put 'em in the basement. Dad aint been down there in years anyway.

MIKE

(to Justin)

Call me tomorrow after you see your friend.

Justin nods. Mike goes. Justin reaches over the back seat and unzips one of the duffle bags.

CHRIS

What're you doin'?

Justin transfers one BRICK OF COCAINE into his own bag.

JUSTIN

They're gonna wanna see one, so they know what they're gettin'.

Chris looks at Justin, wondering if that's really what it's for.

INT. BARRY'S ROW HOME — FAMILY ROOM — NIGHT

It's late. A *Time Life Best of Soft Rock* infomercial plays on the TV. Barry's doing sit-ups. Drenched in sweat, panting. Yet he keeps going, knowing he won't be able to fall sleep unless he completely exhausts himself.

INT. BORZELL ROW HOME BASEMENT — LAUNDRY ROOM — NIGHT

The lights come up. Chris enters lugging the two duffle bags. He slides them into the crawl space, shifts some boxes around to conceal them, then switches off the lights —

BLACK.

INT. JUSTIN'S APARTMENT — FOLLOWING MORNING

CLOSE ON AN ALARM CLOCK. It turns to **7:00 AM**. NEWSRADIO goes off —

KYW NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)
— *snowfall across much of the Northeast tonight. The snow is expected to begin around 7 PM and continue through the night. It's predicted the storm will drop between 8-10 inches in Philadelphia and along the I-95 corridor.*

Justin stirs in bed, opens his eyes. Leah's in the bathroom, dressed and putting on her make-up.

JUSTIN
Where ya goin' so early?

LEAH
I have to work a weddin' party in Jersey. One'a the girls at the salon asked me to fill in. I won't be back until late. Want me to pick up dinner?

JUSTIN
Sure.

Justin sits up, lights a cigarette.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)
Yunno I was thinkin'. Maybe we don't hafta stay with your sister when we get out there.

LEAH
What, you don't like my sister?

JUSTIN
No, I love your sister, it's just...maybe we buy our own place.

LEAH
Yeah, with what money?

JUSTIN
I don't know. Be nice, though. Right? Somethin' of our own.

Leah smiles at him in the mirror.

EXT. DOG PARK — MORNING

Chris tosses a tennis ball and watches as his labrador chases it down and brings it back to him.

INT. KELLY'S ROW HOME — KITCHEN — MORNING

Chris sets out bowls of water and food for the labrador. Kelly enters, her arms overflowing with bags of groceries.

CHRIS
Here, lemme help.

Chris takes a few bags and sets them down on the island.

KELLY
(re: the dog)
Thanks for takin' him out.

CHRIS
Yeah.

Chris begins unloading the groceries.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
I spoke to Dale over at the bank yesterday. I told him I was gonna get him the money we owe by next week. All of it.

KELLY
And how do you plan on doin' that?

CHRIS
Don't worry about it.
(off her look)
This is our house. I'm not lettin' them take it.

He starts putting the groceries away as if he still lives here. Kelly is quiet, uncomfortable.

INT. JUSTIN'S HONDA ACCORD, MOVING — MORNING

Clock reads **9:30 AM**. Justin drives. He's anxious, smoking, tapping his fingers on his thigh.

INT. GRUNGY APARTMENT BUILDING — CORRIDOR — AFTERNOON

Justin searches for an apartment number. A loud argument can be heard: a COUPLE SCREAMING at one another. GLASSES BROKEN. He arrives at a door, KNOCKS.

MAN'S VOICE (O.C.)

Who is it?

JUSTIN

Gav, it's J.

The door opens revealing GAVIN. He hugs Justin.

GAVIN

What're you doin' here? What's this twice in one month?

JUSTIN

You busy?

INT. CHESTNUT HILL DINER — LATE MORNING

Justin and Gavin sit in a booth. Coffee and cigarettes.

GAVIN

— You wanna know the truth? It's his fuckin' parents' fault, man. I swear. I mean why do ya think he OD'd at their house? He wanted them to find him, that's why. They were always pushin' him to do this an' do that, and be a doctor like your brother, be a lawyer like your father. They didn't know who the fuck he was. We knew who the fuck he was. We knew the real Billy. Not them. Yunno? And they look at us like we're trash.

JUSTIN

(tired of Gavin's
rambling)

Listen, Gav, I need a favor.

GAVIN

...okay.

JUSTIN

(leans in, quietly)

You still makin' runs?

GAVIN

Runs? You mean...?

JUSTIN

Yeah.

GAVIN

Here an' there. When I need the money.
Why?

JUSTIN
I got some coke. A lot of it.

GAVIN
...what're we talkin' about?

JUSTIN
30 kilos.

Gavin sits back in the booth.

GAVIN
Jesus Christ. Thirty birds? You're serious?

JUSTIN
I need ta move it. There's money in it for you if you can help.

GAVIN
Where the hell'd you get it?

JUSTIN
I don't wanna get into where it's from, or how I got it, or none'a that shit. Do you know some way I can move it?

Off Gavin, thinking...

INT. GAVIN'S MUSTANG — DINER PARKING LOT — LATE MORNING

Justin watches as Gavin cuts open the kilo of cocaine. It's the first time he's been close to drugs in a long while and he's feeling uneasy. Gavin snorts a bump. Then another.

GAVIN
Shit's smooth. No burn.

INT. NARC FIELD UNIT — MUSTER ROOM — AFTERNOON

A LIEUTENANT briefs a room of NARCOTICS DETECTIVES, SAYERS and NANCE among them.

LIEUTENANT
— We got the prints back on Troy Carter's girlfriend's safe this morning. Matched 'em to a Daryl Wilkins.

Lieutenant taps his clicker. PHOTOS OF WILKINS and SPROUSE appear on the projector screen.

LIEUTENANT (CONT'D)

That's Wilkins there. The other one is Kurt Sprouse. Both were found dead in Pike County last weekend with multiple gunshot wounds. We believe they rented a cottage Friday mornin' hoping to hide out there after murdering Carter. Cops found 'em early Sunday in the forest. Conley, you wanna update us?

A DETECTIVE stands and joins Lieutenant at the podium.

NARC DETECTIVE

We're workin' with Pike County Police on this. They're pursuin' a lead. Guy's name is Terry Edney. There he is there.

A PHOTO OF TERRY EDNEY flashes onto the screen. Sayers and Nance glance at one another.

NARC DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

Got a string of priors. Guns and drug possession, attempting to sell stolen property.

ANOTHER PHOTO appears on the screen. It's TERRY inside his Cadillac passing through a TOLL BOOTH.

NARC DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

Photo was taken at a toll booth on 380 North Saturday night. There are two passengers in the car. Toll Collector made out a white male and a black male, but couldn't provide any details.

Sayers and Nance tense: it's the two of them in the car with Terry, though it's impossible to make them out in the photo.

NARC DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

The presence of three individuals checks out with the story we got from our witnesses in the woods with that night. Pike County's puttin' a case together on Edney. We're hopin' if we squeeze him enough, he'll give up the other two.

INT. NARC UNIT — BATHROOM — AFTERNOON

Sayers pisses at the urinal. Nance paces nervously.

SAYERS

Calm the fuck down, alright.

NANCE

Calm the fuck down? They got our faces goin' through that toll booth, Shawn.

SAYERS

They don't got our faces. They got two faces. The only one who knows those faces belong to us is Terry.

NANCE

You heard Conley. They're gonna squeeze him til he pops.

SAYERS

So we'll make sure he's not around when they get there.

Sayers jiggles out the last few drops, flushes, and goes.

INT. TERRY EDNEY'S DUPLEX — MASTER BEDROOM — AFTERNOON

Terry's grabbing clothes out of drawers and messily stuffing them into a suitcase as he talks on his cell phone —

TERRY

(into phone)

— I'm not askin' for my own fuckin' luxury suite or nothin', Gerry. Shit, it's Florida, I'll sleep on the goddamn porch... No no, I just need to get outta Philly for a while, that's all...

A KNOCK at the door. Terry exits the bedroom and moves to the front door. Through the peephole he sees GAVIN outside.

TERRY (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Hold on a sec.

(calls outside)

Whaddaya want?

GAVIN

Terry, it's Gavin.

TERRY

I can see who the fuck it is, whaddayou want?

GAVIN

Open up, man. I need to talk ta ya.

TERRY

I'm busy, get lost.

Gavin KNOCKS again.

GAVIN
(jiggles the handle)
Come on, come on, open up. I got
somethin' good for ya'.

Terry opens the door slightly. Gavin opens his jacket allowing Terry a glimpse of the KILO OF COCAINE.

TERRY
You fuckin' crazy flashin' that shit!?
Get in here.

Terry pulls Gavin inside, shuts the door. Gavin hands over the brick of cocaine. Terry recognizes the PLASTIC WRAPPING and RED TAPE. A perfect match for the kilo of cocaine he found in the forest, left behind by Wilkins.

TERRY (CONT'D)
...Where'd you get this?

GAVIN
I got twenty-nine more. Friend'a mine's
lookin' to dump 'em quick.

VOICE ON PHONE
Terry?! Hello?!

Terry hangs the phone up.

GAVIN
Can we move 'em through your guy in
Pittsburgh? He's willin' to go twenty
percent for us.

TERRY
(still staring at the
cocaine in disbelief)
...where's your friend?

GAVIN
Waitin' in the car.

Terry peers out the window and SEES JUSTIN sitting in the passenger seat of Gavin's Mustang.

TERRY
Bring him inside.

Gavin exits the home. Terry hurries into the kitchen, opens a drawer. Inside is the article from the *Philadelphia Inquirer* with a photo of Justin, Chris, Mike and Barry. He recognizes Justin.

TERRY (CONT'D)
Jesus fuckin' Christ...

The door opens. Terry shoves the article back into the drawer as Gavin and Justin enter.

GAVIN
Terry, this is my friend Justin.

Terry tenses a moment, unsure if somehow Justin might recognize him. He doesn't and offers his hand.

JUSTIN
Justin.

TERRY
Terry... Here. Siddown.

Justin and Gavin sit on the couch, Terry across from them.

JUSTIN
So Gavin toldja the details?

TERRY
Where it's from?

JUSTIN
Does it matter where it's from?

TERRY
Matters to me. I sell the shit to a friend a mine, shit you stole from someone else, an' that someone you stole from comes lookin' for my friend -

JUSTIN
No one's gonna come lookin' for it.

Terry stares at Justin a moment, then starts CHUCKLING. And can't stop himself. He can't fucking believe this reversal of fortune that's fallen into his lap.

GAVIN
Somethin' funny?

TERRY
No no, I'm sorry, it's just...
(lifts the kilo)
Thirty a these birds? That's a lotta fuckin' coke, yunno?

JUSTIN
Can ya help me move it or not?

Terry lights a cigarette, considers Justin.

TERRY

Yeah. Yeah I can help ya'.

JUSTIN

When?

TERRY

You got a big fuckin' hard-on to move this shit, huh, kiddo.

JUSTIN

Yeah.

TERRY

Write your number down.
(slides a memo pad close to Justin)
I'll call ya in a few hours.

INT. BORZELL ROW HOME — KITCHEN — AFTERNOON

A small TV on the counter plays a college football game. Vince watches from the kitchen table, eating scrapple drenched in ketchup. Chris enters from the side door, hangs his Eagles coat on the rack.

CHRIS

(re: the scrapple)
Doctor know you're eatin' that?

VINCE

I won't say nothin' if you won't.
(re: the game)
Temple's givin' Miami a good fight here.

CHRIS

Yeah?

VINCE

21-17. Fourth quarter. Somethin' came in the mail for ya'. Had ta sign for it.

Chris takes the mail from a bin on the wall, sits at the table. He opens a large manila envelope and slides out DIVORCE PAPERS from Kelly. For a moment he just stares at them, incredulous, blindsided.

VINCE (CONT'D)

(re: the game)
See that kid there? That 56?

Chris doesn't answer, doesn't look up.

VINCE (CONT'D)
Played ball at LaSalle. Joey Carden's son
coached him. Kid's a damn good player.
Tough.

INT. TAVERN — LATE AFTERNOON

Mike sits at the bar drinking a whiskey. He's been going hard for hours and it shows. Gazing around, he sees DENNY and a GROUP OF BUDDIES drinking in a booth. He finishes his whiskey in a single gulp and staggers over that way.

MIKE
Denny. Denny, how are ya?

Denny turns to Mike. His mirth disappears in an instant.

DENNY
Hey, Mike.

MIKE
These your friends?

DENNY
Yeah.

MIKE
Nice to meet you guys. So how long you
been friends with this rat fuck?

A beat. Friends look at Denny: *is this guy for real?* Denny waves them off: *leave it.*

DENNY
Whaddayou want, Mike?

MIKE
Nothin', I just was havin' a drink at the
bar an' I wanted to come over an' give ya
that money I owe ya.

DENNY
Don't worry about the money.

MIKE
No no no no. I'm gonna pay what I owe ya.
Because that's the kinda man I am.

Mike fumbles at his wallet, takes out some cash and begins to roll it up.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Here, I'm just gonna...roll it up like this...into like a little tampon. See that? And you can shove it up your pussy, you rat fuck!

Mike FLICKS the rolled up bills at Denny. Denny's FRIEND shoves Mike against the wall. Mike SHOVES him back.

DENNY

Hey hey hey - !

MIKE

T'fuck off'a me - !

DENNY

Let him go, Steve. He'll fuck himself up worse than any of us could anyway.

Friend releases Mike.

DENNY (CONT'D)

You wanna know why I ratted on you? Cause I couldn't stand workin' with your ass no more. Nobody could. And I knew a fuckin' loser like you wasn't goin' nowhere. So I did it to get ridda ya'.

Mike just stands there, feeling small. Friend SHOVES Mike away.

FRIEND

Go! Get the fuck outta here!

Mike staggers across the bar floor and out the door.

INT. MIKE'S OLDSMOBILE/EXT. DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Mike's Oldsmobile rolls into the driveway. He steps out and unsteadily approaches the home. Through the windows he sees CLAIRE and ANGELA inside talking with PEGGY. Claire is showing Peggy drawings she made in class.

He doesn't want to be here. Not drunk like this. He climbs back into the car and reverses out of the drive.

INT. TERRY EDNEY'S DUPLEX - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Terry opens a drawer and lifts a 9MM GLOCK and SILENCER out.

INT. GARAGE

Terry grabs a TARPAULIN and a SHOVEL from the clutter and stuffs them into the trunk of the Cadillac.

HEADLIGHTS GLIDE across the garage windows. Terry looks out and SEES SAYERS and NANCE exit the unmarked Crown Vic and approach his front door. He crawls under the car. The DOORBELL RINGS a few times.

Nance peers into the garage windows.

NANCE (O.C.)
His car's in there.

SAYERS (O.C.)
Fuck it. We'll come back later.

Terry waits a few moments, then crawls out and watches the Crown Vic drive off down the street.

INT. BARRY'S ROW HOME — FAMILY ROOM — EVENING

Grace, Allie and Michael are playing a game of duck-duck-goose. Barry enters, carrying trays of food and balloons that read, *Happy 60th Birthday!*

BARRY
Hey guys. Everyone ready for Pop Pop's surprise party?

ALLIE
We've been ready for like two hours.

BARRY
Where's your mother?

ALLIE
Looking for Kirsten.

BARRY
Whadda you mean lookin' for Kirsten?

Allie shrugs.

Barry sets the party goods down on the kitchen table and heads up the stairs.

BARRY (CONT'D)
Sooz? Susan?

SUSAN (O.C.)
In here.

Barry finds Susan in KIRSTEN'S BEDROOM. She's dressed for the party, sitting on the bed with Kirsten's laptop open.

BARRY
What's goin' on?

SUSAN
Kirsten never came home from school.
She's not answerin' her phone.

BARRY
You call her dad?

SUSAN
She's not there. Look at this.

Barry sits beside Susan. Kirsten's Facebook page is open on the computer. Barry reads through the dozens of messages written on her 'wall'. WE GLIMPSE A FEW: **tonight u pay up, bitch!...u act like a slut, u get beat down like a slut!...** And finally one from JESSE: **snatch a dumb bitch's v-card, then watch her get her ass beat by my real girlfriend = tru playa!!!!**

BARRY
Jesus Christ. I'll drive around.

SUSAN
I'm coming with you.

BARRY
No, stay with the kids and call the police.

Barry goes.

INT. GAVIN'S APARTMENT — BEDROOM — NIGHT

MUSIC SMASHES — *Deerhunter 'Memory Boy'*. QUICK DETAIL SHOTS as HEROIN is dumped onto a spoon. Melted down with a lighter. A syringe sucks the brown liquid up. Gavin searches for vein in his arm. Injects himself.

BEDROOM, LATER

Shirtless, Gavin lounges on the bed, listening to the music as the heroin euphoria washes over him.

BOOM—BOOM—BOOM. LOUD KNOCKING at the door. Gavin attempts to ignore it. **BOOM—BOOM—BOOM.**

GAVIN
Alright alright. Fuck. I'm comin'.

Gavin stumbles out of the bedroom and opens the door to find TERRY standing in the hall.

GAVIN (CONT'D)
Heyyyy, man, what're you doin' here?

Terry steps inside, locks the door behind him.

TERRY
Anyone else here?

GAVIN
No no, it's just me. Why, what's, what's goin' on?

TERRY
Go an' get a shirt on. We're gonna pick up your friend Justin.

GAVIN
My friend Justin? Oh. Yeah. Right. What're we pickin' him up for again?

TERRY
Just get dressed.

They enter the BEDROOM. Terry TURNS UP the volume on the stereo.

TERRY (CONT'D)
You got Justin's address?

GAVIN
Uhhh, yeah. It's in my phone there somewhere.

Gavin opens a drawer and pulls out a sweatshirt. He slides it over his head when —

TERRY RAISES HIS GLOCK with the SILENCER on and — **BLAM!** FIRES A SINGLE SHOT INTO GAVIN'S HEAD! Gavin collapses to the floor. Blood staining through the sweatshirt he never managed to fully get on.

Terry grabs Gavin's iPhone, tucks it away. He leaves the bedroom and moves back to the door. Opens it slightly and looks down the hall. *Empty*. He exits the apartment.

INT. BARRY'S MINIVAN, MOVING — FISHTOWN — NIGHT

It's snowing as Barry cruises down the main drag, watching the storefronts and sidewalks. Groups of teenagers are hanging out, but there's no sign of Kirsten.

INT. JUSTIN'S APARTMENT BUILDING — NIGHT

Terry slips out his pistol, keeps his tight against his body as he KNOCKS on the door. No answer. He quickly picks the lock and enters.

INT. JUSTIN'S APARTMENT — QUICK DETAILS SHOTS AS

Terry turns the apartment out searching for the drugs. Closet, bedroom, under the mattress, bathroom, et al. Tossing shit everywhere to no avail.

EXT. SULIMAY'S RESTAURANT — PARKING LOT — NIGHT

Justin exits the diner after his shift. He brushes snow off the windshield of his Honda Accord, climbs in and drives off.

INT. JUSTIN'S APARTMENT — NIGHT

Justin opens the door, switches on the light. He slips off his flannel coat when —

TERRY STEPS OUT OF THE BATHROOM and presses the Glock against Justin's temple.

JUSTIN
What the fuck...?

TERRY
Where are my drugs?

Startled, frightened, Justin doesn't respond right away. Terry STRIKES HIM ACROSS THE FACE with the pistol! Justin FALLS to the floor, bleeding from his nose.

TERRY (CONT'D)
Look at me. I was there that night in the woods, you dumb motherfucker. You're tryin' to sell me back my own fuckin' drugs!
(presses the pistol against Justin's head)
Now where are they?

JUSTIN
...they're not here.

TERRY
No shit.

JUSTIN
...my brother has them at his house.

TERRY
Take out your phone an' dial his number.

Justin reaches into his pant pocket, slips out his cell.

INT. BORZELL ROW HOME — DEN — NIGHT

Chris lies on the couch, the divorce papers not far from his mind as he absently watches a college football game. Vince is asleep on the Lazy-Boy, an afghan draped over him. Chris cell phone VIBRATES: '**Justin Calling...**' He answers —

CHRIS
Yeah...

INTERCUT CHRIS AND TERRY

TERRY
Chris?

CHRIS
...who's this?

TERRY
I'm the guy with a gun to your brother's head. Now I'm gonna blow his fuckin' brains onto the wall unless you gimme my drugs back. D'ya understand?

Chris sits up.

TERRY (CONT'D)
Chris...?

CHRIS
Yeah.

TERRY
Pay attention. Where are my fuckin' drugs?

Chris stands, moves into the kitchen so Vince won't hear him.

CHRIS
...they're here. Whudda you — whudda want me to do with 'em?

TERRY
Remember where you found the bags?

CHRIS

Yeah.

TERRY

There's a road runs along the edge'a the woods on Route 84. Harland Road. D'ya know it?

CHRIS

...yeah.

TERRY

It's 8:03 PM. You have 'til 11:00 to meet me there.

CHRIS

Why all the way up there?

TERRY

Because I'm the one with the gun, Chris. And the one with the gun makes the rules. You try anythin' stupid — you call the police, you bring along one'a your thief friends, an' I'll make sure you never find your brother's body. And if you do you sure as fuck won't recognize it.

Terry hangs up.

INT. BORZELL HOME — KITCHEN — NIGHT

Chris listens to the DIAL TONE. For a moment he can't move. Can't breathe. Can't think. He considers the numbers on the phone, wondering if he should dial 911.

Finally he hangs.

EXT. JUSTIN'S APARTMENT BUILDING — PARKING LOT — NIGHT

Terry and Justin exit the building. Terry holds the pistol against Justin's back. They arrive at Terry's Cadillac.

TERRY

Get in the car.

Justin gets behind the wheel, his hands trembling. Terry sits in the backseat and keeps the pistol trained on Justin as he hands him the keys. Justin starts the car and drives out of the lot.

INT. BORZELL HOME — BASEMENT LAUNDRY ROOM — NIGHT

Chris switches on the lights, moves to the crawl space and slides the two duffle bags out.

INT. KITCHEN

Chris emerges from the basement and looks into the family room. Vince is still asleep. He stands on a chair, opens the shelves above the refrigerator and removes a Glock 22 Pistol. Checks that it's loaded.

EXT. DRIVEWAY — NIGHT

Chris opens the trunk of the Tahoe and loads the duffle bags in. WE NOTICE the snow plow is still affixed to the front of the car. He climbs into the SUV and drives off.

INT. BARRY'S MINIVAN, MOVING — NIGHT

Barry isn't having any luck locating Kirsten. Dejected, he swings into the parking lot of a strip mall, parks. He lifts his cell phone and dials JUSTIN. Gets his voice mail. Dials CHRIS next.

INT. CHEVY TAHOE, MOVING — PA TURNPIKE — NIGHT

Clock reads: **9:54 PM**. The heavy snowfall is making it hard for Chris to see outside. His windshield wipers flip back and forth at full tilt. The cell phone in the console RINGS. He startles, but it's only '**Barry Calling...**' He presses 'Ignore', drives on.

INT. BARRY'S MINIVAN — NIGHT

Barry hangs up at the sound of Chris' voicemail. He scrolls through his list of 'Contacts' and stops at '**Mike**'. He hesitates.

INT. MIKE'S OLDSMOBILE ACHIEVA — NIGHT

The car is parked in a McDonalds lot. Mike's smoking a cigarette and drinking a coke, attempting to sober up. His phone RINGS. '**Barry Calling...**' He answers —

MIKE

Hey... No, I'm just, sittin' around.
Why?... Okay, I'll be right there.

Mike sits up, starts the car.

INT. CADILLAC, MOVING — PA TURNPIKE — NIGHT

The conditions are treacherous. Cars have pulled to the side of the road. Salt trucks litter the road, their yellow emergency lights flashing. The wheels SKID. Justin fights to steady the wheel.

JUSTIN

I don't know if we're gonna make it up there.

TERRY

Just keep drivin'.

INT. BARRY'S MINIVAN — NIGHT

Barry watches as Mike's Oldsmobile enters the lot and parks beside him. Mike climbs into the passenger seat.

BARRY

Thanks for comin'.

MIKE

Yeah.

Barry starts the car, pulls into traffic.

BARRY

I don't even know where I'm lookin' anymore.

MIKE

You call the cops?

BARRY

They told Sooz to try back in the mornin' if she still hasn't turned up.

A long beat.

MIKE

Sorry about the other day. I don't know what I was thinkin'. I'm gonna call J. Tell him to forget everythin'. Dump the shit somewhere. Burn it. I don't care.

(beat)

I guess I just wanted somethin' to change. It's like, when you're growin' up you have this image of how you're life's gonna turn out.

(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)

Then ya get older an' ya' realize your life's so far away from what you imagined it'd be. And you're stuck. You can't do nuthin' to change it. Some days I don't know what I get outta bed for.

BARRY

...For your daughter. For your mom. For your friends. All the people that love ya and need ya.

Mike looks over at Barry.

BARRY (CONT'D)

We been friends a long time, Mike. That's never gonna change.

Mike considers it a long moment.

Barry's cell phone RINGS. '**Susan Calling...**' He answers —

BARRY (CONT'D)

Yeah?... Where?... Okay, I'm on my way there now.

(hangs up, to Mike)

She's at the high school.

Barry swings into a u-turn, races down the street.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD — UNDER THE BLEACHERS — NIGHT

A ROWDY GROUP OF TEENAGERS (20 in total, boys and girls) have gathered to witness a fight. Beer cans and joints are passed around. We see JESSE among the crowd. KIRSTEN stands alone as a GROUP of three bigger, older TEENAGE GIRLS shout at her. Tears burn in Kirsten's eyes.

GIRL 1

Just admit you stole my boyfriend.

GIRL 2

Yeah, admit you're a slut and take your beatdown!

GIRL 3

Say somethin', you dumb bitch!

KIRSTEN

I didn't steal your boyfriend. He called me first.

JESSE

Bullshit! I wouldn't call an ugly skank like you!

LAUGHS from the crowd.

GIRL 1

Just say, '*I'm a dirty, skanky slut*' and we'll let you go.

GIRL 2

Say it, slut!

Kirsten doesn't respond. The GIRLS ATTACK as a pack. Kirsten swings her fists wildly, but it doesn't take long before they overwhelm her. The crowd HOOTS and HOLLERS as the GIRLS drag Kirsten to the snowy ground by her hair and begin to pummel her with fists.

INT. BARRY'S MINIVAN, MOVING — NIGHT

Barry pulls into the high school parking lot. He sees a crowd under the bleachers. And a girl on the ground, desperately trying to cover herself.

BARRY

That's her!

The MINIVAN screeches to a halt. Mike and Barry leap out and races towards the bleachers.

BARRY (CONT'D)

HEY! HEY, GET OFF'A HER!

Barry yanks the TEENAGE GIRLS off of Kirsten. A few TEENAGE BOYS, including JESSE, attempt to confront Barry. Mike jumps in and shoves the boys back.

MIKE

Get the hell outta here! GO!

JESSE

You gonna make me!?

MIKE

If I need to!

A tense moment between the two. Finally:

JESSE

Come on, let's go.

The crowd disperses. Barry kneels down beside Kirsten. Her face is bruised, her lip bloodied. He takes off his coat and drapes it over her. Scoops her into his arms and carries her back towards the minivan. Mike slides the side door open.

BARRY

You drive. Keys're in my pocket.

Mike reaches into Barry's pocket removes the keys.

INT. BARRY'S MINIVAN

Barry climbs into the backseat with Kirsten. Mike gets behind the wheel, starts the car, drives off.

Kirsten's eyes open slightly and stare up at Barry. She CRIES softly. Tears roll down her face.

BARRY

It's okay. I got you. I got you now.

As if comforted by Barry's voice, her eyes close again. She takes his hand. The van rattles through the night.

INT. CADILLAC, MOVING — POCONOS — NIGHT

Far away from the Interstate now. No streetlights and no other cars on these remote roads. A PLOW TRUCK roars by.

TERRY

Slow down. This is our turn.

Justin slows, turns down HARLAN ROAD. The road is dark and flanked on both sides by dense forest.

TERRY (CONT'D)

Pull over here and turn the engine off.

Justin pulls to the shoulder, turns the car off. Terry looks down at Justin's cell phone: **10:58 PM.**

INT. CHEVY TAHOE, MOVING — NIGHT

Chris passes the same PLOW TRUCK we saw just moments ago. He makes out a street sign ahead: HARLAN ROAD. Before he arrives, he pulls to the shoulder. Reaches into the glove compartment and removes his YELLOW EMERGENCY LIGHT. He switches it on and places it on the hood of the SUV.

INT. CADILLAC — NIGHT

Terry notices yellow emergency lights approaching in the rear view mirror. He thinks it's just another plow truck.

Justin's cell phone VIBRATES in his hand. It's a picture message from Leah. A photo of Chinese food on the kitchen table and a message: **where r u?**

INT. CHEVY TAHOE, MOVING

Chris cruises past the Cadillac. The light of the cell phone illuminates the car's interior. Justin glances at the car passing in the road.

And a look passes between JUSTIN and CHRIS.

Some unspoken understanding between brothers.

INT. CADILLAC

Terry looks at the car's clock: **11:03 PM**. He finds 'CHRIS' in the contacts on Justin's phone.

INT. CHEVY TAHOE — NIGHT

Chris u-turns, heads back towards the Cadillac. His cell phone rings. '**Justin calling...**' He answers —

CHRIS

Yea. .

TERRY (V.O.)

You're late, Chris.

CHRIS

Gimme ten minutes.

Chris hangs up.

INT. CADILLAC

Terry watches as the Chevy Tahoe pulls up beside them in the street.

TERRY

T'fuck is this...?

Terry tucks his pistol inside his jacket.

TERRY (CONT'D)
(to Justin)
Don't get stupid.

Chris steps down from the Tahoe and TAPS on the passenger window. His face is hidden under a baseball cap and Terry doesn't recognize him at first, thinking he's just the plow driver. He reluctantly lowers the window.

CHRIS
Guys stuck out here?

TERRY
No, we're waitin' on a friend.

Inconspicuously, Chris reaches inside his jacket and grabs his pistol.

CHRIS
Don't wait too late, alright? Only gonna get worse.

And then it hits Terry. It's CHRIS. Before he can react, Chris whips his pistol out and presses it against Terry's head. With his left hand he reaches in and grabs Terry's wrist so he can't raise his pistol.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Gimme the gun.

Terry doesn't let go.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
J, get outta the car.

Justin climbs out.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Gimme the gun and I'll leave the drugs on the road.

Terry still won't let go.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Gimme the fuckin' gun goddamnit! You can the have the fuckin' drugs, and we both walk away —

Terry RIPS THE PISTOL AWAY, RAISES IT AT CHRIS and —

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BOTH MEN FIRE AT THE SAME TIME!

CHRIS IS HIT IN THE NECK. He drops his pistol and falls to the snow. He tries to stanch the bleeding with his hand. Blood rushes over his fingers.

TERRY

jumps out of the backseat and chases JUSTIN, FIRING HIS GUN.
BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

JUSTIN

races down the embankment and into the forest.

TERRY

feels a sharp pain and looks down. Blood stains through his jacket. HE'S BEEN SHOT IN THE SIDE. He stumbles down the embankment and searches the forest for Justin. It's too dark, the snow too thick to see anything.

He trudges back up the embankment and stands over Chris. Points the pistol down at his head and pulls the trigger. Click. Click. Click. *Out of bullets.* He searches the snow for Chris' pistol, but can't find it.

Fuck it. He runs over to the Chevy Tahoe, looks inside. SEES the TWO DUFFLE BAGS in the truck. Opens the gate and lifts the duffle bags out. He loads them into the trunk of his Cadillac and SPEEDS OFF.

JUSTIN (O.C.)

Chris! CHRIS!

Chris tries to talk, but can't. Justin races out of the woods and kneels down beside Chris. Sees the blood. So much blood.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

Jesus Christ.

Justin lifts Chris under his arms and drags him over to the Tahoe. Pulls him inside the passenger seat. He climbs into the driver's seat and starts the engine.

INT. CHEVY TAHOE, MOVING — NIGHT

Justin holds Chris close as he races down the snow-blanketed streets. He can't see five feet in front of the car.

JUSTIN

It's okay. Stay with me. Stay with me...

Chris' eyes narrow and then close.

FADE OUT.

INT. UNMARKED CROWN VICTORIA — NIGHT

Sayers and Nance sit inside. They watch as Terry's Cadillac pulls into the garage.

NANCE
There's our boy.

INT. TERRY'S EDNEY'S DUPLEX — LATER THAT NIGHT

Terry staggers inside. Weary, dazed, fading.

INT. TERRY'S BEDROOM

Terry lifts the suitcase from the ground, when he HEARS THE DOOR CREAK OPEN. He looks into the hall and sees SAYERS and NANCE creep into the home, pistols drawn.

Terry opens a drawer and remove a pistol. Steps into the hall and — **BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!** NANCE is hit and FALLS, DEAD

Sayers FIRES BACK — hitting Terry in the stomach. Terry falls to the ground, FIRING BACK at Sayers. Sayers is hit in the head and crumples to the floor, dead.

INT. GARAGE

Terry loads the suitcase into the Cadillac beside the drugs. He climbs in behind the wheel now. And breathes. And breathes. He can't muster the strength to start the car. His head slumps against the window and his breathing gets slower and slower until it's gone.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM — PIKE COUNTY POLICE STATION — NIGHT

Justin, crestfallen, exhausted, sits across from DETECTIVES TOMKINS and CHURCH. He has a blanket over his shoulders.

DETECTIVE CHURCH
Lemme run through this again, Justin. You
and your brother went fishing and we're
planning on camping out for the night.
(MORE)

DETECTIVE CHURCH (CONT'D)
Your brother went off to gather some
kindling for a fire and that's when you
heard the gunshots.

Justin nods absently.

DETECTIVE TOMKINS
You didn't see anyone, but you believe it
was probably a group of hunters who
mistakenly shot him?

JUSTIN
Yeah.

DETECTIVE TOMKINS
Yunno, we checked that area and didn't
find any camping equipment. Were you
gonna sleep in the snow?

Justin doesn't respond.

DETECTIVE CHURCH
What Detective Tomkins is saying, Justin,
is that your story is a load of bullshit.
We know that and you know that. I got
eight bodies in the morgue, two of which
are fallen police brothers, good men, and
zero fuckin' answers. Now I know you and
your friends are into this more than
you're lettin' on. Problem is, I can't
prove it cause every fucker that should
be talking to me is dead. But a good
spider always catches his fly in the end.
And I'm nothing if not a patient spider.

The threat hangs in the air. Justin doesn't flinch.
Detectives stand and move to the door.

DETECTIVE CHURCH (CONT'D)
One more thing. Next time you think about
comin' up here, don't.

Detectives exit.

FADE OUT.

INT. BORZELL HOME — DEN — SOME DAYS LATER

Vince sits at the kitchen table with his head in his hands.
Hard to tell if he's mourning someone or awaiting an arrival.

The front door opens. Justin, Barry and Mike enter aiding Chris. Chris looks pale and thin. He's lost about 15 pounds and his neck is heavily bandaged and he can't speak.

VINCE
Hey, there he is!

Vince nears and hugs Chris tightly.

VINCE (CONT'D)
Ya look good, Chris. Real good. How ya' feelin'? Alright?

Chris shakes his head: *ah, so-so.*

VINCE (CONT'D)
How's your voice?

JUSTIN
Doctor said couple'a more weeks before it comes back.

VINCE
Okay. Great. Well go on up. The girls're gettin' the room all ready for ya'.

INT. CHRIS' BEDROOM – MORNING

Kelly and Leah are inside, making the bed. Barry and Mike set Chris down in bed and say their goodbyes.

BARRY
Get some rest.

MIKE
Love ya, pal. Everythin's gonna be alright.

Chris nods. Barry and Mike leave.

LEAH
I'm gonna get some towels.

Leah exits. Kelly sits down beside Chris. He looks weak. He looks scared. She fights off tears, touches his face.

KELLY
Are you okay?

Chris nods.

KELLY (CONT'D)
Tell me you're gonna be okay.

He knows what she's asking.

Will you be okay without me?

He reaches up and touches her face and nods.

Yes.

INT. KITCHEN — MORNING

Justin, Barry and Mike stand by the front door.

BARRY
When're you leavin'?

JUSTIN
Next Sunday.

MIKE
Ah we'll be over before then.

BARRY
(a beat, then)
Why does this feel like the end of
somethin'?

JUSTIN
(touches Barry's shoulder)
Thanks for bringin' him home.

Barry and Mike go. Justin stands in the doorway and watches them drive off. He moves into the kitchen now.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)
Pop? Pop?

VINCE (O.C.)
In the garage.

INT. GARAGE — MORNING

Justin enters. Vince is sifting through old boxes.

JUSTIN
What're you doin', pop?

VINCE
Lookin' for that old TV used'ta be in
your room. Figured Chris could use it.

JUSTIN
Listen, I wanted ta talk to ya about
sometin'.

VINCE
Okay.

JUSTIN
Can ya stop lookin' for a second?

Vince stops rummaging, turns back to Justin.

VINCE
What's up?

JUSTIN
Leah an' me, we're gonna head out to
Oregon. Stay with her sister out there.

VINCE
Oregon? When did all'a this come up?

JUSTIN
We've been thinkin' about it for a while.

VINCE
Well how long ya think you're gonna stay?

JUSTIN
I don't know. We're gonna just see how it
goes. Maybe a while. Fresh start.

Vince is silent, worried for his son. Justin notices, moves
to his father and hugs him with everything he's got.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)
I'm okay now, dad. And I'm gonna be okay
an' I need ya to stop worryin' about me.

VINCE
Okay, son.

JUSTIN
I'm not a boy anymore.

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END