

# carried by six

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**OVER BLACK:**

Events in this film took place along the Texas/Mexico border in 2007.

Names have been changed to protect survivors.

**FADE IN:**

**EXT. DARK FIELD - NIGHT**

Moonlight bathes miles of empty dirt parcels. In the distance, houses with lit windows glow like homing beacons far away from a deserted back road.

SMOKE RISES from--

A BLACK SUV

Still running though it's smashed into a gnarled juniper. The passenger door is flung open but no one is inside. Streaks of dark blood mar tawny leather seats. A melancholy piano tinkles from radio speakers.

PATSY CLINE (ON RADIO)

*...I'm crazy...for thinking that  
my love could hold you...*

Bloody drag marks lie just beyond the open door.

HEADLIGHTS knife through the darkness illuminating--

A MAN on top of a YOUNG WOMAN whose face we can't see.

His hands grip her throat, CHOKING THE LIFE OUT OF HER.

PATSY CLINE (ON RADIO)

*...I'm crazy for trying and crazy  
for crying...and I'm crazy for  
loving you...*

The Young Woman's HAND claws the dirt, reaching for--

A PEARL-HANDLED KNIFE

She stretches her fingertips as she GASPS for air.

With a grip on the handle, she swings the knife at his face. He SHRIEKS in agony and she pushes him off of her.

He lands on his side, KNIFE JUTTING OUT OF HIS NECK.

Spasms rack the man. She climbs on top of him, pulls out the knife and stabs him again and again until...

His body goes still.

Trembling, the girl crawls off the dead man. She looks down at her torn, blood splattered dress and hands.

A HALO flares around her in the headlights and we finally see her. She's 16, raven-haired, lovely. Her girl next door face etched in sorrow and quiet beauty.

She gathers herself and climbs into the wrecked car. The engine dies as she yanks the keys out of the ignition.

She goes to the back and opens the trunk.

**INT. BLACK SUV - TRUNK - NIGHT**

Huddled near the wheel well is a YOUNG BLONDE GIRL, about the same age, shaking, terrified. The girls lock eyes.

**FADE TO WHITE.**

**FADE IN:**

**EXT. TEXAS HIGHWAY - DAWN**

In an isolated lot not far from the border fence DISCOVER-

A SHALLOW GRAVE

Several decaying decapitated HEADS are piled in the dirt. Their eyes and tongues are missing.

A grizzled Fort Hancock SHERIFF stares down into empty eye sockets. Repulsed and perplexed.

His queasy DEPUTY approaches, covering his nose.

DEPUTY

Never seen nothin' like this.

SHERIFF

I have. Cartel wars.

Fear flickers on the young man's face.

DEPUTY

How bad?

SHERIFF

Better get on the horn and perk  
some ears.

He turns away, squinting at storm clouds on the horizon.

**INT. REISMAN HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAWN**

Sparse bachelor pad. Clothes, including a sheriff's uniform, trail to a rumpled bed. FIND--

DEL REISMAN (40), propped on his elbow in bed. Kind and austere, he keeps his feelings close to the vest. He's a man of few words. When those don't work his Colt talks for him. His soft, intelligent eyes watch--

JOANNA KILLEN (20s), sleeping beside him. Serene as she dreams. There's a calm he's not used to seeing. Awake, she's a roman candle. Brilliant and explosive.

Del's cell phone BUZZES on the bedside table. He quickly picks it up but not before Joanna stirs.

DEL

Reisman.

**EXT. TEXAS HIGHWAY - DAWN**

The sheriff paces as he talks on the phone.

SHERIFF

Sheriff Reisman. This is Griffin  
over in Fort Hancock.

**INT. REISMAN HOUSE - CONTINUOUS**

Del watches as Joanna pushes blankets off her naked body.

DEL

What can I do for you this early  
in the mornin', sheriff?

INTERCUT

SHERIFF

Sorry for the wake up call.  
Thought you should know we've had  
some trouble out this way.

Joanna finds her underthings and slides into them.

DEL  
 (covers the receiver)  
 Don't go.

She pulls on a pair of jeans as she glances at the clock.

JOANNA  
 Didn't mean to sleep over--

DEL  
 Gimme a second--

JOANNA  
 I should get home.

He tries to mask his disappointment as she slips out.

SHERIFF  
 You still there?

DEL  
 Yeah. What've you got?

Del makes his way to his window. Watches Joanna climb in her car and drive away.

SHERIFF  
 Got some nasty cartel spillover from across the river. Giving neighboring towns a buzz til border patrol can get out here.

DEL  
 I'm listening...

**EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY**

A dark canopy lingers beyond the trees. A grey coyote scavenges near the wire fenceline, searching for prey.

**INT. KILLEN HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY**

The rise and fall of breath resonates. The most soothing of metronomes. CAL KILLEN (age 4) sleeps deeply.

Joanna, showered and in a robe, sits on the edge of the bed, watching her boy. She rubs his back and kisses him.

She goes to the window. The coyote in the yard is gone.

Outside, the wind picks up. Tree branches bend to its will. In the distance, a rusty brown sky churns.

**INT. KILLEN HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY**

Joanna enters, finds her father ELIJAH (60s) making coffee. He's worn down by sickness and life. Iron willed in spite of it. As he peers out the window--

ELIJAH

Restless out there. Haven't had a dust up this way in a while.

JOANNA

Hoping it'll blow over to El Paso. Slip right by.

With a shaky hand, Elijah pours a mug of black sludge.

JOANNA

Take your meds?

ELIJAH

Got my coffee.

He spills it on the counter.

ELIJAH

Dammit.

He tries to clean up. Joanna moves in with a dish towel--

JOANNA

I got it.

ELIJAH

(cantankerous)  
I can do it.

JOANNA

Just making myself useful.

He concedes. Joanna mops up, then opens a cabinet. It's crammed with Elijah's prescription bottles. She opens a few, pours pills in a bowl and crushes them with a spoon.

JOANNA

Take two yellow before lunch--

ELIJAH

I know.

Joanna pours the ground powder into his mug, then adds coffee. She scoops in a spoonful of sugar and stirs.

JOANNA

And one white after you eat.

ELIJAH

I'm not senile, contrary to popular belief.

She smiles, hands him the mug. He drinks and grimaces.

JOANNA

Don't let Cal sleep too much longer. And no TV til after breakfast.

ELIJAH

Mmmm-hmmm.

Elijah stares out the window.

JOANNA

What's so interesting out there?

ELIJAH

Ruby Pearl. Taking down laundry.

THROUGH THE WINDOW

RUBY PEARL (50s, curvy) is in the yard next door. Sheets billow on a clothes line like tethered hounds fighting to be unleashed. She scrambles to take them down.

ELIJAH

Like it better when she does it in her nightgown.

JOANNA

When did you become a peeping tom?

ELIJAH

I'm just a man looking outta 'ma window.

JOANNA

Look too hard, you'll go blind.

Elijah smiles. She kisses his cheek.

JOANNA

Gotta get ready for work.

ELIJAH

(as she goes)  
Eyes on six.

Joanna nods and heads down the hall. Elijah lingers at the window, enjoying his coffee and the view.

**EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY**

An old blue F-150 PICK-UP drives down a lonely stretch. At this point along the Texas/Mexico border, the Rio Grande isn't much more than a stream.

The truck closes in on an isolated small town. A dusty Texas oasis in prairie country. Passes a weathered sign--

ASCENSION, TX -- 12 Miles

**EXT. EMMALINE'S DINER - DAY**

A sleepy greasy spoon. Faded lunch special decals dress up dirty windows. All alone on the edge of town it feels like it could be at the end of the world.

The blue pick-up pulls into the diner parking lot.

The driver's side door opens. Out step a pair of COWBOY BOOTS. Reveal ABEL FLORES (20s), a hot-headed fireplug.

A pair of dirty, beat-to-shit red Chuck Taylors step out of the passenger side. They belong to--

THE DRIFTER, dark-haired, five o'clock shadow, intense. The kinda man who'd stare down an oncoming freight train without flinching.

As Drifter eyes the diner, Abel moves in beside him. Drifter stubs out his cigarette and they head inside.

**INT. EMMALINE'S DINER - DAY**

Bells JINGLE as Abel and Drifter enter.

The diner is empty except for a TRUCKER sitting at the counter plowing through a Denver omelette. He talks football with the COOK as he waits for the morning rush.

EMMALINE (60s), a faded Texas beauty, approaches them.

EMMALINE

Mornin'.

DRIFTER

Ain't you the prettiest thing this side of the Rio.

Emmaline is taken aback. Compliments around here are rare as rain. Drifter smiles at her. Charming devil.

EMMALINE

Too early to be serving up that  
kinda hooey.

But she fights a smile just the same.

EMMALINE

Counter or booth?

DRIFTER

Booth. Our party's already here.

At a table near the back, three MEXICAN MEN are halfway through breakfast. Emmaline bristles at the group. They're loud and obnoxious. She grabs sticky menus.

EMMALINE

Suit yourself.  
(offers a menu)  
Specials.

DRIFTER

Thank you, ma'am.

EMMALINE

What'll you take to start?

DRIFTER

Somethin' fizzy.

EMMALINE

Anything in particular?

DRIFTER

Surprise me.

EMMALINE

And your friend?

Abel's eyes are fixed on the men. He shakes his head.

DRIFTER

Nothin' for him but I'll take  
another one of those smiles if you  
got one.

She can't help herself. A smile blooms.

DRIFTER

Sunrise ain't got nothin' on you.

EMMALINE

I'll get your drink.

She peels off. Abel and Drifter head to the back.

DRIFTER

See that? Just like a flower.  
Give 'em a little love, a little  
attention, they blossom.

RAFAEL is chief, flanked on either side by two PARTNERS. They joke as they enjoy pancakes, eggs and bacon. Abel and Drifter ease into cracked vinyl across from them.

DRIFTER

Started without us? Now, boys,  
where're your manners?

Emmaline brings over a tray with more food. She sets a frosty Coke bottle in front of Drifter.

EMMALINE

Anything else?

DRIFTER

We're fine. Thank you, darlin'.

He winks at her. Emmaline sidles away smiling. As she passes Cook at the counter he raises an eyebrow.

COOK

Robbin' the cradle now, Em?

EMMALINE

Hush up, Hank...

He and the trucker chuckle.

At the back table, Abel takes the lead as a discussion begins in Spanish. Their dialogue is SUBTITLED.

ABEL

*You got what we want?*

Rafael eyes Drifter as he sips his soda.

RAFAEL

*What's with the fucking white boy?*

PARTNER #1

*They got you baby sitting now?*

PARTNER #2

*Nah, he got demoted to translator.*

They laugh. Abel glares at him.

DRIFTER  
 (perfect Spanish)  
*Where's the package?*

Rafael and his buddies exchange surprised glances. Beat.

RAFAEL  
*Depends on how much you want to negotiate.*

DRIFTER  
*This look like fucking Tijuana to you? You see me selling chiclets? We don't barter, we don't trade, we don't fucking negotiate.*

RAFAEL  
*Too bad, bro. 'Cause what you want ain't here.*

DRIFTER  
*Where is it?*

RAFAEL  
*Somewhere safe.*

He shoves bacon into his mouth and smiles.

Abel SLAMS his fist on the table. Dishes rattle.

ABEL  
*Where the fuck is it!?*

DRIFTER  
*Calm down, Abel.*

RAFAEL  
*Listen to your boss, errand boy.*

They trade heated stares. Abel settles down.

DRIFTER  
*Let's hear it.*

RAFAEL  
*It's stashed. Not far from here. You can have it. As long as you pay the tax.*

DRIFTER  
*Tax?*

RAFAEL  
*Delivery charge. Forty percent.*

Rafael eats another piece of bacon.

RAFAEL

*Gotta start saving for a rainy  
day, y'know? Why are the big dogs  
the only ones that get to eat?*

*(a smile; then)*

*We got a deal or what?*

Drifter smiles. Then rips out a fucking HAND CANNON -- a nickel plated .44 Desert Eagle with busty, red-lipped PIN-UP GIRLS winking and blowing kisses engraved on the grip.

BLAM! BLAM! He SHOOTs both Rafael's partners in the head. Rafael flinches as their blood peppers his face.

At the counter, the trucker jumps at the crack of gunfire. He turns, sees the slumped over dead men.

TRUCKER

Fuck!

Bells CHIME as he bolts out the door.

Emmaline and Cook duck behind the counter and hide.

IN THE BOOTH

Abel pulls his 9MM. Drifter motions him towards the exit. Abel follows the trucker outside.

Drifter watches Rafael. He's shaking, trying to hold it together. Rafael lifts his eyes to Drifter's, defiant.

Drifter eats the last of Rafael's bacon.

DRIFTER

*Not gon' ask again.*

**EXT. EMMALINE'S DINER - PARKING LOT - DAY**

WINDS have picked up. Dust swirls around the trucker as he stumbles towards his semi. He climbs into his truck cab, reaching for something in the glove box.

The trucker yanks it open and grabs--

a snubnosed .38.

The window EXPLODES as Abel BLASTS out the glass.

He fires two slugs into the man's chest before he can get off a shot.

The trucker goes limp and drops the gun.

Abel fires once more, blowing a hole in his head.

He climbs down the semi steps, crunching shattered shards beneath his boots as he stalks back towards the diner.

**INT. SHERIFF'S STATION - DAY**

A FRAMED TEXAS FLAG hangs on the wall, high above a few cluttered desks behind an attending counter. The computers, faxes and phones are years behind the times.

Del sits at his desk reading the local paper, the Ascension Daily Sun. He looks up as--

Joanna blows in, dressed in her deputy uniform.

JOANNA

Mess out there.

DEL

Weather man said it might be a mean one.

They lock eyes for a moment. Joanna looks away.

JOANNA

Tried to call to tell you I was running late. Couldn't get through on my cell.

HOLLIS (O.S.)

Can't get through half the time on a good day.

Del's secretary HOLLIS (60s) looks up from her work.

HOLLIS

Somethin' tells me today ain't gon' be the day it gets better.

Joanna settles in at her desk.

HOLLIS

How's your father?

JOANNA

Ornery as ever.

HOLLIS

Feeling better with the new meds?

JOANNA

If by better you mean yellin' and bossin' everyone around then, yes.

DEL

Once a sheriff, always a sheriff. Yellin' comes with the territory.

JOANNA

Anything else going on?

He wants to say something to her but decides on business.

DEL

Nothing too exciting. Hiram's garage window's blown out. Tree fell over in Mrs. Enwright's yard.

JOANNA

Everybody alright?

DEL

Yeah but we'll probably have to do some welfare checks if the storm gets any worse.

JOANNA

I'll do the first run right after Travis and Gabe get in. Gonna do a supply check on the cruiser.

Joanna steps out and wind blows in as the door closes.

**INT. SHERIFF'S CRUISER - DAY**

Joanna reaches for a utility duffle from the passenger floor. As she does, her radio CRACKLES to life.

GABE (V.O. / ON RADIO)

Bandit, this is Smokey. Come back.

She cracks a smile as she grabs the receiver and talks.

JOANNA

You been drinkin' again, Gabe?

**INT. GABE'S SHERIFF'S CRUISER (MOVING) - DAY**

Bearded and scrappy, DEPUTY GABE FOSTER (20s) grins as he navigates the road. Enjoying their sibling-like vibe.

GABE  
 Not since I woke up.  
 (grins; then)  
 Got debris in the road. Gonna  
 clear. Let the boss man know.

**INT. SHERIFF'S CRUISER - CONTINUOUS**

Static FLARES on the radio. Joanna adjusts the dials.

JOANNA  
 Copy that. Get in when you can.  
 And bring coffee.

GABE (V.O. / ON RADIO)  
 You got it.

She replaces the mic and gets out.

**EXT. SHERIFF'S STATION - DAY**

The open trunk of a cruiser. Joanna leans in and checks a box of emergency supplies as Del approaches behind her.

DEL  
 How's it lookin'?

JOANNA  
 Good. Almost set.

He nods and watches her a moment. Waiting. She looks up.

JOANNA  
 Somethin' wrong?

DEL  
 Found this on my bathroom floor.

He pulls a small gold hoop EARRING out of his pocket and offers it to her.

DEL  
 Can't have you goin' 'round with  
 bare ear lobes. Although, I  
 wouldn't complain about the rest.

He smiles. She takes it from his hand.

JOANNA  
 Thought I lost it.

DEL

That's me. Bringer of hope. Finder of earrings. Also grill a mean rib eye. So I've been thinkin'...

JOANNA

Always trouble when you do that.

DEL

Maybe after the shift I could throw some meat on the fire and you could come over. Nothing fancy. Except you.

She manages a smile. He senses her hedging.

DEL

Gotta eat.

JOANNA

I can't be away from the house for long.

DEL

Thought about that and wanted to extend the invitation to your father. Cal too. If you want.

She goes still. This hits close to home.

JOANNA

Daddy's not one for goin' out much these days. Let me think about it.

DEL

You're thinking too much. That's the problem. I can see the wheels behind those eyes just turnin'.

JOANNA

(amused)  
Can you now?

DEL

You're thinkin' we're doing things backwards.

JOANNA

And upside down. And at the wrong time.

DEL

Can't say much about the timing but I like the direction.

She looks at him and sees adoration staring back at her. Complicated feelings for him play across her face.

JOANNA

We had a good time.

DEL

I thought so. 'Til you ran out like you were on fire this mornin.

JOANNA

(a pause)

I haven't done this in a while.  
I just need time.

Del digests this. He points to her shirt.

DEL

You've got something there.

JOANNA

Where?

A sliver of her collar bone is visible near the top of her uniform. He reaches over, pulls a loose thread.

JOANNA

Thank you.

They linger close a moment. He twirls a strand of her hair around his fingertip.

DEL

Y'know, one of these days you're gonna run out of excuses.

(smiles)

Might even be today.

He turns away and heads back inside. Joanna watches him go and can't help smiling.

#### **INT. SHERIFF'S STATION - DAY**

Del sits at his desk and returns to his paper. He looks up from the print and gazes at Joanna through the window.

HOLLIS

Seems like you've got a lot on your mind, sheriff.

Del turns. Sees Hollis watching him watch Joanna.

DEL

Now, Hollis, refresh my memory.  
Do I pay you to run the office or  
that mouth of yours?

HOLLIS

Little of both last time I  
checked.

Del shoots her a playful "mind your own business" glance.

The phone RINGS.

DEL

Phone ain't gon' answer itself.

Hollis smiles, then picks up the line.

HOLLIS

(on the phone)  
Sheriff's office.

**INT. EMMALINE'S DINER - KITCHEN - SAME TIME**

Emmaline is hunched on the floor, huddled in a corner.

EMMALINE

(feverish whisper)  
Hollis! It's me. There're men  
here. They got guns--

**INT. SHERIFF'S STATION - DAY**

Hollis perks up at the urgency in the voice. There's  
crackling on the line. Her voice goes in and out.

HOLLIS

Emmaline? That you? Speak up. I  
can't understand you--

INTERCUT

EMMALINE

Send the sheriff! We need help--

HOLLIS

What? I can't hear you--

EMMALINE

No...NO!

Then a noise. A bang. Was that a gunshot?

HOLLIS  
Emmaline? ...Emma?

The line goes dead.

LIGHTS DIM. Then, the entire station goes DARK.

DEL  
Power's out.

Hollis frantically dials a number.

HOLLIS  
So's the phone.

She hangs up.

HOLLIS  
Something's wrong over at the  
diner.

DEL  
What'd Emmaline say?

HOLLIS  
I could only make out parts of it.  
Something about a man there. And  
then there was a noise--

DEL  
What kinda noise?

Hollis' face darkens.

HOLLIS  
Sounded like a shot.

DEL  
You're sure?

HOLLIS  
I know my sister. She was scared.

Del absorbs the gravity of this. Joanna re-enters.

JOANNA  
Power out? I saw the lights--

DEL  
We've got a problem. Might be  
gunfire at Emmaline's.

Joanna steals a look at Hollis, sees a flicker of fear.

JOANNA

Anybody hurt?

DEL

Can't be sure. Phone's out.  
Power probably is too. We've  
gotta get over there.

JOANNA

Travis can get there faster. He  
always stops on his way in.

DEL

I'll try to get him on the radio.

Del gets on the old police radio, tries to get a signal.

HOLLIS

Anything?

DEL

Static.

Joanna goes into the supply closet and retrieves several  
two-way walkie-talkie CB RADIOS. She sets the channels.

JOANNA

(into radio)

Test, test.

The radios CRACKLES with her voice.

DEL

We're good. Let's move.

He meets Hollis' eye as he and Joanna move to the door.

DEL

You need anything, channel one.

Wind scatters papers as they rush out.

**EXT. EMMALINE'S DINER - PARKING LOT - DAY**

Darkness devours daylight as clouds move in. Abel and  
Drifter drag Rafael to the truck.

Abel punches Rafael in the face. He crumples to the  
ground, tries to get up but is leveled by vicious kicks.

DRIFTER

Wait.

Drifter stares down the road. Abel follows his gaze.

A sheriff's CRUISER closes in.

DRIFTER

Get him in the truck.

Abel shoves Rafael into the cab and slides in beside him. He pushes Rafael down on the floor and holds the gun on him with a free hand as he backs the truck up.

Drifter disappears inside the diner.

Abel throws the truck in reverse, backs out of the parking space and pulls away.

**INT. SHERIFF'S CRUISER - MOMENTS LATER**

The cruiser glides in and parks. DEPUTY TRAVIS BRADLEY (30s), an amiable jarhead, turns off the car. His beefy fingers turns down the static on his radio.

He checks his cell phone, sees a message: NO SERVICE.

TRAVIS

Shit.

He grabs the keys and gets out.

**INT. EMMALINE'S DINER - DAY**

Travis enters and finds the place deserted.

TRAVIS

Emmaline? Mind if I use your phone? My cell's out.

No answer. He bellies up to his usual stool at the counter.

TRAVIS

Take a steak and egg scramble too.

Still nothing. Travis sees ketchup spilled on the floor near the kitchen.

TRAVIS

Hank, you're gettin' sloppy, boy. Got ketchup all over the floor.

He inspects the dark, sticky red stuff on the floor. A realization strikes him -- that ain't Heinz.

Travis looks around. Sees the dead men in the back booth. He unholsters his GUN, eyes searching for signs of life. Weapon drawn, he moves towards the kitchen.

**INT. EMMALINE'S DINER - KITCHEN - DAY**

Travis eases in. He sees the Cook shot dead, vacant eyes staring into eternity.

Near the stove, Emmaline is in a pool of her own blood. Shot in the chest. Gasping for air.

Travis rushes to her.

TRAVIS

My God...Emmaline...can you hear me?

Travis presses a hand to her wound. Her eyes widen.

EMMALINE

B-be--

TRAVIS

Don't try to talk--

EMMALINE

...b-behind...

Travis whirls around. The .44 is jammed in his face.

TRAVIS

No--

Drifter FIRES. Travis collapses in a heap. Dead before he hits the tile.

Drifter kneels before Emmaline. Quiet. Almost penitent. Tears spill down her cheeks as she meets his eyes.

He leans close, pressing his mouth to her trembling lips. The kiss lingers as he savors the moment.

**INT. F-150 PICK-UP - DAY**

Engine running, Abel sits behind the wheel watching the diner door. He turns to Rafael crouched under the dash.

ABEL

*Talk shit now, asshole.*

Rafael says nothing. An old screwdriver beneath the seat catches his eye. He reaches for it as--

A GUNSHOT rings out. Abel glances at the diner.

Rafael grabs the screwdriver and gut-stabs Abel over and over. Abel punches him. Rafael drops the screwdriver.

Abel reaches for his 9MM and they wrestle over it.

The gun FIRES.

Rafael lunges at Abel, jams him against the door, then pulls the handle. Abel falls out of the truck.

Rafael slides into the driver's seat and guns the engine.

Abel can only watch as the truck speeds away.

**EXT. EMMALINE'S DINER - PARKING LOT - DAY**

Bells CHIME as Drifter exits the diner. He stalks across asphalt and finds Abel bleeding and crawling towards him.

ABEL  
(reaches for him)  
H-help...me....

Drifter looks around. The truck and Rafael are nowhere to be found.

DRIFTER  
Which way?

Abel drags himself closer. He grabs a handful of Drifter's pant leg.

ABEL  
Help...

Drifter steps back. Abel's hand drops.

DRIFTER  
East or West?

Abel's bloody finger points West.

ABEL  
(coughing up blood)  
P-please...

The wind kicks up. Drifter raises his pistol. Abel stares down the barrel of the gun.

**INT. SHERIFF'S CRUISER - DAY**

Drifter climbs into the driver's seat. Using Travis' keys, he starts up the engine and throws it in reverse.

**EXT. EMMALINE'S DINER - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS**

The cruiser's back tires ease past Abel's dead body. It coasts out of the lot and slingshots down the highway.

**INT. F-150 PICK-UP (MOVING) - DAY**

Rafael speeds down the road. Putting distance between him and the diner. The fence separating Texas and Mexico ends. The truck blazes by a weathered sign--

ASCENSION

*Closer to God*

Sweat pours down Rafael's brow as he touches the hole in his shirt. He grimaces as he looks at his hand. It's covered in blood from the gunshot wound to his stomach.

Rafael grips the steering wheel as he drives on.

**EXT. SHERIFF'S STATION - DAY**

An old gas generator ROARS to life. Hollis closes a small power hatch and makes her way around the building.

She stops, mid-stride, awash with a sense of dread.

On the horizon, the dust storm stirs like a crimson hurricane coming to shore. Hollis heads back inside.

**INT. SHERIFF'S STATION - DAY**

Lights are back on. Hollis goes to her desk, gets the CB.

HOLLIS

(on the radio)

Sheriff? Sheriff do you read me?

Beat. Her radio CRACKLES. There is no answer.

**EXT. EMMALINE'S DINER - PARKING LOT - DAY**

Del and Joanna get out of the cruiser. They spot Abel's body and instinctively draw their guns.

DEL

Stay close.

They move to the door and slowly enter.

**INT. EMMALINE'S DINER - DAY**

Del and Joanna stand in the doorway clocking the dead Mexicans in the booth. Joanna tries to mask her fear as she checks their bodies. No one else in sight.

Joanna nods, giving Del the all-clear. He eases into--

**INT. EMMALINE'S DINER - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS**

Del's face darkens as he takes in the carnage. He's old school tough. Unshakable. But this unnerves even him. Joanna moves in behind him. He tries to stop her.

DEL

Joanna, wait--

It's too late. Her eyes linger on the faces she's known for years. Now gruesome lifeless mannequins.

She turns and bolts.

**INT. EMMALINE'S DINER - CONTINUOUS**

Joanna tries to make it outside but can't. She vomits on the floor. It takes her a moment to catch her breath.

DEL

(offers a napkin)

Here. You alright?

He knows the answer. But she nods anyway.

JOANNA

Yeah.

As she cleans herself up Del moves to the booth. He looks over the bodies. Both are inked with "Z" tattoos.

DEL

Fallout from across the border.  
Cartel wars in our backyard.

Bloody SHOE PRINTS catch his eye.

DEL

Got boot prints about size nine.  
Looks like our guy outside.

JOANNA

Somebody's missing.

She points to the trail out the door.

JOANNA

Wearing tennis shoes.

Del follows the shoe prints outside.

**EXT. EMMALINE'S DINER - DAY**

They stand over Abel's body. Del kneels down and gives it a once-over. Joanna is mesmerized by the bullet hole in the dead man's head.

DEL

No ink on this one. Probably not  
playing for the same team.

He lifts the shirt and examines the stab wounds.

DEL

He and Sneakers go in the diner,  
surprise our friends in the booth.  
Kill the witnesses.

JOANNA

Then he stabs him and shoots him  
in the head? Doesn't seem right.

Del glances at the diner. Putting it together.

DEL

Might've been three instead of two  
inside.

JOANNA

(catching on)  
Straggler gets the jump on this  
one.

Her eyes return to the bullet hole.

DEL

Then his partner turns on him.  
Dead weight execution.

This is right. Del can feel it in his bones. He stands.

DEL

Travis's car's missing. One of  
them took it. No way to tell  
which way they went.

Del peers down the highway.

JOANNA

Could be to town.

DEL

(a beat)  
Possible.

Her expression is grim.

JOANNA

One of us should go for help.

DEL

Fifty miles to El Paso. Another  
twenty to everything else. No way  
we make it before the storm hits.

The sky rages as the dust storm draws closer.

JOANNA

We can't handle this on our own.

DEL

Don't have much choice.  
(then)  
Let's get back.

Del strides to the cruiser. Joanna follows.

**EXT. BACK ROAD - DAY**

A sheriff's cruiser drives down the lane.

NEAR THE TREELINE

Two girls huddle close. A blonde and a brunette, haunted  
and angelic.

The cruiser stops near them. Gabe leans out his window.

GABE  
You girls need help?

The girls stare at him for a long moment.

**INT. SHERIFF'S CRUISER (MOVING) - DAY**

STATIC hisses on the radio. Gabe gives up on trying to find a signal and watches the girls in the backseat through the rearview.

GABE  
Shouldn't be hitchhiking out here.  
Back roads ain't no place for  
pretty girls like you.

The brunette catches his eye in the mirror but doesn't respond. Gabe tries to fill the silence.

GABE  
Y'all got names?

BRUNETTE  
She's Iliana.

GABE  
And you?

BRUNETTE  
Estrella.

GABE  
Don't that mean moon or something?

ESTRELLA  
Star.

GABE  
It's all in the sky, right?

He chuckles. She doesn't.

GABE  
She your sister?

ESTRELLA  
Cousin.

Gabe watches Iliana. Can't see past the veil of blonde hair covering her face.

GABE  
Don't talk much, huh?

Iliana gazes out the window. Estrella watches him.  
 He notices bruises and scratches on her neck and arms.

GABE  
 Where were y'all headed before  
 your car broke down?

ESTRELLA  
 Fort Hancock.

GABE  
 Which part?  
 (off her silence)  
 Not bein' nosy. Just askin'. Got  
 family out that way.

ESTRELLA  
 East side.

GABE  
 Near Tayboure?

ESTRELLA  
 'Round about.

Gabe chews on this a spell.

GABE  
 Storm's gonna be a mess. We'll  
 hole up at the station til it  
 passes then get you situated with  
 your car. Sound alright?

Iliana looks at Estrella. Panicked. She reaches for the  
 car door handle. Estrella peels her hand away.

ESTRELLA  
 Just fine.

Gabe turns back to the road and drives on. Estrella  
 takes Iliana's hand and interlocks their fingers.

**INT. KILLEN HOUSE - DAY**

CAL'S HANDS grip the barrel of a silver CAP GUN. A toy  
 six shooter right out of the Wild West.

ON THE COFFEE TABLE

TOY ROBOTS are lined up, hands in the air like suspects.

Cal takes aim. He shoots and misses.

ELIJAH (O.S.)

Remember what I taught you.

Elijah stands in the kitchen doorway observing. He motions for the toy and Cal hands it to him.

ELIJAH

Get in your stance.

He settles into a firing stance. Cal mimics it.

CAL

Like this?

ELIJAH

Just like that. Now take a breath. Aim. Squeeze.

Elijah takes a breath, then aims the barrel at the robot. Tremors rattle his hands. He can't hold it steady.

Cal watches as Elijah SHOOTs.

He misses. All the robots remain standing.

Elijah regroups, aims again. Concentrating. His hand shaking even more than before.

A gust of WIND blows the screen door open. The robots topple over.

Cal and Elijah exchange looks.

ELIJAH

That counts.

Elijah smiles at his grandson and ruffles his hair. Cal squints up at him, not quite sure if he's teasing.

RUBY PEARL (O.S.)

Elijah?

Elijah moves to the screen door. Finds Ruby Pearl approaching, shawl wrapped around her shoulders.

ELIJAH

Mornin'.

RUBY PEARL

Your barn's wide open.

Elijah goes to the window. Sees she's right.

RUBY PEARL  
Saw Midnight running around your  
fields. Wanted to let you know.

ELIJAH  
Weather musta spooked her.  
(under his breath)  
Thought I fixed that damn latch.

He looks at Cal, then back out the window. Torn.

RUBY PEARL  
I can watch Cal while you get her.

ELIJAH  
Wouldn't wanna trouble you.

She glances at the boy as he quietly plays with his toys.

RUBY PEARL  
No trouble at all. I got nobody  
to talk to over there. This'll be  
an improvement.

They share a smile.

ELIJAH  
Sure you won't mind?

RUBY PEARL  
Can't leave her out in all this.

Elijah nods, then grabs his hat.

ELIJAH  
Gotta go out a while, cowboy.

CAL  
Can I come too, paw-paw?

ELIJAH  
Not this time. Now you be good  
for Mrs. Baker, y'hear?

CAL  
Yessir.

Elijah pauses near Ruby Pearl. Puts on his cowboy hat.

ELIJAH  
Appreciate it.

She pats his shoulder fondly and watches as he pulls on a  
coat and disappears out the door.

**INT. SHERIFF'S CRUISER (MOVING) - DAY**

Del and Joanna drive in silence. Dirt pelts the windows like a thousand drumming fingertips.

DEL

Nomads. That's what border patrol's been calling them. Some are ex-military. Some are ex-cops. All hired hands.

JOANNA

Working with the cartel?

DEL

Hired by them to keep their foot soldiers in line.

JOANNA

So they're enforcers.

DEL

(nods)

Given the go-ahead to use whatever force necessary to keep their product moving from there to here.

JOANNA

I've read the border patrol reports about the cartel shootings, the stabbings...

DEL

That's just the tip of it. Entire families have been tortured and burned alive for talking to the police. Just this mornin' they found a shallow grave on our side of the fence filled with seven heads. Still lookin' for the bodies. Somebody'd cut out their eyes and tongues.

This disturbs Joanna. She works to conceal it.

DEL

Some men are born with conscience. Others...

(shakes his head)

No words for what they are.

JOANNA

Thought all that was far away from here.

DEL

So did I.

They drive on. An aura of unease settles in.

DEL

I've been thinkin' 'bout what you said back there. Might be best if you do try to get out of town.

JOANNA

Then it'll just be you and Gabe.

DEL

We'll be alright. We'll handle it.

She looks at him. Trying to read his face.

JOANNA

I don't need hand-holding.

DEL

Not sayin' you do--

JOANNA

All my life people been protecting me. My father. Now you. I can stand on my own.

DEL

You don't have enough time under your belt. Not for this.

JOANNA

Nobody does.

He turns to her.

DEL

I made your father a promise when he stepped down and you came on. Said I'd take care of this town and I'd take care of you.  
(looks at her)  
Promises I intend to keep.

JOANNA

I'm not leaving.

Their eyes meet. Unspoken trust between them.

DEL

Travis. Hank. Emmaline...  
They deserved better...

JOANNA

What do we tell Hollis?

A wave of emotion washes over Del. He clenches his jaw.

DEL

I'll handle it.

**EXT. BARREN FIELDS - DAY**

The SHADOW OF A MAN on horseback eases across a broken barbed wire fenceline.

Elijah scans the pasture. A tiny spec of something black in the distance catches his eye.

Urging the horse forward, he pulls on the reins and guides it off the property, onto an empty back road.

**EXT. BACK ROAD - DAY**

Elijah rides to a cluster of trees. Pacing near them is MIDNIGHT, a beautiful black mare.

As he gets closer, Midnight snorts, eyes wide with fear.

ELIJAH

Easy...easy girl...

His gentle tone allows him to close the gap between them.

ELIJAH

That's it...good...

She allows him to rope her. Elijah pulls her close and rubs her nose.

ELIJAH

Let's go home.

As he leads her away he sees--

The CRASHED BLACK SUV the girls got out of in the opening.

A hundred yards down the road. Wrapped around a juniper.

Elijah ties Midnight to a post, then rides over to it.

As he gets closer he hears GROWLING. A grey coyote chews on something near the front tire...

REVEAL a DEAD BODY.

ELIJAH  
Get outta here! Go!

The coyote bears its teeth. Elijah's horse REARS UP and he fights to control it. The wild dog scurries away.

He eases the horse around the SUV, taking in the signs of a struggle, blood on the seats...

Elijah yanks the reins away from the SUV and gallops off.

**INT. SHERIFF'S STATION - DAY**

Del and Joanna enter, bringing the wind with them. Hollis makes a beeline for them.

DEL  
Still no Gabe?

HOLLIS  
Not yet.  
(then)  
Did you talk to Emmaline?

DEL  
A lot happened at the diner. I'll  
bring you up to speed.

There's an officiality to his tone that strikes her cold. Hollis steals a look at Joanna who can't meet her eyes.

HOLLIS  
Sheriff, what's going on? Is my  
sister alright?

DEL  
Let's talk in here.

Del leads Hollis to a nearby office. Joanna stays near the entrance, watching them.

OFFICE DOORWAY

A cry of grief escapes Hollis as Del breaks the news. Her hands go to her mouth. She has to sit down.

Joanna can only watch from afar. Moved by her heartbreak.

THROUGH THE WINDOW

The highway is visible, less than a quarter mile away. An F-150 coasts across the meridian lane divider. It keeps gliding until it SLAMS into a telephone pole.

A car horn BLARES.

JOANNA

Del...

Joanna goes to the window. Del isn't far behind.

DEL

What is it?

JOANNA

Accident.

She punches out the door.

**EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY**

Joanna's cruiser drives up the main road and pulls to a stop behind the crashed truck. She and Del get out.

INSIDE THE TRUCK

Rafael is slumped at the wheel.

Joanna yanks the door open and pulls his head back. The horn stops. She touches his neck, feels for a pulse.

JOANNA

He's alive.

DEL

Let's get him out.

They pick him up and he moans in pain.

RAFAEL

No...

DEL

You're okay...

They drag him to the back seat of the cruiser. She peels back his blood soaked shirt. An oozing bullet wound seeps all over the serpentine "Zetas" etched across his abs.

JOANNA

He's one of them.

Del stares at the man. Not liking this.

DEL

Yeah.

JOANNA

Nobody'd cry if we just let him...

He looks at her.

DEL

We don't do that.

JOANNA

Wouldn't he do it to us?

DEL

We play by their rules and we ain't no better than they are.

This soaks in. After a beat--

JOANNA

Let's get him to the station.

DEL

We need answers. He's got 'em.  
Do what you can for him.

JOANNA

What about you?

DEL

Drop him off then come and get me.  
Hollis can help. Gonna search the  
truck and get it off the road.

Joanna jumps in the cruiser and drives off.

Del goes to the truck and climbs inside.

DOWN THE HIGHWAY

A different cruiser brakes to a stop in the middle of the road, just short of the crash site.

Del doesn't see it. The cruiser eases towards the truck.

**INT. SHERIFF'S STATION - DAY**

Joanna pulls Rafael through the door. He's barely conscious on his feet as she drags him inside.

JOANNA

Hollis! Need your help!

Hollis is taken aback by the sight of the man.

HOLLIS

My God...

She helps Joanna carry him into the office.

JOANNA

Here! Put him here!

Joanna motions to a desk and Hollis sweeps it clear. They struggle and finally get him on it.

RAFAEL

No...no...

He makes a feeble attempt to stand but fails.

JOANNA

Stay down.

HOLLIS

I'll get the first aid.

She moves off, then returns with a small orange box.

Joanna strips his shirt off. Examines his wound.

JOANNA

Bullet's still inside. Not much we can do except try to stop the bleeding.

She retrieves gauze from the kit and presses down. Rafael SCREAMS.

HOLLIS

Thought he was in a car crash.

JOANNA

He was shot. At the diner.

Hollis absorbs the meaning of this.

HOLLIS

One of them.

She backs away, wanting no parts of him.

Joanna slaps Rafael's face hard.

JOANNA

Who did this to you?

His head bobs as he nods in and out of consciousness.

JOANNA

Hey! Don't you black out on me.  
(shakes him)  
Who shot you?

RAFAEL

(in Spanish)  
...*the package*...

JOANNA

What package?

He looks at her. Eyes filled with agony and panic.

RAFAEL

...*he's...coming*...

HOLLIS

What's he saying?

Joanna turns to the window. Peers toward the highway.

JOANNA

Somebody's coming.

**EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY**

Del pushes the truck onto the shoulder. He strikes a FLARE and drops it in the dirt. As it falls we see a pair of worn out red sneakers closing in.

DRIFTER

Need a hand?

Del turns, sees him approaching.

DEL

Got it under control.

DRIFTER

Nasty crash. Everybody okay?

Drifter moves close. He leans in and takes a good look inside the truck. Sees nothing but blood and glass.

Del's struck by his boldness. Spidey senses tingling.

DEL

Driver was injured but we're taking care of him. You should get off the road...get home...

Blood on the man's pants leg catches Del's eye. Then the shoes. Del meets Drifter's eye.

DRIFTER

Where is he? Maybe I can help.

Del draws his Colt. He aims it at Drifter.

DEL

Hands in the air!

DRIFTER

Whoa! Take it easy--

Del steps forward, finger on trigger.

DEL

Now!

Drifter slowly puts his hands up.

DRIFTER

You're making a mistake.

**INT. SHERIFF'S CRUISER (MOVING) - DAY**

Joanna hauls ass up the road. On the horizon she sees--

A WALL OF DUST, just beyond the highway. Barreling in like the tidal wave of a mushroom cloud.

**EXT. HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS**

Arms raised, Drifter watches Del.

DRIFTER

You don't wanna do this.

DEL

Those people you gunned down at that diner were my friends.

Del stares at him. Ice water in his veins.

DRIFTER

The man you're holding's got something I need. You give him to me and I ride off into the sunset.

(beat)

Make it worth your while.

Darkness descends on them. Del steps closer.

DEL  
Link your fingers behind your head  
and turn around.

A beat. Drifter smiles.

DRIFTER  
Got ourselves a bonafide boy  
scout.

HEADLIGHTS illuminate them as Joanna's cruiser comes to a stop. She gets out, gun drawn.

JOANNA  
Del, you alright?

DEL  
Will be. Soon as he's in holding.

Drifter glances over his shoulder. Spots Joanna.

DRIFTER  
This is some kinda  
misunderstanding.

Del keeps his gun trained on Drifter. Nods to Joanna.

DEL  
Cuff him.

Joanna holsters her weapon and pats him down. Finds the .44 in his waistband. She tosses it in the dirt.

JOANNA  
Misunderstanding.

Drifter simmers. Joanna takes out the bracelets.

JOANNA  
Hands behind your back.

DRIFTER  
Whatever you say, beautiful.

Drifter lowers his arms. With a burst of speed, he pivots and elbows Joanna in the face.

Joanna doubles over but Drifter yanks her up, grabs her around the throat, and uses her as a human shield.

DEL  
Joanna!

Del can't get off a clean shot.

Joanna and Drifter struggle. He's going for her gun. It's halfway out of the holster when--

Del lunges at Drifter, knocking him to the ground as--

THE WALL OF DUST sandblasts into them.

Del and Drifter trade brutal punches.

JOANNA

Del!

Joanna reaches for her gun. It's gone.

She sees it a few feet away from her in the dirt.

Fighting the wind, she crawls to it.

NEAR THE TRUCK

Drifter rolls on top of Del. He's picked up his gun and uses all his strength to force it towards Del's face.

Del and Drifter lock eyes.

The gun barrel inches closer...closer...pressing cold steel into Del's cheek.

Joanna grabs her pistol. Wheels around towards the men.

BLAM!

Shock jolts Joanna. She sees Del's arms go limp.

JOANNA

(horrified whisper)

No...

The gravity of what's happened doesn't have time to register. Reality closes in as Drifter swings the gun in her direction.

Joanna's HEARTBEAT pounds in her ears. Faster...faster...

For a moment, she cannot move.

The gun bears down on her. Drifter starts BLASTING.

She dives to the ground and returns fire. The rounds miss wide as she crawls for cover.

Joanna takes aim again. Locks in. FIRES.

Drifter leaps for cover behind the cruiser.

WIND tears at Drifter's shirt tails as he stands and closes in on her.

She scrambles to her feet and jumps into her cruiser.

**INT. SHERIFF'S CRUISER - DAY**

Joanna REVS the engine and guns it in reverse.

THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD

Drifter is coming. He squeezes off a barrage of shots.

Bullets RICOCHET off the hood.

There's a HISS as a volcano of steam erupts.

The radiator explodes.

She floors the accelerator and swerves out of the line of fire, onto the shoulder.

Metal meets metal as she collides into the guard rail.

Sparks fly off the rear bumper as--

**EXT. HIGHWAY - SAME**

The cruiser smashes through a railing.

Everything SLOWS down.

AIRBORNE

The cruiser drops...falling for what seems like forever.

It crashes into the dirt embankment ten feet below.

Joanna's head SLAMS into the window.

The world goes DARK.

**EXT. ROAD - DAY**

Gabe's cruiser is enveloped by a curtain of dust. Wind pulls at the power lines overhead.

GABE

Hold on!

A power line SNAPS and comes crashing down in his path.

**INT. SHERIFF'S CRUISER (MOVING) - DAY**

It slams into the windshield. The glass SPIDERWEBS.  
Gabe swerves into--

**EXT. ABANDONED GAS STATION - DAY**

A rusted PUMP ARM flies off as the cruiser clips it,  
narrowly missing the empty reservoir.

The car careens into a 360 spin out. Gabe brakes hard.

Dust blasts through the broken windshield.

Gabe and the girls cover their faces. He spots the  
station entrance, then turns to Estrella.

GABE

There! C'mon!

They get out and make a mad dash for the door. Gabe rams  
his shoulder into it. After three hits, he stumbles into--

**INT. ABANDONED GAS STATION - CONTINUOUS**

Nothing but empty shelves and errant scraps of trash.

GABE

Get inside!

The girls rush in behind him. Gabe fights to hold the  
door closed against the wind. He spots a length of rope.

GABE

Gimme that.

Estrella hands him the rope and watches as he ties it to  
the door knob and knots the other end around a pipe.

The door RATTLES but stays closed.

Gabe slides to the floor, panting.

GABE

You okay?

Estrella and Iliana nod.

**INT. KILLEN HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Ruby Pearl brings Cal cocoa and cookies. As he eats, she sits on the sofa and observes photos on the wall.

PHOTOS

Faded pictures of Elijah when he first joined the force. He's young. Brazen. Shotgun slung over his shoulder. More outlaw than lawman.

Cal catches her gaze.

CAL

Paw-paw use to be sheriff.

RUBY PEARL

He was. Best this county's seen.

CAL

Then he got sick.

It hangs in the air. A sad, undeniable truth. A faint smile touches Ruby Pearl's lips. She watches him.

CAL

My mommy's gonna be sheriff too.

RUBY PEARL

She's real strong. Just like your paw-paw.

CAL

(after a pause)

I know.

Elijah blows in, screen door slamming behind him. He rushes to the telephone on the wall in the kitchen.

RUBY PEARL

Everything alright?

ELIJAH

(as he hangs up)

No dial tone.

RUBY PEARL

I'm sure it'll be up soon.

ELIJAH

I need it now.

She sees he's agitated. Concern creases her brow.

RUBY PEARL

What's going on?

He pulls her aside, away from Cal. His voice is low.

ELIJAH

Found a body out on the back road.

RUBY PEARL

Somebody we know?

ELIJAH

(grabs his car keys)  
Outsider. Could be trouble.  
Reisman and Jo need to know.

RUBY PEARL

You can't go back out there--

ELIJAH

Lock this door and don't open it.  
There's a gun in the top drawer of  
my bureau in the back bedroom.  
Anybody we don't know comes  
knockin' you shoot. Better judged  
by twelve than carried by six.

RUBY PEARL

Elijah--

ELIJAH

I'll be back as soon as I can.

She doesn't get a chance to finish. He's out the door.

**EXT. KILLEN HOUSE - DAY**

Dust unfurls like smoke from a dragon's mouth, engulfing everything in its path.

Elijah shields his eyes as he fumbles to his truck.

**INT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS**

He climbs inside. Keys rattle in his shaking hands as he tries to fit one into the ignition.

The car door opens. A HAND reaches in and takes out the key. Elijah turns and sees Ruby Pearl.

RUBY PEARL  
(yelling over wind)  
Get back in the house!

ELIJAH  
I need those!

RUBY PEARL  
It's not safe!

A tree branch CRACKLES and breaks. It sails into a churning vortex.

Covering their faces, Ruby Pearl pulls Elijah out of the truck and they head back into the house.

**INT. KILLEN HOUSE - LIVING ROOM**

Joanna's eyes fly open. Cal is sleeping next to her on the sofa. She looks down at him and smiles.

There's a KNOCK at the door. She rises and opens it.

Two UNIFORMED ARMY OFFICERS are on the porch.

ARMY OFFICER  
Mrs. Caleb Killen?

She freezes. Uniformed men only come for one reason.

ELIJAH (O.S.)  
Jo?

Joanna turns. Finds her father standing behind her.

ELIJAH  
Eyes on six.

She turns back to the door. Discovers DRIFTER there.

DRIFTER  
Sorry for your loss.

He raises his gun to her head. BLAM!

**INT. SHERIFF'S CRUISER - SOME TIME LATER**

Joanna JOLTS awake. She gasps, trying to orient herself.

**EXT. EMBANKMENT - DAY**

The car door creaks open as Joanna pushes her way out.

A post apocalyptic haze thickens the air. Though it's day, it's almost dark. Visibility next to zero.

She grimaces in pain. Bruised and shaken. She climbs up the dirt hill to the highway.

**EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY**

Desolate and empty. A RED SPARK glows in the distance.

Joanna trudges toward it, disappearing into an ochre fog.

**INT. SHERIFF'S STATION - DAY**

Hollis is at the window. She peers into the soup.

A DARK FIGURE of a man emerges from the haze. Head low.

HOLLIS

Sheriff?

She can't make out a face. As he gets to the glass door we see--

DRIFTER limping closer.

DRIFTER

Ma'am...I need help...

HOLLIS

What happened?

DRIFTER

Got run off the road. My car's in a ditch. Think I broke my ribs.

He reaches for the door handle. It's locked.

HOLLIS

Can't let you in.

DRIFTER

I'm hurtin' real bad.

HOLLIS

Not 'til the sheriff comes back.

DRIFTER

You're serious?

She glances over her shoulder.

HOLLIS

These are unusual circumstances.

DRIFTER

No shit.

Hollis blanches. Drifter leans against the door. Weary.

DRIFTER

Apologies for my language. I just never seen nothin' like this. And I'm freezing my boxers off.

He smiles. All charm as he shudders in the wind.

HOLLIS

I'm sorry.

DRIFTER

Maybe just some water.

Hollis watches him. Torn.

HOLLIS

You don't understand.

He eyes the small gold crucifix around her neck.

DRIFTER

Just like that? You turn your back on your fellow man in a crisis.

She can't look at him. Drifter nods, conceding.

DRIFTER

Guess it'll all be straightened out at judgment.

He turns and starts walking away. As he does, he reaches into his waistband for his .44.

The sound of the door unlocking stops him.

HOLLIS

Wait.

She holds the door open, inviting him in.

HOLLIS

Hurry.

Drifter pulls his shirt down and starts back. Hollis steps aside as he crosses the threshold. She takes a last look into the darkness, then locks the door behind them.

**EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY**

A dying flare sparks like a fiery breadcrumb near the intersection of the highway with the dirt main road.

Joanna pauses, sees the F-150, and the outline of a figure lying on the ground beside it.

She moves towards the body.

**EXT. F-150 PICK-UP - CONTINUOUS**

Breath catches in Joanna's throat as she takes in the sight of Del. We do not see what she sees. Just feel the pain of her loss as she gazes down at him.

JOANNA

Del...

Joanna collapses to her knees and looks away from his face. She takes his hand.

JOANNA

...I'm so sorry...

She caresses his fingers, the same ones that played with her hair what seems like an eternity ago.

Her eyes close and she tilts her head to the sky. As if saying a prayer we don't get to hear.

She opens her eyes and stares down the empty road.

Joanna struggles to her feet. She breaks into a run, down the road, to the station.

**INT. ABANDONED GAS STATION - DAY**

Gabe is slumped on the floor. Estrella sits next to him. Iliana is curled in a ball beside her, head in her lap.

ESTRELLA

How long do you think it'll last?

GABE

No way to tell. My grandma used to tell me stories about a dust up when she was a little girl. Blew for days. Blacked out the sky. Shook her little house right off the foundation.

(he smiles)

Might've just been an old wive's tale to scare us kids.

They listen to the howling winds.

GABE

You in a hurry?

ESTRELLA

Just need to be on our way.

Iliana rocks in the fetal position.

GABE

What's in Fort Hancock?

She strokes Iliana's hair.

ESTRELLA

My grandma.

GABE

Bet she'll be happy to see you.

A MOAN comes from Iliana. Estrella rubs her back gently with a soothing hand.

GABE

She okay?

ESTRELLA

She'll be alright.

GABE

Wish there was something I could give her. Looked around and there ain't nothin' in here but empty boxes and old oil cans.

ESTRELLA

Officer--

Gabe looks at her. They're close. Close enough for him to see just how pretty she is.

GABE

Call me Gabe.

ESTRELLA

Gabe, I never thanked you for the ride.

He shakes his head, sighs.

GABE

Lot 'a good it did us.

ESTRELLA

(reassuring)

Thank you.

Gabe manages a smile, basking in the glow of her gaze.

**INT. SHERIFF'S STATION - DAY**

Drifter sits at a desk near the door staring at an old framed Polaroid on Hollis' desk.

IN THE PHOTO

Hollis and her sister Emmaline stand outside the diner. It's freshly painted and new, not the rundown relic we've seen. The women are young and beautiful. Hugging each other. Shining with promise.

DRIFTER

Y'know, you remind me of someone.

She approaches and hands him water in a paper cup.

HOLLIS

That right?

DRIFTER

You wear your hair the same way my mama used to. Always up an' away from her face. She had that Southern beauty that never fades.

(a smile; re: photo)

You're giving her a run for her money.

HOLLIS

Tell that to my husband.

She smiles. Drifter's piercing blue eyes meet hers.

DRIFTER

I just might.

Hollis turns to the window and looks outside.

HOLLIS

Don't know what's taking the  
sheriff so long. This weather.  
All that's going on out there.  
Got the hairs on my neck on edge.

DRIFTER

That why you're paying such  
attention to that door?

He nods to the office. Door now closed.

DRIFTER

You're pacing in front of it like  
there's a prize on the other side.

HOLLIS

It'll work itself out once the  
sheriff gets here.

DRIFTER

Something tells me you'll be  
waiting on him a long time.

As his words sink in, she turns and looks at him.

HOLLIS

What'd you say?

DRIFTER

Where I'm from, traitor is what we  
call someone like the one you got  
in that room. Guess 'round here  
"unusual circumstances" will do.

Drifter watches as realization dawns on her.

HOLLIS

I didn't get your name.

He smiles.

DRIFTER

Didn't give it.

He moves to the office. Puts a hand on his hip revealing  
the pin-up girls on the gun in his waistband.

DRIFTER

Mind if I take a peek?

She doesn't respond. He opens the door and finds--

RAFAEL

On the desk. Blood has pooled around him.

Drifter stands over him, examining the gauze packed bullet hole. It's black and starting to ooze puss.

A pair of SCISSORS on the floor catches Drifter's eye.

He picks them up and JAMS them into Rafael's wound.

Rafael SHRIEKS.

DRIFTER

Ain't dead after all.

He grinds the scissors around like he's digging for treasure. Hollis grimaces at the sound of his screams.

DRIFTER

(in Spanish)

*Where is it?*

Rafael's mouth opens and closes like a fish caught on a line. He gurgles something inaudible.

DRIFTER

*Tell me...*

Faint words begin to form. Drifter leans close.

RAFAEL

*...fuck...you...*

Their eyes meet. Drifter's amused.

Rafael blinks tears away as Drifter presses his .44 into his eye socket.

BLAM!

Rafael's brains paint the office walls.

IN THE BULLPEN

Hollis jumps, naked with fear as Drifter approaches her.

DRIFTER

He tell you anything?

She shakes her head.

HOLLIS

Not a word.

He pulls up a chair beside her, watches her closely.

DRIFTER

What about the deputy? He talk to her?

She hesitates.

HOLLIS

I don't know.

DRIFTER

Poker ain't your strong suit.

He reaches out and Hollis flinches as he unpins her hair. Silver-streaked tresses cascade down her back.

DRIFTER

That's better.

He glides his hand over her cheek. Rafael's blood is all over his fingers. He leaves a dark, gory trail across her face as he caresses her. She closes her eyes, terrified.

DRIFTER

Now, we gon' try this one more time. One more. Understand?

She nods.

DRIFTER

Did he talk to the deputy?

HOLLIS

Y-yes.

DRIFTER

What did he say to her?

HOLLIS

It was Spanish...I don't know.

He leans close, whispers in her ear.

DRIFTER

Try.

HOLLIS

Something about...a package.

This gets his attention.

DRIFTER

Did he say where it was?

HOLLIS

He said something but I don't know  
what! I swear to God I don't!

She's broken, shaking. He takes her face in his hands.

DRIFTER

The sheriff is dead.

Hollis looks gut-punched. Her eyes fill with tears.

DRIFTER

Your deputy and I exchanged some  
pleasantries and she disappeared  
before we could finish our  
conversation. I aim to end it.

HOLLIS

You don't have to do this...

He turns her face to the PICTURE on Joanna's desk. In it  
Joanna's kissing a laughing Cal. They sit in the red  
swing on her front porch.

DRIFTER

Where is that?

A beat. Tears slip down her cheeks.

HOLLIS

Exeter Road out near old route 31.

DRIFTER

Good.

HOLLIS

P-please...

DRIFTER

Shhh...

Drifter presses a finger to her lips and buries his face  
in her hair. Their eyes meet. He leans in and kisses  
her lips. Relishing her and this closeness.

DRIFTER

Close your eyes.

He raises his gun.

Hollis clutches her cross and prays. She closes her eyes.

**INT. ABANDONED GAS STATION - DAY**

Huddled in a dark corner, Gabe watches Estrella as she comforts Iliana.

GABE

Can I ask you something?

ESTRELLA

(a pause)

If you want.

GABE

Somebody hurt you?

She's quiet. He brushes the hair off her shoulder. Reveals the strangle marks on her neck.

ESTRELLA

It's nothing.

Gabe reaches for the hem of her dress and softly pulls it up. Bruises shine on her thighs. Bright and fresh.

GABE

This nothing too?

She pushes his hand away.

ESTRELLA

Don't.

A beat. He looks at her.

GABE

Thing is, there is no Tayboure in Fort Hancock.

Silence between them.

GABE

What are you really doing here?

The quiet is broken by a scream as Iliana lifts her head from Estrella's lap. Something silver glints in her hand.

ILIANA

Don't touch her!

She stabs Gabe in the thigh with a pearl handled knife. He SCREAMS in pain.

GABE

What the hell's wrong with you?!

He clutches his bleeding leg. Estrella tries to calm her.

ESTRELLA

Listen to me...it's alright...

The bloody knife trembles in Iliana's hand. She shakes her head, defiant as she kneels beside them.

ILIANA

No. No more.

ESTRELLA

Okay, okay...just calm down...

Estrella nods. She moves to Gabe and kneels close.

GABE

What are you doing?

Estrella slides a hand to his holster. Instinctively, he GRIPS her hand hard. He grabs her by the shoulder to stop her as she starts to pull the weapon.

GABE

Get back--

Iliana moves in and presses the knife into his jugular.

ILIANA

Let her go.

Tense beat. Iliana pushes the knife in deeper. A trickle of blood slides down his neck.

ESTRELLA

(to Gabe)

Don't.

Finally, Gabe lets go. As he releases her, Estrella takes his gun and aims it at him.

Iliana glares at him. Trembling with adrenaline.

ILIANA

Didn't have to be this way.

Gabe stares at the two girls watching him like predators.

**INT. KILLEN HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY**

CANDLES cast deep shadows on walls. Ruby Pearl brings Elijah a cup of coffee. He keeps watch at the window.

ELIJAH

Remember the Larkin farm? Out near the grain silo?

RUBY PEARL

Not there anymore. Been gone for years.

ELIJAH

First month on the job we got a call from Mrs. Larkin's sister. She hadn't heard from Beau, his wife or the two kids in over a week. We went to check. Robbers broke in one night after Easter Sunday. We found their bodies. Or what was left of them. All four of them. Violence like that was unheard of then. Things that'd been done were...unspeakable.

She nods, caught up in the memory.

RUBY PEARL

They tore down their place after all that happened.

ELIJAH

Police in Oklahoma caught the boys who did it a few months later. But all my years on the job I never felt nothin' like what I felt when I walked in that house. That darkness. I was a deputy then, shakin' in 'ma boots and tryin' not to show it. Sheriff Brower took me aside, helped me get my head on straight. He said people see brutality like this and say it wasn't his time or her time. But only God decides when that time's up.

He sips his coffee.

ELIJAH

Been years since I thought about that house. Or the Larkins.

(MORE)

ELIJAH (CONT'D)

When I saw that car out on that  
back road, I got that same  
feeling.

RUBY PEARL

Maybe what you found...maybe it's  
nothing.

ELIJAH

(doesn't think so)

Maybe.

She tries to lighten the mood.

RUBY PEARL

You worry too much.

ELIJAH

No matter how old she gets, she's  
still my little girl.

Ruby Pearl smiles.

RUBY PEARL

I remember her following behind  
you closer than your shadow.  
Wasn't any bigger than Cal.

ELIJAH

Even after her mama said she  
shouldn't. Always had to have her  
way.

(a faint smile; then)

Ever since Caleb passed she hasn't  
been herself. Says she's just the  
widow Killen now.

There's a father's disquiet beneath his solemn gaze.

RUBY PEARL

Been a long year. I didn't know  
what to do with myself after my  
John died. She'll be fine.

He digests this with a grunt. She watches him.

RUBY PEARL

Y'know, this is the longest  
conversation we've had in all the  
years we've been neighbors.

ELIJAH

Never was much of a talker.

RUBY PEARL  
I always see you. At the window.

He knows what she means. Their eyes meet.

RUBY PEARL  
Why don't you ever come over?

ELIJAH  
(a pause)  
Guess I was waitin'.

RUBY PEARL  
For what?

ELIJAH  
Right time.

It's an endearing admission from this man, forged in granite and silence. A moment passes between them.

CAL (O.S.)  
Paw-paw.

They turn. Find Cal lingering in the doorway.

CAL  
I heard a noise.

ELIJAH  
Where?

CAL  
Outside my window.

Elijah gets to his feet.

ELIJAH  
Show me.

#### **INT. BEDROOM**

Cal leads Elijah into the room by the hand. They stand in the dark a moment, straining to listen.

CAL  
(whispers)  
Hear that?

An eerie and persistent creek comes from outside.

ELIJAH  
Stay here.

Elijah pulls aside the curtain.

THROUGH THE WINDOW

The yard is dark and empty. A thin tree branch wedged in the shutters scrapes the glass as it bends in the wind.

ELIJAH

Just a branch. See?

Cal goes to the window and peeks out. Elijah pats his head, then looks at the pile of toys on the floor.

ELIJAH

Now you can get back to your games.

He starts away. Cal reaches for his hand and stops him.

CAL

I'm scared.

Elijah picks Cal up and sits him on the bed beside him.

ELIJAH

You got nothing to be scared of, cowboy.

CAL

Can you tell me a story?

ELIJAH

Your mama's much better at that than I am.

CAL

Mommy says you tell good stories.

ELIJAH

She didn't have much choice. Nobody else around to tell 'em.

CAL

'Cause her mommy died like my daddy did when she was little?

Elijah looks at the boy. Manages a smile.

ELIJAH

There was a storm like this when I was a boy.

CAL

Really?

Cal nuzzles into him, comforted by the closeness.

ELIJAH

Mmm-hmm. Dust came from as far as  
Arizona.

CAL

Whoa...

ELIJAH

Blew so hard we thought the whole  
town was gonna fly away...

Elijah's deep voice resonates down the hallway. Just  
outside the door, Ruby Pearl listens.

**EXT. SHERIFF'S STATION - DAY**

Joanna rushes up to the glass doors and finds them  
unlocked. She stumbles in out of the cold.

**INT. SHERIFF'S STATION - DAY**

Deserted. On alert, Joanna draws her gun and checks  
corners. She moves to the office.

OFFICE

Her eyes fall on what's left of Rafael.

JOANNA

Christ.

Panic strikes her as she searches the rest of the  
bullpen. Weaving past desks, she FINDS--

HOLLIS

Slumped on the floor. Flowering bursts of blood on her  
cheeks and neck. Eyes empty and staring.

Joanna rushes to her.

JOANNA

Hollis!

She checks for wounds and comes up empty. Slowly, Hollis  
focuses on Joanna's face.

HOLLIS

(dazed whisper)  
Joanna...

JOANNA  
You're bleeding.

HOLLIS  
(far away)  
Not my blood.

JOANNA  
What happened?

HOLLIS  
A man came and killed us all.

There's a devastated look in her eyes. Joanna sees she's been shaken to her core.

JOANNA  
Let's get you up.

She helps Hollis into a chair. Joanna grabs kleenex and gently cleans her face.

HOLLIS  
Sheriff's dead.

JOANNA  
(beat)  
I know.

A wave of guilt washes over her.

JOANNA  
A man came after him...I couldn't stop him.

HOLLIS  
Now we're all alone.

The weight of this hits Joanna hard. It begins to sink in. She is the last line of defense.

JOANNA  
I'm here.

HOLLIS  
Thought I was dead too.

Hollis starts to sob. Joanna does her best to comfort her. Even as she wills herself to hold it together.

JOANNA  
Thank God you're alright.

HOLLIS  
I shouldn't have told him.

JOANNA  
Told him what?

HOLLIS  
Where you live.

Joanna goes cold.

JOANNA  
He knows where I live?

HOLLIS  
He had the gun in my face and I  
was so scared. He knew you'd  
talked to that man in there.  
Wanted to know about the package--

Wheels turn behind Joanna's eyes as she puts it together.

HOLLIS  
(shakes her head)  
I told him the wrong address but  
he took your picture.

JOANNA  
What?

Hollis points to Joanna's desk. The photo of her and Cal  
in front of the house is gone.

HOLLIS  
Only a matter of time before he  
finds it.

Joanna goes to her desk. She opens a drawer, searching.

JOANNA  
I need you to get to your place.  
Keep tryin' to get through on the  
phone lines. The minute you're  
able, call for help.

She finds extra keys to the spare cruiser. Grabs them.

HOLLIS  
Where are you going?

JOANNA  
Home.

Hollis clutches her arm, stricken.

HOLLIS

Don't. Jo, please. It's too dangerous.

JOANNA

Everything I love is in that house.

She peels herself away from Hollis.

JOANNA

(on the move)  
Get on home. Go!

Hollis can only watch as Joanna stalks out the door.

**INT. ABANDONED GAS STATION - DAY**

Iliana stares at Gabe like a scientist observing an insect. Estrella is beside her.

ILIANA

Shoot him.

ESTRELLA

You don't want that.

ILIANA

It's the only way.

Gabe raises his hands in surrender.

GABE

Please. I didn't mean any harm--

ILIANA

Shut up! I didn't wanna have to do this! Don't make me do this!

Gabe quiets. He looks to Estrella with pleading eyes.

ESTRELLA

We can just go.

ILIANA

He'll tell them about us. They'll find us.

ESTRELLA

They won't. I promise.

ILIANA

You know they'll come for us. They  
won't stop until they find us.

ESTRELLA

We'll be far away by then.

Iliana melts into a frightened little girl.

ILIANA

I can't go back.

ESTRELLA

I know, baby.

ILIANA

I won't.

The knife trembles in Iliana's hand. Her whole body is  
shaking. She reaches for the wall to steady herself.

ESTRELLA

Breathe.

She goes to Iliana, touches her face softly. Wipes beads  
of sweat from her brow.

ESTRELLA

Let me take care of you.

Iliana closes her eyes. So tired. So scared.

ESTRELLA

I'm right here.

Iliana raises the knife to Estrella's throat. Surprise  
blooms on Estrella's face.

ILIANA

The gun.

Estrella winces. Betrayal sharper than the blade.

ESTRELLA

Calm down--

ILIANA

Now.

Estrella concedes. She hands her the gun.

Iliana takes it and brandishes it at Gabe.

GABE

I was just tryin' to help you.  
I'm sorry--

ILIANA

I said shut up!

Iliana fights a wave of pain. Suddenly, she doubles over and starts puking her guts out.

ESTRELLA

Baby...

Gabe watches in horror as--

Oblong WHITE PELLETS pour out of her.

Drug balloons. Dozens of them.

GABE

Jesus...

Estrella goes to her. Holds her hair as she heaves. When she's done, she gasps for air, tears in her eyes.

ILIANA

I couldn't hold it anymore.

ESTRELLA

It's okay...it's okay...

Iliana breaks down into sobs. Gabe locks eyes with Estrella as she wraps her arms around her.

**EXT. NEAR ROUTE 31 - DAY**

Drifter drives to the end of Exeter Road.

THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD

Nothing but deserted grassland.

Anger percolates as he stares out at the vast emptiness.

DRIFTER

You sly devil.

**INT. ABANDONED GAS STATION - LATER**

Trash tumbles out of an old black garbage bag. Estrella takes the bag and fills it with the drug balloons.

Gabe looks on, pawing his bleeding thigh. She sees this.

ESTRELLA

You alright?

GABE

Been better.

A heated stare. Iliana lies on the floor, still not well. Estrella moves close to her, rubs her back.

GABE

Why are you doing this?

ESTRELLA

Don't have a choice.

GABE

There's always a choice.

She meets his eyes.

ESTRELLA

Where I'm from, any day you can be snatched off the street. These men take you from your family and everything you know. Police can't touch them. And they make you do things you don't wanna do.

He eyes his gun, lying on the floor beside her.

ESTRELLA

(looks at Iliana)

She tried to say "no." They took her to a motel and let any man on the street come in to have their way with her. They came for days. Even after she said "yes."

Revulsion registers on Gabe's face.

ESTRELLA

They brought her back to the pen where they kept us. She didn't talk for days. Then they asked me.  
(a pause)  
They knew what my answer would be.

They listen to the storm.

GABE

How long have you been smuggling?

A sad smile touches her lips.

ESTRELLA

Longer than I want to remember.

GABE

How do you get past border security?

ESTRELLA

Cash and carry.

GABE

What's that mean?

ESTRELLA

One of us bribes border patrol.  
The other one carries.

GABE

Bribe?

ESTRELLA

Money. Sometimes other things.  
(she looks away)  
A driver brings us to a drop off.

GABE

Where?

ESTRELLA

All over. But this time, not far  
from here. Near Fort Hancock.

GABE

So much for grandma's house.

ESTRELLA

We were supposed to deliver the  
package. Then they'd take us back  
to do it all over again.

(beat)

But that didn't happen.

GABE

Where's your driver?

Her eyes are downcast as she runs her fingers through  
Iliana's hair.

ESTRELLA

I promised her this time was the  
last.

Gabe absorbs this.

GABE

And then what?

ESTRELLA

(meets his eye)

Never look back.

Wind RATTLES the door. Iliana stirs, orients herself.

ILIANA

What's that...?

ESTRELLA

Just the wind.

Iliana settles down. She pulls Estrella's hand to her heart and holds it there before closing her eyes.

GABE

She's not your cousin is she?

Estrella looks at him but doesn't answer.

ESTRELLA

Sorry you got mixed up in all this.

GABE

Me too.

They settle into silence. Gabe eyes the gun. With a burst of speed, he lunges and reaches for it.

Estrella grabs it first.

They fight for the 9MM.

Iliana jolts awake.

ILIANA

Let her go!

She feebly punches him. Gabe pries the gun from Estrella's hands and pushes her away.

She collapses in a heap and stares at him, panting.

ESTRELLA

What now, Gabe?

Gabe favors his wounded leg as he gets to his feet.

GABE  
Deputy Foster.

He points the gun at her.

GABE  
Stand up.

She doesn't move.

GABE  
GET UP!

Estrella helps Iliana stand.

ESTRELLA  
What are you gonna do?

GABE  
Arrest you.

The two girls trade stares. Gabe grabs the bag of drugs. He motions them to the door with the pistol.

GABE  
Move.

**INT. JOANNA'S CRUISER - DAY**

Joanna swerves past debris in the road as she races home. She scans frequencies on her car radio as she drives.

JOANNA  
(on the radio)  
This is Deputy Killen. Ascension  
Sheriff's Station. Come back.

The radio HISSES. Nothing. She tries again.

JOANNA  
We have perpetrators using deadly  
force. Officers down. Requesting  
assistance--

GABE (O.S. / ON RADIO)  
Jo! It's Gabe. Do you copy?

Shock registers on her face. It's the first signs of life she's heard on the radio since the storm hit.

JOANNA  
Gabe? You alright?

**INT. CRUISER (MOVING) - DAY**

Gabe guides the battered car through the dense haze on the highway. The girls ride in the back in silence.

GABE  
Surviving. Not from lack of  
tryin' otherwise.

**INT. JOANNA'S CRUISER - DUSK**

Relief washes over Joanna as she hears his voice.

JOANNA  
Where are you?

INTERCUT

GABE  
Got two girls in custody. Drug  
mules from across the border.  
Bringin' 'em in.

JOANNA  
(realization)  
The package.

Spotty radio reception wavers.

GABE  
The what?

JOANNA  
Forget the station. I need you at  
my house. I need backup--

GABE  
(slaps radio)  
You still there?

JOANNA  
Can you hear me?

GABE  
...Jo...you...

The lines goes dead. She throws the mic.

JOANNA  
Fuck!

She's on her own.

**EXT. ROAD - DAY**

Drifter drives down winding pathways, past houses.  
Stalking them in the dark. Eyes searching...

**INT. KILLEN HOUSE - LATER**

Keys jangle in the front door. Joanna enters and Cal runs to her.

CAL

Mommy!

He leaps into her arms. She hugs him close and looks him over. Can't help smiling at the sight of his sweet face.

JOANNA

You been holding down the fort?

(Cal nods)

That's my boy.

Elijah and Ruby Pearl approach as she enters.

ELIJAH

We've got trouble.

JOANNA

Here?

ELIJAH

Found something on the back road.  
Looked like fallout from across  
the river.

JOANNA

Had some at the diner. Station  
too.

Elijah doesn't like this.

ELIJAH

Reisman?

Joanna shakes her head. Ruby Pearl gasps.

RUBY PEARL

Lord almighty...

ELIJAH

How many?

JOANNA

One. Far as I know. But he's coming for me. Thinks I got something he wants.

ELIJAH

Something tells me a man like that doesn't put much stock in reason.

Ruby Pearl goes to the phone and tries to dial.

RUBY PEARL

Still no service.

JOANNA

(to Ruby Pearl)

I need you to do something for me.

RUBY PEARL

Anything.

JOANNA

Take Cal with you over to your place.

Cal grabs her hand.

CAL

No! I wanna stay with you.

JOANNA

It's just for a little while. I need to take care of some business. Then we'll all come back and have a nice supper.

CAL

I don't want you to go.

He clutches her, scared. It's like a dagger to her heart. She fights the urge to breakdown.

JOANNA

Sometimes we gotta do things we don't want to. Understand?

He nods. Then:

CAL

Promise?

She kneels in front of him. Looks him in the eye.

JOANNA

I promise.

(manages a smile)

We'll have anything to eat you want. Even cereal.

Cal wraps his arms around her neck. She holds him tight. After a moment, she forces herself to let go.

JOANNA

Keep an eye on paw-paw for me.

RUBY PEARL

C'mon, sweetheart. Let's get your jacket.

She leads Cal away. Elijah pulls Joanna aside.

ELIJAH

What are you sayin'?

JOANNA

You're goin' with them.

ELIJAH

I'm not lettin' you do this by yourself--

JOANNA

Daddy, don't argue with me. Not now--

ELIJAH

Would you stop bein' so goddamn stubborn--

JOANNA

I won't leave him alone!

Her fierce words hang in the air, disturbing molecules.

JOANNA

You and me...we're all Cal's got and I won't have him...

(struggling for composure)

Just do what I'm askin'.

A beat. Elijah digests this.

ELIJAH

Alright, Jo. Alright.

He looks to Ruby Pearl.

ELIJAH

Need my coat.

She watches as he goes down the hall.

**INT. BEDROOM**

Elijah opens the drawer of his bureau and retrieves a polished wooden lock box.

IN THE CASE

A Colt .45 PEACEMAKER. Carefully restored relic with his initials engraved on the barrel.

He opens the box of bullets beside it and starts loading.

**INT. LIVING ROOM**

Elijah pulls on a coat as he re-enters. He finds Cal and Ruby Pearl near the door and joins them.

RUBY PEARL

Ready?

ELIJAH

Let's go.

They head out. Elijah stops at the threshold. He turns back to Joanna.

ELIJAH

What are you gonna do?

JOANNA

Only thing I can.  
(after a pause)  
Wait.

Elijah nods, then goes out. All alone, Joanna looks small standing in the empty house.

**INT. RUBY PEARL'S HOUSE - LATER**

Warm and inviting. Hand crafted furniture and self-made landscape oil paintings decorate the living room.

Ruby Pearl carries Cal in. Elijah follows behind her.

RUBY PEARL

I'm gonna put him down.

ELIJAH

Alright.

She pads down the hall to a back bedroom. Elijah stands sentry at the windows.

**INT. KILLEN HOUSE - DAY**

WAX DRIPS down burning candles. Joanna leans over them.

With a puff of breath she blows them out one by one, slowly plunging the house into darkness.

**EXT. ROAD - DAY**

Drifter's cruiser idles not far from a little farm house near the end of the road.

ON THE PORCH

A red swing sways in the wind. It's Joanna's house.

He eases the car to a cluster of bushes near the fenceline. He cuts the engine and gets out.

**INT. CRUISER (MOVING) - DAY**

Gabe navigates the road. Estrella watches him from behind the cage.

ESTRELLA

What are they gonna do to us?

GABE

Confiscate the drugs. It's outside our jurisdiction to prosecute. Customs and Border Patrol will send you back.

Estrella leans into Iliana. Whatever she whispers in her ear brings her no comfort.

ILIANA

Do what you gotta do.

IN THE REARVIEW

Gabe watches them. The girls stare daggers at him.

GABE

I'm the bad guy?

They watch him. The looks on their faces say it all.

GABE

You smuggle drugs, assault a peace officer and threaten his life and I'm the bad guy?!

The expression on Iliana's face changes.

ILIANA

Look out!

The rear end of a truck APPEARS -- suddenly bursting through the veil of dust.

Gabe brakes. Tires spin on asphalt. It's too late.

A terrible screech of burning rubber CRESCENDOS as--

The cruiser SMASHES into the truck. The hood folds in on itself.

Gabe's head SNAPS back as the airbag explodes, punching him in the face.

BACKSEAT

Iliana and Estrella slam into the divider cage like rag dolls. They go limp as the car settles in a heap.

#### **INT. KILLEN HOUSE - DAY**

Joanna peers out the window. Her heart pounds when she sees the car parked near the trees.

Her eyes frantically scan the yard.

She can't make out anything in the dark.

Her head turns at the sounds of--

FOOTSTEPS

Slow and deliberate. Just outside.

#### **EXT. KILLEN HOUSE - DAY**

Drifter ascends creaky stairs. He reaches for the door but stops short.

He turns and moves towards the back of the house.

**INT. RUBY PEARL'S HOUSE - DAY**

Ruby Pearl makes her way down the hall.

RUBY PEARL

Poor thing was so tired he was out  
before he hit the pillow.

She looks around. No Elijah. She moves to the kitchen.

RUBY PEARL

You in here?

It's empty. Realization dawns on her.

RUBY PEARL

Goddammit, Elijah.

She rushes to the window. There's no one in the yard.  
He's gone.

**EXT. ROAD - CONTINUOUS**

The DRIVER jumps out of the truck and approaches Gabe's  
cruiser. Smoke rises from the twisted metal frame.

ROADSIDE DRIVER

Shit! I'm sorry! Damn thing  
stalled out on me.

Panic registers as he sees Gabe unconscious in the front.  
The girls aren't moving in the back.

GAS LEAKS, dripping out of the caved in tank.

The driver bangs on the window.

ROADSIDE DRIVER

Hey! HEY!

The girls stir. Try to get their bearings.

ROADSIDE DRIVER

There's a gas leak!

ILIANA

Get us outta here!

He rushes back to his truck. She turns to Estrella.

ILIANA

(nudging her gently)  
Open your eyes...

(MORE)

ILIANA (CONT'D)  
(she barely moves; shakes her)  
Wake up!

She starts to come around, grimacing in pain.

The divider cage is bent in. A small gap is visible near the passenger door.

Iliana pushes her arm through it, reaching towards--

FRONT SEAT

The black garbage bag is beside Gabe.

Her fingertips graze the plastic, stretching...

She squeezes her arm as far as it will go.

Her hand snaps it up. She pulls it into her lap as--

The trucker returns with a crowbar.

ROADSIDE DRIVER  
Cover your faces.

The girls slide over and shield themselves.

He bashes at the glass. It SHATTERS.

**INT. KILLEN HOUSE - CAL'S BEDROOM - DAY**

GLASS BREAKS. A HAND reaches inside and unlatches the window.

Drifter lifts it open and climbs through.

TOYS and STUFFED ANIMALS stare at him with black eyes.

Drifter stands in the room, cat quiet. Listening.

**INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Drifter checks the back bedroom. It's neat and well-kept. Filled with books on fishing and wood carving.

He scans the titles.

A CRANKING SOUND startles him.

His head turns in the direction of the adjacent room.

Drifter reaches for his gun and follows the sound.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

MECHANICAL LEGS of a toy robot bicycle the air as it winds down. Its red eyes FLASH in the dark.

Drifter stares down at it.

DRIFTER

I know you're here.

**INT. KITCHEN - SAME**

Joanna is pressed to the wall, just around the corner. Every fiber of her being wants to run. But she doesn't move. She closes her eyes and steels herself.

Adrenaline-jacked, she fights to control her breathing. Holding her pistol up near her face, she gets ready to pounce.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Drifter crushes the robot beneath his sneaker. It slowly dies down and stops flashing.

DRIFTER

I just wanna talk.

He moves toward the kitchen.

**INT. KITCHEN - SAME**

Joanna grips the pistol. Puts her finger on the trigger.

**EXT. ROAD - DAY**

The truck driver reaches in and unlocks the door.

He helps the girls out.

ROADSIDE DRIVER

You alright?

ESTRELLA

Think so.

ROADSIDE DRIVER

This thing could go up. Get to cover.

She takes the bag and Iliana's hand. They move out of the way.

The driver pries the front door open as he tends to Gabe. He starts to come around.

ROADSIDE DRIVER

I got 'ya.

GABE

Girls...

ROADSIDE DRIVER

Got them too. Hold on...

The driver heaves and pulls Gabe out of the cruiser.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Drifter closes in on the kitchen door.

Sees something out of the corner of his eye.

He whips the gun around towards--

THE WINDOW

Midnight gallops through the yard.

He stares at the horse in wonder.

Leaning closer to the glass, he sees the barn doors are wide open.

Drifter turns to the front door and goes out.

**EXT. KILLEN HOUSE - DUSK**

LIGHTNING crackles across the sky. Charged air swirls. Winds have calmed but the haze is still thick as sludge.

Drifter approaches the barn.

Midnight REARS UP at the sight of him.

He moves past her, through the open door.

**INT. RUBY PEARL'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DUSK**

A roll of THUNDER jars Cal awake. He sits up and rubs his eyes. Padding out of bed, he goes to the window.

THROUGH THE WINDOW

Cal sees the cruiser parked near the treeline.

His face lights up.

CAL  
You're back. Mommy!

He runs into the hall.

**INT. BARN - DUSK**

Dark and empty. Drifter checks barn stalls.

One by one, he eases past them, searching for signs up life but finds nobody there.

He lifts his eyes to--

THE LOFT

Something shadowy behind a bail of hay catches his eye.

He moves towards the ladder.

BEHIND DRIFTER

Elijah steps out from his hiding place near the door.

Moving slowly, he sneaks up behind Drifter.

**EXT. RUBY PEARL'S HOUSE - DUSK**

Ruby Pearl stands on the edge of the porch, searching for Elijah. She can't see much in thick air.

The SHADOW of something catches her eye. It's CAL, already several yards away, bounding towards the barn.

RUBY PEARL  
Cal!

She rushes down the stairs after him.

**INT. BARN - CONTINUOUS**

The BARREL of Elijah's Peacemaker finds a target -- right in the middle of Drifter's back.

CLOSE ON ELIJAH

Taking aim. The gun shakes in his hands.

He puts his finger on the trigger and cocks the hammer.

Elijah FIRES. The bullet ricochets wide right.

Drifter wheels around. He draws and SHOOTS.

The two men UNLOAD on one another. Drifter's bullets hit home, dropping Elijah to his knees.

Blood begins to pool out of the corner of Elijah's mouth. He collapses in a heap on the ground.

Drifter closes in on him.

DRIFTER

Where is she?

Elijah coughs and spits up more blood.

Drifter raises his .44 at him.

DRIFTER

Not gon' ask again.

BANG! BANG! BANG! Shots ring out as Joanna bursts through the door firing.

Bullets whizz past Drifter.

One tags him in the arm as he dives into an empty stall. He lands in a hay pile, grimacing in pain.

Joanna rushes to Elijah.

JOANNA

Daddy!

ELIJAH

(gasping for air)

I'm...okay...

She peels back his coat and sees the hole in his shirt and the blood leaking from his chest.

JOANNA

(covering her fear)

You're gonna be alright.

She grabs his arms and tries to drag him to cover.

Drifter SHOOTS again. Narrowly missing them.

Joanna returns fire.

Wood BLASTS away near his head as he ducks behind the stall door.

Pulling him by the arms, Joanna yanks Elijah out of the line of fire.

The gunfire stops. The barn goes silent.

A stand-off.

INSIDE THE STALL

Joanna peeks over the door, calculating her next move.

ELIJAH (O.S.)

Jo?

She turns to Elijah and sees his shirt is turning red, soaking wet with blood. She tries to mask her panic.

JOANNA

I'm gonna get you outta here.

He clutches her hands.

ELIJAH

You're my girl...always...

He fights to breathe, searches for the right words. A wave of coughing spasms through him. He can't speak.

JOANNA

(fighting for composure)  
Hold on. Y'hear me?

They lock eyes. This father. His little girl. She squeezes his hand. He nods. She peers over the door.

**INT. DRIFTER'S STALL**

Drifter leans against wall, panting.

DRIFTER

You're gonna give me what I need.

He chambers a round in the .44 and gets ready to move.



Cal's legs kick as Drifter clutches him hard. All she can see is the gun in his hand, so close to her son.

DRIFTER

Drop it.

The gun falls from her grip. She raises her empty hands.

JOANNA

This is between us. You hear me?  
THIS IS BETWEEN US!

CAL

Lemme go!

Cal starts to scream.

DRIFTER

Shut him up!

JOANNA

Cal! Calm down, baby. Mommy's  
here. It's alright...

The boy stops fighting. Drifter puts him down.

JOANNA

Please. Don't hurt him.

Drifter kneels close and whispers to Cal.

DRIFTER

You love your mama?

Cal nods.

DRIFTER

Good. I want you to look at her.  
G'on. Turn 'round.

Cal turns and faces Joanna. Doesn't see that Drifter is now pointing the gun at the back of his head.

DRIFTER

Tell her.

CAL

I love you, Mommy.

She wills herself to sound calm.

JOANNA

I love you too, baby.

DRIFTER

Don't make that the last time you  
hear those words.

She shakes her head, compliant.

JOANNA

Anything you want. Anything.  
Just let him go.

RUBY PEARL (O.S.)

Cal! You come back here--

Ruby Pearl bursts into the barn and sees Joanna with her  
hands in the air. She takes in Cal. Drifter. The gun.

RUBY PEARL

My God...

JOANNA

(to Ruby Pearl)  
Stay where you are.

She doesn't move.

DRIFTER

Get her out of here.

JOANNA

Let her take my boy. You let her  
take him and I give you what you  
want.

Drifter broods, considering.

JOANNA

He's just a baby...

She stares him down. Looking deep into the darkness.

JOANNA

I know what you are. But he's  
just a boy. He doesn't deserve  
this.

Drifter watches her, his face unreadable as he observes.

JOANNA

The man from the diner told me  
about the package. A deputy from  
my station intercepted it. He's  
got the drugs and the girls. It's  
yours. You have my word.

A tense beat passes. After a moment:

DRIFTER

Alright.

He lets Cal go and he runs into Ruby Pearl's arms.

JOANNA

Take him.

CAL

No!

RUBY PEARL

Jo--

JOANNA

NOW!

Cal screams as Ruby Pearl wraps him in her arms and disappears out of the barn.

Drifter and Joanna are alone.

JOANNA

Who are you?

He looks into her eyes.

DRIFTER

Someone you should never know.

They trade bitter glances.

DRIFTER

Where are they?

JOANNA

I'll take you to 'em.

DRIFTER

That's how you're gonna play this?  
Think hard. Consider your boy.

She meets his gaze.

JOANNA

You want 'em. That's the way you  
get 'em.

Drifter motions to the door with his pistol.

DRIFTER

After you.

**EXT. ROAD - DUSK**

TREE BRANCHES sway in the wind.

GABE'S POV -- Lying on his back, staring up at them.

Gabe sits up. Finds the trucker beside him. He brightens when he sees Gabe awake.

ROADSIDE DRIVER

Easy. Got a nasty bump on your head.

Gabe presses a hand to his pounding skull.

ROADSIDE DRIVER

Had to get you out of that car in case it sparked up. Better safe than sorry.

Gabe sees his crashed cruiser and the empty backseat.

GABE

Where are they?

ROADSIDE DRIVER

The girls? They're waiting right over there.

He points to a patch of trees across from them.

The girls are gone.

**INT. JOANNA'S CRUISER (MOVING) - DUSK**

Drifter drives, keeping his gun in his hand as he guides the steering wheel. Joanna rides shotgun.

DRIFTER

Where to?

She pauses a moment. Weighing options. Then:

JOANNA

Silo on Factory Road.

DRIFTER

Sound sure of yourself.

JOANNA

I am.

DRIFTER

All liars are.

JOANNA

I'm not lying.

DRIFTER

Good. Cuz if you are, I'm gonna shoot you. Several times. Not to kill you. Not at first. You'll be bleeding out. It'll hurt like hell. You'll wish you were dead.

Fear flashes on Joanna's face as she listens.

DRIFTER

But you won't be dead. You'll be alive for the long drive when I take you back home and let you watch while I shoot your boy in the face. This .44 will blow most of it clean off. Won't be enough cuteness left for dental records. Then I'll come for you. And the last thing you'll see is me standing over you with this.

Joanna's eyes lock on the luscious pin-up girls winking at her on the .44 grip. Drifter looks at her.

DRIFTER

Everybody should see somethin' beautiful at the end.

BOOM! A fireball ERUPTS in the murky sky in the distance. An explosion ignites near the highway.

JOANNA

My God...

Drifter turns the wheel and drives towards the fire.

**EXT. ROAD - DUSK**

Flames bubble paint and char metal of Gabe's cruiser.

Joanna's cruiser rumbles close to the crash site.

The truck driver watches from the treeline as the fire burns. Drifter rolls down the window as he approaches.

ROADSIDE DRIVER  
Thank God! Tried to call for help  
on my phone but couldn't get  
through.

DRIFTER  
What happened?

ROADSIDE DRIVER  
Crash caused a gas leak. Wires  
sparked. Whole thing went up.

Joanna recognizes the cruiser. Sees no sign of Gabe.

JOANNA  
What happened to the driver?

ROADSIDE DRIVER  
Took off after some girls.

He points to the bridge in the distance.

ROADSIDE DRIVER  
That way.

Drifter glances at Joanna, then jams on the gas pedal.

ROADSIDE DRIVER  
(calls after them)  
Wait! Aren't you gonna help?

The cruiser's already gone.

**INT. SHERIFF'S CRUISER (MOVING) - CONTINUOUS**

Drifter searches the horizon as he barrels down the road.

JOANNA  
What are you--

BLAM! He SHOOTS Joanna in the shoulder.

Joanna writhes in pain and gasps for air. She touches  
her shirt, pulls back a hand covered in blood.

His cold eyes turn to her, taking in her pain.

DRIFTER  
I'm a man of 'ma word.

THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD

SUMMIT BRIDGE

Decimated concrete arches of an old railroad overpass.

He SKIDS to a stop as he sees--

OFF THE MAIN ROAD

Two FIGURES crossing a field. Iliana and Estrella.

Drifter veers off-road. Dirt pelts the undercarriage as he slams on the gas pedal.

**EXT. SUMMIT BRIDGE - DUSK**

Just beneath the overpass, a small defunct supply depot is tucked amid a cluster of trees near the Rio Grande.

Iliana and Estrella run towards it. Estrella stops. Looks around, lost. Trying to figure their next move.

ILIANA

What now?

ESTRELLA

Just let me think...

GABE (O.S.)

Stop right there.

The girls turn. FIND Gabe behind them limping closer. Bleeding and battered, he trains his pistol on them.

Estrella walks towards him.

GABE

Don't.

She keeps coming. He cocks the hammer on his gun.

GABE

That's far enough.

She stops. Locks eyes with him from afar.

ESTRELLA

Just let us go.

He watches her. Even more beautiful now than the first time he laid eyes on her. A moment passes between them.

GABE

Can't do that.

ILIANA

Estrella!

Estrella turns. Sees Iliana motioning behind them.

An engine's ROAR gets Estrella's attention. She turns--

HEADLIGHTS from the cruiser blind her as it closes in.

Relief washes over Gabe when he sees it. That vanishes when he realizes it's coming faster than it should be.

Estrella turns to Iliana.

ESTRELLA

Run.

The girls run and duck inside the depot.

The cruiser rockets towards Gabe.

**INT. JOANNA'S CRUISER (MOVING) - DUSK**

Joanna yanks the steering wheel and they SWERVE.

Drifter points the gun at her again.

She knocks his arm away as--

The passenger window EXPLODES. Inches from her face.

She lunges at him and they wrestle for the gun.

**EXT. FIELD - DUSK**

The cruiser crop-circles loops in the dirt as Drifter and Joanna fight for control.

Gabe hobbles out of the car's path.

A sudden turn sends it careening right for him.

The cruiser SLAMS into him.

IN THE AIR

Gabe's body marionettes wildly.

It lands with a sickening thud.

**INT. SHERIFF'S CRUISER (MOVING) - CONTINUOUS**

Drifter elbows Joanna in the face. She lets go of the wheel and he aims for her again.

Joanna dives for her door and jumps out.

**EXT. FIELD - DUSK**

Dust rises as Joanna hits the ground HARD and tumbles to a stop face down.

**EXT. SUPPLY DEPOT - DUSK**

The cruiser grinds to a stop near the entrance.

Drifter steps out. He surveys the field and sees Joanna lying motionless in the dirt.

He grips his gun and walks towards the depot.

**INT. SUPPLY DEPOT - DUSK**

SHADOWS fill the corners. It's dark and empty. The girls search for a back exit but find nothing but aisles of dust covered shelves.

There's one way in and one way out. They're trapped.

THROUGH THE WOOD SLATS

HEADLIGHTS pierce the darkness, setting the girls aglow.

Estrella peeks through a crack. Squinting in the light, she sees a SHADOWY FIGURE moves towards the door.

Iliana pulls her away.

ILIANA

We have to hide.

**EXT. FIELD - DUSK**

Joanna grimaces on the ground. BLOOD leaks from the wound in her shoulder. Using all her strength, she gets to her feet.

She staggers to Gabe's body. She kneels beside him and feels for a pulse. He's gone.

Sadness washes over her as cold reality sets in.

Not far from his body she sees--

GABE'S GUN

She picks it up and moves towards the depot.

**INT. SUPPLY DEPOT - CONTINUOUS**

Drifter eases past aisles, eyes scanning the shadows.

BACK AISLE

Iliana and Estrella are huddled close, listening to his approaching footsteps.

Shaking, Estrella presses herself against the shelf. Slowly, she peeks around the corner.

WALKWAY

Drifter isn't there.

She motions to Iliana. She wants to run for the door. Iliana shakes her head, too scared to move.

A HAND yanks a fistful of Estrella's hair and drags her around the corner. She SCREAMS.

ESTRELLA

No--

She lunges at Drifter and tries to fight him off. He throws her to the ground.

DRIFTER

Where is it?

ILIANA

Let her go you bastard!

LIGHT floods in as the door bangs open.

Joanna enters, brandishing the 9MM. She FIRES.

Drifter ducks down, using the girl as a shield.

A HAIL OF BULLETS from Joanna's gun sends Drifter diving for cover.

A BLAST from her gun BLOWS OFF a chunk of his ear. He curses as his hand instinctively cups his bloody face.

Another bullet RIPS THROUGH his thigh.

Drifter doubles over. Estrella slips out of his grasp. She runs to Iliana and they cower near the aisles.

Joanna SHOOTS until--

CLICK. CLICK. She's out of ammo.

Drifter gets to his feet and limps closer.

DRIFTER

Let's finish this.

Joanna crawls backward as he raises the gun again.

Estrella LEAPS at Drifter from behind and STABS him.

The pearl-handled knife JUTS OUT OF HIS NECK.

Drifter growls in pain and claws at the knife.

As he yanks it out of his flesh, he drops his gun.

Joanna sees her opening. She dives for it and takes aim.

The .44 blast levels Drifter, knocking him to the ground.

CLOSE ON DRIFTER

Surprise blooms on his face. He looks up at her as she comes closer. Staring down the barrel of his own gun.

The PIN-UP GIRL BOMBSHELLS wink at him.

Joanna fires again. And again. And AGAIN.

Drifter collapses in a heap.

SMOKE whispers from the barrel of his .44.

She lowers the gun and drops to her knees.

JOANNA'S POV

The room SPINS.

The girls swarm her. She can barely make out their faces.

ESTRELLA

She's a cop.

They exchange looks as Estrella picks up her knife.

ILIANA

What should we do?

Joanna falls onto her back, fighting hard to breathe.

Iliana and Estrella stand over Joanna, watching her.

Their faces BLUR before winking out.

**INT. SUPPLY DEPOT - SOME TIME LATER**

Joanna's eyes OPEN. She sits up and gets her bearings. There's nothing but darkness in this place now. She's all alone. As she sits up she winces. Sees--

Her wound has been dressed.

Near the aisle, a pool of blood soaks concrete.

Drifter is gone.

Panic surges through her as she grabs her gun and gets to her feet. She sees--

FOOTPRINTS, the sneaker pattern, leading out the door.

Joanna follows the blood tracks.

**EXT. FIELD - NIGHT**

Scarlet streaks of blood paint crushed WILD FLOWERS. They are drag marks from a crawl trail.

Joanna walks the path of broken petals to the edge of an embankment.

**EXT. RIO GRANDE - NIGHT**

SHALLOW WATER trickles over rocks.

Halfway across the Rio, the stream gently laps over lifeless Drifter as he lies face down in the riverbed.

**EXT. FIELD - CONTINUOUS**

HEADLIGHTS silhouette Joanna as she looks down from the crest. Her face inscrutable as she stares at the body.

**EXT. RUBY PEARL'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Joanna crosses the yard. Ruby Pearl opens the screen and Cal bounds down the porch and jumps into her arms.

She picks him up and holds him close for a long time.

**EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT**

A rusty PICK-UP blows down the blacktop. It closes in on two small specs walking on the side of the road.

The truck drives past two GIRLS, haunted and angelic. Estrella and Iliana watch as it slows, then pulls over.

The girls climb inside.

**INT. PICK-UP (MOVING) - NIGHT**

An OLD MAN drives, searching the radio for music. A few snippets of news burst through. He settles on a country station. Johnny Cash croons.

OLD MAN

Some storm.

Estrella and Iliana are huddled together. Quiet and watchful. The black bag on the floor at their feet.

OLD MAN

Where 'ya headed?

The girls trade looks. Contemplating. Outside, the open road rushes towards them, unfolding before their eyes.

**INT. KILLEN HOUSE - CAL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Joanna stands sentry at the window. Stars wink in the sky beyond the carnage the storm's left in its wake.

Far away, RED POLICE LIGHTS strobe the night. The cavalry is on the way.

RHYTHMIC BREATHING fills the quiet. Joanna sits on the bed watching Cal. Tears spill onto her cheeks as she leans down and kisses her boy as he dreams.

**FADE TO BLACK.**

**THE END**