

COLORS OF AUTHORITY

Written by
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Star Thrower Entertainment.

OVER BLACK.

BASED ON A TRUE STORY.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

A wasteland of a field. Nothing but dirt, dead grass, and hopelessness. Three sad, old cows listlessly drink from a trough. Too skinny for slaughter.

CHYRON READS: ACTON, CALIFORNIA. MAY, 2012.

A field mouse scurries past, then we hear it:

CLIP. CLOP. CLIP. CLOP. CLIP. CLOP...

Stepping into frame is a beast of a BULL. Fourteen hundred pounds of pure wrath. Ropes of drool swinging from his mouth.

The beast wrenches his massive neck forward - *almost looking right through us* - when...

A CAR whips past frame, as we are transported inside a --

INT. FORD TAURUS - CONTINUOUS

Behind the wheel sits DEPUTY JAMES SEXTON, late 20s. A razorback in sheep's clothing. There's not a crease on his youthful face, but don't be fooled. On the inside he's as hard as the iron mined from the Alabama town he was born in. Confident edging on cocky... *but James has every right to be.* In just a few years, James has accomplished what would take many deputies an entire career.

A wave of pain flashes across James' face. He's got one hand on the wheel, the other now reaching for his stomach.

TONY (O.S.)

You good?

James turns toward his best friend and partner, DEPUTY ANTONIO "TONY" JIMENEZ - late 20s, Latino, loyal to a fault - sitting shotgun. Living out of third rate motels most of his childhood, Tony grew up in the sludge of Los Angeles. Losing his father to gang violence only hardened his determination to do something about it.

The two wear kevlar vests, the word "SHERIFF" prominently stitched across their chests in gold.

Listen closely, and you'll notice a slight southern drawl to James' speech.

JAMES

I'm good.

He takes a deep breath, then another - *this has happened before and it will happen again*. The phantom pain subsides.

James shifts his gaze to the rearview mirror, sighting ERIC BARNETT, 40s, dyed in the wool Aryan Brotherhood member, sprawled out in the back seat. He sports his prison uniform, ham hock-sized hands cuffed. Built like a safe vault, Barnett's about as dangerous as nitroglycerin.

JAMES (CONT'D)

(to Barnett)

You good?

BARNETT

Fuck you.

James smiles winningly.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - AFTERNOON

A low income street somewhere in Acton. Lawns so dry you wanna water them yourself. There are CONSTRUCTION WORKERS repairing a sidewalk, two WOMEN pushing strollers, a UPS DRIVER in his truck enjoying a lil' afternoon nap...

Down the street, under the shade of a tree, sits the Ford Taurus. James, Tony, and Barnett still seated inside.

INT. FORD TAURUS - CONTINUOUS

The three sit in silence, James tuning into a songbird chirping nearby. A moment passes, then --

JAMES

*Shoot all the bluejays you want,
but it's a sin to kill a
mockingbird...*

Tony nods in recognition - "Mhmm" - packs a dip.

BARNETT

You just make that up?

Beat.

TONY
(to James)
He serious right now?

JAMES
(to Tony)
I think so.

BARNETT
Who said it?

JAMES
Come on, Barnett...

TONY
You know this.

Barnett waves them off with his cuffed hands, unfolding a chicken wrap in his lap.

BARNETT
Where's the garlic spread?

JAMES
Here's a hint - Boo Radley.

James holds up a container of garlic spread. Barnett reaches out for it, but James quickly pulls it out of reach.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Answer the question, Barnett.

BARNETT
Boo fucking hoo - I'm not eating Zankou without garlic spread.

JAMES
Well, then I guess you're not eating your Zankou.

Barnett steams. Finally acquiescing. Thinks hard.

BARNETT
Is it from a song? Garth Brooks.

TONY
Unbelievable.

BARNETT
Sounds country to me.

JAMES
Hint number two --

TONY
He only gets three.

JAMES
It's from a book... written by a
woman --

BARNETT
Harry fucking Potter. Now give me
my damn garlic --
(sits up)
That's her. In the green pickup.

The mood instantly shifts. James and Tony sighting a GREEN
PICKUP pulling into a driveway down the road.

JAMES
Are you positive?

BARNETT
YES.

James flings the garlic spread back to Barnett, eyes glued to
the pickup as it disappears behind a garage door. He raises
up a POLICE RADIO to his lips.

JAMES (INTO RADIO)
All units code six on this service.
Our suspect's 97, POS-ID.

Over the police radio a MALE VOICE crackles out.

MALE VOICE (OVER RADIO)
Copy that.

James and Tony reach down for their TACTICAL SHOTGUNS.

SECOND MALE VOICE (OVER RADIO)
Confirm no children in the yard or
in the house?

JAMES (INTO RADIO)
Had eyes on it all week. We're
clear.

Lock and load. A tense beat, then...

BARNETT
Killin' birds n' shit, what's it
mean?

James glances back to Barnett - *this ignorant, sonofabitch
better not be lying.*

JAMES (INTO RADIO)
Let's stack it up.

Shotguns shouldered, James and Tony step out into the --
STREET.

That dozing UPS driver? He's really an LASD DEPUTY from OSJ (OPERATION SAFE JAILS). The back of his van now spilling out with TEAM MEMBERS. The construction workers, they're SWAT. And the two women pushing strollers -- DEA.

James leads the way, all silently and systemically swarming the house. Heavy metal music rattling out from the interior.

He SLAMS the palm of his hand against the door.

JAMES (CONT'D)
(yelling out)
Sheriff's department. We have a
warrant to search --

The door swings open, a thong-clad WOMAN standing on the other side. Her eyes widen in fear, as we travel into --

THE HOUSE.

James is first man in, rushing his way inside the --

LIVING ROOM.

Where ten 'roided out members of the WHITE POWER PECKERWOODS, their bodies a canvas for hate, lounge with their Aryan dream GIRLFRIENDS.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Los Angeles Sheriff's Department.
Show me your hands. Now.

James clocks all the firearms littered throughout the room. Modified shotguns, AK-47s, Uzis... all within reach.

JAMES (CONT'D)
SHOW ME YOUR FUCKING HANDS.

The White Power Peckerwoods raise their hands as --

The house is FLOODED with LAW ENFORCEMENT, fanning out into every room. The whole thing is surgical. Coordinated. Precise. A product of months of planning.

The Peckerwoods are restrained, James catching sight of a SKINHEAD as he slips his way out a BATHROOM WINDOW. James tosses his shotgun to Tony, bolting his way out the --

FRONT DOOR.

Hightailing it down the side of house, where the Skinhead is already half way over a fence and into the next yard.

James chases, vaulting the fence, into a --

JUNK PILE OF A BACKYARD.

But this Skinhead's practically simian, already halfway over a nine-foot wall. Rather than follow, James hops a side fence into another BACKYARD, then another BACKYARD...

James keeps pace with the Skinhead tearing down a back ALLEYWAY, chainlink fences topped with razor-wire separating the two. James slips through a break in the chainlink --

Trailing the Skinhead as he bounds his way over a CHICKEN WIRE FENCE, the two soon racing through a --

FILTHY PASTURE.

Chickens and goats and donkeys and pigs, all roaming about. Flies buzzing in mass over piles of shit. *The outskirts of LA can be a strange place...* And that's when James clocks a Colt snub nose in the Skinhead's palm. Even worse, there's four SMALL CHILDREN playing in the dirt some fifty yards ahead.

James kicks it into another gear, leaping out and tackling the Skinhead to the ground, the revolver sent flying.

The Skinhead scrambles for his gun, fingers latching onto the grip, instantly freezing at the cold touch of --

James' Sig Sauer P320 pressed against the back of his head.

JAMES (CONT'D)
I've already got cause.

A tense beat passes, the Skinhead releasing his grip on the Colt. James flips him over, shocked and terrified to see --

He's just a freaking kid, 15, face speckled with acne.

EXT. ARYAN BROTHERHOOD HOUSE - BACKYARD - MOMENTS LATER

A sweaty and breathless James leads the cuffed Skinhead Teenager into the backyard. Kneels him down next to five WHITE SUPREMACISTS lying prostrated, wrists bound.

OSJ Members hover over the five -- *patting them down, reading them their rights, barking off question after question...*

James takes a moment, rattled by just how close he came to shooting a kid. He steadies his breath, sighting --

An emaciated and mangy GERMAN SHEPHERD chained to a rusty pipe. The dog cowers in fear, his coat littered with scaly scabs. A product of years of neglect and abuse.

James clenches his jaw, sickened by what he sees.

He takes hold of an empty pot, filling it up with water from a hose. James mindfully steps his way towards the German Shepherd, gently setting down the pot of water.

James nudges the pot closer to the dog - *holding the space* - until the fearful canine finally feels safe enough to drink.

INT. ARYAN BROTHERHOOD HOUSE - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Heated, James marches down the hall, passing by a bedroom where two half-naked TEENAGE GIRLS, hardly a day over fourteen, are attended to by three FEMALE DEPUTIES.

James averts his gaze, stepping foot inside an --

OFFICE.

Where Tony is patting down GRETCHEN ETTINGER, 40s, face like an old catcher's mitt from years of meth abuse. On a table, James sights four kilos of meth and fifty grand in cash.

It's a score and a half but James isn't satisfied.

TONY
(re: Gretchen)
Watch yourself. She's a llama.

JAMES
(to Gretchen)
Where's the cook?

And just like a llama, Gretchen spits in James' face. He grimaces, wiping the sputum from his cheek. James pivots, striding his way back into the --

HALLWAY.

He pushes forward, inspecting the walls, the floors... James swings open the last door, stepping foot into the --

GARAGE.

There's the green pickup. James' eyes flicker across the room. Hawkish. He paces, glancing under the car. Kicks over a drip mat. Grimaces in frustration. Then --

Backtracks.

Stopping before an industrial WORK BENCH. He sights faint grooves on the dirty floor. Almost imperceptible.

TONY (O.S.)

We good?

James glances up at Tony standing at the door.

JAMES

Give me a hand.

They pull on the work bench, revealing a TRAP DOOR.

INT. HIDDEN STAIRWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Flashlights in hand, the two descend down a pitch black stairway, stepping foot into an --

UNDERGROUND METHAMPHETAMINE LAB.

Light a match, the whole block goes boom. You got your barrels of CHEMICALS, COOKING MATERIALS with your triple neck flasks, and damn near FIFTY KILOS of METHAMPHETAMINE.

Tony turns to James, jaw agape, as we cut to --

EXT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS - DAY

James' Taurus leads a procession of LASD PATROL CARS through the LA suburban sprawl. Up ahead, The DTLA skyline looms.

EXT. MEN'S CENTRAL JAIL - DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES - DAY

A massive edifice seemingly cut from one block of concrete. Fear and intimidation the crux of its design.

A METAL GATE opens, James' Taurus the first to pass through.

INT. MEN'S CENTRAL JAIL - VARIOUS SHOTS - DAY

Our first glimpse inside Hades. THE YARD, THE COMMISARY, THE PRISON FLOOR... This is a zoo of humanity's worst. *Murderers, rapists, child molesters* -- all gathered under one roof.

INT. MEN'S CENTRAL JAIL - INTAKE - DAY

All steel everything. Two somber PETTY CRIMINALS await processing, when in marches -- James, Tony, and the rest of OSJ. The cuffed Aryan Brotherhood members are paraded in single file, none too pleased with how the day's progressed.

DIGGS (PRE LAP)
That shit was smoooooth...

INT. MEN'S CENTRAL JAIL - OSJ OFFICE - DAY

The end all be all for prison gang intelligence. Wanna know what flavor bubblegum the shot caller of La Eme chews?

This is where you go.

The mood is boisterous, like a locker room post victory. James, Tony, and the rest of OSJ sifting through box after box of evidence obtained. Note: Every deputy present we've already seen during the raid.

DEPUTY HASAN DIGGS (20s, Ivy League educated, black) slips off his kevlar vest, taking a moment to celebrate.

DIGGS
From nock to cuff, ninety seconds.
Tops. Didn't even break a sweat.

TONY
I'm guessin' thirty kilos.

DIGGS
Try forty.

DEPUTY SHAWN GRIMES, 20s, walking mouthpiece, chimes in.

GRIMES
That DEA agent was crushin'.

JAMES
The Latina? Please...

DEPUTY DAVID WILCOX, 20s, coward at his core, comes to Grimes' defense. Grimes and Wilcox are two peas in a pod.

WILCOX
No, it's true. I was there. She
friended him on Facebook.

TONY
Cuidado, Grimes. That's a lotta
spice.

In walks LT. GUTTERSON, 40s, with the gravitas of a four-ton boulder. It's like the walls of the prison bend towards this man; MS-13 hitman unable to hold his gaze. All conversation stops on a dime as Grimes and Wilcox latch onto Gutterson like obedient dogs.

GUTTERSON

Deputy Sweet Home, La Bamba... way to tee it up today. Everyone else, now's your time to step the fuck up. We have sixteen Peckerwoods waiting to be flipped. Suck out every bit of information you can. Names of buyers, their competitors, who's runnin' guns in the SFV... By the end of the day, they should all be working for us.

Gutterson turns to leave, calling out over his shoulder.

GUTTERSON (CONT'D)

Alright, everybody. Get to work.

Gutterson exits. A jealous Grimes turns to James and Tony.

GRIMES

(to James & Tony)

What's the view like swinging from LT's ball bag?

James and Tony smile. And as the two head for the door...

TONY

Department's got a station in Lancaster...

JAMES

Y'all would fit in real nice.

INT. MEN'S CENTRAL JAIL - HOLDING CELL - DAY

CLIFTON ADAMS, 30s, edgy like a speed addict, sits on a steel bench against the wall. "Heil Hitler" and swastikas running all the way down to his cuffed hands.

In walks James, munching on a bag of peanuts.

JAMES

You like baseball?

CLIFTON

Baseball?

JAMES

The sport.

Clifton stares quizzically at James.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Infield, outfield, pitcher,
catcher, batter --

CLIFTON

Yeah, I like baseball.

James slides the bag of peanuts Clifton's way.

JAMES

Favorite player?

CLIFTON

Josh Hamilton.

JAMES

He can swing it.

CLIFTON

Fuck yeah he can.

JAMES

Guess what, Clifton? Right now
you're Josh Hamilton, and I'm your
agent.

CLIFTON

And why's that?

JAMES

Because you're looking at twenty,
twenty-five years. Easy. But I can
help you with that. Get you the
best deal with the best team. Only
what I need from you is intel.
Drugs, guns, murder. Feel me?

CLIFTON

You think I'm a rat?

JAMES

Clifton...

CLIFTON

You think I'm a fucking snitch? Go
fuck yourself.

JAMES

Calm down, Clifton. I'm on your side. And you are no rat.

A beat passes. Clifton nods, feeling alpha. Calms.

JAMES (CONT'D)

But you're a duck.

CLIFTON

A duck?

JAMES

A duck who's gonna get fucked by every single person in this prison. First by me --

Clifton suddenly lunges across the desk, latching his cuffed hands around James' neck.

WA-BAM! Clifton lands a wicked head butt, a dazed James stumbling back. Clifton bull-rushes James, clinching up.

WA-BAM-WA-BAM-WA-BAM. Clifton cracks three knees to James' ribcage, James trying to writhe his way free, but --

Clifton swings his wrists over James' neck - choking him out with his handcuffs. James gasps for air, windpipe collapsing. He kicks off the wall, creating space, then drops to his knees -- Clifton tumbling over James' back.

James lands an elbow, then another, taking the mount --

Just as Gutterson and company storm into the interrogation room, throwing James off of Clifton.

It's all Gutterson now, the look in his eyes cold and reptilian. He lands HAYMAKER after HAYMAKER with ANIMALISTIC FEROCITY, Clifton's pleas for mercy totally ignored.

And as Gutterson cocks his arm back one last time, Clifton lying a bloody mess on the concrete floor, we turn to --

James, sitting dazed, back against the wall, as we -- PRE-LAP Mick Jagger's haunting falsetto wail...

INT. JAMES' HOME - AFTERNOON

Hunched over a dinner table, KEELY SEXTON - 20s, suffers no fools, mind like a diamond - painstakingly sketches out a design for a necklace. Once upon a time, Keely could of been a debutante, but her soul screamed out in revolt.

Nearby, a speaker plays GIMME SHELTER, dozens of jewelry prototypes flared out before her.

James enters, Keely turning to greet him.

KEELY

Hey, babe.

Keely winces at the sight of James' BLACK EYE, but it's the German Shepherd by his side that makes her jaw drop.

KEELY (CONT'D)

Oh my God.

JAMES

Yeah.

Keely crouches down, allowing the dog to sniff her hand.

KEELY

Where'd you find him?

JAMES

You really wanna know?

Keely gently runs her fingers over the dog's head.

KEELY

He's a sweetie.

(checks her watch)

I can run him to the vet now...

Keely snatches up her purse, taking hold of the cord of rope leashed around the timid dog's neck. She heads for the door, James moving to join her.

KEELY (CONT'D)

Where do you think you're going?

JAMES

With you.

KEELY

Your dad's in town.

James winces. He forgot. Thankfully Keely didn't.

KEELY (CONT'D)

Your uniform's laid out on the bed.

Keely turns to leave, motioning to James' face.

KEELY (CONT'D)

And nice shiner by the way.

INT. CALIFORNIA CLUB - BALL ROOM - NIGHT

Oak lined walls and crystal chandeliers. Two HUNDRED GUESTS sit at white clothed tables, the attire formal. Standing before the masses, in his starched and pressed uniform, is --

SHERIFF LEE BACA, 50s, five brass stars gleaming on his collar. In the world of law enforcement, there isn't a more powerful officer in the country. His demeanor is jocular and approachable. A man of the people before his constituents.

SHERIFF BACA

... I'd like to thank the governor and the mayor for hosting this fine event. But I regretfully have to say that all those favors you two owe me? Those still stand...

This gets a good chuckle from the crowd. James slips in the back, careful not to draw attention to himself.

SHERIFF BACA (CONT'D)

Also in attendance, one of my closets friends, Sheriff of Tuscaloosa -- Ted Sexton.

James sights his father, SHERIFF TED SEXTON, 50s, humbly nodding to all those seated near.

SHERIFF BACA (CONT'D)

In the state of Alabama, Ted Sexton IS law enforcement. His awards and commendations reading like a damn Tolstoy novel...

Ted waves off the comment, as a WELL-TO-DO WOMAN, 60s, catches James in her periphery. She visibly flinches at the sight of James' swollen and bruised face.

James just kindly smiles right back at her.

SHERIFF BACA (CONT'D)

Thanks for being here, Ted.

(transitioning)

The Los Angeles Sheriff's Department - *I can assure you* - is at the forefront of policing and prison reform. Implementing Educated Based Incarceration has given inmates a new chance at life. And I'm happy to say that so far it has exceeded all expectations.

All those in attendance applaud, Baca nodding his thanks.

INT. CALIFORNIA CLUB - BALL ROOM - LATER

James approaches Sheriff Baca's table. Ted's seated to his right, UNDERSHERIFF PAUL TANAKA, 50s, Sheriff Baca's second-in-command, seated to his left.

Sheriff Baca sights James, rising from his seat.

SHERIFF BACA

James...

JAMES

Sheriff Baca, please don't get up.
And my apologies for --

SHERIFF BACA

No need.

Sheriff Baca turns to the CIVILIANS seated at the table.

SHERIFF BACA (CONT'D)

James works in our elite OSJ unit.

Sheriff Baca turns to James, putting him on the spot.

SHERIFF BACA (CONT'D)

(please explain)

James...

JAMES

Operation Safe Jails... We
specialize in extracting intel from
incarcerated gang members. Once the
intelligence is deemed credible, we
use it to take down the gangs
running the streets.

A CONGRESSWOMAN, 50s, chimes in.

CONGRESSWOMAN

Clearly takes after his father.

JAMES

Jails are our single greatest
resource in fighting crime. The
intel, endless...

SHERIFF BACA

Just today, James led a raid on a
meth lab that resulted in --

Sheriff Baca turns to Undersheriff Tanaka.

UNDERSHERIFF TANAKA

The seizure of fifty-two kilos of
meth, two million in cash...

TED

And one black eye.

JAMES

Don't tell Mom.

The joke lands with everyone at the table. James takes a seat
as a team of WAITERS arrive with the entrees.

LATER.

Mid-meal. Filet mignons, potatoes au gratin, red wine...

SHERIFF BACA

... Violent crimes are down twenty-
three percent, property crimes
fourteen --

CONGRESSWOMAN

But the wolves are at the door...

SHERIFF BACA

The wolves will always be at your
door when you have a three billion
dollar budget and ten thousand
deputies on your roster. The FBI,
ACLU... they live in a fairy --

(turns to James)

This black eye... Whoever gave it
to you, would they have killed you
if given the chance?

JAMES

(zero hesitation)

Yes, sir.

SHERIFF BACA

The streets are safer than they
have ever been. All you have to do
is look at the hard data.

UNDERSHERIFF TANAKA

Tie our hands up and see what
happens.

CONGRESSWOMAN

Lee, don't blow this off.

SHERIFF BACA
I'm not. Which is why I want to
bring Ted onto my executive staff.

James turns to his father. This is news to him.

TED
Like I said before, my wife makes
all the decisions...

CONGRESSWOMAN
Spoken like a true diplomat.

TED
Spoken like a man who knows better.

All present laugh, with the exception of James. Ted clocks
the pensive look on his son's face.

EXT. CALIFORNIA CLUB - ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Post meal cigars and Macallan Rare Cask. Guests mingle on the
wraparound balcony, the city expanse twinkling below. James
stands with Ted and Sheriff Baca, the three smoking cigars.

SHERIFF BACA
... How's Keely, doing?

JAMES
Busy as always.

A BALDING MAN, 60s, calls out to Sheriff Baca.

BALDING MAN
Lee, I got someone you should meet.

Sheriff Baca holds up a commanding finger - "one second."

SHERIFF BACA
(to James)
We should hit the range Sunday.
It's been too long.

JAMES
I would love that.

SHERIFF BACA
If you two would excuse me for a
moment...

Sheriff Baca drifts off. It's just James and Ted now. There's
a reverence to James' demeanor. That boyhood idolization
still intact.

JAMES

You need a place to stay tonight?

TED

Taking the red-eye back. That was quite the bust today. Lee and I were listening to it on the radio. Nick Saban himself couldn't of drawn up a better raid.

JAMES

Just thankful everything went by the book, not a bullet fired.

TED

Spare your modesty for the Times.

James smirks, knowing full well his dad wants a recap.

TED (CONT'D)

Spill it. I may be getting older but I can still knock your dick in the dirt.

JAMES

Had the house cleared in a blink. Everyone stacked and flowing... Busted up their whole operation.

TED

All the agencies got along?

JAMES

Like kissing cousins.

A smile escapes Ted's lips, enjoying his son's passion for the job. An enthusiasm he once felt many years ago.

TED

You love it, don't you?

JAMES

I threw up twice this morning I was so nervous --

TED

I can understand that.

JAMES

But I love it. Yes, I do.

A beat passes, the two men reflecting on their chosen careers. James switches gears.

JAMES (CONT'D)
The job offer...

TED
You have your reservations.

James pauses. *Should he go there?* Treads very lightly.

JAMES
It's different out here.

TED
I'm aware.

JAMES
Los Angeles is not Tuscaloosa.

TED
And you don't think I could adapt?

JAMES
Not in the way you think.

Ted eyes his boy. *So much history between these two...*

TED
Like I said before, I need to
discuss it with your mother.

Ted stubs out his cigar.

TED (CONT'D)
I should be going.

JAMES
Can I drive you to the airport?

TED
No need. Lee's got a car for me.
(then)
Fifty-two kilos in meth. Two
million in cash...

Ted whistles. *That's quite the bust.*

TED (CONT'D)
Making good in the big city...

Ted glances at the view one last time before he goes.

KEELY (PRE LAP)
Why now?

INT. JAMES' HOME - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Keely, her shirt half-soaked, and a shirtless James are hunched over the tub as they lather up the German Shepherd with medicated shampoo. We pay notice to a -- ten inch scar running like fault line down the length of James' abdomen.

JAMES

It's about his career. His legacy.

KEELY

Maybe he wants to be closer to you.

Keely reaches out for a comb, gently brushing out a mat.

JAMES

Or maybe he just wants to have his cup of coffee in the big leagues. I can't fault him for that.

KEELY

You're angry.

JAMES

I'm not angry. I just don't want to see him fail. Alabama he understands, but out here...

KEELY

That may be part of it, but you're not foolin' me.

JAMES

How so?

KEELY

You came all the way out here to build something. On your own merit. Then today your dad gets a steak sandwich with Baca, and now he's gonna glide his way to the top. Your dad can't see past his own nose. And sometimes, James, neither can you.

James' jaw slackens ever so slightly. She's right. For a moment, it's quiet. Just James, Keely, and this sopping wet German Shepherd quivering in the tub.

KEELY (CONT'D)

(re: German Shepherd)

We're keeping him. Say no and I'm divorcing you.

JAMES
I don't deserve you.

Keely reaches out for a towel.

KEELY
And we're naming him Winston.

James glances at Keely. A moment taken to suss out her reasoning. *God he loves this woman...*

JAMES
Like Harry Winston's? The jewelry store?

Keely nods, smiling. James guessed right.

KEELY
Cause he's a diamond in the rough.

Keely crawls atop James, both sopping wet. She runs her index finger down the length of James' abdominal scar.

KEELY (CONT'D)
And in a couple years, a few kids...

James smiles ear to ear, excited by the thought.

JAMES
How many we talkin'?

Keely pauses to think, the answer on the tip of her tongue, when she abruptly kisses James on the lips. It's tender. Intimate. And as he kisses her back, harder, we cut to --

EXT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS - DAWN

From the coves of Malibu to the arid terrain of Palmdale, Sheriff patrol cars fan out across their domain like bats expelled from a cave.

Over four thousand miles of jurisdiction. *Altadena, Marina Del Rey, West Hollywood, Compton...* And with each new locale we edge further into more urbanized territory, until we finally settle on the image of - Men's Central Jail.

LT. GUTTERSON (PRE LAP)
Listen up, everybody...

EXT. MEN'S CENTRAL JAIL - HERO'S PARK - EARLY MORNING

A communal, outdoor space reserved only for deputies. It's a coffee and donuts morning courtesy of Gutterson. James, Tony, and the rest of OSJ gathered around their superior.

LT. GUTTERSON

If anybody wants Clifton Adams' dental records, I got 'em right here for ya on my fist.

Gutterson holds up his swollen fist, deputies hooting in approval, with the exception of - James, Tony, and Diggs.

Gutterson waves his hand, calming down his minions.

LT. GUTTERSON (CONT'D)

Alright, alright. *Calm down...*

His deputies silence, time to get to work.

LT. GUTTERSON (CONT'D)

We got a request from up top to ghost an inmate by the name of Anthony Brown.

DIGGS

What'd he do?

LT. GUTTERSON

Had a cell phone on him. Beyond that... don't know, don't care. Sexton, you're on the computers. Wilcox and Grimes, ship him out to San Dimas and stand watch.

James, Wilcox, and Grimes nod - "understood."

LT. GUTTERSON (CONT'D)

So, how was the fishing yesterday?

DIGGS

Got a lead on a chop Shop in Sun Valley. Just waiting on a second source.

LT. GUTTERSON

Good.

WILCOX

Drug den in Rialto.

GRIMES

Looking juicy.

Guttererson turns to James and Tony.

TONY
Barnett wants to meet again.

LT. GUTTERSON
What about?

JAMES
Will find out soon.

LT. GUTTERSON
Barbecue at my house this Saturday.
Attendance is mandatory. We got the
Dodgers playing the Giants. Grimes,
you come wearing that Nor Cal shit
and there will be hell to pay.

All of OSJ share in a laugh at Grimes' expense. Team members
good-naturedly throwing in verbal jabs of their own.

INT. MEN'S CENTRAL - CLERK'S OFFICE - MORNING

CLOSE ON -- A computer screen. Specifically, the name ANTHONY
BROWN, ominously flickering in green font, as it's DELETED -
then replaced with the name - PAUL JOHNSON.

REVEAL -- James standing before a computer like he's done
this dozens of times before, *which he has...* Note: This may
all seem insignificant now, but it will circle back later.

TONY (O.S.)
Yo, Barnett's waiting on us.

James pivots, seeing Tony holding two bags from Fatburger.

JAMES
Almost done...

CLICK. The file is saved, window exited. James glances up,
catching glimpse of Wilcox and Grimes escorting ANTHONY
BROWN, 30s, black, down an interior hallway.

INT. MEN'S CENTRAL JAIL - INTERROGATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

An impatient Barnett sits before a metal table. In struts
James and Tony like two old friends stopping by for a beer.
James holds a manilla folder, Tony carrying the Fatburger
bags. Barnett is damn near salivating in anticipation.

TONY

Two Fats with cheese. All the fries
you want --

JAMES

(re: manilla folder)
And a motion for a ten-month
sentence reduction.

Barnett snatches hold of both. Ripping into his first burger,
as his eyes scan through his motion for reduction.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Spoke to Judge Brown today and he's
taken a shining to you.

James and Tony crack open two Dr. Peppers.

JAMES (CONT'D)

You may be a lot of things,
Barnett, but dumb you are not.

TONY

Keep putting in work and you could
be a free man very soon.

Barnett licks his sausage fingers. Racking his brain.

BARNETT

BG's running a pay to stay on some
kid named Spoons. Got his momma
wiring money to their accounts.

James shakes his head. Not good enough.

JAMES

We're hunting for dingers, Barnett.

TONY

You got the judge's eye now. Take
advantage of that.

Tony slides a PENTHOUSE Barnett's way.

TONY (CONT'D)

Springtime will be here before you
know it. Gonna have all those
college girls walking around in
short skirts.

JAMES

Cocksman like yourself, it'd be
like a fox in the hen house.

TONY

What else you got up your sleeve?

Barnett's gaze flickers with thought. A flash within a flash.
Not of lust, but of an entirely different emotion.

JAMES

What was that?

TONY

I saw it too.

JAMES

Something you wanna tell us?

Barnett furrows his brow. Suddenly all business.

BARNETT

Transfer me up to Wayside.

TONY

We could do that.

BARNETT

And I want two years off my
sentence. Minimum.

James whistles just like his old man. *Quite the request...*

JAMES

Tell us what you got, then we can
start talking numbers.

The smallest of beats.

BARNETT

Shoreline Crips runnin' a crack
game outta some laundromat.

JAMES

That's not it.

TONY

Nope. He's holding out on us.

BARNETT

Fuck you.

JAMES

You're scared.

BARNETT

Scared never could run game.

TONY
(to James)
Way his arm's cradling his stomach?
Hasn't even touched the Penthouse.

JAMES
(to Tony)
And those demands? Acting like he
knows who killed Biggie Smalls.

TONY
What's got you scared, Barnett?

A beat. *Is Barnett ready to talk?*

BARNETT
You two blow each other on the low?

JAMES
You got no problem dropping a dime
on your cousin Gretchen yesterday.

TONY
Same with the Mexican Mafia and the
Black Guerrillas.

JAMES
But that's cause you're road dogs
with... Larson.

Bingo. James leans back, smelling blood in the water.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Tony, you remember Larson.

TONY
Leader of the Aryan Brotherhood.
The "white power" tattooed above
his eyes makes him hard to forget.

Barnett abruptly stands, revealing just how massive he is.

JAMES
Sit. The Fuck. Down.

James holds his stare. Unblinking. A long beat passes then
Barnett sits. Tony amiably slides a pack of smokes his way.

TONY
One way or another we'll figure out
what Larson's up to. So just do us
a solid and tell us now.

Barnett procures a smoke. Lights up. Exhales. It's not rage we see in Barnett's eyes anymore, but fear.

BARNETT
You'll protect me?

JAMES
You have our word.

BARNETT
To Kill A Mockingbird. The quote -
That's what it's from. *Shoot all
the blue jays you want --*

JAMES
What's the deal with Larson?

BARNETT
You two so fucking smart, go watch
his cell. Figure that shit out
yourselves.

EXT. TWIN TOWERS - 3000 FLOOR - AFTERNOON

From a distance, James and Tony surveil GLEN LARSON - 40s, war hammer personified - standing outside his cell. You can almost smell the sulfur oozing out his pores. Only Larson isn't doing a single thing that would be deemed illicit.

James cracks open a bag of sunflower seeds, pouring Tony a handful. The two settling in for the long haul, as we cut to--

COMMISARY.

James and Tony stroll the floor, chatting up INMATES along the way, but their real focus is on Larson playing Spades with five of his ARYAN BROTHERHOOD COHORTS. And that's all they're doing. *Playin' cards...* Nothing criminal about it.

TV ROOM.

Larson lounges with his boys, James and Tony spying from afar. For the two it's like watching paint dry. Not a single thing out of the ordinary. Tony shoots James a look, one that reads, *"What are we doing here?"* James can only shrug.

3000 FLOOR.

Hours have passed. Inmates settling in for the night. James and Tony are back surveilling Larson's cell. The sunflower seeds are all gone and a nagging boredom has set in.

TONY
(re: Barnett)
He played us.

James doesn't comment. Eyes bolted to Larson's cell.

TONY (CONT'D)
You ever fly fish?

JAMES
Fly fish? No.

TONY
Thinking about getting into it.

James clocks DEPUTY PETE JENKINS, 30s, strolling down the floor like he owns the place...

TONY (CONT'D)
Saw it in a movie. Seems peaceful.

Jenkins slows to a stop before Larson's cell, Tony following James' eyeline, as Jenkins now converses with Larson. Neither James nor Tony expecting much from this interaction, when --

Larson rises from his bed, slipping a manilla envelope to Jenkins. Jenkins ambles off, Larson returning to his bed.

James and Tony are speechless. Both avoiding eye contact. Spiraling. Minds blown. Then...

TONY (CONT'D)
You know him?

JAMES
(nods)
Pete Jenkins. He's a piece of shit.
Runs with the 3000 Boyz. You wanna
take him down now?

Tony shakes his head.

TONY
Let's see how far this goes.

INT. MEN'S CENTRAL JAIL - PARKING STRUCTURE - NIGHT

Jenkins saunters up to his white BMW, where two other DEPUTIES, late 20s, await his arrival. The three hop inside, peeling out of the parking structure.

James' Explorer soon trails. Tony seated shotgun.

EXT. VAHALLA INK TATTOO PARLOR - BACK PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Jenkins' BMW pulls to a stop, Two ARYAN BROTHERHOOD MEMBERS, 30s, awaiting his arrival. Jenkins and the two Deputies step out of the BMW... *the five conversing like old friends.*

TONY (O.S.)
The two other deputies?

JAMES (O.S.)
Jeff Ayles and Marshall Pinkard.
Also 3000 Boyz.

ON JAMES AND TONY - Watching it all go down from James' Explorer parked across the street. That's when --

Jenkins retrieves two DUFFLE BAGS from his trunk. He hands both over to the Aryan Brotherhood Members, along with the manilla envelope Larson had passed along.

One of the Skinheads checks the envelope, then motions to the other, who snaps into action - loading three BACKPACKS into the trunk of the BMW.

Jenkins and his dirty Cohorts pile back into his car, speeding off. A loaded beat passes between James and Tony. What they've just seen landing like a ton of bricks.

TONY
What do we do?

JAMES
Our jobs.

Tony grimly shakes his head.

TONY
Are you ready to see this all the way through? *Deputies catching bullets in the back...* Don't tell me that shit doesn't happen.

James pauses, tortured by the thought of turning in three deputies and all that would entail. His moral code wins out.

JAMES
I've seen a lot of shit that ain't right, but ain't really that wrong. But this, Tony... we have to do something here.

James still senses his partner's hesitation.

JAMES (CONT'D)

We write up the report, send it to
Lt. Gutterson. He's the only one
who will see this fucking thing.

We PRE-LAP the sharp CRACK of a baseball meeting bat.

EXT. LITTLE LEAGUE FIELD - NIGHT

It's a night game, LITTLE LEAGUERS (12-13) playing ball under the caustic wash of halogen lights. A YOUNG PLAYER slides safely into second base, as Gutterson - *or Coach Gutterson to his players* - cheers on from the DUGOUT. He's chomping on a wad of gum, shoulders relaxed, having a good old time.

LT. GUTTERSON

(to player)

Nice rip, Nathan...

Gutterson turns to his bench.

LT. GUTTERSON (CONT'D)

Weisenberg, you're in the hole.
Stay loose. Step and drive.

Gutterson's cell vibrates. Sees an email from James and Tony at the top of his inbox. CLICKS it open, reads. There's ZERO REACTION from Gutterson regarding the email's content.

CRACK!!! Gutterson glances up from his phone, catching sight of a baseball sailing deep. Players jump to their feet, cheering, shaking the chainlink, as we hard cut to --

INT. TONY'S TRUCK - MORNING

A pensive Tony cruises down this residential street in Rosemead. Dozens of rose bushes in the bed of his truck. He reaches for his cell, texting James: *Anything from Gutterson?*

Three dots, then James replies back: *Nope. Don't stress.*

Tony sets his cell on the dash, still feeling uncomfortable with it all. He slows to a stop, parking before a --

Newly renovated, one-story home. White picket fence, perfectly manicured lawn... It's the American dream. Tony manufactures a smile, sighting --

His mother, LETICIA, 60s, happily awaiting his arrival.

EXT. LETICIA'S HOME - FRONT YARD - LATE MORNING

Tony and Leticia work as a team, planting the last of the rose bushes, then covering them with potting soil. Leticia steps back, taking a moment to admire her new home.

LETICIA

You are a good son, mijo.

It isn't said, but it's clear that Tony is the one who financially made this house a reality for his mother.

LETICIA (CONT'D)

But now you need to start a family of your own. *Quiero nietos.*

TONY

You may already have a few...

Tony smirks. Leticia slapping her son's shoulder. He stands, wiping the dirt off his hands. Checks the time.

TONY (CONT'D)

I gotta run.

LETICIA

Stay for lunch.

TONY

Lo siento pero no puedo.

LETICIA

You being careful, Antonio?

TONY

Siempre.

Tony hugs his mother goodbye. Glancing back at her one last time standing in... *a yard of her own.* Grins in satisfaction.

TONY (CONT'D)

Fruit trees next, ma. Orange and lemon. Maybe get some Jasmine running up the walls...

LETICIA

Te amo.

TONY

Love you, too.

EXT. GUTTERSON'S HOME - BACKYARD - DAY

Cop land. A backyard in Santa Clarita with a pool and a batting cage. All of OSJ is here for this monthly ritual, significant others and children in tow.

Tony enters through a side gate, showered and sporting his Dodgers' blue. He passes by Grimes (wearing a Giants hat) and Wilcox at an outdoor bar, pouring up a pitcher of margaritas.

GRIMES

Hey, La Bamba... thirsty?

Wilcox raises up his margarita.

WILCOX

Just a taste. Won't kill ya.

Tony motions to an outdoor flatscreen. It's the top of the second, score reading: Dodgers 6, Giants 0.

TONY

(re: ball game)

It's gonna be a long day, Grimes.
Better make those doubles.

Tony sights James stepping out the house. He's got a plate of carne asada in one hand, three longnecks in the other.

Tony approaches, fishing out a Coke from a tub of beers.

TONY (CONT'D)

Talk to --

JAMES

Was just about to.

We follow James now as he wades his way towards Keely and Diggs chatting up a storm. James divvies up the beers.

DIGGS

Sweet Home... I hear you're
starting an animal rescue.

JAMES

(laughs)
Oh, yeah?

DIGGS

Couple stray cats behind my
building. I'll bring em by.

JAMES
Please do.
(to Keely)
Hungry yet?

KEELY
Starvin'...

James kisses Keely, slipping his way towards Gutterson hovering over the BBQ. He hands over the plate of asada.

JAMES
LT, ya got a minute?

LT. GUTTERSON
What's up?

JAMES
Wondering if you've had a chance to
look at that --

LT. GUTTERSON
I'm on it.

Just three words but it's all James needs to hear.

LT. GUTTERSON (CONT'D)
Good work, Sexton.

JAMES
Thank you, sir.

James heads back to Keely, buoyed by Gutterson's assurances, as we PRE-LAP the staccato bursts of gunfire.

INT. LOS ANGELES SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT - GUN RANGE - NIGHT

The range is entirely empty sans James and Sheriff Baca. Two SHERIFF DRIVERS (Baca's personal detail) stand by the entrance like Mossad agents. Sheriff Baca fires off his Sig Sauer P220, his form impeccable, James standing near.

Sheriff Baca releases his empty magazine, slips off his ear protection, drawing his target back on the track. His shot grouping could fit inside a Coke can. Lethal.

SHERIFF BACA
James, I have made a point not to
help you in any way.

JAMES
I wouldn't of wanted it any other --

SHERIFF BACA

I know that. But I would be remiss -
I would be doing our department a
disservice - if I didn't put you on
the fast track for bigger and
better things.

Sheriff Baca steps aside. James tacks up a fresh target,
loading up the magazine to his Sig Sauer P320.

SHERIFF BACA (CONT'D)

The department is full of good
deputies, but it's the exceptional
ones who make it what it is. And
whether your father was aware of it
or not, he was grooming you from
day one.

JAMES

What do you have in mind, sir?

SHERIFF BACA

I know you like being in the thick
of it, but we need deputies of your
caliber running the show.

BZZZT! Sheriff Baca hits a button, the paper target flying
all the way down the firing lane.

James takes a shooting stance - BOOM! His bullet rips through
the bullseye. James is a dead shot.

EXT. GUN RANGE - NIGHT

James and Sheriff Baca exit through glass doors, the two
slowly making their way towards the street. Sheriff Baca
speaks to James as if he is an equal. A friend. A confidant.

SHERIFF BACA

What we have within our department,
it's a brotherhood like no other.
The older I get the clearer that
becomes. *And we have to protect
that, James.* At all cost.

Sheriff Baca motions to his surroundings, James drinking in
his every word.

SHERIFF BACA (CONT'D)

This city, it's ours. Not the
LAPD's, not the DEA's, and
certainly not the god damn FBI's.

The two Sheriff Drivers roll up in a town car. Sheriff Baca turns to James conspiratorially. As if James was now a part of the Sheriff's inner circle.

SHERIFF BACA (CONT'D)
 So, what you did the other day,
 ghosting that Anthony Brown
 character... it has not gone
 unnoticed.

INSERT - A quick flashback to James changing Anthony Brown's name on the computer. The real Anthony Brown passing by.

BACK ON JAMES - As he puts two and two together.

JAMES
 You gotta be kidding me. The cell
 phone, that's how he got it? From
 the FBI???

Sheriff Baca nods. James can't believe it.

JAMES (CONT'D)
 How stupid could they --

SHERIFF BACA
 They're grasping at straws.

JAMES
 Cell phones get people killed, sir.

SHERIFF BACA
I know, I know... It's one thing to
 piss on our lawn, but to invade our
 house? Disrespect us like that?

Sheriff Baca shakes off his anger, a smile materializing. As if he now secretly has the upper hand with the FBI.

SHERIFF BACA (CONT'D)
*For the foolish, not reason but
 misfortune will be thy teacher...*

Sheriff Baca hops in the back of the car, James watching it drive off, taking a moment to process what the Sheriff has just told him. He reaches for his cell, seeing five missed calls from Tony. *Strange...* He dials Tony back.

JAMES (ON CELL)
 You won't believe this...

TONY (O.S.)
 James --

JAMES (ON CELL)
That inmate we ghosted, sonofabitch
was working for the FBI --

TONY (O.S.)
What?

JAMES (ON CELL)
They had him snitching on us.

TONY (O.S.)
Forget that. Gutterson fucked us.

Beat.

JAMES (ON CELL)
What?

TONY (O.S.)
He showed Jenkins, Ayles, and
Pinkard the report. All names
unredacted...

All the color drains from James' face.

TONY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
They saw my name, your name,
Barnett's --

JAMES (ON CELL)
I don't understand...

TONY (O.S.)
What's to understand? Gutterson
threw us under the fucking bus.

James reels. No words sufficing.

TONY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
You there?

JAMES (ON CELL)
Yeah, I'm here.

TONY (O.S.)
Nothing was blacked out.

JAMES (ON CELL)
I heard you.

TONY (O.S.)
We're rats now, James. What if half
the fucking jail is in on this? You
heard what Barnett said...

JAMES (ON CELL)
Where's he now?

TONY (O.S.)
I put him in isolation.

JAMES (ON CELL)
Good. I'll meet you first thing in
the morning.

CLICK. James takes a breath. With one phone call, his life
has changed forever.

INT. MEN'S CENTRAL JAIL - HALLWAY - EARLY MORNING

James and Tony are on the move. Harsh whispers traded back
and forth when deemed safe to do so.

JAMES
Maybe Gutterson made a mistake.

TONY
Gutterson doesn't make mistakes.

JAMES
So why'd he do it?

TONY
Why does a dog lick his balls?
Cause he can...

Conversation halts as two DEPUTIES pass by, escorting a
DERANGED INMATE who's conversing with all the devils in his
head. Once the three are no longer in earshot...

JAMES
(figuring it out)
Gutterson used to run the 3000
floor before OSJ.

TONY
Gutterson's on the cut too?

The comment hangs in the air like rotting flesh.

JAMES
Anyone else in OSJ know about this?

TONY
I didn't exactly send out a group
text.

JAMES

No one's said anything to you?

Tony shakes his head, as they step into the --

PROTECTIVE CUSTODY WING.

JAMES (CONT'D)

This has to be a mistake.

They stop before a cell, Barnett lying asleep on his bed.

TONY

Barnett. Wake up.

Barnett rises from his cot, only -- HE'S NOT BARNETT. There's some other white INMATE now in Barnett's cell. Blood running cold, James turns to the nearest GUARD (40s, incompetent).

JAMES

Where's Barnett?

GUARD

Gen pop.

No time to investigate any further. James and Tony race off to General Population.

INT. MEN'S CENTRAL JAIL - CORRIDOR - SECONDS LATER

James and Tony sprint down the corridor, as if the life of their informant depends on it - which it does. They shoulder their way through a clusterfuck of bodies.

JAMES

Outta-the-way!

TONY

Fuck-move!

Prisoner or Deputy, doesn't matter - James and Tony SHOVE and ELBOW their way past, no apologies given.

The two reach the side entrance to General Population, only it's suspiciously LOCKED SHUT. James SLAMS his hand against an OBSERVATION WINDOW, startling the YOUNG DEPUTY inside.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Open-this-fucking-door.

The Young Deputy turns to the door, shocked to see that it's closed. He scrambles to buzz it open, James and Tony finally slipping their way into --

GENERAL POPULATION.

Hundreds of INMATES mill about, divided by race. Two Aryan Brotherhood FOOT SOLDIERS, armed with shanks, stalk their way towards an oblivious Barnett at the commissary.

The two Foot Soldiers quicken pace, an arms reach away from Barnett now. And as they raise up their jailhouse shivs --

Two streams of PEPPER SPRAY blast the Foot Soldiers in the face, James and Tony tackling the assassins to the ground... metal shanks sent flying. SIRENS BLARE as --

The entire floor is sent into a mad coughing fit. Diggs, along with a dozen ARMED DEPUTIES storm the floor, as James and Tony quickly restrain the two Foot Soldiers.

INT. MEN'S CENTRAL JAIL - PROCESSING ROOM - LATER

James and Tony wipe off the pepper spray from their faces. They squint at Barnett, pacing inside a HOLDING CELL, clearly distraught with all that's just transpired.

JAMES

(re: Barnett)

Let's rush him up to Wayside now.
Put him in protective custody. I
got a buddy who can keep watch.

TONY

And what about us?

JAMES

We act like it's any other day till
we hear back from Gutterson.

INT. MEN'S CENTRAL JAIL - OSJ OFFICE - AFTERNOON

James and Tony are seated in the communal office of OSJ. Clock on the wall tick-tick-ticking the seconds away. Ten other members of OSJ floating in and out of the office.

James studies ALL OF THEM from his periphery. Ears attune to any reference or side comment about what's transpired.

A glance to his partner and Tony is playing the same horrible game. Wound tighter than a two-dollar watch.

Both examining pieces on the chessboard, only problem is they have no idea who their opponent is. *Tick-tock-tick-tock...*

Turning to his computer, James checks his email. All seven messages sent to Lt. Gutterson have gone without response.

INT. MEN'S CENTRAL JAIL - LOCKER ROOM - AFTERNOON

James hoofs his way past the showers, steam wafting past.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Hey, Sexton.

James slow turns towards a grizzled SERGEANT, early 50s.
Deputies all around James stopping in notice.

SERGEANT

Been hearing good things about you.
Keep it up, kid.

Speechless, James can only nod his thanks. *Maybe this will all blow over. Maybe there is some explanation to it all...*

Moving onwards, spirits momentarily lifted, James arrives at his locker. Swinging open the metal door --

Where James' eyes fall upon a DEAD RAT resting atop his gym bag. No, this is not over. This is only just beginning.

We PRE-LAP the metallic flutter of a blade chopping.

INT. JAMES' HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

CLOSE ON - A blade slicing and dicing up a ripe tomato.

PULLING BACK - Keely tends to six activities at once, Winston latched to her side. She stirs the marinara sauce, checks on the chicken... James enters from the side door, like it's been just another day. Plants a kiss on Keely's cheek.

JAMES

How was your day?

KEELY

We got a genius on our hands.

Keely turns to Winston.

KEELY (CONT'D)

(to Winston)

Show me your sit.

Winston obediently sits, Keely doting upon him.

KEELY (CONT'D)

Hear anything from your dad?

JAMES

Nope.

Keely motions towards the dining room.

 KEELY
Window's jammed again. Think you
could...

James nods, stepping his way into the --

DINING ROOM.

James inspects the window, SLAMMING the heel of his palm into the top rail, but the window's still jammed. Keely pops her head into the dining room.

 KEELY (CONT'D)
Everything okay?

 JAMES
Yeah. Why?

 KEELY
I dunno. You just seem...

Keely shrugs it off.

 KEELY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 (re: window)
Try finessing it, maybe.

A phone rings, Keely drifting back into the kitchen. James hammers away at the window sill, ignoring Keely's advice.

Bang. Bang.. Bang...

 KEELY (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)
Hello?

BANG. BANG.. BANG...

 KEELY (CONT'D)
Who is this???

James races into the KITCHEN stealing away the phone. There's nothing but DEAD AIR on the other end, then... CLICK.

 KEELY (CONT'D)
Who was it?

 JAMES
No idea.

James turns to Keely who now stares at the window. A LARGE FRACTURE running right through the middle of the glass.

INT. MEN'S CENTRAL JAIL - HALLWAY - EARLY MORNING

Through wire-meshed glass, we catch Gutterson lumbering his way through the halls. Other DEPUTIES referentially moving aside. Gutterson steps into his --

OFFICE.

Where James awaits his arrival. Gutterson can't contain his surprise.

JAMES

Why did you do it, sir?

LT. GUTTERSON

Do what, Sexton?

JAMES

Show them the unredacted report.
Put a target on our backs.

LT. GUTTERSON

So, now you take your big balls and
surprise me in my office, to
what... Interrogate me?

James is terrified of this man, any sane individual would be, but he still musters up the courage to hold his stare.

LT. GUTTERSON (CONT'D)

Your father may be an important man
in bum-fuck, Alabama --

JAMES

Is it just the three, sir?

LT. GUTTERSON

I wouldn't need to put a target on
your back. I'm standing in front of
your face right now.

Gutterson's eyes bore through James like augers, a polar chill sent fluttering down James' spine. James glances downwards, no longer able to hold Gutterson's gaze.

LT. GUTTERSON (CONT'D)

That's what I thought. This
investigation of yours is over. Now
get the fuck out of my office.

A pained silence passes, James leaving without a word.

INT. MEN'S CENTRAL JAIL - MEN'S BATHROOM - MORNING

James studies his reflection in the mirror, as if in judgement of his own character. Tony joins James at his side. They wash their hands, waiting for a DEPUTY to leave.

TONY

So that's it? Gutterson growls --

JAMES

Fuck Gutterson. He's dirty too. And if we back down now that makes us just as complicit.

TONY

You think anyone else in OSJ --

JAMES

I dunno but let's find out.

TONY

You gotta plan?

JAMES

We toss Larson's cell.

TONY

Won't find shit...

JAMES

You and I know that, but they may not. So, we chum the waters. See who starts circling the boat.

INT. MEN'S CENTRAL JAIL - 3000 FLOOR - DAY

James and Tony toss Larson's cell, the man in question standing xanax calm outside. Dozens of INMATES linger nearby. Tossing a heavy's cell is not an everyday occurrence. James hold up a tattered paperback for Larson to see.

JAMES

(re: book)

Since when did you learn how to read, Larson?

LARSON

It's amazing what you can accomplish while in jail.

James quietly steams. *This is not going to plan, when...*

WILCOX (O.S.)
Once you two are done embarrassing
yourselves, I want everything put
perfectly back in its place.

James pivots to see Wilcox, Grimes, and four other OSJ
Deputies approaching. All six fuming with anger.

JAMES
Just baiting hooks, Wilcox. Waiting
to see who bites.

Wilcox face reddens, realizing that this was a TRAP. A livid
Wilcox CHARGES at James, Grimes able to restrain him.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Ya, dirty mother fuckers. Is it
just the white boys you're in bed
with, or are ya equal opportunity?

GRIMES
Fuck you, Sexton.

JAMES
How long you been on the take,
Grimes? Cause imma figure it out
one way or another.

EXT. MEN'S CENTRAL JAIL - HERO'S PARK - LATER

James is seated, Tony digging a foot path into the grass.

TONY
Gutterson, Wilcox, Meyer, Grimes...

JAMES
Don't rush to judgement. We're not
taking on the whole jail.

TONY
Jesus Christ... Two days ago I was
playing with Gutterson's kids.

James turns to Tony, his partner clearly distraught.

JAMES
We're doing the right thing.

TONY
I know. But that doesn't mean we
get a pass.

James shakes his head. *Don't go there...*

TONY (CONT'D)

Ten members from the 3000 Boyz damn
near beating two deputies to death.
And everyone knows the shit
Gutterson used to pull in Lynwood --

JAMES

It's our job. And if you think any
different, I don't know why we're
talking right now.

Dead silence. Tony's integrity put into question.

TONY

Shoulda known better. That's all
I'm saying. And don't for a second
think this is gonna be a fair
fight. That's not how this place
works. Gutterson alone is boys with
half the department, Tanaka
included. So whatever we decide to
do next, better be a direct hit.
Cause as of now, I'm only seeing
the situation getting worse for the
both of us.

The charged thump of a BASS DRUM kicks in, as we cut to --

INT. KEELY'S LEXUS RX - MORNING

A scarlet sky over Lincoln Blvd, Keely adding vocals to
Stevie Nicks' smokey timbre. In the trunk rests six glass
display cases, Keely's jewelry prototypes encased in each.

KEELY

(singing)

*Listen to the wind blow, watch the
sun rise... Running in the shadows,
damn your love, damn your lies...*

Cherry lights FLASH and sirens WAIL. A Sheriff's PATROL CAR
trails Keely's car. She glances to her odometer: 25 MPH. Not
a mile over the speed limit.

INT. KEELY'S LEXUS RX - MOMENTS LATER

Keely rolls down her window, a SHERIFF'S DEPUTY approaching.

KEELY

Good evening, Officer --

SHERIFF'S DEPUTY
Step outside the vehicle.

Keely pauses, picking up on his curt tone.

KEELY
I'm sorry, did I --

SHERIFF'S DEPUTY
Step... Outside... The vehicle.

Hand trembling, Keely unbuckles her seatbelt.

EXT. STREET - LATER

Humiliated, Keely stands by her car, hands on the hood. The Sheriff's Deputy approaches, Keely's ID in hand.

KEELY
(glancing back)
Officer, can you tell me --

SHERIFF'S DEPUTY
Eyes forward.

The Sheriff's Deputy steps toward Keely, frisking her. His hands roughly run up her ribs, lingering on her breasts. Groping. Keely freezes, eyes cresting with tears.

INT. TONY'S TRUCK - MORNING

Tony drives, fruit trees strapped down to his truck bed. His eyes widen seeing his mother's front yard --

Completely DESTROYED. Like someone ran over it with a Mack truck. Rose bushes and picket fence bulldozed. There's red paint splattered all over the driveway, "Go Home Spic" graffitied on the garage door.

Tony seethes, sighting his mother's front door, swung ajar.

MOMENTS LATER.

Tony hustles his way up the steps, rushing into his --

MOTHER'S HOUSE.

Eyes falling on a sobbing Laticia seated on the couch.

TONY
Mom, are you okay?

The look on her face tells Tony she's far from okay.

LATICIA
Qué hiciste, Tony? Why did they
bring this to my house? Why?

Tony lowers his jaw, speechless at his mother's response, as the sounds of police sirens echo in the distance.

EXT. JAMES' HOME - FRONT YARD - NOON

James, wearing his Sheriff's uniform, plays fetch with Winston, his mind clearly elsewhere. Keely pulls up the driveway. Parks. She steps out of her Lexus, trembling. Her mascara is smeared, eyes red from crying.

JAMES
What happened?

Keely opens her trunk, taking hold of her display cases...

JAMES (CONT'D)
Keely --

... running smack into James. The display cases slip from her hands, smashing onto asphalt.

KEELY
I got pulled over on Lincoln.

Keely fights back tears as every fiber in James tenses.

JAMES
What? Why?

KEELY
I DON'T KNOW. I wasn't speeding --

JAMES
LASD?

Keely nods.

KEELY
He had me do two sobriety tests,
then felt me up like I was some...

James instantly reddens with anger.

JAMES
What's his name?

KEELY

I was shaking so hard I --

Keely stares James down, unwavering.

KEELY (CONT'D)

Why would he do this?

JAMES

I don't know.

KEELY

So this was all just some random --

JAMES

What's his name, Keely?

Keely pauses as a look of rage ghosts across her face.

KEELY

Hawkins. His last name was Hawkins.

And before Keely can protest, James takes the keys from Keely's hand. He climbs into her Lexus, peeling off.

EXT. CARSON SHERIFF'S STATION - DAY

Keely's Lexus jerks to a stop outside the station. James hops out, like a frothing bull seeing nothing but red.

INT. CARSON SHERIFF'S STATION - BULL PEN - DAY

Calm and collected, James passes through the floor, scouting brass name tag after brass name tag. The CARSON SHERIFF DEPUTIES oblivious to James' true intentions because he's still in uniform. *Just another deputy. One of them...*

James zeroes in on a name tag, pivots. He pads his way towards Deputy Hawkins (the scumbag who felt up Keely) chewing the fat with three other DEPUTIES, and --

BOOM! James clocks Hawkins right in the face. Nasal bones shatter. Blood running all over Hawkins' uniform.

Hawkins falls to his knees, moaning like a wounded sea lion, James looming over him, as --

THE ENTIRE BULL PEN FALLS TO A HUSH.

JAMES

You put your hands on my wife again, I'll fucking kill ya.

There's no attempt made to restrain James - *this is inner LASD justice at its finest*. James marches his way out.

INT. JAMES' HOME - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Keely sits on the couch with Winston. She's still visibly upset from her encounter with Deputy Hawkins. The front door swings opens, Keely rising to her feet.

James steps into the living room, locking eyes with Keely. He raises up his swollen fist, Keely not batting an eye.

KEELY
I'll get you some ice.

INT. JAMES' HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

James and Keely lie fast asleep in bed, Winston resting in his dog crate. Winston raises up his head, suddenly barking like mad, as James stirs awake.

JAMES
(half asleep)
Jesus Christ, Winston...

KA-THUNK!!! James' eyes snap open to a splintering crack reverberating down the hall. Someone is trying to break in.

Winston's really going crazy now, Keely startled awake.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Keely, listen... I want you to hide
in the closet until I come back.

She nods fearfully, James reaching for his Sig Sauer.

INT. JAMES' HOME - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Gun raised, James sweeps through his home, clearing each room. No intruders seen, James arrives at his front door and it's torn to shreds. As if somebody had taken an axe to it.

EXT. JAMES' HOME - CONTINUOUS

James foots his way onto the street. All is severely quiet on this sleepy cul-de-sac. James sucks in a breath, air impossibly still, when we hear --

CLIP. CLOP. CLIP. CLOP. CLIP. CLOP.

James swings around, and standing in between himself and his home -- is the 1400 pound beast of a bull we paid glimpse to in Acton. It snarls at James, nostrils flaring in menace.

The bull cracks his hoof onto the pavement in a show of rage, James dropping his Sig Sauer as he BUCKLES OVER in anguish.

He glances down to his stomach, blood seeping through his shirt. And just as James lifts up his head --

THE BULL CHARGES AT JAMES. ALL VIOLENCE AND FURY.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. JAMES' HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

James awakens, bolts upright, breathing heavy. Keely offering up soothing words of reassurance.

KEELY
You're all right...

James takes a deep breath, acclimating to the here and now.

JAMES
Christ, what time is it?

James turns to his cell, sees it's buzzing with a call from Tony. He reaches out, answering the call, as we cut to --

INT. NANCY'S BAR - NIGHT

The kind of place cockroaches go to die. An obliterated Tony is saddled up at the bar, empty whiskey tumblers before him. He slams back his Dewars neat, eyes watering with tears, falling further and further down a well of self hate.

JAMES (O.S.)
Tony...

Tony swivels on his bar seat, seeing James. Nearly loses his balance as he rises to his feet.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Woah, woah --

TONY
Woah, what?!?

Tony pushes James, an absolute emotional wreck.

TONY (CONT'D)
We got my mom involved now... What
the fuck did we do?!?

Tony takes a swing, James ducking. He pins his partner
against the wall, Tony fighting to escape.

TONY (CONT'D)
What the fuck did we do, James?
Huh? What the fuck did we do...

The flood damn bursts. Snot and tears now running down Tony's
face. He collapses into James arms. A heaving mess.

EXT. NANCY'S BAR - LATER

James and Tony sit on the curb, the two sipping on coffees.
Tony's sobering up, but the guilt and self loathing is now
setting in like an anvil on his chest.

TONY
Who called you?

JAMES
You did.

Tony shrugs. *If you say so...* He lights up a cigarette.

JAMES (CONT'D)
I'm here for you. You know that.

TONY
I know.

Tony reaches into his pant pocket, handing James a crumbled
up NEO NAZI PAMPHLET.

TONY (CONT'D)
(re: pamphlet)
Found about fifty of these stuffed
in my mom's mailbox. Her front yard
was destroyed, "spic" and "wetback"
graffitied everywhere...

Tony's face contorts, fighting back the tears. James' heart
breaks seeing his best friend in such a state.

TONY (CONT'D)
It's my mom, ya know? Anything
happens to her, I swear to God...

James is quiet. Stakes raised tenfold. Tony wipes his eyes,
sucking in a steeling drag.

TONY (CONT'D)
 I had a chat with our friendly in
 homicide. Word is Tanaka's got his
 cleaners on it.

Mention of Tanaka's involvement leaves James speechless. *How deep does this go?*

TONY (CONT'D)
 Not only that, Gutterson's been
 having sit-downs with some of his
 old pals. We really fucking kicked
 the hornet's nest on this one.

JAMES
 What do you wanna do?

Tony shakes his head. A gesture of futility.

JAMES (CONT'D)
 Call it, Tony. However you wanna
 handle this... I'm on board.

Tony takes one last drag, stamping out his cigarette.

TONY
 After today? We gotta get loud.

INT. JAMES' HOME - LIVING ROOM - PRE DAWN

James sits before his laptop, Tony hovering near, as he finishes off an email to six captains within the department. Header reads: Harassment and Corruption Within the LASD. He pauses, email finished, turning to Tony.

JAMES
 Send it?

TONY
 Yeah. Send it.

James turns back to his laptop -- CLICKING SEND.

And for a moment it's totally quiet, save for the faint warble of a mockingbird nearby. James and Tony gaze at the laptop as if it will give them forewarning of what's to come.

Only that doesn't happen. James closes the laptop shut.

INT. JAMES' KITCHEN - DAWN

Alone, James stands before his coffee maker, black liquid percolating into carafe. Coffee is poured into mug, James glancing at Keely's broken display cases resting on the kitchen counter. He sips from his mug, gazing out his window, mockingbird still warbling, as we cut to --

EXT. HOME DEPOT - DAY

James and Keely pass through the aisle, on the hunt for materials to replace her broken display cases. James sights a MAN in his late 20s up ahead, eyes creasing in recognition.

JAMES

Steve...

The Man glances up from his cart, taken aback to see James. This is STEVE ELLIS. He's got that haughty, frat boy feel to him. His southern accent is more pronounced than James'.

STEVE

James. Jesus Christ, It's good to see you.

JAMES

Likewise...

(then)

Steve this is my wife, Keely.

Steve shakes Keely's hand.

STEVE

Pleasure to meet you.

JAMES

Back home, Steve and I were in Boy Scouts together.

STEVE

I heard you were working for the Sheriff's Department.

James nods.

JAMES

How about yourse--

STEVE

FBI.

JAMES

Are you now?

STEVE

Been out here eighteen months. Got
me working with the ACLU.

A beat passes. This run in doesn't feel so... *coincidental*
anymore. Steve hands over his business card.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Hey, here's my card. If you ever
wanna grab a beer.

(turn to Keely)

Very nice meetin' you, Keely.

Steve walks off, James suspiciously glancing back as he goes.

EXT. RIVIERA COUNTRY CLUB - PARKING LOT - LATE MORNING

James parks his car, navigating his way through a sea of
Porsches, Beamers, Maseratis... He pauses, unsure exactly
where to go, when James spots --

A Sheriff Driver (Baca's personal detail), appearing outside
an unmarked door. He coldly waves James over.

INT. RIVIERA COUNTRY CLUB - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

James passes through this members only club, three Sheriff
Drivers trailing closely behind.

SHERIFF BACA (PRE LAP)

And this email you wrote, who
exactly did you send it to?

INT. RIVIERA COUNTRY CLUB - MEN'S GRILL - LATER

James sits with Sheriff Baca at a table overlooking the
championship course. Sheriff Baca bites into a tuna melt,
washing it down with an Arnold Palmer.

JAMES

Captain Alves, Captain Hurt,
Detective Guidry --

SHERIFF BACA

Who's to say it wasn't just some
random traffic stop?

JAMES

The way he groped my wife? I should
hope not, sir.

Sheriff Baca glances down to a printed copy of the email.

JAMES (CONT'D)

That, along with everything that happened to Tony's mother was in direct retaliation to the report I gave to Lt. Gutterson. There were six recipients in total, sir. Not a single response back.

CLUB PATRON (O.S.)

Lee, how'd you swing 'em?

Sheriff Baca turns towards a CLUB PATRON, 60s, passing by.

SHERIFF BACA

Like I've never played golf before.

Sheriff Baca smiles, turning focus back to James.

SHERIFF BACA (CONT'D)

I can understand how all of this might seem related --

JAMES

Sheriff Baca, I can assure you --

SHERIFF BACA

But at the moment I think your youth has gotten the best of you. Anything could have been in those duffle bags. For all we know they could've been filled with bibles.

James can't believe what he's hearing.

JAMES

Bibles, sir??

(changing tactics)

Sheriff Baca, this job... nothing means more to me than the sanctity of this department. Which is why I felt compelled to come directly to you.

James humbly leans in.

JAMES (CONT'D)

I don't pretend to know everything, but this isn't just a few deputies working a hustle on the side. I am certain of that. Someone like you, with your rank and experience, needs to intervene.

SHERIFF BACA
And what would you have me do?

JAMES
Run a full, third party
investigation on this, sir. And
until that's over, place every
suspected deputy on leave.

SHERIFF BACA
Just so I understand the scope of
all this, how many suspected
deputies are we talking here?
Twenty? Forty? The entire jail?

James is taken aback by Sheriff Baca's glibness.

JAMES
Respectfully sir, Keely was
sexually assaulted and in the same
day my partner's mother had her
house vandalized. You need to know
that not everyone in your
department is a boy scout --

Sheriff Baca snaps.

SHERIFF BACA
Boy scouts earn merit badges and
have pow-wows in the woods. Do you
think a boy scout could do what we
do???

Sheriff Baca pulls back on the vitriol. Like it never even
happened. Puts a grandfatherly hand on James shoulder.

SHERIFF BACA (CONT'D)
Tell ya what, James... I will look
into it for you.

James stands, disheartened and shaken by the Sheriff's
response. He leaves Sheriff Baca with one final request.

JAMES
Sheriff Baca, I would appreciate it
if you asked them to leave my wife
out of this.

As James walks off, we PRE-LAP the ominous sounds of metal
doors racking open.

INT. MEN'S CENTRAL JAIL - MONTAGE

-- New INMATES, wrists and feet chained, are led in for processing. James, Tony, and the rest of OSJ size up each new prisoner, determining who best to flip. An INTAKE GUARD SHOULDER CHECKS Tony, offering no apologies as he walks away.

-- James and Tony work the PRISON FLOOR, shooting the breeze with OLD CONS, building a rapport. There's a palatable undercurrent of danger. Not because of all the felons roaming about, but because of all the JAILHOUSE GUARDS circling James and Tony like bull sharks in the water.

-- James and Tony sit at their respective desks, Wilcox and Grimes staring maliciously at the two. James eyes Wilcox, turns to his laptop - sending various files to print.

EXT. TOP OF MULLHOLLAND - LOS ANGELES - SUNSET

James and Tony lean against James' Explorer, a manilla folder resting on the hood. The two sip coffees - *a moment of reprieve* - as the sky smolders orange over West Hollywood.

JAMES

No one inside is gonna help us. Not Baca, not anyone.

TONY

So, we go outside.

Tony glances to James, handing him a folded up copy of a NEWSPAPER. Both knowing what needs to be done.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - MORNING

FROM A DISTANCE -- Morning rush in full effect, our gaze voyeuristic. We catch glimpse of James and Tony, both dressed in civilian attire, as they disappear and reappear amongst the masses. We lose them, *but only for a second...*

As our lens captures James and Tony slipping a MANILLA FOLDER to a bearded MAN, in his late 40s.

The three trade brief words, of which we cannot hear, James and Tony once again departing back into the sidewalk's flow.

We now follow the Man as he passes through revolving doors. Bronzed signage above reading: The Los Angeles Times.

KEELY (PRE LAP)

How long has this been going on?

INT. JAMES' HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A stunned Keely sits before James, like a bomb has just been detonated. That's because it has.

JAMES

Long enough where I should've told you before.

KEELY

That cop who pulled me over... The nightmares...

James reaches out, but not before Keely SLAPS him across the face, striking James dumb. A leaden silence follows, Keely showing no signs of remorse. If anything, she's angrier.

KEELY (CONT'D)

We were standing right outside, and I asked you... I asked you if there was anything I should --

JAMES

I'm sorry.

KEELY

Didn't cross your mind to tell me? Your wife?

Pangs of regret flash across James' face.

KEELY (CONT'D)

I know who I married. And I'm not trying to change you. But there's the job, and then there's you. The two are not indistinguishable. You don't need to walk through fire for something that doesn't --

JAMES

I have to see this through.

KEELY

Says who??? There's a lot of ways to earn a living.

JAMES

And do what? It's all I know.

Keely shakes her head, knowing damn well nothing she says will change his mind on the matter.

JAMES (CONT'D)
 After they go to print, it might be
 best if --

KEELY
 I'm not leaving. No, James. No.
This is my home now.

A beat.

JAMES
 The article should force Baca's
 hand, but...

KEELY
 But what?

James hands Keely a -- LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT. Her
 expression pales reading the header.

JAMES
 Just in case.

MONTAGE.

NIGHT -- Printing floor. Herculean rollers gyrate, an
 unremitting torrent of paper branded with ink.

SHERIFF BACA (O.S.)
*... It was then their informant
 hinted at a bombshell: Fellow jail
 deputies working with skinhead
 gangsters...*

NIGHT -- Delivery trucks, by the hundreds, fan out from a
 warehouse like worker ants leaving the colony.

SHERIFF BACA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
*Following protocol, the two
 partners investigated, detailing
 everything they witnessed in a memo
 to their boss, Lt. Gutterson. But
 what happened next stunned them...*

FIRST LIGHT -- Newsstand after newsstand, home after home,
 the Los Angeles Times is dispensed for consumption.

SHERIFF BACA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
*Lt. Gutterson told the three
deputies suspected of working with
the skinheads about the memo, and
revealed to him the names of the
confidential informant, as well as
those of Jimenez and Sexton.*

INT. SHERIFF'S HEADQUARTERS - SHERIFF'S OFFICE - MORNING

Gutterson, along with twelve other CONFIDANTS, stand abashed before Undersheriff Tanaka and Sheriff Baca. The Sheriff clings to today's edition of the LA Times.

SHERIFF BACA
(reading)
*The way this confidential
information was handled is typical
of the rotten and systemic culture
residing within the jail system.*

Sheriff Baca pauses, so angry he almost can't finish.

SHERIFF BACA (CONT'D)
(reading)
*In recent years the department has
been accused of weak investigations
of deputy misconduct and a
corrosive code of silence that...*

Sheriff Baca storms out of his office, Undersheriff Tanaka's expression darkening by degrees.

UNDERSHERIFF TANAKA
(exploding)
You're all a bunch of fucking,
goddamn idiots.

All eyes are bolted to the floor. Even Gutterson appears to shrink before the Undersheriff.

UNDERSHERIFF TANAKA (CONT'D)
We're already knee deep in dog shit
and you all --

LT. GUTTERSON
Sir, I promise you --

UNDERSHERIFF TANAKA
Unless you're about to eat your
gun, I'd shut your fucking mouth.

Gutterson nods, the Undersheriff's gaze passing over his men like a Thompson submachine gun.

UNDERSHERIFF TANAKA (CONT'D)
Unfuck this situation now. I don't
care how you do it but get it done.

INT. RAMA JAMA'S - TUSCALOOSA, ALABAMA - LATE MORNING

We follow a BABY-FACED DEPUTY, 21, holding a printout of the LA Times article, as he hurriedly shuffles through this shrine to all things Crimson Tide. He spots Ted at the counter, pleasantly chatting up a few of the STAFF.

He approaches Ted, the Sheriff turning in notice.

BABY-FACED DEPUTY
Sorry to bother you, sir, but --

The Baby-Faced Deputy hands over the LA Times printout, Ted's eyes widening with each line read.

INT. MEN'S CENTRAL JAIL - OSJ OFFICE - MORNING

Crypt quiet. Sitting at his desk, James steals a glance towards Tony. His partner looks like a man who's been denied a stay of execution.

James' phone pings with an email from his father: Flight information regarding Ted's arrival at LAX. James takes an anguished breath, dreading his father's return.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Deputy Sexton?

James pivots his line of sight towards LASD Detectives STARKS and ALVARADO, 40s, dressed in sharp suits.

EXT. VISTA HERMOSA PARK - MORNING

James sits with the two Detectives at a bench. Dodger Stadium and the downtown high-rises framed behind a malevolent sky.

DETECTIVE ALVARADO
How are you doing, James?

JAMES
I've been better.

DETECTIVE ALVARADO

The department is taking these allegations very seriously. Orders already came down this morning to transfer Lt. Gutterson.

DETECTIVE STARKS

You got some friends in high places, James. We were personally pulled from homicide to administer this investigation.

James nods, grateful for the support.

JAMES

I want you to know that this is by no means an indictment on the entire department. The good deputies far outweigh the bad. But there are deputies in bed with criminal organizations and someone needs to clean house.

DETECTIVE STARKS

That's why we're here.

A beat.

DETECTIVE ALVARADO

Are you in fear for your safety?

JAMES

I'd be lying to you if I said I wasn't.

DETECTIVE ALVARADO

In retaliation from Lt. Gutterson?

JAMES

Yes, sir. Or the Aryan Brotherhood. And who knows how many deputy gangs are also in on this thing. *The Vikings, 3000 Boys...* Lt. Gutterson's gotta wide reach.

Detective Alvarado shakes his head.

DETECTIVE ALVARADO

Friend, enemy... you can't tell the difference, can you?

JAMES

When they come after me, sir, I'll know then.

DETECTIVE STARKS
How do you see that happening?

JAMES
What do you mean?

DETECTIVE STARKS
How will they come after you?

James is taken aback by the question, but answers honestly.

JAMES
They'll make it look like a car
jacking gone wrong. Find me slumped
over the wheel, on my way home from
work. Bullet to the head.

A lengthy pause. The image of that really sinking in.

DETECTIVE ALVARADO
How are you sleeping, James?

JAMES
Take a guess.

DETECTIVE ALVARADO
Who do you have to talk to about
this?

James pauses as a drop of rain kisses his hand.

JAMES
My partner... Jimenez. Just told my
wife about it last night.

DETECTIVE ALVARADO
Anybody else? Therapist?

James shakes his head, a drizzle now falling from above. He catches a quick glance snuck between the two detectives.

DETECTIVE STARKS
Are you taking any medications? No
shame in doing so.

DETECTIVE ALVARADO
Any thoughts of suicide, James?

With this, it becomes clear to James that these two are not here to help him, but to prove that he is unfit for duty.

JAMES
This has been an awful lot of
questions about me.
(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)
Shouldn't you be asking one or two
about the case?

James shakes his head. Rises. Turns to leave.

JAMES (CONT'D)
You two gentlemen have yourselves a
day.

INT. JAMES' EXPLORER - DAY

James sits in his car, parked outside a terminal at LAX. Rain drumming steady onto the roof of his car. James squints towards the masses outside, just as his --

Passenger door flies open, Ted taking seat.

INT. RAY'S DINER - DAY

Rain weeps on windowpane. James and Ted sip coffee at a booth, the LA Times article splayed out on countertop.

TED
Why didn't you call me first?

JAMES
Because I'm not a kid anymore. And
what would you have done?

TED
For starters, I would've told you
not to talk to the LA Times.

JAMES
It was a play we had to make.

Ted glances out the window, softening.

TED
Guttersen, how bad is he?

JAMES
On paper - spotless. Behind the
veil - sulfuric.

TED
Is there anything you're not
telling me?

JAMES
No, sir.

TED
I'm stoppin' by Lee's house today.

JAMES
Dad, I already told Sheriff Baca everything and --

TED
Well, maybe he needs to hear it from me.

Words said with all the assurances of a man who has fought his share of battles. And won.

TED (CONT'D)
And the duffle bags, never saw what was inside?

James shakes his head, pushing back.

JAMES
Cops meeting gangsters outside the back of a tattoo parlor... what do you think was in those duffle bags?

TED
You may think the complexities of your department are beyond my comprehension... but I didn't get to where I am in this life by living in a dream world. And right now you got nothin'. It's presumption of guilt, that's it.

James is silent, his father has a point. Ted reaches for his wallet, sizing up his son - sleep deprived and worn thin.

TED (CONT'D)
James, we will get through this together. Understand me?

James nods in gratitude. The myth of the father still intact.

INT. MEN'S CENTRAL JAIL - HALLWAY / OSJ OFFICE - DAY

James and Tony foot their way inside the office, Guttererson awaiting their arrival. He nonchalantly leans against James' desk like he just had a two cocktail lunch.

LT. GUTTERSON
Tony, James... just wanted to say my goodbyes in person.

The two stand silent. Tension thicker than a bowl of oatmeal.

LT. GUTTERSON (CONT'D)
We all need a nemesis. Keeps the
blood moving. I'm just flattered
you two chose me.

Gutterson smiles wolfishly at the two, waving goodbye as he makes his exit. Grimes turns to James and Tony, his words said almost as an afterthought.

GRIMES
Back in Lynwood, Gutterson used to
flip his baton at gang members. And
when they'd pick it up, he'd put a
slug in their chest.

Grimes casually glances back down to his paperwork.

GRIMES (CONT'D)
This city... it can be a real
dangerous place.

INT. JAMES' HOME - LIVING ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

James enters, uniform sopping wet. Drops of water fall from a leak in the roof, puddling onto the floor.

JAMES
Keely?

KITCHEN.

He steps inside, spotting Keely's car keys on the counter, then a STREAK OF BLOOD on the linoleum flooring. James retrieves his Sig Sauer from his holster.

BEDROOM.

James creeps forward, gun drawn, French doors ajar. White curtains billow in the wind. He takes another step, floorboard creaking beneath his feet, when --

KEELY (O.S.)
I'm out here, James...

EXT. JAMES' HOME - BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

He steps his way outside, sky the color of gunmetal. Rain beating down on the corrugated awning. A somber Keely sits on a deck chair, reading through a printout.

James turns gaze to a morose Winston resting by her feet, the dog's paws wrapped in blood soaked bandages.

James instantly moves to Winston, crouching down close, heartsick. He tenderly strokes his dog's head.

JAMES

(re: paws)

What happened?

KEELY

Somebody left rat traps all over
our backyard.

James seethes, turning focus back to Winston. He massages Winston's back, feeling responsible for the dog's suffering.

KEELY (CONT'D)

(re: Winston)

Poor thing was so scared, he hid
under the bed all morning. Took me
an hour just to bandage his paws.
Then there was all the blood...

(then)

Who... who would hurt a dog???

James has no words.

KEELY (CONT'D)

I thought you were with your dad?

JAMES

He's having dinner with Baca, then
flying back to Tuscaloosa tonight.

Keely holds up the printout for James to see. Title page reads: ACLU - Cruel and Unusual Punishment in the LA Jails.

KEELY

You've read this?

James nods solemnly. *He has...* Keely opens up the ACLU report. Pages dog-eared, lines highlighted.

KEELY (CONT'D)

(reading)

*...Of all the jails I've had the
occasion to visit... I have never
experienced any facility exhibiting
the volume and repetitive patterns
of violence, misfeasance, and
malfeasance impacting the Los
Angeles County Jail system...*

(MORE)

KEELY (CONT'D)
(pointedly)
An FBI agent said that.

JAMES
I know.

Keely tosses down the ACLU report with disdain. Her scalding gaze turns to James. He tenses, anticipating Keely's fury.

KEELY
I get it now. Why you're doing
this. Why you can't just quit and
walk away...

James' jaw lowers just so. Keely is offering her support.

KEELY (CONT'D)
Somebody needs to do right. And I
want you to know that I'm by your
side one hundred percent. *But you
know people, James.* And you got
every right to salt their earth.

James knows EXACTLY who Keely's referring to. His friend in the FBI, Steve Ellis. She stands, drifting back into the house. The ACLU report purposefully left behind.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

A mansion lined street in San Marino. Everything about this neighborhood screams old money. We settle on --

SHERIFF BACA'S HOUSE.

A stately four bedroom craftsman. On the porch, in two rocking chairs, sits a solemn Ted and Sheriff Baca. The latter procures two cigars from his coat pocket, a modest attempt to lighten the mood.

TED
(re: cigar)
Cuban?

SHERIFF BACA
You gonna turn me in?

The two men stoically light up their post meal cigars.

TED
I just wish he would've reached out
to me first.

SHERIFF BACA
Would you have called your old man?

Ted pauses. *No he wouldn't have.*

TED
How bad's the fallout?

SHERIFF BACA
A blip on the radar with everything else going on. And you can't fault James. He did what he thought was right.

A moment passes. Sheriff Baca paying notice to just how concerned Ted is for his son.

SHERIFF BACA (CONT'D)
(assuringly)
Tanaka had our A-team on this. Five detectives from homicide.

TED
And?

SHERIFF BACA
The deputies outside the tattoo parlor were donating clothing. We worked them hard, vetted their alibis, story checks out. The scumbag who felt up Keely is on leave. If James didn't break his nose, I would've had him thrown in jail. And what happened to Jimenez, we've zeroed in on some bigot down the block. I know how it looks, Ted, but all of this was completely unrelated. The investigation we did was as exhaustive as it comes.

TED
What about my son?

SHERIFF BACA
We're doing all we can to fix this, and I will always look after your boy... but we can't have James starting any more fires. He's got too bright of a future for that.

INT. WAYSIDE PRISON - SHOWERS - MORNING

Barnett (Aryan Brotherhood informant) has the whole shower floor to himself. He happily lathers up his hair, two DEPUTIES, 40s, standing watch. The shower flow diminishes to a trickle, then... nothing.

BARNETT

The fuck???

Barnett pivots back to the guards, only they're no longer there. Instead, Barnett's soapy gaze falls upon --

Three hulking WHITE BOYS, armed with shanks. They descend upon Barnett like rabid wolves, all four slipping and sliding on the wet tile. And at first, Barnett puts up fight.

He lands a body blow, avoiding a shank to the neck, tackling another White Boy to the ground. But this is three against one, shanks soon PLUNGING into Barnett's back, his chest...

Over and over Barnett is SKEWERED, until he lies unconscious, a trail of his blood vortexing down a shower drain.

INT. LA COUNTY MEDICAL - ICU FLOOR - HALLWAY - DAY

James and Tony hustle their way past a bevy of DOCTORS and NURSES, slowing before a hospital room. Two FRIENDLY DEPUTIES (late 20s) stand post outside the door.

James glances inside the HOSPITAL ROOM where -- Barnett lies unconscious on a bed, hooked up to life support.

JAMES

What the fuck happened? We had him in solitary...

FRIENDLY DEPUTY

It was our day off. They hit him in the showers. Three white boys with shanks.

Tony glares accusatorially at the Friendly Deputy.

TONY

We go to the Times, so you just march him down to the gallows...

JAMES

Tony --

Tony gets in the Friendly Deputy's face.

TONY
Couldn't get to us so you went
after our informant?

James pulls a seething Tony away, but his partner writhes his way out of his grasp, SHOVING James hard, unhinged. Tony lurches his way back down the hall, leaving James behind.

INT. JAMES' EXPLORER - DUSK

James motors down La Cienega, hands white knuckling the steering wheel. It's not fear we see in his eyes, but rage. James guns it. He pulls a hard right onto a --

RESIDENTIAL STREET.

Jerking his Explorer into park. He closes his eyes. Takes a long, calming breath, then --

HAMMERS away on the dash with his fists, CRACKING the plastic, cutting his hand. He lets out a primal scream.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - MOMENTS LATER

James paces near his car. Turns to his phone. He pulls up his father's number, hitting the dial button.

No. Fuck that. James ends the call before it has time to connect, catching the stare of a suspicious ELDERLY WOMAN watching him from behind a curtained window.

James reaches into his wallet, pulling out Steve Ellis' business card (FBI agent). He punches the number into his cell, pausing in debate. Gaze steeling, James pressing send.

JAMES (ON CELL)
Steve... It's James.

James looks to the Elderly Woman, still eyeballing him.

JAMES (ON CELL) (CONT'D)
Let's talk.

INT. GILBERT'S EL INDIO RESTAURANT - NIGHT

James slips his way through the restaurant, avoiding eye contact with restaurant PATRONS. He reaches a secluded booth, tucked away in a corner, where Steve sits sipping his Modelo.

James takes seat opposite his old friend.

STEVE
You need a drink?

JAMES
I'm good.

STEVE
You look like you could --

JAMES
I'm good.

Steve studies James, no room for bullshit in this conversation. He slides an FBI file across the table.

STEVE
They're gunnin' for you. Other
deputies, Aryan Brotherhood... Just
a matter of who gets to you first.

James skims the documents. It's a complete file on James. Various redacted sources detailing threats to his life.

JAMES
How long y'all been watching me?

STEVE
Long enough. The intel on the death
threats came through yesterday.

James closes the file, sliding it back towards Steve.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Whatever precautionary measures
you've taken so far, they're not
enough.

JAMES
And you can offer me protection,
just as long as I help you?

Steve nods, setting his beer aside.

STEVE
The Bureau's been building a case
against the LASD for years. *Deputy
gangs, mass corruption, prison
brutality...* As a friend, I'm
telling you the Sheriff's
Department is going down. Might be
a month from now, might be a year
from now. But you will need to pick
what side you're standing on when
that happens.

JAMES

And what do you wanna know?

STEVE

Everything. You've got access to the jails, access to Baca...

A terrible chill runs down James' spine.

JAMES

You know what you're asking?

STEVE

One hundred percent. I get it. You don't talk to the FBI. We're the enemy. But you don't go airing dirty laundry either, and you did that already with the LA Times.

JAMES

In for a penny, in for a pound...
Is that your pitch?

STEVE

James, we're the only ones left who can help you. You can't fight this on your own. Not anymore.

James stands. Stomach lurching with the thought of betraying his Department in such a manner. He turns to leave.

STEVE (CONT'D)

I'm not gonna force your hand, I've known you for too long to do that. But you called me. I didn't call you.

The comment resonates with James.

STEVE (CONT'D)

And if you do know something, which I think you do, then this is your opportunity to do the right thing. Say nothing and you'll be just as culpable as Baca and Tanaka.

James foots his way towards the exit, passing by a painting of a BLOODIED BULL dying at the hands of a MATADOR.

He stops, backtracking his way towards Steve.

JAMES

We can meet again Sunday. I'll text you when and where.

The PRE-LAP sounds of a BUZZ SAW lead us into --

INT. JAMES' HOME - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Front door and windows removed. One team of WORKERS saw away at timber, another lays sledgehammer to James' bedroom wall.

JAMES (PRE LAP)
Ballistic fiberglass walls...

BACKYARD.

Multiple cameras are fitted to the sides of the house, metal bars bolted over the windows. James and Keely standing in observance as their home transitions into a -- SAFE HOUSE.

JAMES (PRE LAP) (CONT'D)
Bulletproof windows...

EXT. REEL INN - PATIO - NIGHT

Sparsely populated. String lights and delaminated surfboards for decor. James, Keely, and Steve sit at a table.

JAMES
...Steel enforced doors. Firearm in every room...

STEVE
And Winston.

Keely pats a docile Winston sitting at her feet.

KEELY
Too bad he's scared of his own shadow.

Steve rises, sighting agent TARA WRIGHT, late 20s, all business, walking through the door. Hands are shaken.

TARA
Hi, James...

JAMES
Agent Wright.

TARA
Very nice to meet you, Keely.

Tara sits next to Steve, James handing over two files.

JAMES

This is documentation of everything
that's transpired from the moment
we wrote up that report.

Tara flips through the files. *Thorough stuff...*

TARA

You're doing the right thing.

JAMES

I appreciate your vote of
confidence, Agent Wright --

TARA

Tara, please.

KEELY

But we still haven't decided if
James should be talkin' to you yet.

Keely's not fooling around. Every bit a part of the decision
making process as her husband. She eyes Steve and Tara.

KEELY (CONT'D)

Who else is working on this?

TARA

We have a whole floor down in
Westwood on it. Sixty other agents,
give or take. U.S. Assistant
Attorneys Jill Green and Derek
Bragg will be presenting the case
when it goes to trial.

STEVE

They're the best of the best. We
spoke to them today about James.

TARA

(to Keely)

We will protect your husband. From
start to finish. You have our word.

Keely eyes Tara and Steve, ruthlessly sizing up the two. She
turns to James, offering up her blessing. Keely takes Winston
by the leash, exiting towards the parking lot.

James gathers himself, feeling like he might vomit. He takes
a long breath. *Here we go...*

JAMES

Do you wanna --

Before James can finish the thought, Tara sets down an AUDIO RECORDER on the table, turning it on. A beat passes, then --

JAMES (CONT'D)

I want it on record that I am doing this for the good of my department. And I have every intention of being a deputy once this is all over. Helping you - the FBI - I could care less.

Tara and Steve exchange a glance. *At least he's honest...*

JAMES (CONT'D)

With that said... First thing you all gotta understand is Baca may be the figurehead of the department, but Paul Tanaka pulls the strings. Tanaka started out at Lynwood where he was a member of the Vikings, and his allegiances run all throughout the LASD. Tanaka is as dirty as they come.

TARA

How so?

JAMES

You name it. Killed a kid while at Lynwood. At the scene, Long Beach police called it a murder.

INSERT - Standing in an alley, a KOREAN MAN, 20s, is shot FIFTEEN TIMES. Bullets ripping through his neck, back, arms... A thirty-year-old Paul Tanaka one of the five DEPUTIES who had opened fire.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Tanaka runs a whole "kiss the ring" game. You wanna advance in the department, better tithe a part of your check to his campaign.

INSERT - *Check after check after check* piles up on Undersheriff Tanaka's desk.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Working in the grey is something he vocally approves of. Knock a few molars loose, Tanaka's all for it.

(then)

Deputy cliques still run rampant, and colors of authority happen every day without repercussions.

(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)
Gladiator fights, deputies ordering
other inmates to attack each
other... These are realities.

INSERT - Four DEPRAVED DEPUTIES watch on as two BLOODIED
INMATES fight each other on a prison floor. A KNOCKOUT BLOW
sends the Depraved Deputies into a frenzy.

BACK ON JAMES - as he glances down to the recorder. With each
secret revealed it's like a part of his soul is dying.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Same with all the deputies in bed
with Aryan Brotherhood. And if you
tapped a few phones, looked into
their bank accounts...

Steve and Tara nod, picking up what James is putting down.

JAMES (CONT'D)
But before y'all do anything,
here's a couple softballs for you.
One -- Captain Andrea Houston has
been tipping off the Crips to drug
raids for years. I can't imagine
she's the only one. Two -- The Aero
Bureau has been selling parts for
cash online, and ten million bucks
just went up and disappeared. Look
into it and you'll see this runs
all the way to the top. Three --
Not too long ago, a deputy shot an
inmate... handcuffed to the bed.
The inmate died and the deputy is
still on active duty.

STEVE
Why are you reporting all of this
now? Why not say something then?

James glances at Steve like he has no idea. And he doesn't.

JAMES
Well, shit, Steve... I just
reported a couple deputies and
things haven't exactly been rosy
for me.
(tempers himself)
Most of it I did report. Others I
was too late to the game... And
when you're a new boot inside a
jail, head spinning, all you're
really thinking about is not
getting shanked.

EXT. FBI BUILDING - WESTWOOD - NIGHT

Nineteen floors of concrete and glass. Steve and Tara hustle through the barricades towards the building's entrance.

INT. FBI BUILDING - WESTWOOD - NIGHT

An entire office floor buzzing with FBI AGENTS burning the midnight oil. Their only objective: to burn the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department to the ground.

The steel doors to an elevator open, Steve and Tara striding onto the floor as other Agents pause in notice.

The two approach a PHOTO TREE on the wall of all the kings of the LASD. At the very top is a photo of Sheriff Baca.

Steve retrieves a photo from a desk, curious Agents gathering near. Steve ceremoniously tacks the photo next to Sheriff Baca's, and it's then we see the photo is of --

James, wearing his uniform, fresh out of the Academy. We push tight on James' smiling face, as we match cut to --

EXT. JAMES' HOME - FRONT YARD - MORNING

James hustling his way down the steps. His cell buzzes with a text from Sheriff Baca: MEET ME AT TAYLOR'S. 1 PM. James winces, unlocking his Explorer.

INT. TAYLOR'S STEAKHOUSE - DAY

An LA institution. Red booths, and signed USC TROJANS / LA DODGERS memorabilia lining the wood paneled walls. A HOSTESS, 60s, leads James into a --

PRIVATE ROOM.

Where Sheriff Baca and Undersheriff Tanaka sit at a table, along with ten other SENIOR BRASS from within the LASD. If it all seems intimidating, that's cause it's meant to be.

SHERIFF BACA (PRE LAP)

The FBI, CIA, and LAPD are all
gunning to prove that they're the
best at catching the bad guys...

INT. TAYLOR'S STEAKHOUSE - PRIVATE ROOM - LATER

An anxious James sits sandwiched between Sheriff Baca and Undersheriff Tanaka. The Sheriff appears remarkably jovial considering all that's transpired. Undersheriff Tanaka showing zero restraint in his contempt for James.

SHERIFF BACA

So, the President decides to give 'em a test to decide once and for all who is the best at apprehending criminals. He releases a little white rabbit into the forest, declaring that whoever catches the bunny will forever be known as the best law enforcement agency in America.

Sheriff Baca leans in, quite the story teller. All those present respectfully quiet.

SHERIFF BACA (CONT'D)

The CIA goes in, and they place animal informants all throughout the forest. They question all witnesses, and after six months of investigations, they conclude that rabbits simply do not exist.

Sheriff Baca bites into his bloody rib eye. His tone darkening by degrees.

SHERIFF BACA (CONT'D)

Now it's the FBI's turn. And after two weeks, with no leads whatsoever, they burn the forest with napalm, killing everything in it -- including the little, white rabbit -- making no apologies for all the devastation they've caused. *That rabbit had it coming...*

The Sheriff ceremoniously sets down his knife and fork. His point of view regarding the FBI coming in crystal clear.

SHERIFF BACA (CONT'D)

Finally, It's the LAPD's chance to give it a go. They rush in, and no less than two hours later, a badly beaten grizzly bear comes running out the forest. His fur drenched in blood. The bear stops, raising his hands in the air, and says, "Okay!

(MORE)

SHERIFF BACA (CONT'D)
Okay!! Okay!!! I'm a rabbit. I'm a
goddamn rabbit!!!"

Sheriff Baca chuckles, all the present brass laughing along
with their superior. James doesn't see the humor.

SHERIFF BACA (CONT'D)
Wanna know who told me that one?

JAMES
Who, sir?

SHERIFF BACA
Your old man.

The smile disappears from Sheriff Baca's face.

SHERIFF BACA (CONT'D)
From here on out, you need to be
very judicious in regards to who
you talk to, James.

JAMES
Who I talk to, sir?

Sheriff Baca nods, the subtext registering loud and clear --
Stop talking to the FBI.

SHERIFF BACA
And I hope the changes I've made
concerning Lt. Gutterson have eased
the strain on you and your partner.

JAMES
Sir, *Lt. Gutterson was transferred.*
I'm in fear for my safety, my
wife's safety...

SHERIFF BACA
The FBI will stab you in the back
then ask why you're bleeding.
Remember that I said that.

James tries to restrain himself, but the words just tumble
out over his lips.

JAMES
Where's the Sheriff's Department in
all of this, sir?

Sheriff Baca raises a quizzical brow. Every single eyeball
present now bolted onto James.

JAMES (CONT'D)
In your joke you've got the LAPD,
the FBI, the CIA... but no LASD.
How exactly would you go about
hunting down the rabbit?

Undersheriff Tanaka interjects. Can't help but do so. His
eyes as black as a moonless night.

UNDERSHERIFF TANAKA
I think it's time for you to go.

EXT. TAYLOR'S STEAKHOUSE - PARKING LOT - DAY

James exits the steakhouse, footing his way towards his
Explorer surrounded by a fleet of luxury cars.

DETECTIVE ALVARADO (O.S.)
Deputy Sexton --

James turns to see Detectives Alvarado and Starks.

JAMES
That was quick.

DETECTIVE ALVARADO
Our records show you were involved
in an altercation with an inmate
named Clifton Adams.

DETECTIVE STARKS
Does that name ring a bell?

James tenses, but continues footing his way towards his
Explorer. Not giving them the pleasure of seeing him sweat.

JAMES
Get fucked.

DETECTIVE STARKS
We're opening a case to determine
if excessive force was used.

DETECTIVE ALVARADO
One last thing, Deputy Sexton.

Detective Alvarado raises up a small plastic cup.

TED (PRE LAP)
They made you take a drug test?

INT. JAMES' HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

James paces, phone on speaker, as Keely listens on by the kitchen counter. Note: We intercut with Ted, also pacing in his office, as needed.

JAMES

Dad, would ya forget about the --

TED (OVER SPEAKER)

I want to understand, James.

JAMES

They're trying to pin me for excessive force. Run me out.

A beat.

TED (OVER SPEAKER)

Why didn't you tell me about this?

JAMES

I don't know. I should have.

TED (OVER SPEAKER)

Did you report it to anyone? Write down what happened?

James is silent, regret flashing across his face.

JAMES

No. No, I didn't.

TED

Well, shit, James.

JAMES

I know.

A beat passes.

TED (OVER SPEAKER)

And you're the only deputy they're investigating?

James pauses. *Is that suspicion he's registering in his father's voice?*

JAMES

You don't believe me do you?

TED (OVER SPEAKER)

Let me speak with Lee --

JAMES

Last time you spoke with Baca, my informant got a knife to the gut.

TED

That's on me? Is that what you're saying?

JAMES

Baca and Tanaka are not who you think they are.

TED

And who are they, James? Since you know them so well now.

James attempts to quell his anger. No luck.

JAMES

You know what, Dad? Maybe from here on out, it's best if you just stay out of it. I don't need your help.

INT. JAMES' HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

James still paces. Keely on the couch with Winston.

KEELY

You're pacing...

JAMES

I know I'm pacing.

KEELY

Sit down. You're making me anxious.

James flops down at the dinner table, still feverish from his call with Ted. He turns his gaze to his open laptop. At the top of his inbox is an unread message from a "Frank Serpico."

Subject line reads: A FEATHER IN YOUR CAP.

JAMES

You know who Frank Serpico is?

Interest piqued, Keely moves to James' side.

KEELY

Yeah, that movie. Al Pacino.

James CLICKS the email. It reads -- "YOU'VE GOT FRIENDS." Nothing more. Attached to the email is a PDF file. As he drags his cursor, CLICKING the PDF open, we cut to --

EXT. RIVIERA COUNTRY CLUB - MORNING

CRACK! Sheriff Baca smashes his driver against a golfball, angrily watching as it sails out of bounds. *Fuck...* He flings his driver to his CADDY, turning to Ted standing near.

SHERIFF BACA
(frustrated)
I told Tanaka to handle --

TED
Well, he didn't. This is payback
for turning in those deputies.

SHERIFF BACA
Ted, I got the ACLU crawling up my
ass, the FBI planting informants in
my jail - the whole thing's become
this massive clusterfuck. I've had
time for nothing else.

TED
This could ruin James.

The two walk down the fairway, two Caddies trailing.

SHERIFF BACA
Who's investigating?

TED
IA. The charge is bullshit.
(then)
Rat traps in the backyard... Lee,
this is my son.

Sheriff Baca sneaks a glance at Ted when he's not looking.
His expression briefly flashing mercenary.

SHERIFF BACA
I will take care of it myself, no
delegation. You have my word. But
I'm up to my fucking neck, Ted. I
need your help. And there isn't
anyone in this world who I trust,
whose opinion I value more than
you.

EXT. WESTWOOD - PARK - DAY

A CASKET is lowered into a grave, MOURNERS solemnly standing
near. Sailing over gravestone after gravestone, we come
across -- James, Steve, and Tara, seated atop a stone bench.

James' gaze passes over his surroundings, the irony not lost. He motions to the audio recorder resting between them.

JAMES

Turn that off. What I'm about to say I don't want recorded.

Tara complies, turning it off.

JAMES (CONT'D)

The other night I got an email with a PDF attached.

James hands over a file. Inside is an LASD case report.

JAMES (CONT'D)

This friend of ours was part of an investigation into four deputies who were believed to be on the payroll for the Sinaloa Cartel.

(James lets that sink in)

In exchange for cash, the deputies were said to be gunning down rival cartel members, then burying the bodies somewhere in the desert.

INSERT - Shovel plunges into dirt, a ten foot hole dug in the desert. Body after body are slung into the unmarked grave.

JAMES (CONT'D)

They never found the bodies, so the case ran cold, but maybe you all will have better luck.

Steve glances at the file, all the names are MARKED OUT.

STEVE

Did you black out these names?

JAMES

You're damn right I did.

STEVE

Any idea who sent this to you?

JAMES

Not a clue. But the word's out I'm talking to all of you.

(then)

What's going on with the Gutterson investigation? Y'all need to be hitting that now.

TARA

Just waiting on a warrant from the judge. These things take time.

James closes his eyes. Frustrated with the lack of progress.

STEVE

Once it comes through you'll be the first to know.

James glances to an email on his cell. It's a reminder from Delta for a flight from Los Angeles to Tuscaloosa.

JAMES

(standing)

Look, I got a flight to catch --

TARA

James, did you ever come across an inmate named Anthony Brown?

And without missing a beat...

JAMES

Why do you wanna know about him?

TARA

He was working as an FBI informant inside Men's Central Jail. But then one day he just... vanished.

JAMES

Your informant was lazy is what happened. Deputies tossed his cell, found the flip phone you gave him. Once Baca and Tanaka caught wind, they lost their shit. Sent orders down to hide him.

TARA

And you know this because --

JAMES

Because I was on the team that hid him from you all. Those orders were sent to my LT. I was the one who ghosted his file.

Steve and Tara are both speechless. James studies them, something they're not quite understanding.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Y'all don't understand how serious it is to give an inmate a cell phone, do you? A cell phone is more dangerous than a shank, than a dozen shanks... Do you know how many murders happen because of a cell phone? And Anthony Brown was no saint. He was serving a four hundred year sentence. His celly - *sitting on a murder charge* - was dialing up his homeboys on the phone you all provided. Sink into that ocean for a minute...

TARA

But you still hid an inmate from --

JAMES

We didn't know who we were hiding him from. We just had our orders and we executed them as fast as we could. Because in case you've never been inside a jail, which I'm guessing you haven't, it's a dangerous place. People get murdered. And for all we knew Anthony Brown had a hit out on his life. I've hid dozens of inmates for that very same reason.

TARA

That may be the case, but hiding an FBI informant is against the law. It's obstruction of justice, James.

Off James, processing this, as we PRE-LAP the deafening roar of a commercial airliner.

EXT. TUSCALOOSA, ALABAMA - RESIDENTIAL STREET - AFTERNOON

Sprawling front lawns, Roll Tide flags proudly hanging from every home we pass. Settling on the Sexton residence, a perfect example of understated wealth.

INT. TED SEXTON'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - VARIOUS SHOTS

Dozens of FRIENDS and FAMILY are gathered in the living room. James, Keely, and Ted stand near James' mother - LEAH ANNE, 50s, whip smart and then some - as she self consciously blows out the candles atop her birthday cake.

MOMENTS LATER.

Living room turned into a football field, James roughhouses with his NEPHEWS. Two of which are latched onto his back.

Watching it all from a distance is Keely and Leah Anne. Seems like forever and a day since they've seen James this happy.

James' cell phone buzzes. He clicks open his email, as we catch snippets of what James reads:

"Deputy Sexton, you have been cleared of any wrongdoing in regards to excessive use of force..."

Feelings of gratitude and relief roll over James like waves at a beach. James glances to Ted chatting with a few close friends. *Could this be his father's doing?*

LEAH ANNE (PRE LAP)

You keep staying true to
yourself...

EXT. TED SEXTON'S HOME - BACKYARD - DUSK

James and Leah Anne recline by a fire pit.

LEAH ANNE

The path of least resistance was
never in your cards. I saw it in
you as a boy. But you can't change
the direction of the wind, and as
your mother, I've had to learn to
adjust my sails.

James nods, near hypnotized by the crackling fire.

LEAH ANNE (CONT'D)

How's Keely?

JAMES

Every time I wake up in the morning
I'm surprised to see her still
layin' next to me.

Leah Anne nods. James sights Keely chatting with Ted. A long beat passes -- *it's good to be back home* -- then...

LEAH ANNE

So I think it's best you hear this
from me first... your father's
accepted Baca's offer to join his
executive staff.

Silence descends, James refraining from expression, but it's like his insides have just been hit with napalm.

James looks to Ted, the myth of the father destroyed. He marches his way over to his father.

JAMES

Baca's just pulled you into his web. How do you not see that?

TED

I see more than you know.

JAMES

He's a snake, Dad. And you just chose him over your son.

James turns to Keely.

JAMES (CONT'D)

We're leaving.

EXT. TED SEXTON'S HOME - MOMENTS LATER

James and Keely rush down steps, luggage in tow. Ted and Leah Anne appearing behind them at the door.

TED

James --

James stops, pivoting back towards Ted.

JAMES

Pack light. Cause I'm telling you now Baca's going down.

EXT. LAX - ARRIVALS TERMINAL - NIGHT

A broken down bus has given forth to chaos. James, carrying two sets of luggage, guides Keely through all the turmoil.

INT. JAMES' EXPLORER - NIGHT

James motors down La Cienega, Keely sitting shotgun. The air is heavy, thoughts still dwelling on Ted's betrayal. A call pops up on James' cell, it's from Steve Ellis. James glances to Keely, showing her who's calling.

KEELY

(re: call)

Answer it.

James accepts the call, puts his phone on speaker.

STEVE (OVER SPEAKER)
We got 'em.

JAMES
Got who?

STEVE (OVER SPEAKER)
Come down to the office tomorrow.
I'll explain everything then.

CLICK. Keely turns to James, raising a brow. The light turns green, James putting his foot on the gas.

EXT. FBI BUILDING - DAY

James treks his way towards the front entrance, nearby traffic along the 405 Freeway running amuck.

INT. FBI BUILDING - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

James sits alone in the conference room, sounds of laughter drifting down the hall. Trotting their way into the conference room is Steve and Tara, along with -- Assistant U.S. Attorneys JILL GREEN and DEREK BRAGG, both 40s.

Don't let their Brooks Brothers suits fool you. They have more bite than a great white shark.

GREEN
Deputy Sexton, I'm Assistant U.S.
Attorney Jill Green...

BRAGG
And I'm Assistant U.S. Attorney
Derek Bragg.

Hands are shook, James glancing towards Steve and Tara.

STEVE
You need a water, James?

JAMES
I'm fine.

The five take their seats.

BRAGG
James, we're confident there's
enough here to make a case against
the Sheriff's Department.

GREEN
We're taking this to trial.

JAMES
In regards to what exactly?

BRAGG
The hiding of FBI informant Anthony Brown.

JAMES
(genuinely confused)
But what about everything else? All the deputies in bed with the Aryan Brotherhood? The bodies buried in the desert...

BRAGG
You're gonna have to let that all go. This is what we can pursue.

GREEN
By hiding a federal informant, we can prosecute Baca and Tanaka, among others, for conspiracy and obstruction of justice.

James tightens his jaw.

JAMES
Among others... like myself? Cause I didn't do anything --

TARA
No. No, James...

GREEN
As a cooperative witness, which you have been, you are guaranteed immunity.

BRAGG
We want Baca and Tanaka. That's it.

STEVE
This is a good thing, James. And we have you to thank.

James grits his teeth, at a loss for words, then...

JAMES
Al Capone.

GREEN

I'm sorry?

JAMES

Al Capone didn't go to prison for all the people he had killed. You busted him on tax fraud.

GREEN

You pick and choose your battles. If we had all the time and money...

James studies Bragg. Something about him irks our lead.

JAMES

And what I say...

BRAGG

You will not be prosecuted for. You have our word.

KEELY (PRE LAP)

Al Capone? You said that?

INT. HILLSTONE - NIGHT

The restaurant is packed, James and Keely finishing up their meal. Keely sips her wine, clearly in a good mood.

JAMES

Yeah...

KEELY

Before we know it, this'll all be behind us.

A WAITER, 30s, approaches with the check.

WAITER

Whenever you're ready.

JAMES

Thank you.

The Waiter drifts off, Keely raising her glass.

KEELY

We're cheers...ing.

JAMES

To what?

KEELY

Al Capone.

This gets a smile out of James. The two clink glasses.

EXT. HILLSTONE - STREET - NIGHT

Keely cuddles up to James near the valet stand, the night air crisp. His Explorer pulls up to a stop, James tipping the VALET, 20s. James and Keely step inside his --

EXPLORER.

The two buckle up, James furrowing his brow.

JAMES

Someone's been in here.

A beat.

KEELY

Yeah. The valet guy.

James shrugs it off, putting the car in drive.

INT. JAMES' EXPLORER - MOMENTS LATER

Driving down Pico, James glances in the rearview mirror, sighting a DODGE RAM trailing. He switches lanes, a moment passing, and the Dodge Ram... once again appears in his rearview mirror. James tenses, his wife none the wiser.

He pulls a quick right, Keely now sitting up in her seat.

KEELY

Where are we going?

Sure enough, the Dodge Ram appears again on his trail.

JAMES

That truck is following us.

Keely glances in the mirror, seeing the Dodge Ram, as James reaches for his Sig Sauer in the glove box.

JAMES (CONT'D)

When I tell you, I want you to
crouch below the dash.

Keely nods, James making yet another right. This time onto a residential street. The Dodge Ram soon following.

James picks up speed, but so too does the Dodge Ram. Passing by a dumpster on the right side of the road --

JAMES (CONT'D)

Now, Keely.

Keely ducks under the dash and James flips a mean U-turn, PINNING the Dodge Ram between the dumpster and another car. His HIGH BEAMS directed right at the truck's windshield.

In a flash, James skims his sidearm, exiting out onto the --
STREET.

He aims his Sig Sauer right at the DRIVER's exposed silhouette. The Dodge Ram sits idle, James unflinching.

He takes a step towards the truck. Then another. Adrenaline flooding through his nervous system.

The truck revs it's engine, like a beast signaling intent to charge. James showing zero signs of backing down. The truck jerks forward at James, then unexpectedly --

Kicks it into reverse, tearing up a driveway, and speeding off in the opposite direction.

INT. JAMES' HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Keely and James enter, not a word said. Keely begins to tremble and the tears flow down her cheeks. James embraces her, knowing nothing he can say will offer any bit of relief.

TONY (PRE LAP)

No, no, no, no...

INT. FBI OFFICES - DAY

A distressed Tony now sits in the same seat James once sat in. Steve, Tara, Green, and Bragg assembled across the table.

BRAGG

You've been subpoenaed, Tony. You have to testify.

TONY

And James has been...

GREEN

Cooperating this entire time.

Tony shakes his head. He can't believe it.

TONY
I didn't sign up for this.

BRAGG
We're not asking.

Tony writhes in his chair, feeling trapped with no way out, as we PRE-LAP measured bursts of GUNFIRE.

INT. SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT - GUN RANGE - EVENING

BOOM. James fires off his Sig Sauer, muzzle flashing. BOOM. His gaze is cold and remote, each bullet shot with surgical precision. BOOM. A bead of sweat rolls down his brow. He sets down his Sig Sauer, taking a moment to collect himself.

This isn't target practice, it's preparation for battle.

EXT. SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT - GUN RANGE - NIGHT

James loads his ammo bag into his trunk. Shuts it, when --

SHERIFF BACA (O.S.)
I understand now, James. Why you're
doing all of this.

James turns seeing Sheriff Baca, approaching alone, in jeans and a sweatshirt. He looks older, tired. Maybe even humbled.

SHERIFF BACA (CONT'D)
I can only hope that I would've
had the courage to do the same
thing when I was your age.
(then)
Medal of Valor? Promotion to
detective? After everything you've
been through, you deserve it.

James is silent. Baca turns away, reflective.

SHERIFF BACA (CONT'D)
When people think of LA, it's
Disneyland, Hollywood Walk of Fame,
the Oscars, vacationland USA... To
me, it's triple homicides in
Duarte, and seven year old girls
buried out in Commerce. There
exists an evil in this city - of
that I am sure - and I am haunted
by what I have seen. But we are the
ones who must keep the devil at
bay, James.

(MORE)

SHERIFF BACA (CONT'D)

Who wade through the shit day in
and day out so that others won't
have to. I have ten thousand
deputies in the fold, a few are
bound to go astray. But if the FBI
and the ACLU have their druthers...

Sheriff Baca pauses, emotions swelling.

SHERIFF BACA (CONT'D)

... All those good deputies, the
ones out there fighting on the
front lines -- it's them who will
pay the ultimate price. And people
will die, James. Mothers and
fathers, daughters and sons.

James glances up to Sheriff Baca, as if every word said has
been taken to heart.

JAMES

Sheriff Baca...

James pauses, brow furrowed in thought, then --

JAMES (CONT'D)

*For the foolish, not reason but
misfortune will be thy teacher...*

Sheriff Baca's avuncular demeanor instantly evaporates.

SHERIFF BACA

The white rabbit? From my story? Do
you want to know how I would go
about hunting him down?

Sheriff Baca latches onto James' arm. Words spit with venom.

SHERIFF BACA (CONT'D)

I'd let him walk into a trap - one
of his own doing - *have him leave a
trail for his whole family...* Then
I'd skin'em all alive and roast'em
over an open fire.

Try as he might, James can't hide how rattled he is. He frees
his arm from his superior's grasp, opening the door to his
car. Sheriff Baca leaves James with one final comment.

SHERIFF BACA (CONT'D)

You wanna see me burn, James? Then
you better believe I'm taking your
father with me.

INT. JAMES' HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Arriving home, James legs his way towards the bedroom, still trembling from his encounter with Sheriff Baca. He peaks through the door where Keely soundly sleeps, Winston near.

LIVING ROOM.

Emotions swirling to the surface, James tries to distract himself with mundane tasks. Sorting mail, cleaning dishes...

But try as he might, James finally crumbles, tears rolling down his cheeks, as --

His home dissolves into a nighttime desert landscape.

Nothing but cracked earth, sage brush, and chaparral. By James' feet, his cell phone flashes with a missed call.

TONY (PRE LAP)

Hey, James. Just wanted to talk.

In the distance, we catch sight of a TRUCK racing down a lonely stretch of highway.

INT. TONY'S TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

A drunken Tony, phone to ear, steers his way down the empty road. Headlights piercing their way through the darkness.

TONY (ON CELL)

Give my love to Keely.

Tony shuts off his cell, setting his phone down next to his sidearm and a suicide note addressed to his mother. Tony is about to put an end to all the madness swirling in his head.

INT. MEN'S CENTRAL JAIL - HALLWAY - EARLY MORNING

James briskly walks down the hall, cell to ear, catching the iciest stares from DEPUTIES as he passes by.

JAMES (INTO CELL)

Dad, it's me. Call me when you get this.

CLICK. James ends the call, stepping foot inside --

INT. MEN'S CENTRAL JAIL - OSJ OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

James slips into the office, a debriefing already under way. There's Grimes standing before a map projected onto the wall, transpo route highlighted. Next to the map is the image of ADOLFO RAMIREZ, 40s, eyes like black holes.

Grimes and company shoot James a spiteful look, waiting for him to take a seat next to Diggs before continuing on.

GRIMES

... At oh-eight-thirty our five team convoy will arrive at Walnut Station. Team three will retrieve inmate Ramirez, while teams two and four will safeguard the perimeter.

James scans the room for Tony, leaning over to Diggs.

JAMES

Where's Tony?

DIGGS

I don't know.

GRIMES

Once Ramirez is secured inside vehicle three, we will caravan to the courthouse, two AS350's acting as eyes in the sky...

James fires off a text to Tony: *Where are you?*

GRIMES (CONT'D)

The Mexican Mafia is well aware Ramirez wants to tell all. They will do anything and everything to feed him to the dogs. This is no bullshit and I want everyone on their game today.

INT. MEN'S CENTRAL JAIL - ARMORY - MORNING

Members of OSJ outfit themselves with kevlar vests, inspect their assault rifles, run tests on the comm system... We find James, geared and ready, cell phone clamped to his ear.

JAMES (ON CELL)

Tony, where the fuck are you?

James pitches forward, his phantom stomach pains manifesting. He takes a long breath, then another. The pain subsides.

GRIMES
(calls out)
Let's go. Time to roll.

INT. MEN'S CENTRAL JAIL - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Members of OSJ march through the corridor. James sends off another text to Tony, when his partner's slurring voice floats out from a nearby office.

TONY (O.S.)
You one of Tanaka's boys? Take
these cuffs off motherfucker...

James stops, blood turning to ice. He rushes towards the sound of Tony's voice, into an --

OFFICE.

Where on a COMPUTER SCREEN plays footage of a -- belligerent Tony handcuffed in a Sheriff's station holding cell.

TONY (ON VIDEO) (CONT'D)
You wanna bust me up? Bust me up...
I'll take you all on right now.

The two DEPUTIES sitting in front of the computer smirk something evil upon seeing James.

JAMES
What the fuck is this?

SMIRKING DEPUTY
Your partner crashed his car out in
the desert last night.

SMIRKING DEPUTY #2
Then he put on a show back at the
station. Want me to forward ya the
video? I can CC the FBI...

DIGGS
(calling out)
James, what the fuck. Let's go!

James turns to Diggs, then back to the two Smirking Deputies. He sends the computer screen CRASHING to the ground, as the baleful THUMP of rotor blades lead us to --

EXT. FREEWAY INTERCHANGE - LATE MORNING

HELICOPTER'S POV -- Skyscrapers loom over the 110 Freeway like silver sentries made of glass. Black and silver tributaries flowing in and out of this congested interchange.

MOVING CLOSER -- Break lights flaring off and on, as if in Morse code for distress... We come across a caravan of five SUBURBANS, crawling their way down the freeway.

INT. THIRD SUBURBAN - CONTINUOUS

James sits shotgun, two Suburbans ahead of him, two trailing behind. The POLICE SCANNER crackles out in transmission.

FEMALE DISPATCHER (OVER RADIO)
HVT 29, what is your status?

GRIMES (OVER RADIO)
Ten minutes out from the court house. Over.

James glances back to Ramirez, sandwiched between Diggs and another DEPUTY. A look of childish wonder smeared across his face as he stares up at all the towering skyscrapers.

Traffic comes to an abrupt standstill, James et al. showing no signs of alarm. *Welcome to Los Angeles...*

James canvasses all nearby cars outside, but the silvery glare off the windows make it impossible to see who's inside.

GRIMES (OVER RADIO) (CONT'D)
We got a fender bender up ahead.

JAMES (INTO RADIO)
Copy that.

GRIMES (OVER RADIO)
See anything?

JAMES (INTO RADIO)
Glare's killing me.

In the lane to James' left, a HONDA SWINGS its door open, James and the rest snapping their sidearms to the ready. Out of the car steps a BUSINESS WOMAN, hoping to ascertain what the hold up is. OSJ Members let out a collective exhale.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Sonofabitch...

A beat.

MALE VOICE (OVER RADIO)
Anyone else just piss themselves?

The Woman retreats into her car, traffic now inching ahead,
as the Female Dispatcher's voice crackles out the radio.

FEMALE DISPATCHER (OVER RADIO)
HVT 29, divert back to Walnut
Station immediately.

In a heartbeat, the mood shifts. Tension skyrocketing.

JAMES (INTO RADIO)
Copy that. HVT 29, diverting back
to Walnut Station.

James turns to the OSJ MEMBER behind the wheel.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Get us off this freeway. Now.

Cherry lights flash above each Suburban, sirens wailing out.
Traffic slowly begins to part ways toward an off-ramp, only
it's taking forever and a day for a passage to clear.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Come on, come on, come on...

FEMALE DISPATCHER (OVER RADIO)
Be advised of a grey Buick
LaCrosse, red Ford Ranger, black
Chevy Impala...

JAMES
Jesus fucking Christ...

James et al. scan the nearby cars for any of the vehicles
mentioned, but the Female dispatcher isn't finished.

FEMALE DISPATCHER (OVER RADIO)
Silver Yukon, green Envoy... All
passengers believed to be armed
members of the Mexican Mafia.

AERO TWENTY-ONE (OVER RADIO)
Aero twenty-one to HVT 29, I'm
seeing a red truck... four cars
back.

Diggs twists backwards, Aero Twenty-One now circling above.

DIGGS
I see it.

JAMES (INTO RADIO)
Aero, copy that.

James looks back to Ramirez, a placid expression on the shot caller's face. James vaults his way out of the Suburban --

110 FREEWAY.

Approaching a MERCEDES, slamming his hand on the window.

JAMES (CONT'D)
MOVE YOUR CAR. NOW.

The STARTLED DRIVER nudges his car into the left lane. James hustles towards a MINIVAN ahead, creating a pathway for the convoy of Suburbans to reach the off-ramp.

JAMES (CONT'D)
MOVE-MOVE-MOVE...

Grimes' voice crackles out over James' shoulder radio.

GRIMES (OVER RADIO)
I got a Black Impala to my left.

Totally exposed, James sucks in a breath. Head spinning, sweat beading down his brow. James readies himself for a fire fight right in the middle of the freeway, when --

Every car on the free suddenly vanishes...

And it's just the bull and James. CLIP. CLOP. CLIP. CLOP.

The vision lasts for only a second, James blinking it away, as reality returns like a tempestuous windstorm.

James refocuses, seeing Wilcox in the lead Suburban --

Talking on his cell and not the comm system per protocol.

The Minivan nudges its way into the emergency lane, the sea of cars finally parting. James hops back inside the third Suburban as the convoy speeds towards the off-ramp.

EXT. FREEWAY - OFF-RAMP - CONTINUOUS

The five Suburbans barrel up and over the shoulder lane, passing by a procession of cars, all stopped at a RED LIGHT. Just before the convoy blasts through the busy intersection --

Two Sheriff PATROL CARS appear, skidding to a stop as they block all crossing traffic from passing through.

INT. SUBURBAN - CONTINUOUS

Engines roar as the convoy flies through the now cleared intersection, speeding past the two Sheriff's cars. James glances back to Ramirez and he appears almost sedated. Like he's already made peace with every possible outcome.

JAMES
Why was Wilcox on his cell?

DIGGS
Wilcox was on his cell?

GRIMES (OVER RADIO)
Heading east on Seventh...

James furrows his brow. Something's not right.

JAMES
We're going the wrong way.

No response. James turns to the OSJ Member behind the wheel.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Where the fuck are we going???

OSJ MEMBER
East LA station.

A lone shot BOOMS out. James and his team scan for the source. *Gunfire or just a car backfiring? No way to know...*

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Dirt lawns, barbwire fencing. An ELDERLY MAN sits up from atop his stoop as the -- CONVOY OF SUBURBANS BLAST BY IN A BLUR OF RED AND BLUE LIGHTS.

EXT. COMMERCIAL STREET - CONTINUOUS

A BUICK LACROSSE and SILVER YUKON, windows tinted, roar down the shop-lined boulevard. Look closely, and you can see the assault rifles through the darkened glass. They speed into a turn, but a -- barricade of patrol cars block the road ahead.

The LaCrosse and Yukon flip a hard U-turn, speeding off whence they came, as the convoy of Suburbans materializes on the OTHER SIDE of the barricade.

Tires screech, as the Suburbans peel up a driveway leading towards a SHERIFF'S STATION.

EXT. EAST L.A. STATION - SECONDS LATER

The first three Suburbans break to a stop, OSJ Members flying out the vehicle as they rush to secure the perimeter. Only Grimes and James' Suburban keep barreling onwards, finally skidding to a stop behind the station, outside of a --

LOADING DOCK.

Diggs and two OSJ Members safely usher Ramirez through a back door. Adrenaline pumping, James follows Grimes towards the back entrance, only when Grimes passes through --

He quickly shuts the door behind him... locking James out.

LT. GUTTERSON (O.S.)
We finish this right now...

James slow turns towards Gutterson standing behind him with a BATON in his right hand.

INSERT - Live feed from a security camera of James and Gutterson as it -- ABRUPTLY CUTS OUT.

Gutterson flips the baton towards James' feet, a callback to past treacheries from his days at Lynwood.

James glances down to the baton, his stomach bottoming out, as -- Gutterson slides his hand over his BERETTA.

LT. GUTTERSON (CONT'D)
No more bullshit. Just you and me.

James peers back up at Gutterson, his superior damn near thirsting for the chance to put a bullet in James' chest.

JAMES
Shots fired. Deputy caught in the crossfire...

LT. GUTTERSON
One of us will be buried a hero.

A long beat passes, the air frighteningly still.

James slides his hand towards his holster, just as -- Diggs bursts out the back door, interrupting their quick draw.

DIGGS
You shoot him then you're gonna have to shoot me too.

Gutterson eyes Diggs, a fury building. *One deputy caught in the crossfire is explainable, but two? That's when --*

THWAP-THWAP-THWAP. An LASD helicopter appears overhead, the roto-wash sending debris flying every which way.

Gutterson looks up to the helicopter, steaming like a train engine about to explode. He glances one last time at James, then lurches his way back through the loading dock door.

MOMENTS LATER.

It's just James and Diggs, the two leaning against the wall. No more helicopter overhead, no deputies nearby.

DIGGS (CONT'D)
You got friends, James.

James pauses, picking up what Diggs is putting down.

JAMES
That email... You're Serpico?

Diggs doesn't need to answer, the look on his face says it all. James takes a deep breath, nodding his gratitude.

BRAGG (PRE LAP)
This is all gonna work out. You
just have to trust us on that.

INT. FBI OFFICES - CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

A battle weary James sits slumped before Green and Bragg. Three other assistant U.S. ATTORNEYS lurking behind them.

JAMES
Then why haven't charges been
filed?

GREEN
I know this hasn't been easy for
you, but I assure you that when all
is said and done... Baca, Tanaka,
and Gutterson will be behind bars.

BRAGG
We're close, James. Really close.

James rubs his face, near the point of collapse. He nods, Green adopting a gentle demeanor.

GREEN
We heard about your father joining
the department. I can't imagine
what that's like for you.

JAMES
It doesn't feel good.

GREEN
Do you think he'll meet with us?

JAMES
My father? No way.

BRAGG
We know how Baca confides in Ted.
If we could somehow --

JAMES
You gotta better chance of seein'
me walk on water, than you do of
recruiting my dad.

GREEN
Swaying a man like your father
could make our case, James.

JAMES
Well, I'm sorry, but I just can't
help you with that.

Silence. Green and Bragg assimilating this new bit of info.
Then said as casually as suggesting a restaurant...

BRAGG
What if you wear a wire?

A long beat, then James scoffs.

JAMES
On my father? Are you fucking out
of your mind?

BRAGG
It's not your father we want. This
isn't about Ted Sexton.

JAMES
This has everything to do with Ted
Sexton. And my answer's still no.

BRAGG
So you're only an informant when it
proves to be convenient for you.

JAMES
Convenient??? I wouldn't exactly
call this a matter of --

GREEN
Let's all take a breath.

Green pours three glasses of water, sliding one to James.

JAMES
Where's Steve and Tara?

GREEN
Stuck in traffic.

JAMES
How convenient.

BRAGG
We have reason to believe your
father may be privy to--

JAMES
He's not.

BRAGG
... levels of corruption that
extend far beyond the hiding of a
federal informant.

GREEN
And your father's the key that
unlocks the door to all of it.

BRAGG
Why do you think your dad's coming
out here? He's the clean up. And
Baca is gonna tell him everything
that needs to be fixed.

JAMES
You're asking me to betray my dad
and I won't do it.

BRAGG
Well... you're not being a
cooperative informant. We won't be
able to protect you anymore, James.

JAMES
Is that what you've all been doing?
Protecting me??? Then explain to me
Gutterson itching to put a bullet
in my head. Where were y'all then?

BRAGG
You hid a federal informant. You
broke the law, James.
(MORE)

BRAGG (CONT'D)

If keeping you out of jail isn't protecting you, then I don't know what is.

JAMES

Funny thing is, Baca warned me about y'all.

BRAGG

I'm sure he did.

JAMES

I was guaranteed immunity.

GREEN

As long as you're a cooperative informant. Quid pro quo.

A beat passes. Bragg simmering.

BRAGG

Let me lay this all out for you, James. Cause I don't think you're understanding. We will have carte blanche to lump you in with every rancorous misdeed committed by the LASD. Doesn't matter you weren't there when a jailing guard crushed an inmate's orbital bone. This is a civil rights abuse case and you are guilty by association.

James' silence only provokes Bragg.

BRAGG (CONT'D)

Our sentence recommendation will be five to ten years. And I don't need to remind you how *ex-cops* are treated in prison --

James explodes.

JAMES

What the hell do you two even know about prison!?! Sitting there in your Brooks Brothers suits, you *wouldn't last ten seconds in prison*. I've slept there, shed blood there, seen friends...

(emotions swelling)

So, don't you dare tell me what prison is like.

A long beat passes.

GREEN

It doesn't have to be like this, James. Cooperate one last time. Ted could sink the whole ship and we're not just talking about the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department. We can tie Baca to a lot of powerful people. You know it and I know it.

JAMES

FBI, U.S Attorney's Office... y'all are no different than the LASD. This isn't about cleaning up the department. It's about your shot at harpooning a whale. So you can move up the ladder and get that big corner office.

BRAGG

You broke the law, James. Just work with us here. We are giving you a very simple way out.

James pauses, the air in the room buzzing with an electrical charge. He stands, leaving without another word said.

EXT. DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES - STREET - DUSK

James shoulders his way through a migration of suits. He's dazed, like a punch-drunk boxer leaving the ring.

Music THUMPS out from a nearby BAR as weekday warriors, ties undone, spill out in mass. Completely gutted, James staggers onwards, overwhelmed with this sensory assault, as we --

SMASH CUT TO:

ACTUAL NEWS FOOTAGE FROM VARIOUS CHANNELS.

CBS NEWS.

FEMALE NEWS ANCHOR

Stunning allegations of mass corruption and civil rights abuse have rocked the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department...

NBC NEWS.

MALE NEWS ANCHOR
*... Today, the U.S. Attorney's
 Office indicted nine members of the
 nation's largest body of law
 enforcement...*

ABC NEWS.

FEMALE NEWS ANCHOR
*... Including the leader of the
 department, Sheriff Lee Baca...*

PULLING BACK -- We are now framed on a TV in James' living room. Neither James nor Keely present.

FEMALE NEWS ANCHOR (CONT'D)
*... And his second in command,
 Undersheriff Paul Tanaka, on counts
 of conspiracy and obstruction of
 justice...*

INT. JAMES' HOME - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

James lies in bed, Keely resting her head on his chest, Winston sprawled out by his feet. From down the hall, the News Anchor's voice drifts into their room.

FEMALE NEWS ANCHOR (O.S.)
*... After a lengthy investigation
 by the FBI into unprecedented
 levels of prisoner abuse and deputy
 misconduct within the L.A. County
 jails.*

Neither move, not a word said between the two. James turns off a bedside lamp, the room baptized into darkness.

EXT. LOCATION UNKNOWN - VIGNETTE OF IMAGES - NIGHT

We catch brief, chaotic glimpses of the bull on the attack. Kicking and stomping and snarling in rage.

Muscles ripple and flex, horns tearing into pink flesh.

The images come at us faster and faster, the bull whipped into a hellish frenzy. Dust and horns, grunts and cries.

Blood flowers onto earth, mixing with the dirt and the grime. We hear a GASP - a *final death sigh* - as we match cut to --

INT. JAMES' HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

James GASPING. Eyes snapping open. His undershirt soaked in sweat. He sits up, catching Winston's stare. It's as if the dog has been protectively watching over him the entire night.

James turn to Keely, somehow still asleep. He rises from bed.

EXT. JAMES' HOME - FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

James sits on a wooden bench, Winston resting next to him, the effects of the dream still lingering. His jaw is slightly agape, eyes thirty percent wider than normal. It's as if his windows of perception have been wiped clean.

The front door opens, Keely stepping out in her robe.

KEELY

What are you doing?

James goes to speak. Stops himself. Can't believe what he's about to say. Hunting for the right words.

JAMES

Job doesn't suit me anymore. And maybe, maybe it never did.

The admission - this gut wrenching truth - cuts through James like a razor blade. And Keely as well. She's heartbroken to see her husband come to such a painful realization.

KEELY

We stay in LA?

JAMES

That's for you to decide.

KEELY

And when you see a patrol car?

JAMES

I'll watch it drive on by.

Keely takes in her husband, on the precipice of... *something*. A breakdown or a breakthrough. Hard to tell which.

KEELY

Fight this thing, James.

JAMES

They got me dead in the water.

KEELY
So fucking what.

JAMES
Five to ten, Keely.

KEELY
I know you, James. And I don't want you to go to jail. I really, really don't. But if you become their puppet... you'll carry that with you for the rest of your life.

Keely kneels down next to James.

KEELY (CONT'D)
What do you want, James?

JAMES
For people to know the truth.

KEELY
Then get that. No one deserves a life a misery. But sometimes it's just your turn.

James turns to Keely, an inner fire flickering in her irises.

KEELY (CONT'D)
The Sheriff's Department, the FBI... take the whole goddamn system to task. From Baca to Bragg. Cause you got every right.

INT. JAMES' HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Keely enters from the kitchen, Winston trailing.

KEELY (CALLING OUT)
Where's Winston's leash?

JAMES (O.S.)
By the couch.

Keely grabs the leash, glancing up to see that the window James had cracked earlier has a new pane of glass in it.

KEELY
You fixed the window? When?

JAMES (O.S.)
You were out running errands.

Keely pauses, *huh...* She latches the leash to Winston's collar, swings open the front door, taken aback to see --

Ted walking up the porch steps.

TED
I hope I'm not interrupting
anything.

KEELY
No, no. Come in.

Ted enters just as James steps into the living room, fresh out of the shower. Towel wrapped around his waist.

TED
Hi, James.

A beat. Ted's gaze locking onto James' ABDOMINAL SCAR.

JAMES
What are you doing here?

TED
I was hoping we could chat.

Words spoken with humility, but James could care less, wanting nothing to do with Ted. Keely astutely intervenes.

KEELY
We got beers in the fridge. How
about you two head out to the
backyard while I walk Winston.

EXT. JAMES' HOME - BACKYARD - NIGHT

The two men stand at a distance. Ted well aware of the emotional walls his son has erected.

TED
How's Tony doing?

JAMES
Couldn't tell ya. They got him in
some rehab facility up north.

TED
And you?

JAMES
Is this you asking or Baca?

TED

You haven't answered my phone calls.

JAMES

You work for the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department now. I think my reluctance to communicate is more than understandable.

TED

You warned me and I failed to take heed. But everything I did... I was trying to protect you.

The two go silent. Ted motions to James' stomach.

TED (CONT'D)

That thing still give you pain?

James pauses, wanting this conversation over and done.

JAMES

Comes and goes. No rhyme or reason.

TED

You remember anything from that night?

A beat.

JAMES

The bull. That's about it.

INSERT -- Establishing shots of a rodeo. An island of light in a sea of prairie oblivion. Moths aflutter, dirt clouds suspended in air. Near the BUCKING CHUTE James latches on his gloves, Ted standing nearby.

TED

That thing was the devil himself. Felt it the moment I laid eyes on him. Like he was put on this earth to do just one thing.

INSERT -- Inside the chute, snarls the bull. Body seemingly constructed from just one muscle.

TED (CONT'D)

I wanted to say something, call the damn thing off. And there you were... Already climbing over that chute.

INSERT -- James crawls his way atop this murderous beast of an animal. Fifteen hundred pounds of pure hate. It bucks in protest as James tightens the ropes.

TED (CONT'D)
I shoulda pulled you off that bull myself. But by then it was too late.

INSERT -- The bull EXPLODES past the gate, spinning in dizzying rebellion, James hanging on for dear life. Unexpectedly, James relaxes, finding a rhythm in it all.

TED (CONT'D)
For a second, just a split second, I thought you had him. Then that bull bucked back, and my heart... damn near exploded in my chest.

INSERT -- the bull sucks back, James vaulted through the air as a hush falls over the stands, and time slows down.

TED (CONT'D)
I was halfway over that gate when you hit the ground. Someone pulled me back, don't know who. But I screamed your name out anyways.

INSERT -- James smashes down onto cracked earth. Ted cries out, James turning gaze, just as... the beast plunges his horns into James' belly.

TED (CONT'D)
And then everything went to black for me. Like the moon and the stars never even existed. All I could see was that bull... and you.

INSERT -- Ted climbs his way over the fence, as the arena gives way to an inky void. He lifts his son's head, blood blooming through James' torn flannel.

TED (CONT'D)
As a parent, there is no greater responsibility than ensuring the safety of your children. And it is a guilt... a guilt indescribable seeing your child...
(sucks in a breath)
Knowing full well you could have done something to stop it.

INSERT -- Ted holds James' body close to his as a helicopter descends, clouds of dust swirling all around.

TED (CONT'D)

I watched you flatline twice on the way to the hospital. Musta made who knows how many promises to God. And now once again I am guilty of...

Ted stands, shuddering with emotion.

TED (CONT'D)

I have no right to be standing here. No right to be telling you what to do. But a father should protect his son. Not the other way around. Take the deal. Do whatever they ask.

James looks to his father, tears rivering down his weathered face. No longer the superhero of old, but a man with faults he's brave enough to admit. Ted foots his way towards the door, but not before James embraces his father, Keely standing by the window in witness.

EXT. LOS ANGELES - VARIOUS LOCATIONS - EARLY MORNING

-- Night bleeds into day as the sun rises over the L.A. County sprawl.

-- EARLY RISERS pace walk down quiescent streets, first light bleeding its way through the skyscrapers overhead.

-- Voices clamor as dozens of NEWS REPORTERS stake out their turf at the steps of the UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE.

-- We follow a SUBURBAN through streets awakened. VENDORS peddle their wares, HOMELESS staked out at every corner...

INT. SUBURBAN - CONTINUOUS

James, dressed in suit and tie, sits next to his wife in the backseat. James appears broken in spirit, Keely vacantly staring out the window. The Suburban begins to slow, a sea of media up ahead awaiting their arrival.

BRAGG (O.S.)

Just like we talked about, James.

James looks to Bragg sitting shotgun. Nods in affirmation.

EXT. UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE - SECONDS LATER

James, Keely, and Bragg exit the Suburban. CAMERAS FLASH as REPORTERS CLAMOR for sound bites.

PHOTOGRAPHER
James, this way...

FLASHING LIGHTS pepper James like automatic gunfire.

REPORTER
Anything you'd like to say in regards to Sheriff Baca?

Bragg leads James and Keely through the confluence, Keely almost knocked right off her feet. The three reach the courthouse entrance where Green awaits, ushering them inside.

BRAGG (PRE LAP)
The United States calls James Sexton.

INT. UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE - COURT ROOM - MORNING

James approaches the witness stand, taking seat. The GALLERY is packed, all edging for a glance of the witness. There's Keely, Ted, and Leah Anne. Tony and Diggs, along with fifty other DEPUTIES. A few James knows, many he doesn't.

Seated at the defendant's table, is Sheriff Baca, Undersheriff Tanaka, Lt. Gutterson, along with THREE other SENIOR BRASS from within the department.

Bragg approaches the podium. Turns focus onto James. Seems like he's aged ten years since we first saw him in Acton.

BRAGG
Mr. Sexton are you familiar with an inmate named Anthony Brown?

JAMES
I am.

BRAGG
At some point a cell phone was discovered in his possession. Can you describe what happened next?

JAMES
Once the cell phone was found, it was traced back to the FBI.
(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)

That information went all the way up to Sheriff Baca and Undersheriff Tanaka.

BRAGG

And what did Sheriff Baca and Undersheriff Tanaka do after they found out about Anthony Brown?

JAMES

Baca and Tanaka sent down orders to hide Anthony Brown from the FBI.

Hushed murmurs float out from the packed gallery.

BRAGG

Hide Anthony Brown?

JAMES

Yes, sir. I helped hide Anthony Brown from the FBI. You can't delete a file because there is a count. If there are a thousand and one inmates, there needs to be a thousand and one files. So what I did was replace his name with one we made up.

BRAGG

So when the FBI came looking for their informant --

JAMES

He could not be found. That is correct. We live scan inmates when they are transferred. Anthony Brown was never live scanned.

Bragg shuffles through papers, shifting gears.

BRAGG

Mr. Sexton are you familiar with an inmate named Clifton Adams?

James' blood runs cold.

JAMES

I'm not sure how this is relevant to the --

BRAGG

Mr. Sexton, is it true you were under investigation for excessive use of force?

(MORE)

BRAGG (CONT'D)
Specifically, in regards to the
beating of inmate Clifton Adams?

James pauses.

JAMES
I was cleared of any wrong doing.

BRAGG
And within days of your absolution
you father joins the department.

JAMES
(near silent)
No...

BRAGG
Was this just a matter of
coincidence? Ultimately, the Los
Angeles Sheriff's Department is on
trial here, James. I am simply
trying to ascertain how far the
corruption extends.

James steams at Bragg's machiavellian attempt to have him --
implicate his own father while on the stand.

BRAGG (CONT'D)
I'll ask again, was it just a
matter of coincidence that your
father joined the LASD the same
week you were cleared?

James locks eyes with Bragg, his gaze passing over Sheriff
Baca as he searches through the gallery - past Tony and his
mother, finding Ted. His father pleading unspoken words
through his stare. James turns to Keely and she --

Nods at her husband. *Go get the fuckers...*

JAMES
Those who wear a badge swear an
oath to maintain the rule of law.

BRAGG
Answer the question, Mr. Sexton.

JAMES
I am, Mr. Bragg.
(then)
To act with the upmost integrity,
to wave their own self interests
for that of the greater good.
(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)

But time and time again I have seen otherwise.

James squares up at Sheriff Lee Baca.

JAMES (CONT'D)

The LASD is guilty of systemic violence and corruption. I have seen it with my own eyes. The rot goes down to the root. And the man who bears the weight of these sins is Sheriff Lee Baca.

James turns back to Bragg.

JAMES (CONT'D)

But the process by which the FBI and the U.S. Attorney's Office pursued justice must be reprovod.

BRAGG

Mr. Sexton...

JAMES

You asked me how far the corruption extends and I am telling you. If you cannot adhere to even the most straight forward of ethics and principles... what kind of precedent is that setting, Mr. Bragg? I was guaranteed immunity, *I put my life on the line for you*, then you flip the switch and tell me I have to wear a wire on my --

Bragg explodes.

BRAGG

Did your father have any knowledge--

James exploding right back.

JAMES

Ted Sexton is as clean as it comes, and that's the truth. I am one-tenth the deputy my father is, and you Mr. Bragg... you should be counting your blessings every night that individuals like him exist in this world.

James takes a breath. All now deathly quiet.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Everything I once thought mattered, I have lost. I will spend the rest of my days in fear for my life. The pain I have inflicted upon my family, my wife... I can never undo. Yes, I hid Anthony Brown. If that's a crime the court feels I am guilty of, I will serve my time willingly.

James pauses, tears falling down his cheeks.

JAMES (CONT'D)

So long as the truth of the matter is preserved on record in a court of law. Every transgression, every misdeed committed by the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department, the U.S. Attorney's Office, and the FBI. That is all I ask.

JUDGE ANDERSON, 50s, black, turns to James.

JUDGE

Mr. Sexton... you are aware that you are incriminating yourself in a felony.

JAMES

I am.

-- We pull focus towards a COURT TYPIST, fingers flying over keys, transcribing every word said.

-- Then to the dozens of JOURNALISTS scribbling onto pad.

-- Finally settling on his father, seated amongst the transfixed gallery. Ted nods to his boy as the --

Truth of the matter is preserved onto record.

EXT. SOMEWHERE IN THE SOUTH - VARIOUS LOCATIONS - AFTERNOON

-- Rolling hills burn with all the colors of autumn. Not a single man-made structure to be seen.

-- Cotton and soybean fields stretch out in perpetuity. Rows of shotgun houses, long ago vacated, stand half buried under an entanglement of kudzu vines.

-- James' Explorer rumbles down an empty stretch of highway, nothing but farmland on either side of the road. Cattle roam the landscape as we catch sight of --

The massive bull we've seen throughout the film. Only now it seems remarkably docile, showing zero interest in James' Explorer as it passes on by.

INT. JAMES' EXPLORER - CONTINUOUS

James sits behind the wheel, Keely by his side, Winston in the backseat. Jame and Keely seem at peace, as if a weight has been lifted from their shoulders.

He squints through the bug-spotted window at the speck of building on the edge of the horizon.

INT. JAMES' EXPLORER - LATE AFTERNOON

James slows the car to a stop. Turns off the engine. A beat passes. Grasshoppers chirping nearby, bullfrogs croaking in the distance. The two step outside, revealing --

EXT. FTC TALLADEGA - CONTINUOUS

THE QUARRIED WALLS OF A PRISON. Coils of concertina wire catch the dying light with a shimmer. Keely shuts her car door, moving towards her husband as he lets Winston out.

Keely watches on as James embraces Winston one last time. He strokes the dog's fur, whispering words we cannot hear.

He rises, tears in his eyes, turning to Keely.

JAMES

You know how to get back?

Keely nods, wiping away her own tears. James meets Keely's gaze, a million things communicated without a word said.

KEELY

I don't want you to go.

JAMES

You'll be here when I get out,
won't you?

Keely nods.

JAMES (CONT'D)

I love you.

KEELY

I love you, too.

The two share a tender kiss. James pulls away, walking towards the prison entrance, his head held high, as we --

CUT TO BLACK:

Over black, print reads: *After James Sexton's testimony, Sheriff Lee Baca, Undersheriff Paul Tanaka, along with six other members of the most powerful Sheriff's Department in the country were sentenced to prison for conspiracy and obstruction of justice.*

We see actual footage of:

-- Sheriff Baca, Undersheriff Tanaka, along with six other members of their inner circle standing distraught before the court. They bow their heads in disgrace, cameras flashing mercilessly, as guilty verdicts are read.

Over black, print reads: *Never before has the federal government held a body of law enforcement accountable for corruption and civil rights abuse on such a scale.*

We see actual footage of:

-- Passing by prison cell after prison cell. Incarcerated MEN and WOMEN stare into camera from behind metal bars. These are faces that haunt. We settle on an empty cell, crippling in its severity. And if we look closely enough, we see the image of a bull carved into the cement wall.

Over black, print reads: *After serving over one hundred days in solitary confinement, James Sexton was released four months into his eighteen month sentence. Upon his release, James created a software program that has improved the safety and well-being of hundreds of thousands of Americans currently incarcerated.*

We see actual footage of:

-- James on his graduation day from the Los Angeles Sheriff's Academy. Uniform immaculate, he marches into an auditorium with his fellow cadets. James catches sight of Keely, his smile as wide as the Rio Grande.

Over black, print reads: *James and Keely still live in Los Angeles with their three dogs.*

THE END.