

MILDRED

a tale of meat & mayhem.

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Paradigm. Writ Large.

And **OVER BLACK**: Something **SIZZLES**. Pops. As we **OPEN ON**:

INT. A KITCHEN - MORNING

THREE EGGS in a pan. Frying on up. Bright orange yolks drifting in a lake of bubbling white magma. And as a **BEER CAN** opens --

MILDRED (O.S.)
It's funny, y'know.

-- we land **CLOSE ON: MILDRED KING**. 53. Sleep-deprived but alert. A meditative gaze out her kitchen window as she lights a **CIGARETTE**, gently sips her morning beer. Things are nice. Things are okay.

MILDRED (CONT'D)
What you come to realize over the years. For me? I've realized a lot about *family*. Realized that --
(beat)
-- there's two kinds, you know.
Two: There's the family you *come into*, right? Sorta the luck of the draw, really. Mine being the one that *sent* me away up here in the first place, of course, but *then*?

She draws, ashes, considers.

MILDRED (CONT'D)
Then there's the family you *make*.
Little more handpicked, I guess.

Which is when we start to **PULL BACK** from Mildred. Slowly bringing her kitchen space into view. Clean. Quaint. Nostalgic.

MILDRED (CONT'D)
And being up here? Well, up here, there's the one I've *made*, but-- and this is what I find so curious: the family I made and the family I came into?
(beat)
Both families of *hunters*.

And through the **WINDOW**, a glimpse of what Mildred has been watching: A **CAT**. Regal before a tree. Staring back pensively.

MILDRED (CONT'D)
Gives us *instinct*. To know when to kill to eat -- and when to *defend*.

And Mildred pauses on that, draws from her cigarette, coughs a little, drinks a little. Numbly pondering all of this.

MILDRED (CONT'D)
 Makes the situation we find
 ourselves in here a little tricky,
 you know. Having to *choose* like
 this. *Which* family do you **save**--

And it's not her THRIFT STORE MINNIE MOUSE SWEATER that's
 strange -- it's the massive **PLASTIC APRON** she wears over it.

MILDRED (CONT'D)
 --and which family might we let
 get thrown to the wolves.

She takes another drag. Then drains her beer. Drops the
 cigarette hissing into the can. Before she sighs a beat --

MILDRED (CONT'D)
 And, in your gut, deep down, there's
 this-- sense of *obligation*, right?
 Obligation to protect *both*.

-- and stands, turning the stove off, letting the eggs settle.
 And from the counter, she lifts a **BULKY RUBBER Mallet** --

-- which is when we realize there's someone **ELSE** in this kitchen
 with Mildred: A **MAN**. Stripped to his UNDERWEAR, mouth taped
 tightly shut; AND ALL FOUR OF HIS LIMBS DUCT TAPED TO A CHAIR.

And what's notable: this man isn't scared -- he's fucking
pissed. Fighting to preserve his every last shred of dignity.

Mildred moves to him, **A SHEET OF VISQUEEN** crinkling beneath
 her feet as she exams one of his FOREARMS, which is how we
 find that it's PLUMP, fucking MAROON-PURPLE -- and Mildred --

-- ever-so-gently, presses a fingertip to this grossly swollen
 limb, distending as if it's about to burst, the man painfully
 grunting through his mouth tape at the slightest bit of pressure.

And she peels the tape back, lets it hang a beat, before:

MILDRED (CONT'D)
 How 'bout now?

But no. Proud bastard's a steel trap. Eyes of a hornet staring
 back at Mildred. Trying real fucking hard not to breathe so
 fucking hard because unbelievable fucking pain. So, she nods --

-- and tapes his mouth back up, looks to his *other* forearm.
 Strapped bare to the armrest, untouched. Unharmed. *Until*:

MILDRED SWINGS HER Mallet DOWN ONTO IT. Such ruthless fucking
FORCE. Producing some sorta sickening cross between a THUNK and
 a CRACK and right as this man's GRUNTS turn to fucking **WAILS** --

EXT. MILDRED'S COTTAGE - SOMEWHERE VERY REMOTE - MORNING

-- we come outside. This little 3-bed-2-bath surrounded by forest. Muffled bellows and thwacks barely resonating from within. As the cat trots off.

INT. MILDRED'S KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER - MORNING

And find Mildred seated again. Lighting another cigarette as the man heaves. She cracks herself another beer, sips it small --

-- as she looks back out the window, truly admires the view. It's almost as if she hadn't a single dang care in the world.

MILDRED

Yeah. It's a tricky thing.

(beat)

A real tricky thing.

And she smokes a beat. Drinks a beat. Before we -- **CUT TO BLACK.**

A COUPLE DAYS AGO:

EXT. A FOREST - THAT CRACK-OF-DAWN BLUE KINDA MORNING

October. This dense forest a span of orange and red and everything that makes seasons nice. And as we move through it --

-- its serenity is broken by the CRIES of an ANIMAL. Something wounded. Gravely. Faint at first, but louder as we get closer.

When TWO HUNTERS enter frame, their backs to us, forcing us to FOLLOW THEM through this autumn wonderland. Until they reach:

A MASSIVE **BUCK**. Crooked on the ground, writhing in pain on account of the ARROW that's lodged right through its FLANK.

A YOUNG WOMAN (O.S.)

Shit.

Find **NATALIE**. 22. A young girl holding a COMPOUND BOW. And beside her: is MILDRED. Both in HUNTING ATTIRE because hunting, their cheeks burning cold from this early morning bullshit.

NATALIE

I don't get it. Pin was right on his heart. Thought I had him.

As Mildred locks eyes with the suffering beast. Before she takes the bow, swiftly aims, and -- **FFFFT**. The buck goes quiet.

MILDRED

You took him down. That's the hardest part anyhow, just-- gotta build a little more tension in your back. Like I showed you, right?

Mildred shifts her shoulder blades to demonstrate. As Natalie tries to mimic her movements, Mildred smiling small at the effort.

MILDRED (CONT'D)

C'mon then. Let's get him back.

Big deep breaths -- before they both kneel to the buck.

NATALIE (PRE-LAP)

Why a bow?

INT. MILDRED'S 1979 FORD BRONCO - MOVING - LATER - DAWN

Mildred driving, lighting a cigarette. Natalie, the passenger.

NATALIE

Always gotta get so *close* with a bow. My dad used to say the closer you get, the more they can smell you.

Mildred smokes, looks to Natalie a beat.

MILDRED

Your dad was a smart guy. Always. And your mother ain't in any which way interested in hunting, but-- that's why I can tell you: Hit him with a rifle from a blind, okay. But we're in *their* territory, right? Give 'em that *smell*? An advantage? Then maybe we *earn* that kill just a tiny bit more. You didn't feel that?

NATALIE

("I guess")
Yeah, no. Yeah.

Mildred, smoke drifting from her nostrils, the slightest maternal flicker in her eye as she glances over at Natalie.

MILDRED

Gotta believe in yourself more, kid. Way I believe in you. Get a little cocky, c'mon.

NATALIE
Nah, I know, I just--

MILDRED
--know what it is? This town's too
small for you, that's all.

Mildred, cigarette clenched between her teeth, *grinning*. Playful.

NATALIE
Stop.

MILDRED
You've got too much ambition.
Bursting at the seams with it.

They both share chuckles, Natalie bashful, flattered.

NATALIE
Nah. Told you. This town's my *home*.

Mildred pauses. Smile slightly waning. *Knows that well enough*.

MILDRED	NATALIE (CONT'D)
No, I--	--it's your home, too, Midge.

And a beat with that. As Mildred contemplates what that means. *What it's meant all these years*. So, she levels out.

MILDRED (CONT'D)
You'll get it next time. *The*
heart. I promise you will.

As off Natalie, appreciating that, we head outside:

EXT. KNIGHT'S HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS - MORNING

Where Mildred's Bronco zooms away from us. Revealing this glorious stretch of the midwest. And to clarify, a **CHYRON**:

MICHIGAN, SOMEWHERE IN THE UPPER PENINSULA. 8:04am.

INT. A BUTCHER'S ROOM - LATER - DAY

Steel tables. Freezers. Grinders. Slicers. Knives and cleavers galore. Getting CLEANED. *STERILIZED*. Which is how we find:

JACKSON. 18. A young man with Down syndrome. Cleaning. Mopping. Prepping. When -- A BACK DOOR OPENS. Mildred and Natalie hauling the buck in -- as Jackson stops, checks his watch.

JACKSON
Doors in fourteen minutes, Midge.

Mildred and Natalie stop, the buck swaying between them.

MILDRED
Thank you, Jackson. You get the lights?

JACKSON
Waiting on Nat.

NATALIE
Waiting on *me*? Lil bro, that's
your fucking job.

JACKSON
Still gotta hit the main floor.

NATALIE
Oh, there it is. Waiting on the main
floor, but it's somehow *my* fault.

As her and Mildred hoist the buck on the table. Start
shedding their hunting outfits, Mildred chuckling.

MILDRED
Just-- both of you. Get out there quick.
Fire it up. I gotta get goin' on him.

Natalie moves to Jackson, gives him a PECK on the cheek. *Before*
a light slap across his face, running away. Jackson after her --

-- and Mildred. Clocking that dynamic. This world of hers. This
life. Before she starts to reduce a thermal down to a tank top,
which is how we find TWO FULL SLEEVES OF DETAILED TATTOOS --

-- varied styles, but with one consistent theme: TRIDENTS.

This mural sprawling up and across Mildred's back, shoulders,
her slim frame of dense sinew making for an intense canvas, as:

EXT. A PLACE CALLED MIDGE'S MEATS - MOMENTS LATER - DAWN

In charmingly vintage neon lights, MIDGE'S MEATS powers up, an
"OPEN" sign flickering on. In business for the day. Before:

INT. MIDGE'S MEATS - THE MAIN FLOOR - LATER - DAY

TWO TRAYS slide forward in a DISPLAY CASE. Freshly processed
meat, labeled: **CUBED VENISON. GROUND VENISON. 3.99/LB.**

INT. A MEAT LOCKER - LATER - DAY

Frosty and crisp in here. When the door opens, Mildred enters. Finds a few stacks of MEAT BOXES labeled KING'S LONG CUTS --

-- a name to remember, but for now, Mildred simply grabs one --

THE BUTCHER'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

-- where she opens it to reveal A PORK LOIN, SPARE RIBS, various other SLABS OF MEAT. She pulls them out, gets to work.

THE MAIN FLOOR

A day in the life of Midge's Meats. A quasi-MONTAGE as we watch Natalie serve CUSTOMERS, Jackson keeping the place up. Mopping. Hauling. Mildred sporadically bringing out trays of fresh meat.

These days, this work. Steady. Easy.

EXT. MIDGE'S MEATS - LATER - DUSK

And as the sun drops, just as quickly as this place came to life, here, its neon lights come powering down. Another day's end.

INT. MILDRED'S OFFICE - MEANWHILE - DUSK

The size of a closet. Mildred SPINNING A SAFE'S COMBINATION LOCK. She snaps a LAPTOP closed, grabs **TWO HARD DRIVES**, tucks them into a MESSENGER BAG, which she also locks. This closing routine.

EXT. THE CLOVER - LATER - DUSK

A charming midwestern take on an Irish Pub. Approaching a century in age. As Mildred, Natalie, Jackson approach, enter --

INT. THE CLOVER - CONTINUOUS - DUSK

-- the whole town's practically here. Our trio sitting at the bar, where they're immediately approached by **CHUCK THE BARTENDER**.

CHUCK

You three.

MILDRED

Chuck. How are ya.

CHUCK
Pot pie's on special tonight.

MILDRED
That'll work.

A quick wipe of the bar, before Chuck leaves. And we push in on Mildred, clocking the dynamic of this place. This *community* --
-- a small drink, smaller smile. This life she enjoys. Genuinely pleasant. But *something's off*. As if it were all somehow *forced*.

AND, YET, LATER - NIGHT

Mildred at a TABLE OF TOWNFOLK. Drinking. Laughing. These people without a stranger in sight. Ready to do it all over tomorrow.

And Mildred, loosened up for the night. Enjoying herself.

INT. MILDRED'S BRONCO - MOVING - LATER - NIGHT

And here's Mildred driving. Smoking. Maybe even a little beer-drinking. Nothing wrong with a road soda in these parts. Nice and content. This highway. This night. This beer. Before:

A RECORDED VOICE (PRE-LAP)
Hey, you've reached Poppy. Do the thing.

A girl named **POPPY**. Voice young but old. Followed by [**BEEEEEP**]:

INT. MILDRED'S KITCHEN - LATER - NIGHT

Mildred with her back to us. On the phone -- *but saying nothing*. Hunched over the table, her frame swaying, *nervous*.

Before she ends the call. Sits here. Alone. Smoking. Hiding it from us, but we sure can see: *something's missing* from Mildred's life, as: she takes one last drink, a drag... and we **FADE TO BLACK**.

EXT. AN EXTREMELY FUCKING RURAL TWO-LANE BLACKTOP - DAY

AND FADE BACK IN ON: A rotted artery of pavement cutting into a swath of overgrown weeds, green devils flirting with uncut grass.

A few beats, before -- A MERCEDES. One of those prowler-looking motherfuckers -- comes *ZOOMING* into frame. And we FOLLOW IT, as:

NORTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA. 9:37AM.

It turns, revealing a SIGN: **UNITED STATES PENITENTIARY, CANAAN**.

INT. LIAM'S BENZ - MOVING - CONTINUOUS - DAY

LIAM KING, 25, at the wheel. Cocksure with a volatile gleam.

LIAM

Doesn't say where to park.

As he looks to his passenger: **BARTHOLOMEW KING**, 50s. Sturdy build juxtaposed with the OXYGEN TUBES strung about. Working hard to breathe -- as he peers out the window, *distracted* --

-- by the NEWS TEAMS gathered in the far corner of the parking lot.

LIAM (CONT'D)

Pop? Doesn't say where to park--

BARTHOLOMEW

--just wherever there's a fucking spot, Liam. Figure it out, *Christ*.

Bartholomew, *seething* that their purpose here is newsworthy.

EXT. UNITED STATES PENITENTIARY, CANAAN - LITTLE LATER - DAY

And here's Liam now, posted up against the hood of his cool-guy car, shades on and everything. As he repositions himself --

-- then repositions himself again. Doing his best to look presentable but hip but professional but a bad dangerous boss.

BARTHOLOMEW

Stop that shit.

Liam pauses. Before getting in one more rack of his shoulders.

LIAM

BARTHOLOMEW (CONT'D)

Just tryna make an impression- -stop it.

And they *both* stop. Because THE PRISON GATES ARE OPENING. And out strides **SEBASTIAN KING**. Deep end of 70s but we'd never guess it.

Fit and built to the heavens, broad shoulders swaying like a pissed off centaur's, the fucking Logan Roy of violent felons, scanning --

-- and spotting: Bartholomew's HAND jutting from the car window. And when he approaches, it's uncomfortable as he eyes *Liam* a beat.

BARTHOLOMEW (CONT'D)

Hey'a, Pop.

SEBASTIAN

Who's this?

BARTHOLOMEW
That's Liam. *Little* Liam. My boy.

SEBASTIAN
You the one been switching up our
assets? Making these deals?

Liam, his Cool Guy Factor dried right on up.

LIAM
Yeah, we just. Little expansion--

BARTHOLOMEW
--he's alright. You're gonna be happy.

Bartholomew saving Liam, Sebastian shifting focus to his **son**: Those oxygen tubes indeed damning. The air of someone hurtling downhill.

SEBASTIAN
What's the matter?

A beat. Wanted to break it to his father gently, but. *Gently* ain't exactly how Sebastian King rolls, so. Bartholomew musters it.

BARTHOLOMEW
I, uh-- I got this thing. *Things*.

SEBASTIAN
Bad?

BARTHOLOMEW
Pretty bad, yeah. Not long to go,
that kinda shit.

This stoic brute of an ex-con walking out of prison only to learn that his son is dying. But Bartholomew shakes it off.

BARTHOLOMEW (CONT'D)
Hey, uh. Liam-- get the threads.

Liam, rigidly, nervously, moves to the trunk of his car.

LIAM
Yeah, me and Poppa Bart here
thought you might want--

SEBASTIAN
-- your **father's**. Name's *Bartholomew*.

Liam stammers a beat, fumbling this reunion left and fucking right here. Before, from the trunk of his car, he pulls a **SUIT**.

LIAM

Your, uh-- your favorite, right?
Thought you might wanna change in
the car. Since we're walking
straight into the party.

Sebastian takes the suit. Regards it. When he looks to the NEWS
TEAMS, hands the suit back to Liam, *and starts to get undressed.*
Down to his underwear. Right here in the fucking parking lot --

SEBASTIAN

Talk to your sister?

-- taking the suit piecemeal, putting each garment on
meticulously. As Bartholomew shifts at Sebastian's question.

BARTHOLOMEW

Not since dropping her off.

He watches his father process that, trying to get a read on him.

BARTHOLOMEW (CONT'D)

Her numbers've stayed steady
though. *Butchers* leave her alone.

And that last part. The first we've heard of "**THE BUTCHERS**".

SEBASTIAN

Butchers gonna be there tonight?

BARTHOLOMEW

'course. But ain't gonna bug you with
any business talk. Just a good time.

Sebastian racks his shoulders, fully dressed now. Suit's a
little tight because prison muscles, but still. *He's refreshed.*

SEBASTIAN

Business is *all* we're talking tonight.

Bartholomew unsettled by that response, as Sebastian leaves his
prison uniform in a crumpled heap, drops into the backseat.

A NEWS ANCHOR (PRE-LAP)

*SEBASTIAN KING, famed leader of The
King Crime Family, was released from
a Federal Penitentiary earlier this
morning, on a **reduced** sentence--*

INT. THE WALSHS' CONDO - MEANWHILE - DAY

CLOSE: A **PHONE** -- and on it, an **ANCHOR**. Indeed, broadcasting from the prison's parking lot. Long lenses trying to catch any image they can of Sebastian changing right out in the open.

A NEWS ANCHOR
*--a controversial decision granted earlier
 this month by a Pennsylvania high court.*

And we pull up and out to find the phone's on a BED, where **POPPY KING WALSH**, 27, is spooning her **ONE-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER**.

A NEWS ANCHOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
*Mr. King became CEO of the
 nationwide meatpacking company,
KING'S LONG CUTS, after his father,
 HOGAN KING, stepped down in 1984--*

Poppy, half-listening, focused on cooing her child to sleep.

A NEWS ANCHOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
*--and while the company's roots in
 organized crime stretch back decades,
 many refer to Sebastian King's reign of
brazen violence as having put its
 operations under increased scrutiny--*

When -- a GENTLE RAP on the doorframe. Poppy looks to find **BRADLEY WALSH**. 35. Clean-cut, innocent as they come --

A NEWS ANCHOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
*--as Mr. King was convicted of the
 sanctioning of multiple murders, including
 that of his own WIFE, **LOUISE** KING--*

-- and Poppy kills her phone, silencing the newscast.

POPPY
 You look grouchy.

BRADLEY
Grouchy's how I look?

POPPY
 Yep. Just a big ol' grump.

He softens. His wife messing with him. And yet:

BRADLEY
 Just feels like a lot, Poppy. Idea
 of having to-- *hide* like this.

Their daughter asleep, Poppy stands, wraps her arms around him.

POPPY

Goodness, you're not hiding. I'm just being overly cautious. Just a little kerfuffle, that's all.

BRADLEY

A *kerfuffle*. Define kerfuffle.

POPPY

I think my grandfather's gonna rip my cousin's head off for what he's done to the company -- and I wanna be there to help my *Uncle* talk him down.

BRADLEY

Right. *Just a little kerfuffle*.

POPPY

Come on. Your parents'll be thrilled to have you two anyway.

But Bradley isn't swayed. Even as Poppy sets her eyes deep into his, gives him a loving smile, before *booping* his nose.

POPPY (CONT'D)

Hey. Gonna miss you though.

BRADLEY

Gonna miss you *more*.

POPPY

Love you.

BRADLEY

Love you *more*.

POPPY

Hmph. Always with your one-ups.

She gives him a little pat on the cheek -- *be good* -- before making her way down their hallway. Which is when we **MATCH CUT TO:**

INT. MIDGE'S MEATS - THE FLOOR - MEANWHILE - DAY

Mildred. Coming in for the day, hungover as any other. Spotting Natalie at the register. On her phone. Slow day. *Normal* day --

MILDRED

Morning.

NATALIE

Hey.

-- and as we follow Mildred, her PHONE BUZZES. Natalie watching as Mildred slows. Taken aback, as she *reads*... and we GO CLOSE ON:

INT. MIDGE'S MEATS - MILDRED'S OFFICE - LATER - DAY

MILDRED'S LAPTOP SCREEN. A local news site. The headline, of course: **FAMED "MEAT MOBSTER" SEBASTIAN KING RELEASED FROM PRISON.**

Mildred staring at this page awhile now. As if trying to decipher it. When: **DING**. The front entrance's bell, other-room-faintly.

NATALIE (O.S.)

Hello.

A MAN (O.S.)

*Hi. That **your** Bronco out front?*

And *that* grabs Mildred's attention, listening closely.

NATALIE (O.S.)

Ha. That's Midge's. Pretty, ain't it?

A MAN (O.S.)

*"Midge". As in **the** Midge? Midge's Meats?*

NATALIE (O.S.)

That's the one.

Mildred moves out into the back room, as we follow her to:

THE MAIN FLOOR

And right as she appears in the doorway:

A MAN

She here today--

MILDRED

--afternoon.

She finds **CLARK**. 30s. Dressed innocently enough. Affable.

CLARK

You're Midge?

But Mildred just sizes him up a beat. No interest in answering.

CLARK (CONT'D)

I was just asking about your truck out there. The Bronco--

MILDRED

--it's not for sale--

CLARK (CONT'D)

--nah, was just admiring it--

MILDRED (CONT'D)

--okay.

Clark chuckles, uneasy. Mildred just being paranoid. **Maybe...**

CLARK (CONT'D)

What's that -- "Midge"? Ain't a legal name, right? More like a nickname? Like Jack or Rick--

MILDRED

--Mildred.

CLARK

Right. You from here, Mildred?

MILDRED

Born and raised.

Natalie looks to Mildred on that one. Confused because not true, as Clark peruses their display case, a vague taunt in his step.

CLARK

Hm. Shit. You seem sorta familiar, but. Never been up this way, so --

MILDRED

-- small town like this only takes a few hours before we *all* start lookin' familiar.

As Clark holds on Mildred a dark beat. Forces another smile.

CLARK

Okay, Mildred-- or, uh. *Midge*. Maybe we'll see you around then.

And he leaves. Mildred darting to a window, watching as he moves to a **BUICK** -- where inside: **TWO OTHER FIGURES WAIT.**

NATALIE

Mm. Seemed friendly.

An oblivious Natalie, innocent. Whereas Mildred -- she's watching this fucking Buick leave. *Wondering what the hell this is.*

EXT. MIDGE'S MEATS - MOMENTS LATER - DUSK

The sun sets now. Find Mildred moving to her Bronco, her GLOVEBOX, where: she pulls a **.357 REVOLVER**, tucks it in her waistband.

INT. THE CLOVER - LATER - DUSK

Again. Mildred and Natalie enter, post up at the bar, except here, they spot **CLARK**. Receiving a TO-GO ORDER at the other end.

And he notices them. Lifts what's left of his beer, gestures. Before he drains it, grabs his order -- and moves for the door --

-- *behind* Mildred, clocking his every fucking move on his way out.

EXT. A PRIVATE ROAD - MEANWHILE - DUSK

Behind a CAR moving down this PRIVATE ROAD, a sign above reading:

KING'S LONG CUTS, est. 1934.

There it is. *That name.* The connection to Midge's Meats. As we find: POPPY scans an ID badge, waves to a GUARD. Drives to reveal:

EXT. KING'S LONG CUT - MAIN COMPOUND - CONTINUOUS - DUSK

This SPRAWLING COMPOUND OF **SLAUGHTERHOUSES**. Mostly windowless buildings, LIVESTOCK herded here and there. A well-oiled machine --

INT. POPPY'S CAR - MOVING - CONTINUOUS - DUSK

-- as Poppy takes it all in with zero sentiment. Growing up on the grounds of a slaughterhouse being kinda fucked up and all.

And she approaches a LONG ROW OF TREES, taking us away from the meat farming -- as all the way up a longer, more private drive --

EXT. THE KING FAMILY HOME - MOMENTS LATER - DUSK

-- a **FOUR-BUILDING HOMESTEAD**, worlds away from the slaughterhouses.

And Poppy parks, sits a beat. Breathing in, out, psyching herself the hell up. Coming home being one hell of a mindfuck.

INT. A BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER - DUSK

A LINE OF COCAINE IS RIPPED OFF a bathroom sink because it was only a matter of time before someone had a drug problem here.

This someone is **DEVLIN KING**. 23. Wiry; erratic; we know the type.

INT. THE KING FAMILY HOME - MOMENTS LATER - DUSK

The house quiet. Poppy moving past **FRAMED PHOTOGRAPHS** of her, her brother. Of *Mildred*. When Devlin appears. They both stop.

DEVLIN
Hey.

POPPY
Hi.

An awkward hug. Siblings with some distance between them.

DEVLIN (CONT'D)
You need your **GPS** to get here?

POPPY

Fuck off. How often *you* come back?

DEVLIN

Every weekend, yo. Sunday dinners with the boys.

POPPY

Guess I stopped getting the invites.

DEVLIN

Stopped showing up.

As Devlin moves to a sofa, shamelessly does another bump.

POPPY

Jesus, Devlin, *tonight*?

DEVLIN

If there ever was a fucking night, Poppy.

She sighs. A lost cause and all. So, she takes a seat next to him, puts her head on his shoulder. Big-sis, baby-bro time.

POPPY

Where are they? Liam, Uncle Bart?

DEVLIN

Picking up the big man.

Devlin does a bump. Poppy picks a piece of lint from his pants.

POPPY

C'mon, look at you, Dev. You're a mess with that shit. When's the last time you've slept? Like, *real* sleep?

DEVLIN

Dunno.

POPPY

What if you-- maybe sat this dinner out tonight, you know? Get some rest.

DEVLIN

What? Surprised *you* even wanted to be here for this shit.

POPPY

Didn't want to. Just miss you. Miss my *family*, I guess.

DEVLIN
Got yourself a new one though.
Hubby-boy. Hating us way he does.

POPPY
Bradley -- doesn't hate *anyone*.

DEVLIN
Scared of us then.

POPPY
Well. I mean. Can you **blame** him?

They sit another beat. Devlin rubbing his nose. Before:

POPPY (CONT'D)
Pretty sure *she* called last
night. Restricted number. Again.

DEVLIN
You pick up?

POPPY
'course not. Was asleep, but. Not
that I ever would anyway. Do you?

DEVLIN
Nah. Not really.

POPPY
It's weird, she just-- sits
there. Like a ghost. Never says
a word. Not even sure I'd
recognize her voice if she did.

DEVLIN
Guess twenty years'll do that.

POPPY
Seventeen.

Poppy with the gaze of a mother as she considers that a beat.

POPPY (CONT'D)
It's just-- funny to think about
now. Having a kid and all. I
can't understand how she did it.
Just-- *leave* so easily like that.

DEVLIN
She didn't have a choice, Poppy.

And Poppy just looks at him. A long beat. *Doesn't buy that bullshit.* As Devlin does *another* bump. Before he stands, dusts his pants, shirt off. A sniff and a snort. Ready to go.

DEVLIN (CONT'D)
C'mon. Let's just get this over with.

Poppy holding a moment to take her little brother in, before --

EXT. THE KING FAMILY HOME - LATER - NIGHT

-- LIAM'S BENZ emerges. As Sebastian looks out at his family home. This place steeped in generations of memories.

SEBASTIAN
You got a piece in here, kid?

LIAM
Yeah -- a .38 on my ankle.

SEBASTIAN
Gimme it.

Liam reaches down. Unvelcros. And hands a **.38** back to Sebastian. Who takes it. Tucks it. And gets the fuck out.

Liam and Bartholomew follow, the three of them moving towards one of the neighboring structures. A **REPURPOSED BARN**, a sign above its massive entryway simply reading: **THE KING HAUS**.

INT. THE KING HAUS - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Poppy and Devlin at a table, looking to a **LONG TABLE AT THE END, SEVEN MEN IN SUITS** seated, conversing amongst themselves --

DEVLIN
Man. So many new ones.

POPPY
You don't know them?

-- akin to a BOARD OF DIRECTORS, and known to the Kings as "**The Butchers**", these aging Mobsters from various eras, backgrounds.

DEVLIN
Nah, just -- Vick and Phil. Ben.

Poppy trying to hide her curiosity, stealing prolonged glimpses of these men, their beady eyes of corruption -- of *violence*.

POPPY
Whole thing feels weird.

Which is when Devlin looks to spot -- their **GRANDFATHER** --

DEVLIN
Not as weird as it's about to be.

-- Sebastian King walking through the massive barn door like just that -- a king. Flanked by Liam and a hobbling Bartholomew --

-- and with Sebastian, we finally see this place. Bar on one side, buffet of all things food on the other. But his eyes stay ahead --

-- as Bartholomew clocks their surroundings: Eyeing the GUARDS, recognizing *some* -- but most? *Are unfamiliar* -- which is when --

AN AGING VOICE (O.S.)
Seb. Holy hell, old friend.

-- **VICK.** One of The Butchers at the table. 70s. Sleepy-dead eyes, a tragic life drifting behind them, approaching Sebastian.

VICK
Only man I know gonna come out
lookin' like a million more bucks
than when he went in.

And the Butchers sit muted. Neutral. Trying to *read* Sebastian.

VICK (CONT'D) SEBASTIAN
How was your drive-- --gotta talk.

Vick falters. Chuckles hoarsely. Shoulda known, of course.

VICK (PRE-LAP) (CONT'D)
17 years is a long time, Seb.

INT. THE KING HAUS - LATER - NIGHT

Everyone's gotten food. Eating at their respective places. Poppy with Devlin and Liam. The Butchers with the Butchers.

While Sebastian sits with Vick at the bar, who's nervously swirling an Old Fashioned in its place, barely looking at his old pal.

VICK
Glad you ducked the full 40 though.

But Sebastian isn't listening, he's just fixated on The Butchers.

SEBASTIAN

Only recognize three of 'em at that table, Vick. Three guys I've known how long now? And they can't even get up to say hello.

Vick looks to The Butchers, back to Sebastian. A thorny beat.

VICK

Like I was saying. 17 years--

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

-- is a long time, yeah--

VICK (CONT'D)

--and the world wasn't no stone age when you went away, but it's *changed*. Fucking *spider web* now.

He takes a drink, exhales as he absorbs the memories here.

VICK (CONT'D)

And, look: *Liam*? He's a bit of a fuckin' dope, but he's got the street smarts. Made concessions that saved this company. Saved *us*.

SEBASTIAN

Concessions.

VICK

This organization. ***Sunrise Holdings***. They came to us with some numbers. Some *Catch-22s*, really. Liam and Bartholomew coulda called a war, sure, but they chose *peace*. Know that woulda seemed crazy in our day, but... heh--

Vick slows, Sebastian hellbent on refusing any and all change.

VICK (CONT'D)

--**listen**: The Butchers you and me came up with? They're long gone, Seb. Shit, *I'm* almost long gone. You know, when I take a piss, I gotta take seven *tiny* pisses just to finish the *one* piss? If I'm *lucky*, maybe there's some medium piss in the middle there, but it's rare.

Vick gestures to the table, where we clock one Butcher in particular: **SIMON STANLEY**. 40s. A simple grin in an even simpler suit, this dashing devil with a modest appeal. No flash required.

VICK (CONT'D)

We used to only get money from where? East Coast up to the city, yeah?

Sebastian, locking eyes with Simon. Trying to take all this in.

VICK (CONT'D)
 Now? We've got it coming in from all
 over the fucking world, Seb. And
 those Butchers you don't know?
They're the reason nobody can see it--

SEBASTIAN
 --I wanna see the books.

Vick shifts at that notion. Uncomfortable. Nerves rustling.

VICK SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
 Seb-- --what, that's a *problem*?

Vick gives him a hard look, really *needs* him to understand:

VICK (CONT'D)
 Might be, yeah. Might be, Seb.

So, Sebastian stands. Buttons up his suit jacket. Cordial.

SEBASTIAN VICK (CONT'D)
 Tell 'em to enjoy their food --Sebastian, *please*.
 tonight--

Sebastian looks to him a beat, Vick's restrained desperation.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
 Gonna go eat with my grandkids.

With that, Sebastian walks away. As we RACK TO: Simon. Clocking their conversation, Vick looking back at him. *He fucking tried.*

WITH POPPY + DEVLIN + LIAM + BARTHOLOMEW - MEANWHILE

And we follow a new guy: **MURPHY**. 60s. A broad man in a very brown suit. Plate of food in hand, making his way for the Kings' table --

-- where he sits across from Poppy. And without looking at her:

MURPHY
 Poppy. Good to see ya, kid.

Murphy's voice calloused, rough. Poppy smiles at him, polite.

POPPY
 Hi, Murphy. You're looking well.

As Bartholomew notices something: Murphy's frame is tense, his knee bouncing. But before he can ask, Sebastian sits with a plate.

SEBASTIAN
So, which one'a you's the boxer?

Everyone glances at Devlin.

DEVLIN
I, uh-- me. I am.

SEBASTIAN
What's your record?

LIAM
Ha! He's 5-5-1 --

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
-- I was asking Devlin.

Everyone stops. Liam whiffing yet again. **Bartholomew**, however --
-- *his* focus is elsewhere: *taking notice of VICK*, who's now
having a discussion with Simon. Some whispers. Some secrets --

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
(to Poppy)
How 'bout you? What's your story?

-- Poppy falters a beat, her grandfather tough to interpret.

POPPY
I just had a child. A girl--

SEBASTIAN
--you don't come around here much,
do you? Around the compound?

POPPY
It's been a busy year.

LIAM
Busy *few* years. Ain't seen cousin
come home in a long ass time.

Sebastian looks Poppy over. Something about her standing out.

SEBASTIAN
Probably for the best, Poppy. Staying
away from a place like this. That's
probably a good thing for you.

Sebastian keeping everyone on their toes. When:

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
Liam. Since you wanna talk so fuckin'
much -- just told Vick I wanna see the
books. First thing in the morning.

LIAM
The-- the books?

And here's Bartholomew, watching as more **Heavies** are entering the barn, one of them SLIDING THE DOOR CLOSED, standing guard --

SEBASTIAN
The computers, whatever fucking files. First thing. The morning.

-- while Bartholomew's sensing something. Just as with Mildred, **something is fucking wrong here, too**. So, he gets up, starts staggering towards the DOOR HEAVY, oxygen tank rattling along --

BARTHOLOMEW
Th'hell you doing?

-- Door Heavy, unprepared for any confrontation. As Bartholomew clocks a PISTOL in his waistband. Normal, yet suspicious.

DOOR HEAVY
Was gettin' a draft.

BARTHOLOMEW
Yeah? Funny, I was just thinkin' it was gettin' a little warm in here.

Door Heavy doesn't respond. And Bartholomew doesn't like it. Which is why he moves to the nearest chair, sits. Something. **Is wrong**.

VICK (PRE-LAP)
Seb, wanna introduce you to someone --

BACK WITH SEBASTIAN

Vick's here now. Simon in tow. And we get a better look at this guy. Clean cut. Slim frame. Somehow both delicate and imposing.

VICK
-- this is Simon Stanley. He's our Delegate Butcher from **Sunrise Hol--**

SEBASTIAN
--th'fuck is Sunrise Holding?

Everyone falling quiet again. All know that *Sebastian* knows.

DEVLIN
(whispers to Poppy)
Yeah, *welp*. Gonna piss.

Devlin cowardly slips away. As Poppy looks to Murphy, unbothered. And Simon interjects, his voice smooth with a sharp crackle:

SIMON

Ha. Ah, I just wanted to come over and pay my respects, sir. Your sentence was a long stretch in a very *shitty* hole. No space fit for a king, am I right?

(beat)

And what a -- *curious* little miracle they let you out so early, isn't it?

Sebastian watches Simon glide around the table -- stopping to place a hand on Liam's shoulder, subtly tightening his grip.

SIMON (CONT'D)

See. Mr. King. You should be proud of all you accomplished when you took up the mantle from your father.

Simon, a mocking tone surfacing now, *leading* to something.

WITH BARTHOLOMEW

Still seated at the other end of the bar. Watching Simon and Sebastian -- which is when he slowly, *calmly*, removes his oxygen tubes, sets his tank aside -- **because he now knows what this is.**

AND SEBASTIAN

Starting to sense something himself, same as Bartholomew.

SIMON

Which is why I can understand that maybe -- it might be difficult to accept a little... *new management.*

"New management". Now Simon's just fucking with Sebastian. As Liam, feeling compelled, clears his throat, moves to stand --

-- but Simon **SHOVES** him back down into his chair, and ever-so-subtly, GLANCES over at another BUTCHER, who approaches the table --

SIMON (CONT'D)

Your father *built* this company, Sebastian King. And then *you* -- went on to give it a terrible *fucking* name -- and your *grandson* here?

-- right as we notice a **HEAVY** coming up behind Sebastian.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Well, he made some good old fashioned deals with a pack of *dashing devils* and sold it right on out, isn't that right, Liam?

And in an instant, The Butcher tosses Simon a **SHOTGUN** -- and before we can make any sense of shit -- BWOOM.

SIMON HAS JUST SHOT LIAM KING POINT BLANK IN THE FACE, sending him hurtling to the floor with a sickening *splat* --

-- POPPY DIVING UNDER THE TABLE, Sebastian jolting upright, **LIAM'S .38 IN HAND, AIMED AT SIMON: BLAM-BLAM -- RIGHT TO SIMON'S JAW** --

-- but his aim just barely *thwarted* by the HEAVY behind him --

-- while Simon falls, clutching his mouth -- and Sebastian, WHIPPING AROUND, in a flash, has this Heavy's HAND BENT BACK, gets rid of this guy in THREE DEFT MOVES, as fucking MEANWHILE:

BARTHOLOMEW. Operating with surprising *agility* for a dying gent, his every last ounce of strength to *move* for the Door Heavy --

-- who draws his PISTOL, but Bartholomew blocks, CHOPS HIS FUCKING THROAT, TAKES HIS PISTOL, and: **BLAM-BLAM** -- shoots another approaching Heavy, then: **BLAM** -- to Door Heavy's HEAD.

And Bartholomew moves for the *other* Heavy's **COMPACT MACHINE GUN** --

-- the place filling with MORE HEAVIES, but let's call them what they now are: fucking KILLERS. Which is why Bartholomew takes aim --

-- **brk-brk-brk-brk-brk-brk-brk-brk-brk-brk-brk-brk-brk** --

-- mowing some down; some others ducking; the point being:

NOW WE'VE GOT A FUCKING PARTY. Hell hath officially broken loose.

INT. A BATHROOM - MEANWHILE - NIGHT

Here's Devlin. Hearing the commotion. The GUNFIRE. Freezes. Doesn't have the penchant for violence that his family does --

-- yet he pulls his own PISTOL, takes a breath, and **heads out to:**

INT. THE KING HAUS - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

And with Devlin, we see it: This absolute *chaos* as a BEVY of these KILLERS battle our **TWO VETERAN KINGS**, this fucking cat-and-mouse gunfight, as Devlin pauses, spotting: **LIAM. Dead on the floor.**

But it's a heartbreak he's got no time for, because *there's* Poppy. Under the table. So Devlin ducks, making a path to her --

-- as Sebastian and Bartholomew are *handling* themselves. Nothing coordinated. Just a messy street brawl of gunfire and blades and anything and everything they can get their fucking hands on --

-- GUNS. CLEAVERS. KNIVES. It's all fair fucking game.

As Devlin joins Poppy under the table, noticing: she's a special kind of distraught. Sadness. Regret. Not her world.

DEVLIN

Okay, okay, hey-- we gotta-- Poppy,
we gotta go, okay-- c'mon, **c'mon**--

And Devlin, certainly no savior, but he navigates Poppy out from under the table, maneuvering them away from the violence.

As Sebastian. Using a SHOTGUN as a **BLUDGEON**, a CLEAVER as a sword -- chopping and thwacking away at SO MANY KILLERS --

-- just tearing through these guys. Making the most of everything, closing spaces between enemies fast, practically dodging bullets.

And Bartholomew, on his last breaths as he brutally battles with his fists. Steals a Killer's **AR-15**. Takes some accurate shots.

Poppy with Devlin, eyes darting for an exit, notices: an **AK-47**. Scurries to it, **RACKS IT**, and then: **Poppy is gone**. Bailed.

DEVLIN (CONT'D)

Shit-- **SHIT**--

He looks out from behind a table, in time to see -- Bartholomew **COLLAPSE**. The last of his steam blown. While Sebastian --

-- **NOW OVERRUN WITH KILLERS**. Putting up a fuck of a fight, but. *It's happening*. THEY'VE DROPPED HIM TO HIS KNEES, TWO KILLERS RESTRAIN HIS ARMS -- and yet Sebastian stays relentless --

-- as Devlin, watching this, when: **krsh-pop-pop** -- *someone's spotted him*. GUNSHOTS flying his way, taking out glasses, plates --

-- so, Devlin aimlessly points his AK -- **BRK-BRK-BRK-BRK-BRK-BRK** --

-- but doesn't even know what he's doing. He ducks again, eyes darting everywhere for Poppy -- before Devlin --

-- tearfully taking one last look at his dead cousin, Poppy nowhere to be found -- as he takes a beat -- **and fucking RUNS**.

While Sebastian. This King subdued. As a death's-door Bartholomew drops before him, dying eyes looking distant at his father.

BARTHOLOMEW

Heh. S-sorry, Pop.

Over Bartholomew, steps SIMON. Clutching a lower quarter of his mouth, **RIPPED apart**, wet words slushing through bloody jaw meat:

SIMON

Uch. *Shit*. See, what I was *trying*
to say, Mr. King -- the future we'd
like to *build* for King's Long Cuts?

Simon pulls his own HANDGUN from his waistband --

SIMON (CONT'D)

There's just no appetite for *liabilities* --

-- which he now aims at Bartholomew's head:

blam.

SIMON (CONT'D)

-- and there's no spelling
liability without **K-I-N-G**.

Which is when Simon steps closer, takes a good long look at this legend he's here to dethrone. As Sebastian --

-- a lifetime of sin culminating in this single moment. The fight that has been this life. Much regret; not enough remorse --

-- which is why, perhaps, Sebastian King, Man of No Smiles, lets a tear fall. Before: **BLAM** -- his head whips away from us. Dead.

INT. THE CLOVER - MEANWHILE - NIGHT

Mildred. Still at the bar. Getting late. When -- her **PHONE BUZZES. DEVLIN CALLING...** the kids never fucking call. So, she snatches it up, slides to accept, but sits a beat... before:

MILDRED

...Devlin--?

DEVLIN (O.S.)

--mom, **where are you??**

EXT. MILDRED'S BRONCO - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

MILDRED'S ENGINE FIRES UP, THE BRONCO TEARS THE FUCK OUT OF HERE --

MILDRED (PRE-LAP)

What about **Poppy**?

INT. MILDRED'S BRONCO - MOVING FAST AS **FUCK** - LATER - NIGHT

-- Mildred driving like hell, mid-conversation with Devlin.

DEVLIN (O.S.)

She was with me one minute, next-- I dunno, she must've just-- panicked.

MILDRED
And her phone?

WITH DEVLIN - DRIVING FUCKING FAST HIMSELF - NIGHT

Snot running down Devlin's nose, struggling to see out his windshield, steer the wheel, this *blubbering* fucking mess.

DEVLIN
Not answering. I tried to-- tried to find her outside, but there were too many of 'em. Only had a second to--

MILDRED (O.S.)
--*why'd they do this? Why now?*

DEVLIN
I don't know-- these new Butchers. Liam and Uncle Bart kept me in the dark, so it was the first time I even seen any of 'em, but I--

-- and Devlin goes quiet. Putting it all together, **realizing:**

DEVLIN (CONT'D)
--**fuck.** Ma. Whatever this is -- you gotta run. You gotta fucking *run*.

WITH MILDRED

-- there's no time for any fear here. Mildred's just *calculating*.

MILDRED
I'm coming down, we'll find your sister.

DEVLIN (O.S.)
*Thought you **couldn't** come down.*

Mildred pauses at that. Can't tell if it's a jab or not.

MILDRED
Well, I can't stay up here either. You just find somewhere *safe*--

DEVLIN (O.S.)
--*I'm going to **Dad's**.*

MILDRED
...your-- your *father's*? No. What are you-- we don't even know where he *is*--

--but Devlin's hung up. And Mildred goes quiet. All of this happening so fast -- but also: *Clark*. Fucker makes sense now.

EXT. KNIGHT'S HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Speaking of. As Mildred's Bronco tears past, we PULL BACK --

CLARK (O.S.)
Whole thing don't add up.

-- to REVEAL WE'RE INSIDE:

INT. THE BUICK - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Find CLARK at the wheel. And in back, someone new: **STEVIE**. 30s.

SOME OTHER GUY (O.S.)
Adds up plenty.

And the passenger: **IVAN**. 50s. *The SAME GUY Mildred had tied to a fucking kitchen chair some twenty-odd pages ago.*

IVAN
"All the Kings" means All the Kings. And Mildred's forever been a fucking Problem Child of a King.

INT. MILDRED'S BRONCO - MOVING - MEANWHILE - NIGHT

-- and Mildred, still driving with the wrath of demons.

IVAN (V.O.)
See, I always heard-- Mildred was every bit her father's daughter.

EXT. MILDRED'S COTTAGE - LATER - NIGHT

Her Bronco halts in the driveway, engine idling. She looks about, alert. Pulls her .357, gets out, stepping lightly, cautious --

IVAN (V.O.)
Which is probably why they hated each other so fucking much.

INT. MILDRED'S ATTIC - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

-- A LIGHTBULB ignites, showing us dusty boxes, wardrobe bags, attic things. As Mildred climbs on up, searching for something.

IVAN (V.O.)
When she was a girl, Sebastian had a trade route worked out, heroin and whatnot with some bikers down in Ohio.
(MORE)

IVAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

(beat)

*Called themselves **THE LUCKY TRIDENTS**.*

A FRAMED PHOTO ATOP A CHEST. 19-YEAR-OLD MILDRED. Her arms thrown around a YOUNG BIKER, similar TRIDENT TATTOOS as hers, this strapping member of **THE LUCKY TRIDENTS** --

IVAN (V.O.)

*Mildred gets a little older, ends up **falling** for one of the younger ones. Puppy Love kinda shit. Pretty much left the family for 'em. Left her **father**.*

Mildred picks up the photo. Doesn't look at it often. And yet...

IVAN (V.O.)

*Rumors said she was out there fighting every damn fight she could with 'em. Always at **his** side.*

She opens the chest. A trove of items. BRASS KNUCKLES. KNIVES. Her own **LUCKY TRIDENTS VEST**. A moment of reflection --

IVAN (V.O.)

*But then Sebastian and The Tridents had a falling out. He forced her to come home -- and the thing there is: Mildred's a hard-headed motherfucker, but she's smart. Knew goddamned well if she didn't obey her father -- Sebastian woulda wiped **The Lucky Tridents** from the face of the fucking Earth.*

-- before she pulls a **SHORT-BARRELED M1A RIFLE** from the wall, starts loading the WEAPONS into a DUFFEL BAG.

IVAN (V.O.)

*Then she came home. And after awhile, Sebastian set her up with one of his Lieutenants: dipshit named **JIMMY MIKE**. Some sorta tax incentive Sebastian had worked out, sure as hell wasn't no Fairy Tale Marriage, I dunno. I just think Mildred, stubborn as she mighta been -- probably figured it was the only way to keep the peace.*

Another PHOTOGRAPH: A 24-YEAR-OLD MILDRED on her wedding day. To a man named **JIMMY MIKE**. Scumbag scowl, thousand-yard stare.

INT. THE BUICK - MEANWHILE - NIGHT

A sullen expression crosses Ivan as he lights a cigarette.

IVAN

You two know about Sebastian's little rampage back then, right? Thought his own wife, Mildred's *mother*, was plottin' against him? Had her *clipped*. **And:** Made Jimmy Mike be the fucking trigger man.

(smokes a beat)

Mildred raised hell, 'course. Tried to *kill* Sebastian. Then Jimmy Mike, maybe rightly, thought Sebastian would kill 'em both, so -- last man anyone woulda thought'd flip on Sebastian King, *ended up flipping on Sebastian King*. He didn't end up killin' Mildred, *obviously*. But he may as well have. This place looks pretty, but it's been her prison. Sent up here to get her tabs kept, held her kids as some sorta collateral -- and we been scouring the planet for Jimmy Mike ever since.

(smokes, shrugs, what a tale)

Ah, shit, I dunno. We can sing a song for the lonely ol' Mildred King --

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

Mildred -- **OPENING A WINDOW**. As we push in on it, the wind lightly blowing on in through its screen, nice and ominous...

IVAN (V.O.)

-- or we can put her out of her fucking *misery*.

EXT. MILDRED'S COTTAGE - LATER - NIGHT

All quiet. Save for Mildred's television emanating faintly from within -- as from the dark emerge **OUR THREE TRIGGERMEN**. Ivan, Clark, Stevie. Wearing **BLANK PLASTIC MASKS**, **ARs** hoisted.

Ready to go to work. Except -- they pause. Because ahead:

Every single LIGHT in Mildred's fucking house is on.

Ivan signals to Clark, Stevie. And with Ivan on one side of the cottage, Clark on the other, Stevie approaches THE FRONT DOOR --

INT. MILDRED'S COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

-- and when Stevie enters, it's peculiar. Because it isn't just the one window Mildred has open -- **it's ALL of them.**

The television, **BLARING**. Distractingly so. As Stevie, puzzled, ENTERS THE *KITCHEN*, takes his steps slow, every move stealth --

-- when -- and we just barely fucking hear it: **fft**-- **THOCK**.

A MOTHERFUCKING **ARROW**. Through one of the SCREENS -- RIGHT INTO STEVIE'S THROAT, **PINNING HIM TO THE GODDAMNED FREEZER** --

-- he chokes, gurgles, tugs at it frantically, *fruitlessly*, as --

EXT. MILDRED'S COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

-- behind the cottage, *Ivan sees this*. Realizing Mildred's play here -- as he turns his attention to **CLARK** --

-- illuminated by the cottage lights -- **fft** -- as CLARK TAKES AN ARROW THROUGH THE **EYE** OF HIS MASK. Drops. A goner.

Ivan steps back into the dark, trying not to breathe. When: A **CRACK** of a twig to his side, he turns, AIMS -- **and in an instant** --

-- MILDRED IS SOMEHOW *BEHIND* HIM. WITH HER **MALLET** -- as she SWINGS it at IVAN'S ELBOW, forcing him to DROP HIS RIFLE --

-- but Ivan is quick, whips around, throws a PUNCH, MISSES --

-- and here's where we first see the caliber of **FIGHTER** Mildred truly is. Swift. Smart. A handful of moves. Ivan throws, Mildred dodges, ducks, TAKES OUT A KNEECAP WITH HER MALLET --

-- and as quick as Ivan drops to his knee, **cr-click**. Mildred has her .357 to his head. Ivan stuck. Bested. Embarrassed.

MILDRED (PRE-LAP)

*And, see, I guess that's what I've been trying to get at: either the hunter -- or the **hunted**.*

INT. MILDRED'S KITCHEN - BACK TO WHERE WE BEGAN - DAY

Right back where we started. Mildred in her plastic apron, eating those eggs she had cooking. Dribbling yolks runny as all hell.

MILDRED

And a shit-heel like you? Appears around here and it's, like-- *what's wrong with this picture*, right? Like seeing a-- a polar bear in Arizona.

(chews, considers that)

You *do* look familiar though.
From back in the day.

Well... not *right* back where we started -- as Mildred looks to reveal that -- **ALL of Ivan's limbs have now been beaten purple.**

IVAN

My-- my name's Iv- Ivan--

MILDRED (CONT'D)

--wasn't asking.

She sets her plate down. Lights a smoke, opens another beer.

MILDRED (CONT'D)

I just remember-- *you had children.*
Grown by now, I'd imagine.

Ivan shifts at that. All but confirming for Mildred. Which she clocks. Nods as she takes a bite. Finds it interesting.

MILDRED (CONT'D)

Similar spots, you and me. *You're* here -- betraying the family you *made*. Leaving 'em like you just did. And you gotta ask: does the family you left them for give a shit about you? Do they? Because if they *did*, would they really send you up **here?**
On such a-- fucking *fool's* errand.

Ivan huffs as he watches her a beat, realizes she's in her own world here. And he doesn't know how the hell to respond to that.

IVAN

Look-- all I heard is-- your *dad*.
Gettin' out. These new *Butchers*, they--

MILDRED

--these **new** butchers. Who are they?

Ivan stops, puzzled a beat.

IVAN

I-- I dunno. Just-- just... **Vick.**
Vick sent us.

MILDRED

Vick, huh. Sent you to kill me?

Mildred with a sigh of betrayal at the mention of Vick's name. Before she rises, pulls her .357, moves to Ivan, zero sympathy.

MILDRED (CONT'D)
What are your kids' names, Ivan?

A beat. Ivan struggling to speak. Before he gives in, musters:

IVAN
--Elizabeth. And Ada--

--**BLAM.**

Mildred's shot Ivan point blank, rocketing his chair to the floor, allowing him his children to be his final thought. As:

POPPY'S VOICEMAIL (V.O.)
Hey, you've reached Poppy. Do the thing.

[BEEEEEP] -- Mildred standing here, Ivan's fresh corpse O.S. --

MILDRED (V.O.)
Hey, uh-- I heard what happened.
(a scratchy recorded beat)
And just want you to know-- I
really hope you're okay, and, uh--

EXT. A DIRT ROAD SOMEWHERE - LATER - DAY

Ivan. Now wrapped in the same Visqueen, crammed in the **TRUNK** of their Buick as it SLAMS SHUT. And we find Mildred, moving to the driver's side door to reveal: CLARK, STEVIE, seated up front --

MILDRED (V.O.)
*I'm gonna **fix** this, Poppy. I promise.*

-- Mildred staging them, no explanation needed. Just two dudes with fatal arrow wounds and a swollen body in the trunk. No biggy.

MILDRED (V.O.)
I'm gonna fix every last bit of it.

-- and off Mildred, considering all that now needs to be done:

EXT. MIDGE'S MEATS - DAY

MIDGE'S MEATS. Except it's not quite Midge's Meats. There's no one around. No neon lights. Just a "**FOR LEASE**" sign plastered up.

BARTHOLOMEW (O.S.)
*Guessin' you'll have it up and
 runnin' by the fall. Long as these
 contractors don't fuck us.*

And as we PULL BACK, a **CHYRON**:

SOME YEARS AGO.

And a little further back, before revealing that we're:

INT. A LINCOLN - CONTINUOUS - DAY

BARTHOLOMEW in the driver's seat. Younger. *Healthier*. Smoking, of course. As he looks to a YOUNGER MILDRED, eyes vacant, defeated.

BARTHOLOMEW
 Dunno what were you thinking.
 Puttin' your hands on Pop like that.

MILDRED
 She was *your* mother, too.

Bartholomew smokes. Because yeah. He's well aware.

BARTHOLOMEW
 Coulda fuckin' told ya: *Jimmy Mike*.
 He wasn't never gonna put you
 before Pop. Not in a million
 fucking years. You got no reason to
 protect him, Mildred--

MILDRED
 --if I knew where he was, he'd
 already be dead.

Bartholomew pauses. Makes enough sense, sure.

MILDRED (CONT'D)
 Send the *kids* up here, Bart.
Please. You don't gotta do this.
 Pop's *inside* now. You don't need
 to take his orders while he *rots*--

BARTHOLOMEW
 --the *kids*. I gotta know you know
 what happens if you come home.

Mildred looks to her brother a beat, *losing him here*.

MILDRED
 That right? Your own nephew?
Niece? You *that* kinda killer,
 Bart? You just like him?

BARTHOLOMEW

No. And he knows that, too. He'd get someone else and they'd do it without batting an eye. So, again.
What happens if you come home?

Mildred slows, accepts her fate. Drawing a terse breath, before:

MILDRED

I come home-- he kills the kids.

And off Bartholomew, this complicated affection for his sister --

INT. MIDGE'S MEATS - MILDRED'S OFFICE - PRESENT DAY - DUSK

-- Mildred *today*, opening the safe to reveal BRICKS OF CASH. She grabs her **HARD DRIVES**, couple bricks, loads them into her duffel.

THE BACK ROOM - MOMENTS LATER - DUSK

And she SLAMS TWO STACKS OF CASH on a steel table, right in front of Natalie, who is, understandably, *concerned*.

MILDRED

That's more than two years worth. Plenty for you to keep taking care of Jackson. Pay yourself twice your weekly every Thursday. But you do *not* come back to this store -- until I return. Anyone asks where I *am* -- and I mean **anyone**, you tell them Midge's Meats is closed for renovations and that I'm taking a much needed vacation, got it?

Natalie nods, rattled. And as Mildred moves to leave --

NATALIE

Midge. Are you in trouble?

-- she stops, turns back. Natalie's confusion growing, *concern*.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Just, uh. You're all we really got, you know? So.

And Mildred gets the message here. *Come home*.

MILDRED

Tension in your back. Don't forget.

And a beat -- before Natalie watches Mildred leave --

INT. MILDRED'S BRONCO - MOMENTS LATER - DUSK

-- and Mildred drops into the driver's seat. Cranks the ignition. Then, finally, she *slows*. Her chest heaving, grief setting in --

-- but she chokes it down. Making way for something far more primal, dark, **angry**. A few beats -- before she throws it in gear --

EXT. KNIGHT'S HIGHWAY - HEADED SOUTH - LATER - DUSK

-- and away goes Mildred's Bronco. Leaving her home behind.

ONE GRAVELLY FUCKING VOICE (PRE-LAP)
*See, what people don't get is that
 retirement's a dangerous game.*

A **MAN'S VOICE**. Hoarse. Tired. New to us. As WE GO --

INT. A VERY BUSTED TOYOTA CAMRY - SOMEWHERE - DAY

-- CLOSE: A sweaty, *sleazy* man. One whose name, until now, we've only ever heard: **JIMMY MIKE**. 50s. Here alone in a CHEAP SUIT --

JIMMY MIKE
 Start slowin' down, gettin' heart
 attacks and strokes and shit.

-- as he feasts on a DOUBLE CHEESEBURGER. Talking with his mouth full, drawing from a lit CIGARETTE in between bites.

JIMMY MIKE (CONT'D)
 When I first got in the program, I
 was so goddamned scared, I'd go
 weeks without leaving the house. And
 that can fuck with you not being
 around nobody like that. But that's
 when I realized: The very least, I
 could step out for a fucking burger
 and a shake. Because *that's* how you
 survive: you gotta have a **routine**. I
 wake up. Clean my hole. Shave. I
 slick my fucking hair back. Even put
 on a crisp little suit like this --

He tugs at his tie, dusts some crumbs from his lapel. Grins.

JIMMY MIKE (CONT'D)
 -- then I come here.

Through his window: a mom-and-pop BURGER STAND. **THE MILKY GRIDDLE**.

JIMMY MIKE (CONT'D)

They all know me in there. Not my *name* or nothin', but they hit me with the *hello; good morning; lookin' nice* today. It's the closest goddamned thing I even get to respect anymore.

(chews, beat, chews)

And then you, *just now*, came and stole that from me. ***Finding me like this.***

And as Jimmy Mike chews, considers his rambling, we head outside --

EXT. THE MILKY GRIDDLE - CONTINUOUS - DAY

-- where it's hot. Damp. Musty as Mars. And a **CHYRON:**

SOMEWHERE IN ARKANSAS, PROBABLY. 12:43p. THE NEXT DAY.

As we reveal: **ANOTHER CAR** parked next to Jimmy Mike's. Facing the opposite direction. And in its driver's seat: **ANNA**. 30s.

ANNA

Well, I'm-- I'm sorry. It wasn't my intention to ruin anything for you--

JIMMY MIKE

--see, no one's supposed to know where I am. Or *who* I am. But now? You leave here, then there's no knowin' who you go and tell I come to this place. Which means now I gotta find a new one. A new *routine*.

Jimmy Mike chews a beat. Flustered, but keeping neutral.

JIMMY MIKE (CONT'D)

How'd you do it then? Find me.

ANNA

I -- guess if I could say *one* thing about any journalistic flair I may or may not have, it's that I know how to stay resourceful.

JIMMY MIKE

Resourceful. Yeah. Th'hell'dya want?

ANNA

I wanna tell your *story*.

JIMMY MIKE

My story's that I'm a rat--

ANNA

--and the Witness Protection angle
only makes it that much more alluring--

JIMMY MIKE

--and ain't nobody tryin' to hear no
mob stories anymore, sweetheart. All
played out, every last one of 'em.

Anna pauses, Jimmy Mike not wrong, but that's not the point.

ANNA

Mr. Michael --

JIMMY MIKE (CONT'D)

-- **Jimmy Mike.**

A beat. Anna wrangling the hell out of her patience here.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Okay. *Jimmy Mike*. Are you aware
that Sebastian King just got an
early release from prison?

JIMMY MIKE

Heard about it, sure.

ANNA

And you were his, uh, "Go-To"? *Head
Painter*, I believe they called you?

Jimmy Mike flicks a pickle out his window. Next question.

ANNA (CONT'D)

'cause, see, I think -- timing
like this? Could be potential for
a rather *lucrative* venture. Are
you familiar with *podcasts* at all?

JIMMY MIKE

Like the computer radio, right?

ANNA

That's right. And there's an entire
market for stories like *yours*. We keep
it strictly audio, no one has to know
where we were when we recorded anything.

JIMMY MIKE

That-- *life I had*. With the Kings.
I've been living everyday knowin' I
can't never go back to it. And that
does shit to my chest, you know? Shit
I don't really know how to explain.

ANNA

Then let me help you find the words--

JIMMY MIKE
 --tryin' to **say**: I don't wanna
 fuckin' talk about it neither.

A beat, before Jimmy Mike balls up his burger wrapper, tosses his lit cigarette into his to-go bag -- and throws it all out his window. He starts his car, puts it in drive, holds a beat.

JIMMY MIKE (CONT'D)
 Don't, uh. Don't let me catch you
 followin' me or nothin', alright?

And with that, Jimmy Mike drives the hell off, leaving Anna behind.

EXT. THE HOME OF JIMMY MIKE - LATER - DAY

A stodgy bungalow nestled in the middle of an unkempt lot, a busted chain link fence jutting out of each side.

Jimmy Mike's Camry pulls in. He steps out with a slight stumble, plastic liquor store bag in hand as he fumbles with his keys.

INT. THE HOME OF JIMMY MIKE - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

Nicotine stains stretch down the walls. Shag carpet long past any expiration date. As Jimmy Mike enters, a few steps, and stops.

His senses dulled, *but something's off*. So. He moves to the fridge, shoves in a bottle of \$4 wine, **AND PULLS A .380 FROM HIS BELT.**

DEVLIN (O.S.)
 Dad.

Jimmy Mike dodders into a spin, impaired. Finds Devlin at the end of a hallway. Dull senses indeed, but Jimmy Mike wasn't wrong.

JIMMY MIKE
 Th'fuc-- **Dev?**

And off Jimmy Mike, clocking his son's despair, we GO CLOSE:

INT. JIMMY MIKE'S LIVING ROOM - LATER - DAY

Jimmy Mike at his kitchen table. Stunned. Eyes squinting as his dogged fucking brain tries to process the attack on the Kings.

JIMMY MIKE
 What the *shit* is Sunrise Wholesome?

DEVLIN
 Holdings.

JIMMY MIKE (CONT'D)
 What--

DEVLIN (CONT'D)
--Sunrise *Holdings*. Some company Liam
and Uncle Bart got mixed up with.
Something about-- international stuff.

JIMMY MIKE
And your sister?

Devlin shifts. The thought of a missing Poppy nauseating.

JIMMY MIKE (CONT'D)
What, you just stopped fucking *looking*?

Devlin looks at his father. Three sheets and judgmental as
all hell. And yet still, the guilt fucking **weighs** on him.

As Jimmy Mike shakes his head, lights a cigarette. *Damn shame.*

JIMMY MIKE (CONT'D)
Least your cousin didn't *suffer*.

Disheartened with his father's ambivalence, Devlin watches him
stand, move to a BAR, fill two LARGE GLASSES with SCOTCH.

JIMMY MIKE (CONT'D)
Your mom know?

DEVLIN
Told her last night.

Jimmy Mike sets one of the jumbo scotches before Devlin, sits
again, taking a long drink as he looks his son over a beat.

JIMMY MIKE
You carryin'?

Beat.

DEVLIN
Yeah, I-- got a carry-9 in my
waist. Blade on my ankle.

He pulls up a PANT LEG, finds **A SHEATHED KNIFE**. Jimmy Mike scoffs.

JIMMY MIKE
Th'hell you supposed to do with
that? Know how *strong* you gotta
be to win a **knife** fight?

DEVLIN
Won fights before.

JIMMY MIKE

Yeah, you've won *five* fights. *Lost* five, too. All against amateurs.

Devlin, blinking because preoccupied with murdered family members.

JIMMY MIKE (CONT'D)

Still go to the gym?

Devlin's eyes flicker, his distracted father hard to navigate.

DEVLIN

Dad-- you get what's happenin' here?

Jimmy Mike blinks a beat. Gets it, sure, but he's calloused.

JIMMY MIKE

You know... I got asked today-- to talk about my story. This fuckin' public radio bitch, she got in my head. Got me thinkin' back how I gave my *all* to the Kings. Hell, only reason I even *married* your mother was for *him*. For Sebastian. Let you kids take his last goddamned name, for *him*. Only thing I was ever any good at.

Devlin looking at his father, this rambling man in a festering swamp of regrets. And, curiosity getting the better of him:

DEVLIN

Why do it then? Why go to the Feds?

JIMMY MIKE

'cause I knew the *life*. And she mighta tried to fucking *kill him*, but Sebastian never woulda clipped his own daughter. But *me?* Shit. I'da been sent straight to the goddamned grinders.

(smokes, drinks, shrugs)

So I got ahead of it.

And the two of them sit with that a beat. Jimmy Mike none too convincing of any certitude. Before, as if snapping out of it:

JIMMY MIKE (CONT'D)

You bring any'a your fuckin' snow?

Devlin. Traumatized, disheartened, yes. But, snow? Well. Fuck it.

EXT. MILDRED'S BRONCO - MEANWHILE - DAY

Mildred. Pulling up, parking, staring out at something through the windshield a few beats. Before she takes a reluctant breath --

-- and looks to a GROCERY BAG next to her. Pulls an AIRPLANE SHOOTER OF WHISKEY. Downs it. Then. A TIN OF **CHEWING TOBACCO** --

-- its label reading *OLD LICORICE*, something nostalgic to Mildred. She pries it open, packs a dip, and climbs out --

EXT. THE LUCKY TRIDENTS MOTORCYCLE EST. - CONTINUOUS - DAY

-- to reveal a nondescript VFW HALL. Fading light box of a sign reading: **THE LUCKY TRIDENTS' MOTORCYCLE ESTABLISHMENT** --

-- and as we FOLLOW MILDRED, yet another **CHYRON** to confirm:

THE MOTHERFUCKING LUCKY TRIDENTS MOTORCYCLE ESTABLISHMENT.

INT. THE LUCKY TRIDENTS MOTORCYCLE EST. - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

She steps in, stops. This handful of **DAY-DRINKING BIKERS** looking at her. Some younger. Most older. A bundle of exhausted lives.

And Mildred -- **knowing damn well she's out of line here.**

A LARGE BIKER. **BEXTER**, 60s, swilling a beer at the bar. The only person in this place refusing to look at Mildred.

MILDRED

Hey there, Bexter.

(no response)

I'm looking for some help--

BEXTER

--no help for a King here.

MILDRED

No, I know, but-- was wondering.

Maybe I could talk to **Huey**.

BEXTER

No Huey here either.

Mildred pauses. Surprised by that one. But also *frustrated*.

MILDRED

Huey'd never leave this place.

Where is he?

And now Bexter finally looks at her.

BEXTER

That sounds like you want *information*.
(takes a long drink)
Which means it's either a bottle
of beer and you're on your way--

And Bexter, waiting on her here. As Mildred nods a beat, **knows:**

MILDRED

--or a glass of milk. And a toll I pay.

And whatever the **fuck** that's supposed to mean, Mildred clearly understands. So, she sets her duffel on a stool, unzips it --

-- as Bexter looks to a **BARTENDING BIKER** -- and a glass of **MILK** slides before Mildred. She slings her **MALLET** into her waistband, a set of **BRASS KNUCKLES** in each hand -- and looks to the milk a beat.

MILDRED (CONT'D)

Who's gonna start?

BEXTER

Dolt. You go.

A biker named **DOLT** steps forward. And Mildred starts to *CHUG THIS MILK*. Every last drop, slams the glass down -- and *DARTS TO DOLT* --

-- Dolt swings, *MISSES*, as Mildred catches him with a *RIGHT HOOK*, A *JAB* to his chest -- and Dolt swings again -- but Mildred with her *MALLET* to his *KNEE*. Dolt goes down, prompting:

BEXTER (CONT'D)

Penny.

A biker named **PENNY**. Falling right in line. But this one *immediately* catches Mildred with A *SQUARE SOCK TO THE NOSE* --

-- Mildred stumbling back a beat. Gasping. Eyes welling.

BEXTER (CONT'D)

Heard you been up north.

And in the middle of this... **Bexter wants to catch up.**

MILDRED

The U.P.

BEXTER

Pretty up there.

MILDRED

Beyond belief.

And Penny comes back in, swings, Mildred dodges, swings back, misses. This little dance of theirs. Before Mildred --

-- finally **catches** Penny with a left to her LIVER. Sends her fumbling backwards. And what's becoming clear: is that this is less of a bar brawl -- and much more of a fucking **homecoming**.

BEXTER

Also heard *Daddy King* banished you.

MILDRED

More or less.

BEXTER

Killed your mother beforehand.

MILDRED

Had her killed--

BEXTER (CONT'D)

--by your **husband**.

Mildred mum on that one. A tough component, to be sure.

BEXTER (CONT'D)

TV says he's getting out --

MILDRED (CONT'D)

-- he's already dead.

Bexter quiets. Processes that unexpected tidbit. Before:

BEXTER (CONT'D)

Jerry.

A biker named **JERRY** steps forward. But now? Mildred's on *FIRE*. She dispatches Jerry with ease. Swift. Brutal. Boom.

And now it goes head-spinningly fast. A borderline **MONTAGE**, Mildred **BATTLING THE ENTIRE ROOM**, when she **STOPS**, looks to Bexter, huffing:

MILDRED

Same people that killed him;
killed my *nephew*; tried to kill
me; and are gonna kill my
children. Unless I stop them.

Bexter, clearly affected by her confession, **RISES**. The boss battle.

BEXTER

Still holding that milk, Mildie?

MILDRED

Never lettin' it go, Bex.

And he **SWINGS** on Mildred. The start of an **EPIC BRAWL**, these two so familiar with each other's instincts. Mildred dodging this absolute **BEAST** of a Biker -- and Bexter, demonstrating the **LEADER** he is --

-- a back and forth, before -- he finally CRACKS Mildred in her side. She stumbles. And, sure as shit: **SHE PUKES MILK.**

Dropping to a knee. Catching her breath. She's lost this game, or, rather -- it's reached its conclusion.

Which is why SHE **LAUGHS**. This catharsis. Something she's *missed*.

When: They **ALL** LAUGH. Thrilled with the return of their *sister*.

These folks may not be her family, **but it's the truest roots Mildred may possibly have.** So, we -- CUT TO:

INT. THE LUCKY TRIDENTS MOTORCYCLE ESTABLISHMENT - LATER - DAY

Everyone now sits drinking, basking in this post-fight euphoria of their bizarre-o ritual. Mildred on the floor, Bexter beside her.

MILDRED
Deserters always pay a toll.

Bexter nods. Drinks. *That's correct.*

MILDRED (CONT'D)
That what I did though? Desert you?

BEXTER
Deserted *him*.

A SPEAKER (PRE-LAP)
*You see, sometimes? A fight? It ain't always necessarily **violent**.*

INT. PICKAWAY COUNTY YOUTH CENTER - LATER - DAY

CLOSE: **HUEY HOWE**. 55. Short sleeved buttoned right on up to his neck. An enlightened gleam in his eye. The man *radiating* optimism.

And, more telling: **JAGGED TATTOOS OF TRIDENTS** snake up his neck, sprouting from his collar, wrapping up both sides.

HUEY
That's the fight of *perseverance*. When you all came to *forks* in your roads, each of you made the right choices. That's the *real* hard work. Knowing when, and *how*, to keep on the right track.

Come out to reveal: a group of **YOUTHS**. All backgrounds. All troubled. Huey on a mission here. When he stops. Because: NOISE.

Faint at first. But louder. **Louder**. Fucking MOTORCYCLES --

EXT. PICKAWAY COUNTY YOUTH CENTER - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

-- Huey steps out front, the youths crowding in the doorway behind him, trying to get a glimpse of what's going on --

-- as here, **THE ENTIRETY OF THE LUCKY TRIDENTS** are pulling up.

EXT./INT. MILDRED'S BRONCO - LATER - DAY

Mildred in the passenger seat, watching Bexter and Huey chat. A few murmurs, before he and Bexter shake hands --

-- and Bexter returns, opens her door, pauses a beat before:

BEXTER

Don't think I don't remember. You
leavin' us -- mighta *saved* this
club. Woulda been a war I ain't
sure we coulda won.

(sniffs, beat, spits)

Your name's still *King* though. Your
father still took something from us.
All our business. *East of the 99*.
Can't pursue it without risking a
dumbass war, **but**. You can ever make
things right? Maybe we could lend a
hand. 'til then though, Mildie..?

And Mildred nods. Understands. So, Bexter pats her shoulder.

BEXTER (CONT'D)

Don't die, okay?

And with that, he hops on the back of a motorcycle, the gang taking off. As Mildred gets out. Stiff, sore, approaches Huey --

-- and these two. Eyes flickering as they take each other in. Neither knowing how to articulate this moment. Which is why:

HUEY

Bex make you do The Milk Run?

MILDRED

Yeah.

HUEY

You yack?

MILDRED

Oh yeah.

Huey watching Mildred as she gently assesses her ribcage.

HUEY
What's wrong then, Mildie?

And off Mildred, still clutching her side:

EXT. PICKAWAY COUNTY YOUTH CENTER - OUT BACK - LATER - DUSK

The Youths play basketball. Having fun. Getting it out. As Mildred sits beside Huey at a picnic table, *grimly* watching along --

HUEY
Where'd he go?

MILDRED
Said he was going to his father's.

HUEY
And *Poppy*?

A heavy pause here. The Case of A Missing Poppy Walsh.

MILDRED
I don't know.

And even heavier. As Huey tries to shake it off, looks to a COOLER at his feet. Pries it open. Cans of SODA.

HUEY
Want a soda?

Mildred pauses, looks to him -- before she smiles. Nods. *Sure*. He hands her a soda. They both crack them open. Sip a few beats.

HUEY (CONT'D)
Did a bit of a stint inside awhile back. Barred from the club, all affiliation, part of my parole. Got set up with a maintenance job here, and-- sorta, fell in talking to the kids. Counselors encourage it. Tell me I've got a way with 'em, and I figure-- shit, maybe it's my way of giving back a bit.
(beat)
It ain't home though. But. Hell, not really sure the club ever could be home again either. Days are gone.

Mildred considers that. Clocking a longing in Huey's frame.

MILDRED

Could come up north. We always
talked about living off the
land. Get some hunting in.

HUEY

Wish I'd known. Woulda made the
trip awhile ago.

And Huey looks Mildred over a beat. Forces a smile. *Can't
believe she's fucking here.*

HUEY (CONT'D)

Still using your .308?

MILDRED

Switched to a bow.

HUEY

Hmph. You and me *learned* on rifles.

MILDRED

Yeah, well. You come up north, I
can teach you a little something.
There's magic in a bow. *Intimacy.*

She sips. Watching those Youths. Whole lives ahead of them.

HUEY

I saw her, you know. *Poppy.*
About a year ago.

And she looks to him, this little confession disarming.

MILDRED

You check in on her?

HUEY

Time to time. Keep my distance,
but. She looks good. *Great.*

And the notion of that. A protector in her stead. Even when she
didn't realize it. It's complicated-- but it warms Mildred a beat.

MILDRED

Never should've let you go, Huey.

(beat)

Not sure why I didn't reached out,
just. Felt -- *locked* in up there.
Paralyzed. Terrified that if I took
a step even a fucking *mile* south,
they'd get hurt. The kids.

(beat)

(MORE)

MILDRED (CONT'D)

I don't know what I'm up against here,
but it seems big. And if I don't figure
out who these people are--

Mildred slows. Resentment stirring in her eyes. *Betrayal.*

MILDRED (CONT'D)

--they made me **swear**: if I took
myself out of their *lives*, never told
anyone the reason why, *not even*
them... then they could live. And I
can't even-- *fathom* how I did it,
but. Here I am. Failing them. *Again* --
(beat)
-- without ever getting a chance to
do right by 'em in the first place.
(beat)
So, I gotta go hunting. I *gotta*, and--
this one I can't do alone.

Huey, considering all of that. Before he sighs. *Giving in.*

HUEY

Ain't been on a hunt in a long time.

Mildred rotates her shoulder, neck. A snap, a crack, a wince.

MILDRED

Eh. Like riding a bike, really.

He smiles small at her. Even with the weight of what she's asking.

HUEY

When?

MILDRED

Sooner they realize I'm alive,
more ahead of things they can get.
Was thinking we'd leave *tonight*.

And off Mildred, considering this homecoming on the horizon --

INT. THE HOME OF JIMMY MIKE - MEANWHILE - NIGHT

-- a small, distorted little MONTAGE. As Jimmy Mike and his son
are getting **fucked** up. Booze. Cocaine. Fuck knows what else --

-- they laugh. Dance. A dark night of such doomed souls. And in
the midst of this madness: **A SCRATCHY OLD JINGLE** SOUNDS UP --

HOGAN KING (PRE-LAP)

*Here at King's Long Cuts, we pride
ourselves on the importance of **family**.*

-- A **TELEVISION COMMERCIAL** fills our frame. 1950s black-and-white. **HOGAN KING**. 40s. The Original Butcher leaning against an enclosure around a herd of CATTLE, SPEAKING TO THE CAMERA --

HOGAN KING (CONT'D)

It's what makes our cuts of beef that
much more special than our competitors'.

-- this commercial so charmingly post-war Americana. Hogan smiling wide, proud, selling the country these slabs of meat --

INT. THE HOME OF JIMMY MIKE - LATER - NIGHT

-- pull back to reveal the commercial is playing on Jimmy Mike's TELEVISION. His place absolutely trashed now --

-- and a strung out Jimmy Mike leans on the edge of his recliner, smoking as he intently watches Hogan King on screen.

JIMMY MIKE

See the old man there? Now, he had
the whole *country* fooled. Didn't
want the public knowing what he
was up to. Not like Sebastian.

Find Devlin. Stressed, coked out eyes staring at the TV from a nearby SOFA. Stealing glances at his spiraling father here.

JIMMY MIKE (CONT'D)

Head Painter for The **Kings**. "Their
go-to man". *Fucking-A right.*

Devlin's PHONE BUZZES. **POPPY CALLING...** holy *shit*. He looks to Jimmy Mike, nattering on in his own fucking world.

JIMMY MIKE (CONT'D)

People don't understand the kinda
demons that are *really* out there...

Jimmy Mike doesn't notice Devlin slip away, snap his phone open.

DEVLIN

Hey. You okay?

And he moves into a HALLWAY, pacing as he speaks.

POPPY (O.S.)

Where are you?

DEVLIN

Dad's.

INT. A NONDESCRIPT BATHROOM - SOMEWHERE - MEANWHILE - NIGHT

Behind Poppy, hunched over a sink. Nerves making her sick.

POPPY

Dad's? No one knows where Dad *is*--

DEVLIN (O.S.)

--*I do. Known awhile now. Come here
sometimes to run away or whatever.
Thought it'd be the safest place.*

Poppy's shoulders lurching, her hand gripping the counter.

DEVLIN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

What about you? Where are you?

POPPY

Is it bad I don't wanna say?

As she looks in the mirror, anxiety rippling in her reflection.

BACK WITH DEVLIN

DEVLIN

Poppy, fuck, if you can't trust me--

POPPY (O.S.)

--*I'm not sure any of us can trust
any of us anymore, Dev. You know?*

He pauses, Poppy having a point. When -- a **SHADOW** in the window, end of the hall. Devlin stops. On edge. Right as --

WITH JIMMY MIKE

-- a **KNOCK** at the door, Jimmy Mike's concentration broken.
When: **ANOTHER KNOCK**. So, he grabs a **PISTOL** from the floor.
Moves to the door, looks through the peephole -- and *pauses*:

JIMMY MIKE

Th' *fuck*--

He cracks the door open, revealing: **ANNA**. The podcast producer.

ANNA

Hi. I-- I know it's late, but. Before
I left town, I just wanted to stop by.
To, one more time-- I really, *truly*
believe in what we could do with this--

JIMMY MIKE

--hey.

Anna stops. Looking at a very **pissed off** Jimmy Mike now --

JIMMY MIKE (CONT'D)

How the *fuck* you know where I live?

-- Anna still smiling... long enough to reveal it's **fake**, as --

WITH DEVLIN

-- pulling his own 9MM, moving for the window --

POPPY (O.S.)

Dev?

WITH JIMMY MIKE

-- as Jimmy Mike realizes: Anna's HANDS. Behind her back...

JIMMY MIKE

***Shit*--**

And Anna whips her hands around, reveals a **SILENCED FUCKING UZI** --

-- right as Jimmy Mike SLAMS THE DOOR SHUT. Just in time. But still -- ***pfft-pfft-pfft-pfft-pfft-pfft-pfft-pfft-pfft-***

-- PUFFY GUNSHOTS SPLINTERING THE DOORFRAME, as Jimmy Mike RUNS --

INTO THE HALLWAY

-- spots Devlin --

JIMMY MIKE (CONT'D)

FUCK AWAY FROM THE WINDOW--

-- but it's too late: ***BWWOOOOMMMM*** --

-- the WINDOW SHATTERS, **SPRAYING** Devlin with shards of glass --

POPPY (O.S.)

DEVLIN? **DEVLIN?**

-- Devlin to the floor, HIS PHONE SKIPPING DOWN THE HALL, as he raises his pistol to the window -- ***BLAM-BLAM-BLAM-BLAM*** --

-- and he looks to his father, who's suddenly in his BEDROOM.

JIMMY MIKE

C'MON!

Devlin runs for the bedroom. Right as -- Anna kicks in the FRONT DOOR. A MASKED ASSASSIN kicks in the BACK. And in flood THREE ASSASSINS FOR EACH ENTRYWAY -- **ANNA AND HER TEAM OF SIX KILLERS.**

BEDROOM

Jimmy Mike pulls up some carpet, reveals a LATCH. **A FLOOR VAULT.** Flings it open to reveal: **CASH. GUNS. SMOKE BOMBS.**

JIMMY MIKE (CONT'D)
Listen to me, you're gonna head
out front, pince 'em nice n' neat
and then we rendezvous in **back**,
you understand? Know you don't
know shit about these, but--

-- as he hands Devlin an **AR PISTOL.** Racks his own **SUPPRESSED AK.**

JIMMY MIKE (CONT'D)
--think of it like a fight. Wait for
your openings, then go in hard, yeah?

Devlin forces a nod, **in** it now, as Jimmy Mike spots: A **SHADOW.** So. He ROLLS OUT A SMOKE BOMB. **FWOOOFFFF** -- before Jimmy Mike moves, AK raised -- **pfift-pfift-pfift-pfift** -- taking an ASSAILANT down.

Devlin watching this. As we note something new about Jimmy Mike: A loser idiot asshole? Absolutely. A lethal fucking *killer*?

Abso-**fucking**-lutely -- all as Devlin looks to the bedroom window, makes for it -- **BLAM-BLAM**, he shoots out the glass --

-- and frantically climbs OUTSIDE --

EXT. THE SIDE OF JIMMY MIKE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

-- when an ASSASSIN is **ON** him, Devlin blocking the guy's weapon -- which is how we get to see -- **Devlin can box** --

-- but then this assassin pulls a KNIFE, Devlin suddenly in a hand-to-hand for his life, before this Assassin has Devlin on the ground, bringing that knife down close to Devlin's throat --

-- the tip. About to plunge, before -- **pfift-pfift** -- the Assassin's **head** explodes, slumping his ass off to the side.

Jimmy Mike. Out front with his suppressed AK. Looking at his son.

JIMMY MIKE
Where the *fuck's* your car?

And as Devlin scrambles to his feet --

EXT. JIMMY MIKE'S BACK YARD - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

-- he follows Jimmy Mike out back. Neighbors audibly stirring at the commotion. Lights turning on, Lookie Loos coming out, as --

-- Jimmy Mike's BACK DOOR BURSTS OPEN, a WOUNDED ANNA -- but Jimmy Mike wastes no time, without even looking at her: *pfft-pfft* --

-- and Anna's dead. Jimmy Mike barely flinching over it. It's whatever. As they hop into another YARD. As a BACK DOOR opens, the SILHOUETTE of **BOB THE NEIGHBOR** against a porch light --

BOB THE NEIGHBOR
James? Everything alright--

JIMMY MIKE
*--shut the fuck up, Bob, go lay
down with your ugly fucking wife.*

POLICE SIRENS in the distance now. As they shuffle to Devlin's CAR, climb in -- and peel the fuck out of here.

And fuck it. A NEEDLE DROP. Bobby Darin's "*THINGS*", as:

INT. KING'S LONG HEROES - THE NEXT DAY - DAY

Meats. Bread. An elaborate spread of toppings here in this **SANDWICH SHOP**. A STRING OF EMPLOYEES hustling to fill orders. As efficient as it fucking gets. As we move along to find: **VICK**.

Uncharacteristically jovial as he mans the VINTAGE REGISTER, greeting CUSTOMERS, this **LONG LINE OF TOURISTS, FOODIES**. Shit-eating smile from ear-to-fucking-ear, full SHOWMAN mode.

EXT. KING'S LONG HEROES - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Reveal we're down the street from King's Long Cuts, this place reminiscent of Midge's Meats. As we KEEP PULLING BACK TO: Mildred and Huey in her Bronco, taking in the long line of customers.

MILDRED
Kinda sandwich you want?

HUEY
You don't want me in with you?

MILDRED
No. Too many people.

HUEY
Just nothing with veggies.

She looks to him sternly.

MILDRED
How fucking *old* are you now?

HUEY
I eat *plenty* of 'em, Mildie, I just
don't like 'em *on* things. Simple
Meat Lovers' all the way, y'know.

She smiles as she takes him in a beat, before she grabs her
DUFFEL, gets out -- and makes her way towards the shop.

INT. KING'S LONG HEROES - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

And she steps in. Takes a moment to observe Vick helping out on
the sandwich line, maintaining his over-the-top enthusiasm --
-- until he slows. Spotting Mildred. Locking eyes. Going pale.

INT. KING'S LONG HEROES - THE KITCHEN - LATER - DAY

Here stands Vick, arms folded, eyeing Mildred across from him.

VICK
Guess I shoulda figured. Ivan not
checking in by now.

And Mildred just stares at him a beat. Before digging into her
duffel bag, pulls out a **HARD DRIVE**, sets it on the counter.

MILDRED
Plenty of copies, of course.

VICK
What, that supposed to be leverage or
something? Midge's Meats is *one* account.

MILDRED
Leverage against *you*. So many
transactions in your name, Feds
could open up a paper trail with
that drive alone--

VICK
--hey. You think a bag of roughed
up meat like this really gives a
shit about prison this point--

MILDRED
--what about your *kids*?

And Vick halts. Dum-dum hadn't considered that one.

MILDRED (CONT'D)

You tied their names to trusts,
mutual funds. Makes them accomplices.
You wouldn't care about *that*? We're
only as happy as our most unhappy
child, Vick. Ain't that right?

And *that* is a bridge too far for Vick. Which is why he gets closer to Mildred, regards this fucking insolence of hers.

VICK

You know. You shoulda *stayed* with
the Tridents back then. Shoulda
died with 'em. Better than you
comin' back an embarrassment to
this family, with the tattoos, the
big biker bullshit attitude. Just a
shameful fucking *costume* you wore.

And he gets closer. Mildred unwavering. Vick cocks his head, as if trying to see something *behind* her eyes, when -- in a **FLASH**:

HE SNATCHES MILDRED BY HER THROAT, **CHOKING** HER. HOWEVER --

-- she **IMMEDIATELY JAMS HER THUMB IN HIS EYE**, stunningly quick with it. As Vick recoils, and Mildred **PUNCHES HIM IN HIS SIDE** --

-- but he lurches for only a moment, before this aging hitter of a mobster **GRABS MILDRED, TOSSES HER OVER THE TABLE** --

THE SHOWROOM - CONTINUOUS

-- the TOURISTS responding to the massive **CLUNG** from within the kitchen. Uncertain what it was. Carry on anyway because tourists.

BACK WITH MILDRED AND VICK

As Vick comes around the table, Mildred already on her feet.

VICK

That gutter possum fighting ain't
gonna get you shit with me, Mildred--

--and Vick is, of course, very wrong. As quickly, *quietly*, **Mildred beats the shit out of Vick**. A matter of only a **few** moves, until--

-- she slams his head onto a table, a **BUTCHER KNIFE** to his throat.

VICK (CONT'D)

Alright, alright. *Christ*.

She lets him go. He straightens his frame as if fixing a tie, propping himself up. Everything fucking hurts.

MILDRED

Why's all this happening?

She watches him light a cigarette, the air of a man deep in a Faustian bargain. Vick rubbing his temples, staring at the floor.

VICK

Company called Sunrise Holdings. They pitch their work as *international financial solutions* or some shit, but it's just fucking money laundering. They've gotten bigger, bolder; started implementing more and more *forced acquisitions* of their... *dirtier* clients. *Us* being one of them.

(beat)

Thing is, Sebastian, he, uh... made a deal with the Feds. Early release in exchange for him coming back, exposing Sunrise from the inside.

Mildred pauses. Her father an informant a surprise to even her.

MILDRED

Why not just him? Why everyone else?

VICK

Come on. You don't know these people, but you know how they work. Put the Kings in the past. Clean slate, no risk of retaliation.

MILDRED

How do I *stop* them?

Vick looks her over again, incredulous as he puffs out a chuckle.

VICK

Our -- *account holder*, as he calls himself. Is a guy named Simon Stanley. Anything you're gonna work out's gonna go through him. Best I can do is get you a meeting--

MILDRED

--*tonight*.

Vick. With just the slightest glint of affection for Mildred.

VICK

You know, you were always the smart one. Your Dad maybe didn't realize what he was up against here, but you? You still got a chance to disappear.

MILDRED

This family's been telling me to disappear for my own good almost twenty years now, Vick. Where's that gotten me?

Vick sighs. *Certainly can't argue with that.*

VICK

Tonight then. 9. *Larry's.*

Mildred stops. A beat of recognition. Knows what *Larry's* means.

MILDRED

The Bookshelf?

VICK

Still around and kickin'.

And off Mildred, knowing what's in store for her...

INT. DEVLIN'S CAR - MEANWHILE - DAY

Devlin in the driver's seat, visor flipped down, MIRROR slid open as he picks shards of glass from his face. It's painful --

-- when he looks through the windshield, spots Jimmy Mike leaning against the hood. Smoking. Muttering to himself. **Pissed.**

EXT. A RURAL ROAD SOMEFUCKINGWHERE - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

Devlin gets out. Side of the road. Somewhere in the south. And he takes a breath, frustrated as he looks to his father.

DEVLIN

You didn't think it was weird? Girl coming outta the blue like that?

And Jimmy Mike looks to his son, suddenly the accuser.

JIMMY MIKE

What do ya mean?

DEVLIN

A **podcast**, Dad? Really?

JIMMY MIKE

What, it's *my* fault? You roll up to my house same day as some two-bit fuckin' hit-lady and her friends, and you think it was *me*?

Devlin slowing at that, not versed in how this world works. Realizing... yeah, maybe he somehow **did** lead Anna to Jimmy Mike --

-- as, out of nowhere, Jimmy Mike **SOCKS** Devlin, his son, keeling over, Jimmy Mike following up with a **HOOK** to Devlin's side.

DEVLIN

I didn't see anyone *followin'* me--

JIMMY MIKE

--no, you wouldn't though, *would* ya?
Pussy little runt of this family
wouldn't know *how* to look for *nothin'*.

Jimmy Mike takes a long beat, when. Suddenly. It's as if something's dawned on him. Prompting him to draw a breath, nod.

JIMMY MIKE (CONT'D)

Fuck. Call your mother.

As Jimmy Mike moves for the driver side. Devlin, skeptical:

DEVLIN

What. Why?

JIMMY MIKE

'cause where the **FUCK** else we gonna go, you palooka motherfucker?!

Devlin concedes, pats his pocket for his phone, *realizes*:

DEVLIN

Shit. My phone. It's at the house.

Jimmy Mike, yet another disappointment, as he gets in the car.

JIMMY MIKE

Guess we just gotta go sniff her out ourselves then, huh.

Devlin clocking something off about Jimmy Mike. This growing distrust in his father, hesitating as he joins him in the car.

INT. MILDRED'S BRONCO - MEANWHILE - DAY

Through the windshield, find Mildred exiting KING'S LONG HEROES, approaching with a **TO-GO BAG**. She gets in, Huey looks to her --

MILDRED
You remember Larry's Bookshelf?

-- which is when she reaches into the bag, hands Huey a WRAPPED SANDWICH. Proceeds to unwrap another herself, starts to eat.

HUEY
Remember *hearing* of it.

MILDRED
It's where they wanna meet.

They both chew a few beats, these sandwiches pretty damn good.

HUEY
That mean a trap?

MILDRED
Absolutely means a trap.

And off Mildred, another stop in her Homecoming tour, we GO TO:

EXT. LARRY'S BOOKSHELF - MEANWHILE - DAY

A busted watering hole. Looks closed. As behind it, an **ABANDONED FACTORY**, looming large. Imposing. Ghostly.

MILDRED (V.O.)
*Out behind the old **Harper Plant**.*

INT. LARRY'S BOOKSHELF - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Dust seemingly collects on the bar, the stools, the vinyl booths. Some good old **REGULARS** still placed about sporadically.

MILDRED (V.O.)
Ideal little spot for shenanigans.

"SHIMMY" THE BARTENDER. 173 years old, probably. Washing tiny beer glasses, keeping this tomb well organized, preserved --

EXT. AN ABANDONED STRIP MALL SOMEWHERE - LATER - DAY

-- somewhere else. Weeds sprouting from concrete. Boarded up store fronts, shadows of their long-gone signs hovering above -- as Mildred and Huey lean against the Bronco, the only vehicle here.

MILDRED
For hosting the kinda meetings people don't typically leave.

HUEY
What's the play then?

MILDRED
Make sure we can leave.

And. In **QUICK** succession, she opens the back: The DUFFEL BAGS, PELICANS. SNAP THEM OPEN. Guns. Grenades. Blades. Party Supplies.

Mildred and Huey **strapping up**. TACTICAL VESTS under jackets. Load. Rack. Load. Slide. Load. Load. Bullets. Blades. Bullets. Party.

EXT. LARRY'S BOOKSHELF - LATER - NIGHT

The Bronco. Mildred and Huey staring out at Larry's Bookshelf, tense, uncertain. This could get rough. So, to break the tension:

MILDRED
Brought something for us.

Mildred pulls out the TIN of OLD LICORICE CHEWING TOBACCO.

MILDRED (CONT'D)
Still bad luck to fight without it?

HUEY
Ha. Been chewin' the gum these
days. Wanna avoid the mouth cancer.

He pulls a sticky string of gum from his teeth, slurps it back in.

MILDRED
Could *choke* on gum in a fight.

HUEY
Not if I tuck it up in the, like.
Tuck it up in my upper lip here?

MILDRED
But then if it gets knocked out?
Goes rolling around in your throat?

HUEY
But what if the *dip* gets knocked out?

MILDRED
Never did before.

HUEY
That's what I'm *saying*. It'll be
the same thing with the gum.

MILDRED
But the dip's *stickier*.

HUEY
Not stickier than *gum*, Mildie.

MILDRED
Gum gets *slippery* when wet, Huey.
Dip lodges right on in there. *Snug*.

Why's this cute? Well, because here, they're fucking *nervous*.
And, in the past, they weren't ever nervous before a fight...

So. Huey thinks on it a beat. Gets a few more chews in. Before
he pulls his gum out, wads it up, tosses it out his window --

-- and they both pinch massive DIPS, stuffing them in their
gums. And they sit. Adjust a few beats, a few *breaths*, before:

HUEY
Like riding a bike.

Beat. Dip. Beat. Breath. Shitty shitty hell, this is gonna suck.

MILDRED
Just like riding a bike.

And with that, **Mildred** gets out, straightens her denim jacket,
before she strides towards the bar -- and **HUEY DRIVES OFF** --

-- as we FOLLOW MILDRED. To the bar's door. Where she pauses. A
slight moment of uncertainty, what the fuck is she walking into --

INT. LARRY'S BOOKSHELF - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

-- and fuck it, she opens the door, enters. And, surprisingly,
it's peaceful. Pleasant. Some Dean Martin shit playing somewhere.

As Vick rises from a booth. And seated opposite him is SIMON
STANLEY. Turning to take in Mildred's entrance, revealing a
BANDAGE WRAPPING HIS JAW from when Sebastian shot it the fuck out.

Right as -- MURPHY approaches. Another old friend of Mildred's.

MILDRED
Long time, Murph.

MURPHY
Mildred. *Real* long time.

She opens her jacket, revealing her **.357**. They exchange a
look. Before he takes it. Both understanding the rules here.

And she steps to Vick, as Simon stands to greet her, a surprising air of humility as he simply offers his hand --

SIMON
Mildred. *Simon Stanley.*

-- his voice still slushy through his mouth wound(s). And Mildred accepts his gesture. Dead in his eyes as she shakes his hand.

SIMON (CONT'D)
*Unfortunate circumstances, I know.
But I'm hopeful we can still work
this out. Have a seat?*

But Mildred looks to Murphy, who's behind Simon; and another HEAVY positioned behind her. A few **HEAVIES** scattered about the place. Which... **fuck** that. So, she looks to the bar, spots SHIMMY.

MILDRED
Shimmy. Mind I take over for you?

And before Shimmy can even answer, she moves to the bar, *behind* it--

-- where now **no one** is behind her. And Mildred begins to pour herself a DRAFT, watching the frothy stream, ignoring the room.

Which confuses everyone. *Except* Simon, realizing:

SIMON
Right. That's smart, Mildred. But
no one's trying to icepick you
here tonight, alright?

She doesn't respond. Simon gets it. So, he nods, moves to a barstool, **A FOLDER** in hand as he takes a seat, looks to her.

SIMON (CONT'D)
I'm gonna make this quick.

From the folder, DOCUMENTS. Simon laying them out in three orderly piles. Some photos. Mostly transcripts, court orders --

SIMON (CONT'D)
Vick told you. Your father made a
deal with the Feds, right?

-- Mildred sips her beer, casually reviews some of Simon's presentation. CCTV stills of Sebastian meeting with **FBI AGENTS**.

SIMON (CONT'D)
See, Sunrise Holdings, it's in our
business model to be able to acquire
verifiable intel. Big reason why your
nephew was so smart to fold us in--

MILDRED
--heard he didn't have a choice.

As Mildred wipes away some froth, Simon keeping patient.

SIMON
It's not *just* that he didn't have a choice. It's that he was smart enough to recognize the **benefits**--

MILDRED
--and that **you** were the one who pulled the trigger.

SIMON
An overcorrection. Regrettably.
(beat)
But. Your family's business has changed. The kinda money we're talking, it makes my employers a little more **risk averse** than maybe the "*culture*" of King's Long Cuts has gotten used to over the years.
(beat)
And that's why we have an offer for you. A gesture of good faith.

He slides her a **CONTRACT**.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Midge's Meats. We'll reduce our position. Essentially make the store yours. And in exchange: you never cross into Pennsylvania, or anywhere on the East Coast, ever again. Live your quiet life up there. All your friends. All that peace. Free of any and all influence.

MILDRED
And Poppy? Devlin?

Simon sucks his teeth. This part's a bummer.

SIMON
Yeah, that's where it's gonna get tough. See, to my employers? Being there that night, makes your kids witnesses. **Loose ends**. It's unfortunate, truly.

Mildred takes a drink, nostrils flaring. An unserious offer. As she surveys the room. These aging mobsters. *Butchers...*

SIMON (CONT'D)

But. Why fight so hard for the people you turned your back on--

MILDRED

--turned my back on them to keep them safe.

SIMON

Maybe. Sure. Even worked for awhile. But now what about your *other* family, Mildred?

-- when Simon lays out a few more PHOTOS. And these: LONG-LENSED "SURVEILLANCE" **PHOTOS OF NATALIE, JACKSON, OTHERS.**

SIMON (CONT'D)

Natalie? Like a daughter to you these days, isn't she? Or her idiot brother--

MILDRED

--not an idiot.

SIMON

Ah. I'm an insensitive man, what can I say. *The point is.* Maybe the wise thing here -- is to make a *choice*.

And Mildred, unable to look at Simon, lost in the photos. This subtle threat not so fucking subtle. So. She takes a drink.

MILDRED

Or maybe I don't have to choose.

Simon stops, shifts. Mildred giving him a run for his money.

SIMON

Ah-ha. **Ha.** Jesus, yeah, I've heard so much about you. The disgraced mob princess. Real street fighter shit; fucking-- *deadly*. Which is why I give you so much credit, because *most...* **killers** like you? They lay their eyes on the guy trying to kill their *family*, don't matter who's around, it's guns a'blazin' out the gate.

(beat)

But that's because people can't **think** when they're emotional, can they, Mildred? They can't act *rationally*. 'cause otherwise:

Simon mimes a GUN TO HIS HEAD, pulls its "thumb trigger".

SIMON (CONT'D)

Bang. Am I right? Take Vick over there --

And Simon looks over at Vick. Bruised up from earlier.

SIMON (CONT'D)

-- you coulda cued the music when I said to him, that if all they say about Mildred King is *true*? Then maybe I should be the one sending some of *my* guys up there to deal with her, you know?

MILDRED

You fancy yourself a hunter, Simon?
You know what it is to hunt?

Simon barely shrugs. Doesn't catch on to what she's getting at.

MILDRED (CONT'D)

Guessing not. Anyone that has to send-- *some guys*... That's no hunter. Which makes me wonder: why the hell is it those who've got no idea how to *work* for their way of life -- hunt for their *food* --
(beat)
-- they always end up the most corrupt.
Just the *greediest* motherfuckers.

Simon smiles wryly. Admires Mildred's brazen defiance here.

SIMON

My point is. *Vick*. Insisted he take care of it. And why? Said it was **personal**. Which, of course, means--

MILDRED

--emotional. Yeah.

SIMON

Your business is your children, that's fine, Mildred, but *mine*? Is *imploing* you to take this deal. 'cause it's about to expire in --
("TSKS")
-- hm, call it **sixty seconds**.

And a HEAVY appears at the end of the bar. Blocking Mildred in. She looks to spot an **AUTO-LOADING SHOTGUN** at his side.

SIMON (CONT'D)
 (without looking at her)
 We can even extend it to the ex-
 boyfriend out parking the car.

Mildred, processing how ahead of it all Simon is --

INT. MILDRED'S BRONCO - MOVING - MEANWHILE - NIGHT

-- as here's Huey. Driving around to the end of the Harper Plant. He PARKS. Gets out, DUFFEL BAG in hand --

INT. THE HARPER STEEL PLANT - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

-- and Huey strolls down this LONG CORRIDOR of The Harper Plant, rusted pipes, broken down concrete. A slumbering relic of a once-thriving industry -- as Huey MOVES INTO:

EXT. LARRY'S BOOKSHELF - AROUND BACK - MEANWHILE - NIGHT

An ALLEYWAY behind Larry's Bookshelf. The BACK DOOR of this place. And -- right as he arrives -- **SOMEONE WHISTLES O.S.**

Two FIGURES, the other end of the alley. **Make that FOUR.** A beat.

HUEY
 Help you boys with something?

ONE OF THE BOYS
 Start by dropping that bag.

HUEY
 Wouldn't mean much to me if I did.

Which is when all four produce GUNS. Train them on Huey. And he nods a beat. *Alright.* So, he TOSSES THE BAG BEHIND THE DUMPSTER --

-- BUT: Swiftly raises a PISTOL-- **FIRES** -- a little cover so he --

-- can DUCK BEHIND THE DUMPSTER, pull his **AR PISTOL**, edge it around this hunk of rusted green steel, and -- **BRK-BRK-BRK-BRK-**

-- fending these ASSAILANTS off, biding his time, as --

INT. LARRY'S BOOKSHELF - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

-- now everyone TENSES, except Simon. Who's simply disappointed.

SIMON
 Well. There goes that dream, huh?

And before he can move his free hand, MILDRED GRABS IT, firm as she SWINGS A **LIQUOR BOTTLE**, CRACKING Simon across his MOUTH WOUND(s), the bottle's thick glass not breaking -- which is why --

-- Mildred's able to CHUCK IT AT THE HEAVY AT THE END OF THE BAR, A DIRECT HIT ON HIS HEAD -- and allowing Mildred to --

-- CHARGE HIM, a PUNCH, a KNEE -- AND NOW MILDRED HAS HIS **SHOTGUN: BWOOOM**. Right to the Heavy's belly, as she whips to --

-- **BWOOOM-BWOOOM-BWOOOM** -- unleashing on the entire fucking room--

-- and her FOCUS IS ON SIMON. **GUNNING** for him, as he drops down behind A BOOTH -- and Mildred drops down at her end --

-- and now everyone in here is taking cover. A small moment of silence. As we ANGLE ON: Simon. Pulling his own pistol --

-- looking over at VICK. Everyone disappointed. But Simon, at this point, he can't help but fucking LAUGH.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Alright! Mildred! How we gettin' outta this?

WITH MILDRED. A good question. As she looks to the BACK DOOR, Huey's gunfight still audible. And she peeks around the corner --

-- she's got no viable play. Simon's covered by too many guys. So. SHE MAKES A BREAK FOR IT. Darting to the BACK --

-- **the EXIT** being right by the DUMPSTER, which is why, when she opens it: **BLAM-BWOOM-BRK-ALL OF IT** -- Mildred taking fire from the boys outside, she slams the door shut -- but now the BARROOM --

-- SHE LETS OFF SHOTS, pinning them, but she's only got so many --

EXT. LARRY'S BOOKSHELF - CONTINUOUS - OUT BACK - NIGHT

-- as Huey digs into his duffel, pulls a **GRENADE**, the pin, HE WHIPS IT UNDER THE DUMPSTER, **RIGHT TO THESE ASSAILANTS** --

-- and before they can react: **KA-BOOOOOOMMMMM** -- they scatter --

HUEY

MILDRED! CLEAR!

-- Mildred explodes from the door, slamming it shut behind her, allowing Huey to MANEUVER THE DUMPSTER, **BLOCKING THE DOOR** --

-- he tosses Mildred her M1A, she racks it -- and they start to move around to the front, all of this part of the plan. However:

OUT FRONT

A **FLEET OF BLACK SEDANS, SUVS** SPEED INTO VIEW, SLAMMING ONTO THE SCENE. Which is why Mildred and Huey slow. **Outnumbered**, as:

A **HIT SQUAD** of **MOBSTERS**, loading, racking, heading this way --

-- and they. Were **not** part of the plan. As Mildred. Taking in the scene. Trying to accept defeat. But she can't. Except:

HUEY

We can't take 'em, Mildie. We gotta get him another way.

A beat. Before Mildred nods, hurts. But they turn back for **THE HARPER STEEL PLANT**. As Simon's team **spots them** -- WHEN:

INT. THE HARPER STEEL PLANT - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

The Harper Steel Plant. Now a blue-collared battleground.

Mildred and Huey hauling ass down the corridor, and visible outside, alongside them -- **MORE SUVS**, speeding parallel --

-- brakes squealing, as Mildred and Huey stop. Because ahead: **MORE MOBSTERS**. Blocking them off at the end of the corridor --

-- and **BEHIND THEM: THE MOBSTERS FROM OUT FRONT**. Mildred and Huey pinned. Which is when, of course, **EVERYONE UNLEASHES HELL**.

Both hit squads rushing towards them, a pincer move -- as Mildred and Huey take cover where they can, **EVERYONE FIRING** --

-- a CACOPHONY OF GUNSHOTS, dusted concrete and putrid barrel smoke filling the air, Mildred and Huey keeping Simon's Team at bay --

-- but these guys close distance *fast*, devolving into a **MELEE**, Mildred and Huey multi-tasking in such close fucking quarters --

-- Huey with a **BLADE**, slinging his AR to interchange -- and Mildred with her **MALLET, REVOLVER**, interchanging with her M1A, this violent little dance -- *but something comes into focus:*

Mildred and Huey. *Together*. It's not just their skills, it's their **HARMONY**. A vicious chemistry, intuitively functioning as a **TEAM** --

-- Mildred knowing when to cover Huey; Huey knowing when to swing around Mildred, this tango of brutality on full display.

And suddenly. The battle *slows*. Mildred and Huey, beat to fuck, exasperated -- surrounded by a dozen **BODIES**. Which is why it's a good time for them make a break towards:

EXT. THE HARPER PLANT - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

MILDRED'S BRONCO. Ahead. Except: it fucking **EXPLODES** --

-- AS ANOTHER **SUV**. Hauling ass towards them. Pinned again.

When *another* ENGINE. Mildred looks ahead to spot: **A SPRINTER VAN** --

-- RIGHT AS IT FUCKING **CRASHES** INTO THIS ONCOMING SUV, taking them out -- and Mildred slows a beat. Confused --

-- Mildred and Huey both raising their rifles, start to creep towards the Sprinter Van -- right as -- **MURPHY** pops out.

Mildred, hesitant. But the thing is: **Murphy has his hands raised.**

MURPHY
Hang on, hang on.
(slowly, slowly, until:)
I can take you to her.
(beat)
Mildred, I can take you to **Poppy**.

And off Mildred, Huey -- what a strange little reprieve...

EXT. KING'S LONG CUTS - LATER - NIGHT

Murphy's Sprinter Van pulls up to the gate. Murphy only having to give the NIGHT GUARD the simplest of waves. Reveal --

-- Mildred and Huey hiding in the back. As Mildred gets closer to the windshield, peering out at her old stomping grounds here, the slightest hint of emotion crossing her.

INT. THE KING FAMILY HOME - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

The door opens. Murphy leading the way. And as Mildred steps in, the nostalgia overwhelms her, dense memories of a long lost life.

MURPHY
Poppy? It's Murph.

As Mildred moves for the banister of PHOTOGRAPHS, landing on one in particular: Her and the kids. Jimmy Mike. All younger.

Movement upstairs. Mildred looks to the stairwell, and at the top, stands POPPY. A long beat. These blank expressions, neither one of them knowing exactly what to do here.

	POPPY	MILDRED
Hey.		Hi.

Stairwells don't get much longer. As Mildred takes a small step.

MILDRED (CONT'D)
It's, uh. It's me. It's *Mom*.

Poppy, with an *incredulous* puff of a chuckle:

POPPY
I know who you are. Shit.

Which is when, behind Mildred, *HUEY ENTERS*. Poppy taking a beat to clock the man. A stranger, sure, but... something about him. A *truth*. As Mildred -- takes a single step up --

MILDRED
Sorry, just. Wasn't sure if. If you'd remember.

POPPY
Restricted number, right?

-- Mildred stammers a beat, unclear what Poppy's referring to.

POPPY (CONT'D)
The phone calls?

MILDRED
(realizing)
Oh. Yeah. Yes, just. Off the grid, you know. Always felt safer. Considering our-- *circumstances*.

POPPY
Mm. *Safer*.

And off this muted little reunion --

INT. POPPY'S BEDROOM - LATER - NIGHT

-- Poppy in a chair, Mildred on the edge of Poppy's bed as she looks Poppy over, these last few days taking a toll on everyone.

POPPY
Why wouldn't they tell us where you were? Why wouldn't they let you see us?

Mildred considers that. This complicated family of theirs.

MILDRED
Lotta reasons. Made myself a liability, I guess. Forced into a shitty deal.

She watches as Poppy struggles to relate to that.

MILDRED (CONT'D)

But. Sometimes you gotta forgive yourself for what you did. Maybe forgive yourself for what you *didn't* do, too. Either way, I'm here now. Here to fix this.

As Mildred spots: a WILTED SHOEBOX atop a BOOKSHELF. Curious, she grabs it, opens it, slows at its contents: **NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS**.

"SEBASTIAN KING'S REING OF TERROR"; "THE KING CRIME FAMILY'S HOLD ON THE WORLD OF BUTCHERY"; etc. Dozens and dozens from over the years, this troubled history of **THE KING CRIME FAMILY**.

POPPY

Started collecting them when I was about ten. Right after you went away. Used to think maybe they just killed you, you know. That maybe they just *told* me you went away. Like in the movies?

(beat)

So, I became obsessed with them. Maybe if I kept looking, I'd find something that might lead me to you.

Another uncomfortable little chuckle, this one forced.

POPPY (CONT'D)

Sometimes even let my imagination run a little wild. Would wonder if maybe you had another family. Another girl.

Mildred takes a seat on the bed. Poppy looks to her, eyes welling.

POPPY (CONT'D)

Back at the barn, it... I'd never seen anything *like* that. Never been scared like that before, Mildred--

And they both stop. Mildred's *daughter*. Calling her *Mildred*.

POPPY (CONT'D)

Sorry, I, uh--

MILDRED

--it's my name, isn't it.

A beat. Poppy reflecting on the violence, her point being:

POPPY (CONT'D)

They just take people out. Like they're nothing. Like they don't matter.

And Poppy shifts, *something grim occurring to her*:

POPPY (CONT'D)
I, uh-- I think he's hurt. *Devlin*.

Mildred stirs, realizing she hasn't had a chance to check in.

POPPY (CONT'D)
Was on the phone with him last night, but then it-- there were gunshots. I think. Haven't been able to get a hold of him since.

Mildred quickly pulls out her phone, but Poppy stops her:

POPPY (CONT'D)
Just goes to voicemail.

And they sit a quiet beat, Mildred fixating on another FAMILY PHOTO on a dresser.

POPPY (CONT'D)
Is it true you tried to kill him?
Grandpa. After he killed Grandma?

MILDRED
Didn't get very far.

POPPY
Why'd he do it? Kill his own *wife*?

Mildred considers that a beat, reflecting on a truth.

MILDRED
More powerful he got-- the more paranoid. Didn't trust anyone. Sanctioned hit after hit, all in public. Wanted them to make headlines as a way to *intimidate* his rivals. Never panned out that way though.
(beat)
Then your *grandmother* -- someone started a rumor about her being out in public with an associate this of an associate that, and--

Mildred pauses, taking a beat to remember her own parents.

MILDRED (CONT'D)
--he didn't even think twice. So, I didn't either. And-- he made me to promise to never come back. In exchange for your Uncle making sure you stayed safe.

And Mildred really tries to choke this out:

MILDRED (CONT'D)

But I shouldn't have done it. Should've fought my father, maybe made my own deal with the feds, I just-- couldn't risk you guys getting hurt.

(beat)

But see that -- you got hurt anyway.

Mildred lets a sole tear fall.

MILDRED (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry. Sorry you had to grow up like that. I stupidly thought you both might understand, but of course, they didn't tell you, did they?

Poppy, realizing all that was at stake, shakes her head "no".

POPPY

They'd tell us -- that you gave up on the family name. Didn't want anything to do with any of us.

MILDRED

Did you believe them?

POPPY

At times.

Mildred absorbs that. A tough blow, to be sure. Before she shifts. Gets herself together. Eyes pooled in emotion, before they start to level. **Mildred's steely resolve resurfacing --**

-- as she looks to a clipping. Drawn to its headline, her family's name. Searching for a way out of this dead end.

MILDRED

Spent my entire life resisting this family's *business* to keep you safe. But, maybe. If I wanna get us outta this -- then I'm gonna have to take it back.

And Mildred thinks on that a beat, before looking back at Poppy.

MILDRED (CONT'D)

Which is why I need to find out who these new Butchers are. And I need to find a way to get to them.

Poppy slows at that. An insane idea churning, as she *realizes*:

POPPY
I think-- I might know a way.

Mildred, Poppy; mother and daughter reuniting as a team, before--

POPPY (CONT'D)
But there's something else.
Something I gotta tell you.

And off Mildred, seeing in Poppy's eyes: *something's very wrong* -- we **CUT TO BLACK:**

POPPY (PRE-LAP) (CONT'D)
The moment, the moment, the moment --

AND CLOSE ON:

A distorted image. Vignetting like wild. As we're CLOSE ON A **BABY**, held for the first time. Crying a few beats, before --

-- she finds peace. Goes quiet. Looks directly at us. As we GO TO:

INT. A DINER - DAY

POPPY. Lost in thought. Wistful. Falling into strange territory.

POPPY
-- my friends've all told me about
"the moment" you first lay eyes on
'em. How it feels. How it *changes you*.

Poppy smiles small, *sighs*. Looks down to her coffee. Which is when we, with a **CHYRON**, fucking clarify: A MONTH AGO.

POPPY (CONT'D)
Thanks for meeting with me.

And she looks to reveal -- **Murphy and Simon**. Sitting across from her. Their own coffees. No clue what this is about.

SIMON
I'm nothing if not curious.

POPPY
Murphy, I've known you since I was
a girl. Long as I can remember.
(off Murphy's nod)
And you know I never wanted any
part of any of it. Your world.

MURPHY

...yeah.

POPPY

My grandfather's getting released.

(beat)

Early.

SIMON

He is.

POPPY

Twenty-three years off a 40-year sentence? If I'm asking *myself* the question -- someone who barely has an *inkling* of how these things work? Then you all must be as well--

SIMON

--and what question is that?

POPPY

In exchange for *what*? My grandfather almost *sunk* this company. He was a violent, reckless man who made cheap tabloid spectacles of our family. There've been books, podcasts, documentaries. Gangster this, mafia that. An absolute stain on our name and, from what I've always understood? My *great* grandfather would've been ashamed.

SIMON

Ready for your point--

POPPY (CONT'D)

--hand me the keys.

Simon stops, baffled, but following. As Poppy leans in, on fire.

POPPY (CONT'D)

You'll never let my grandfather back in. You *can't*. My Uncle? Dying. My cousin? A loose cannon; and my brother's a junkie's holiday away from an early grave.

(beat)

I have made it *my life's goal*. To keep my distance from this family and *all* of its doings. But it's always been there. Hanging right over my head.

(beat)

And I don't want that for my daughter.

(slows, sips, beat)

I *can't* -- have that for her.

Poppy rotates her coffee mug. Her plan coming into view.

POPPY (CONT'D)

*The oblivious granddaughter, insulated from her family's crimes her entire life. **The new face of King's Long Cuts.***

Simon. Fucking *intrigued* now.

POPPY (CONT'D)

Turn a new leaf. Past in the past; future, **in the future**. I expand what you and your organization have worked so hard to build; what you have *struggled* to *preserve*. I push this company *forward*; I take us public in two years time, and I make it so we *dominate* this industry before the decade's up.

(beat)

All while Sunrise Holdings: continues to do... whatever it is you do. My husband keeps running your books. Everyone lives cool. Just --

(beat)

-- whatever you have planned? *For next steps?* Leave me, my husband; and leave my **daughter** out of it.

SIMON

And the others? Won't bother you that, uh... some need to be cut.

Poppy considers that. Her eyes flickering with nostalgia --

-- **A QUICK FLASH TO:** Poppy and Devlin. At the DINNER TABLE. *Years ago. Teenagers.* Laughing. A unique bond. Not like with Liam.

POPPY

My baby brother. *Devlin.*

Simon, wincing at that one. A bump in the road.

POPPY (CONT'D)

Liam's the threat. Devlin's nothing.

SIMON

Problem is, that's *logic* you're talking. And this isn't about logic, Poppy. My superiors spoke the words: *All. The Kings*, men and women. And *you*, are now a *Walsh*, thankfully. Whereas Devlin--

POPPY

--he's *barely* a King. Been as detached from this family as I have since we were kids. He's just-- shown it differently. Self-destructive. And I just-- he deserves a second chance.

Simon, stirring his coffee as he contemplates this proposal.

SIMON

And your *mother*?

Poppy slows. Lump in her throat. Stare turning a thousand-yard. Has gotta do what she's gotta do. A tough call, to be sure.

POPPY

A *ghost*. Far as I'm concerned.

Simon watches Poppy there. Can see she doesn't believe that.

SIMON (PRE-LAP)

This is no good, Poppy.

INT. POPPY'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM - COUPLE DAYS AGO - NIGHT

-- Poppy, pacing in her bedroom, on the phone with Simon.

SIMON (O.S.)

Your brother making it out; puts our deal in a bit of jeopardy--

POPPY

--why? **How?** Simon, what the hell are you talking about, we agreed Devlin was off limits anyway--

SIMON (O.S.)

--***because now he's fucking UNACCOUNTED for, you understand?***

Poppy stops. Because no. She doesn't. But this is how psychopaths work. So. She thinks. Thinks. *Fucking light bulb.*

POPPY

Okay. Okay, what if I could get you someone else? Someone more-- *valuable?*

INT. ANOTHER DINER SOMEWHERE - THE NEXT DAY - DAY

Poppy slides over a slip of PAPER -- to **ANNA**. The podcast producing assassin from many pages ago, sitting beside Simon.

And MURPHY. Who's watching this. **Weighing** it.

ANNA
Th'fuck is this?

POPPY
It's not where he *lives*. But I know
it's where he **goes**. Sent it to Devlin
forever ago. With a note. I found it.
Kept it. And now he's yours.

And we ANGLE ON: Anna's hand -- a MENU for **THE MILKY GRIDDLE**.
Jimmy Mike's favorite spot. Last place he could get respect.

MURPHY (PRE-LAP)
I need you to listen to me.

INT. POPPY'S CAR - THE SAME DAY - DAY

And it's a disorienting little segment here, as everything is
nonlinear. V.O. Watching as Poppy gets in her car after the
meeting with Anna -- TO FIND MURPHY. Waiting for her.

MURPHY (V.O.)
*Your family. Done a whole lotta
good for me over the years.
Wouldn't be nowhere without 'em.*
(beat)
*Which is why I **gotta** tell ya: What
you're doing? It ain't gonna go the
way you **want** it to go.*

And off Poppy's look --

EXT. THE HARPER PLANT - SOME PAGES AGO - NIGHT

-- Murphy outside of his Sprinter Van, *hands raised* to Mildred.

MURPHY
I can take you to her.
(beat)
Mildred, I can take you to **Poppy**.

And from there, we head back to *REAL TIME*, as --

INT. POPPY'S BEDROOM - THE PRESENT DAY - NIGHT

Mildred. Poppy. Both sitting here. Both absorbing Poppy's
confession a few beats. A betrayal for all the right reasons.

They each take breaths, shift. Breaths. Shift. Before:

POPPY
I fucked it, didn't I?

A beat with Mildred. Engrossed with her daughter. Can't help but let the smallest smirk spread.

MILDRED
Maybe a little, yeah.
(truth is though:)
But I did, too, Poppy.

Another beat as the two of them sit with that.

MILDRED (CONT'D)
You said you might know a way? *How?*

And Poppy looks back to her. Their divide collapsing.

POPPY
My husband. Bradley. He's across town.

And off this exchange, this reunion finally complete, we --

INT. MURPHY'S SPRINTER VAN - MOVING - THE NEXT MORNING

-- back inside the SPRINTER VAN. Mildred, Poppy, Huey in the back. Murphy, driving. As Mildred looks at Poppy --

-- these slivers of morning sun bringing her in and out of view. All this lost time over all these years. And now here they are.

EXT. THE WALSH RESIDENCE - A NEIGHBORHOOD - MORNING

DARLENE WALSH. 70s. Answers the door. Finds Poppy, flanked by Mildred, Huey -- and Murphy. A strange sight on her porch.

POPPY
Hey, Mom. This is my, uh. *Mother.*

Bradley appears behind Darlene, along with his father, **BARRY WALSH.** Also 70s. Two people who have lead some nice normal lives.

Bradley, locking eyes with his wife, her eclectic little crew.

INT. THE WALSH RESIDENCE - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

Huey and Murphy at a table with Barry, this awkward trio of a mobster, a biker, a retiree -- having coffee together.

While Mildred -- standing at the end of a HALLWAY, staring down at a cracked bedroom door -- where it's clear that Poppy and Bradley are having one *hell* of a fucking argument...

DARLENE (O.S.)

Didn't think I'd ever have the pleasure.

Mildred looks to find Darlene, this civilian smiling politely, looking Mildred over. This scuffed up, bruised mess.

DARLENE (CONT'D)

Long night, huh?

MILDRED

Longer week.

Darlene forces a chuckle. Not the point she was getting at.

DARLENE

Suppose you've never really had
the chance to meet *her*, have you?

And Mildred, looking to Darlene a beat... *the chance to meet who?*

INT. THE WALSH RESIDENCE - BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER - MORNING

CLOSE: POPPY'S 1-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER. In a crib. Having just woken. Writhing and squirming with that youthful peace in her eyes.

Darlene and Mildred stand over her. And Mildred. The first time learning of, let alone *seeing*, her granddaughter. What a moment.

DARLENE

Pretty tiny gal, isn't she?

MILDRED

What's her name?

DARLENE

Louise.

Mildred. Stirring at that little revelation. Because:

MILDRED

After my mother.

DARLENE

Should introduce yourself.

A beat. Before Mildred lifts Louise, cradles her in her arms.

MILDRED

Hi there-- hi, you.

Mildred cradling Louise a beat, before --

POPPY (O.S.)
You always talked about *the moment*.

-- she looks to find Poppy entering.

POPPY (CONT'D)
When we were all born. How it felt
to be willing to do-- ***anything in
the world***. For your kids.

Poppy's gaze locked on Louise, *the one thing in this world*. A truly dedicated mother. As Darlene stands, politely leaves them.

And Poppy sits across from Mildred and Louise, endeared by this sight. Long Lost Mildred embracing Poppy's entire universe --

MILDRED
To think of what I missed out on. Told
myself I was *protecting* you, but. I
mean, look at you. *Look at her*. How do
I come to terms with that?

-- and Mildred, tears welling. *All that she gave up in this
life now curled up cooing in her arms*. As Poppy clocks that.

MILDRED (CONT'D)
Leaving you three wasn't right--

POPPY
--but it wasn't wrong either.
(beat)
Anything in the world is exactly
what it means. *Anything*.

And Mildred looks to her. Poppy with a tough, but strong point. Which is why Poppy awkwardly, uncomfortably, shifts gears to:

POPPY (CONT'D)
My husband. *Bradley*. If we wanna fix
this, he's uh-- in the other room.

And off Mildred, taking one last look at her granddaughter...

INT. BRADLEY'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

Mildred, Huey, and Murphy sit across from Poppy and Bradley. This young man jittery, nervous, very much out of his element.

BRADLEY

I've worked in finance lotta years.
So, your brother, *Uncle Bart*,
started having me manage King's
Long Cuts' **assets**. Which,
eventually, put me on the radar of
Sunrise. Of Simon Stanley.

POPPY

He's in charge of The Butchers' accounts.
Which-- if you wanted to *hurt* Sunrise--

BRADLEY

--I could *drain* them and their assets.
Transfer them over to the Kings--

POPPY

-- hold them hostage, give us *leverage*
to negotiate a truce and *control* of
King's Long Cuts. Only thing is--

BRADLEY

--the **keys**. Each Butcher has a
digital key to their account. Which
has gotta be entered the same time
as the **Head** Butcher's key --

POPPY

-- same time as *Vick's* key.

BRADLEY

Like a digital safe deposit box. Same
as Midge's Meats, cloud services are
prohibited, and in the case of The
Butchers, Sunrise requires their keys
to be on identical **THUMB DRIVES**; for
each Butcher to have on their person
at *all times*. One of these:

Bradley holds up a tiny black **THUMB DRIVE**. On a chain. Simple.

And he turns his laptop around, where on its screen:
ADDRESSES. And Mildred. Realizing what's gotta be done. *Oh*.

MILDRED

Murphy? Which of the Butchers
voted to kill the family?

Murphy, hesitant. Because the answer stinks.

MURPHY

Was *unanimous*.

MILDRED
Right. Okay.

A beat. As we look at Bradley. Trying to get on the same level as this room full of criminals. Sans his wife. *Sorta.*

BRADLEY
Okay, *what?*

MILDRED
Means we gotta kill The Butchers.

MURPHY
Mm. You hit one, word'll spread to the others. *Fast.* And we ain't got the numbers to contain that sorta wildfire.

MILDRED
Unless I get the numbers.

And she looks to Huey. Who, of course, knows what she means.

INT. THE LUCKY TRIDENTS MOTORCYCLE ESTABLISHMENT - DAY

A **PHONE RINGS** as we're ZOOMING DOWN THE BAR, LANDING ON: BEXTER.

BEXTER
Yeah.

MILDRED (O.S.)
*King's Long Cuts is officially being scrapped for parts. Which means-- "east of 99"? Hell, west, north, south, too. All of 99's yours if you want it. My call. My word. **Your way.***

Bexter rotates a beer bottle, smiles small. *Proud of Mildred.*

BEXTER
Hm. Sounds like maybe you went and made things right, Mildie.

MILDRED (O.S.)
You got a pen and paper?

A CHECK PAD, a PEN. And off Bexter scribbling out the plan --

EXT. THE LUCKY TRIDENTS MOTORCYCLE ESTABLISHMENT - LATER - DAY

-- here go THE LUCKY TRIDENTS, a rip-roarin' motherfuck of BIKERS TEARING THE HELL OUT OF HERE, en route to help their sister --

EXT. AN ABANDONED STRIP MALL SOMEWHERE - MUCH LATER - DUSK

-- as we make a jump in time, watching this monstrous formation of The Lucky Tridents' roll into this strip mall parking lot --

-- where MURPHY'S SPRINTER VAN is now the lone vehicle.

POPPY (PRE-LAP)

Alright.

INT. MURPHY'S SPRINTER VAN - LATER - NIGHT

A MAP. Simple Rand McNally. Taped onto the van's wall. Mildred. Huey. Bexter. Poppy & Bradley. Poppy holds up the THUMB DRIVE.

POPPY

This is what you're looking for.

Murphy looks to Bexter, might remember him from back in the day.

MURPHY

Some of these guys are gonna put up a fight, others not so much, so. Pay attention. In order of **volatility**:

Bradley looks to his LAPTOP, and we begin a very *bloody* **MONTAGE**:

BRADLEY

Guy named **Carter Holmes**.

INT. A PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

A luxurious penthouse rising high somewhere in Philadelphia.

CARTER HOLMES, 50s, Finance Bro playing some video games. When --

BRADLEY (V.O.)

*Company's **Holmes Trading**.*

Essentially makes penny trades while laundering millions for Sunrise.

MURPHY (V.O.)

Pushover.

-- his door's KICKED OPEN. THREE TRIDENTS. They stop when they see him sitting there. Dumbfounded, unaware, rich.

As one of the Tridents raises a SAWED-OFF. Carter registers, before -- **BWWOOMM**. His **THUMB DRIVE**. Plucked from his neck.

BRADLEY (V.O.)

Ben "the Gazz".

INT. THE GAZZ LOUNGE - NIGHT

And we land CLOSE ON: another **THUMB DRIVE** on a chain. This one engraved with a **GOLD CROSS**. Pull back to reveal: **BEN "THE GAZZ"**. 70s. Up on a cheap little stage, a swindler's smile.

BRADLEY (V.O.)
The night club business.

MURPHY (V.O.)
Place is a dump, but it's a good time.

BEN THE GAZZ
Look at you all. You beautiful people. Beautiful, beautiful citizens of this world. Choosing to spend your Tuesday nights here, with me.

And Ben the Gazz clears his throat. Takes a beat, when --

MURPHY (V.O.)
You knew him, Mildred...

-- he spots HUEY -- and MILDRED. In the back. And Ben the Gazz. Suddenly sweating right to hell. *Knows what this is.*

BEN THE GAZZ
Well. How 'bout that now--

EXT. THE GAZZ LOUNGE - OUT BACK - LATER - NIGHT

Ben the Gazz explodes out the back, pulls a tiny little REVOLVER, aiming back at -- Mildred. Stepping out after him.

But he can't even pull the hammer back before she's got her .357 raised, and -- **BLAM-BLAM** -- Ben the Gazz is fucking down. And Mildred yanks the THUMB DRIVE chain from his neck.

BRADLEY (V.O.)
Mattress Phil.

EXT. MATTRESS PHIL OF PHILLY'S MATTRESS BONANZA - NIGHT

And it's as scummy as a mattress store could possibly get.

MILDRED (V.O.)
Always liked him. Shame.

INT. MATTRESS PHIL OF PHILLY'S MATTRESS BONANZA - NIGHT

And here's **MATTRESS PHIL**, TWO HANDGUNS -- SHOOTING IT THE FUCK OUT WITH A TRIO OF LUCKY TRIDENTS, running from them, zig-zagging through mattresses that haven't been laid on in years.

It's a goofy bit of chaos. Especially when Mattress Phil fucking trips, **falls** -- and the Tridents are on him. **Unloading.**

BRADLEY (V.O.)

Then there's Tony --

INT./EXT. TONY BOLERO'S USED CAR SALES - NIGHT

Closing time. A used car lot as shitty as we've seen them.

MURPHY (V.O.)

-- Tony Bolero. Used Car scum.

TONY BOLERO, sleazy as it sounds, shutting the place down. When -- LUCKY TRIDENTS ROLL UP. Except, Tony Bolero?

He doesn't play games. **DUAL UZIS** -- which he does not know how to shoot -- but still: he lets them RIP. While fleeing --

-- and right as he makes it OUT BACK: **BWOOM**. Tony's downed by a simple shotgun blast, this Lucky Trident lying in wait.

MURPHY (V.O.)

Then: Probably most difficult --

INT. SALVATORE'S SCHOOL OF BALLET - NIGHT

BALLET STUDENTS packing their things up. As we PUSH IN ON: **SALVATORE BOCCELLI**. Lean and lithe, smoking a cigarette from a CIGARETTE HOLDER, silently judging his eager students, when --

MURPHY (V.O.)

-- need all hands on deck.

BRADLEY (V.O.)

Lotta innocents. Don't deserve to die.

MURPHY (V.O.)

So, no guns. And be precise.

-- Salvatore looks as the front door opens. In walks MILDRED, HUEY, MURPHY -- and **SEVEN** LUCKY TRIDENTS. No words exchanged.

Which is when some of Salvatore's students come back out. And:

We watch this chaos. A literal **BALLET**. Salvatore and his dancers **outsmarting** Mildred and the Tridents, their overwhelming fluidity. But our crew, **THEY'RE MANAGING**, when. Mildred, a KNIFE --

-- **RIGHT INTO SALVATORE'S ABDOMEN**. And THE STUDENTS all stop.

MURPHY (V.O.)

Then there's Vick. Of course.

-- and off this suddenly quiet dance school...

INT. VICK'S CAR - MOVING - DAY

Vick drives. Pulling up to KING'S LONG CUTS, not noticing the Guard giving him a bit of side eye -- as Vick continues --

-- and starts to notice -- **EMPLOYEES**. A whole lot of them are giving him a little side eye. Strange. Uneasy. Something's up --

INT. KING'S LONG CUTS ADMINISTRATIVE - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

-- as Vick moves down a hallway. Slowing when he notices:

The door to Sebastian's office -- **AJAR**. Vick pushes it open to find -- Mildred. At her father's desk, twirling a pen.

MILDRED

Morning.

And Vick nods. Knows what comes next --

INT. "THE OUTHOUSE" - LATER - DAY

-- Vick duct taped to a metal desk chair. Getting dragged through this space -- by Mildred. And she plants him --

-- right before a MASSIVE MEAT GRINDER. Industrial, ominous.

MILDRED

Only ever heard rumors about this place.
The Outhouse. Always told to keep out.

Vick stoic, frustrated. As Mildred looks to Huey.

MILDRED (CONT'D)

Know what they'd do in here, Huey?
(back to Vick)

Anyone that crossed them, anyone that had to be dealt with? Right through that **grinder** there. Some dead, some alive.

(MORE)

MILDRED (CONT'D)
 Depended on the severity of the
 grievance, ain't that right, Vick?
 Then they'd take it apart, sterilize
 it. Poof, nothing happened.

Mildred taking all that in. These family traditions.

MILDRED (CONT'D)
 This where you brought 'em? Liam?
 My brother? Father?

Vick with a deep breath. Because, of course it is.

VICK
 You. **Of all people.** Saw your
 father for what he was.

MILDRED
 But you went along with all this.

Vick slows at that. The regret palpable in his eyes.

VICK
 It's like you said. Got family, too.

Mildred nods another beat. Before she grabs Vick's chair,
 drags it over to Bradley, nervously sitting at a desk.

And Mildred drops the **FIVE THUMB DRIVES** in front of Bradley.
 Which is when Vick -- realizing what this really is...

VICK (CONT'D)
 Jesus fucking Christ, what've you
 done? **Mildred.** What've you done--

MILDRED
 --taking back the company--

VICK
 --that's not how this works.

Mildred digs inside Vick's shirt, plucks *his* THUMB DRIVE.
 Vick watching her, understands, but... this is no good.

VICK (CONT'D)
 You're killing everyone in this
 room. You understand that?

Bradley shifts at that. Sweating bullets, as he looks to Poppy,
 watching from a distant corner -- who gives him the go-ahead nod.

So, Bradley takes the DRIVE, plugs it in, gets to work.

LATER

CLOSE: Vick. Sweating. Lost. As Bradley stops, looks to Mildred.

BRADLEY
That's that. Done.

She nods, moves to Vick.

MILDRED
Poppy, Bradley. Could you excuse us.

And Bradley? No problem. Snaps up his laptop, moves for the door, hell of a fucking clip -- **past** Poppy... Who *stays*.

VICK
If I had one wish -- it'd be for
you to never come back to see all
this fall apart.

MILDRED
Yeah. Me too--

-- and as she puts her .357 to Vick's head:

POPPY
Wait--

She stops, looks to find Poppy in the corner. Distressed by this. *Because this isn't her world.* She doesn't know what it takes. And Poppy, realizing that. Which is why she turns away --

EXT. "THE OUTHOUSE" - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

-- and exits, the door closing behind her as she stops. When, from inside: **BLAM**. And Poppy. Not sure what to make of that --

-- as Bradley moves to her, tries to comfort her. But Poppy pushes him away, moves towards the King Family Home.

POPPY
Go back to your parents. To
Louise. I'll meet you there soon.

BRADLEY
You should come with me

And as she starts to move for the King Family Home --

POPPY
Can't leave her, Bradley.

-- Bradley stops, watching his young wife walk away.

INT. THE KING FAMILY HOME - LATER - NIGHT

The sun's fallen now. Poppy sits alone at the kitchen table, drinking an alcoholic beverage, rare for her. *But needed --*

-- when the door swings open. Mildred enters. A beat. Before she moves to the bar. Starts making herself a drink.

MILDRED

You've seen worse by now.

POPPY

And I wish I hadn't. Wish I never reached out to him. To Simon--

MILDRED

--you'd be dead.

Poppy stops. As Mildred joins her at the table. Drinks a beat.

MILDRED (CONT'D)

And so would everyone you love.

(beat)

That was your *instinct*. Hunted to hunter. You knew what to do.

And Poppy. Looking to her mother here. As if she were the missing piece of it all... *because she is*. As Mildred continues:

MILDRED (CONT'D)

I've-- often wished I wasn't capable. Of what I did back there.

(beat)

Of what I've done quite a few times. I never wanted it for you, and-- you don't want it for her.

(beat)

Which is why we're here, isn't it?

And Poppy. Can't argue with a single word of that. When: A **KNOCK** at the door. HUEY. He enters, stops when he sees them.

HUEY

Ah. Sorry, just-- they're saying food's ready.

An awkward beat. Huey nods, gets it, leaves, and:

POPPY

Is he my father?

Mildred's head snaps to Poppy, as blunt and abrupt as it gets. *However...* Mildred can't piece together a response. Quiet a few.

POPPY (CONT'D)
 I know your story, Mom. Probably
 even better than you do. Timeline's
 never added up. Ever. So.

Mildred thinks on that. Drinks. Thinks some more.

MILDRED
 Life's a funny thing, Poppy. I
 don't gotta tell you that.

Poppy absorbs that a beat. Before she stands. Moves to
 Mildred. *And kisses her on the top of her head.* A first here.

POPPY
 If anything. Life makes a lot more sense now.
 (whispers)
*And I'm gonna go get some fucking
 food. You go work it out with him.*

And with that, Poppy leaves. Mildred reflecting. Alone. Until:

EXT. THE KING FAMILY HOME - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

Mildred steps out -- to find Huey. Watching after Poppy as she
 makes her way for THE KING HAUS. Where, through the door --
 -- the other Tridents boozing it up. Blowing off some steam
 after all that chaos, **Poppy assimilating with them.**

HUEY
 Strange place to grow up.

MILDRED
 Got no idea.

Huey gestures in the direction of the Slaughterhouses. Far away.

HUEY
 You ever hear 'em? The animals?

MILDRED
 No. Quiet back here.

Huey, taking in this expanse of land, *remembering* something.

HUEY
 Kinda reminds me of the **yard.**

And Mildred smiles warm at the thought, looks to Huey a beat.

EXT. A GRAVEYARD - JUST THE SLIGHTEST FLASHBACK - NIGHT

Two **FIGURES** running through a GRAVEYARD, a long night of drinking, laughing, being young -- as they make their way to --

INT. A MAUSOLEUM - LATER - NIGHT

-- a **LANTERN** showing us a much **YOUNGER MILDRED**. 19. HUEY. 20. Sharing a bottle of SCHNAPPS. No dialogue. Just a tiny moment--

--as Young Mildred looks at Young Huey. Their laughter subsiding. A glimmer in their eyes. Two very smitten smiles --

BACK IN THE PRESENT

-- Mildred on the porch here. Remembering. Averting her gaze as that fond memory is met with the reality of history.

MILDRED

My mother didn't wanna marry my father. Said as much to me. Almost like she-- knew in her gut how it'd turn out. Told me there was once this other guy, that she *almost* married, before my dad.

(beat)

But that, miserable as she was, she wouldn't have it any other way, because -- *if she did*: Me and my brother wouldn't have been here.

(beat, chuckles, beat)

And I, of course, punk ass teenager that I was, couldn't help but ask: *Yeah, but who isn't here because you didn't end up with that guy?*

As Huey follows Mildred's gaze -- to POPPY. In The King Haus.

MILDRED (CONT'D)

Hm. Dunno. Guess it all really only goes the way you let it.

A beat before he looks back to her. Fights a smile. Then **LAUGHS**, settling a beat, laughter slowing. Back in "the yard".

MILDRED (CONT'D)

It was always you, Huey. Even all these years later.

(beat, drinks)

It's always been you.

Huey shifts at that. Vulnerability an even tougher ask, but:

HUEY
Still can be.

And she looks to him. Smiles somber. Hands him back his beer.

MILDRED
Well. 'til then, I'm *starving*.

And Huey smiles. *He'll take that*. So, they get up. Make their way for The King Haus, when -- a CAR approaches, parks askew.

Mildred and Huey slow, as -- JIMMY MIKE gets out. A beat.

JIMMY MIKE
Hey'a, Mildred. Lookin' alright.

Which is when -- DEVLIN. Both he and Mildred, taking a beat to process one another. To *recognize* each other.

DEVLIN
Mom?

And that's when she moves for him, quick, this massive embrace, pulling back, cups Devlin's face. Been too many years.

MILDRED
You alright? You're okay?

DEVLIN
I'm good, yeah, I'm good.

And then, of course, she looks to **Jimmy Mike**. His distant eyes landing on Mildred, a complicated look between these two.

MILDRED
There's, uh. Poppy's in the barn.
There's food. We were about to eat.

And as Mildred moves to lead them all to The King Haus --

JIMMY MIKE
You actually, uh-- got a minute to talk?

-- she stops, zero interest in any conversation with him, but...

INT. THE KING FAMILY HOME - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

They enter. Mildred moving directly for the bar, pours a scotch. Leans against the counter, tough to look at this guy.

JIMMY MIKE
Can help myself then.

He moves to the bar, close to her. Too close. But Mildred, being Mildred, doesn't budge. Sips her scotch. As he pours --
-- and moves to the other end of the table. Watching her.

JIMMY MIKE (CONT'D)
How you not dead yet?

MILDRED
Nice to see you, too.

JIMMY MIKE
I mean *here*. Thought we'd come through, get some clues or some shit, but how are you here?

MILDRED
I'm taking it back.

JIMMY MIKE
What, you and the roaches out there?

MILDRED
Those *roaches* are gonna help me kill the man that killed our *son*. How you feeling about all that? You got questions? *Concerns*? Someone trying to murder your *kids*?

JIMMY MIKE
Mm. Tried to get me, too.

He looks to the Rand McNally MAP on the table.

JIMMY MIKE (CONT'D)
Who's this guy supposed to be?

MILDRED
Name's Simon Stanley. He's got a *compound* of sorts in the Poconos.

Jimmy Mike points to a MARKED POINT on the map.

JIMMY MIKE
Here?

MILDRED
That's the place.

JIMMY MIKE
And, what-- killin' him's just gonna make them all go away.

MILDRED
No. But it's a start.

JIMMY MIKE
Of what?

MILDRED
A war.

JIMMY MIKE
Well, shit. Scenario like that, you
might could use *me* back at the table.

MILDRED
Be honest with you? Not sure you'd
be too comfortable here. 'cause if
I gotta look at you even another,
say-- *twenty minutes*? I can't
promise I won't kill you, Jimmy.

And Jimmy Mike's expression falls. Eyes even darker. As
Mildred turns back to the bar -- refills her scotch, when --

-- a *SKITTERING* across the glass tabletop. She turns to find
ZIP TIES. Looks to Jimmy Mike, WHO NOW HAS A **.45** AIMED AT HER.

JIMMY MIKE
Finish your drink. Then put those
on, and we're gonna go for a ride.

She places a finger to the zip ties, begins *dragging* them
along the table, slowly *STEPPING TOWARDS* JIMMY MIKE --

MILDRED
Please. You still that slick?

JIMMY MIKE
Put 'em on, Mildred.

-- as she takes a drink, eyes never leaving him. Closer. When:

MILDRED
'cause, see, if you were *smart*--

That sentence wasn't meant for finishing, *BECAUSE MILDRED HAS JUST
WHIPPED HER GLASS AT JIMMY MIKE, **DIRECT HIT**, AND SHE'S ON HIM --*

-- but he's quick with it, a grab of her wrist, a FLASH OF A
STRUGGLE, before -- **BLAM**. MILDRED FALTERS ON A LEG, Jimmy Mike
having just SHOT HER THROUGH A **KNEE**, a sloppy shot, but --

-- enough for him to gain control. A *rip-zip* of her wrists, and --

EXT. THE KING FAMILY HOME - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

-- we're outside, staying with Mildred as *JIMMY MIKE DRAGS HER ALONG*, his .45 stuck to her head -- and Mildred, seeing the dinnerfest ahead. *Her army*. And Jimmy Mike sees them, too. *Stops*.

JIMMY MIKE

Go ahead, Mildred, do it. *Call out*.
We can end it all, suicide-by-
cockroach, I don't give a fuck.

He presses his .45 a little tighter. The two of them eyeing The King Haus a few beats. A will-she-or-won't-she, but --

-- no. Of course not. *Mildred knowing she can get out of this*.

So, Jimmy Mike, head on a swivel, eye on The King Haus, loads her into the back of Devlin's car, A SLAM of the door, and:

INT. DEVLIN'S CAR - MOVING - LATER - NIGHT

Mildred squirming in the backseat. This knee wound no joke. As she looks to -- **Jimmy Mike driving like a fucking lunatic** --

JIMMY MIKE

See, this is what I tried to tell
'em, it's what I tried to fuckin'
tell 'em-- never shoulda taken
Jimmy Mike outta his **element**--

-- Mildred, woozy, watching as Jimmy Mike does a massive bump of coke. Driving recklessly. All over the road. She musters:

JIMMY MIKE (CONT'D)

--you know anything about *purpose*,
Mildred? Anything about *having a story* -- **I** had that shit. And we
were at fucking war, and *THAT'S*--
what you didn't have the grit to
understand: WAR.

(beat)

Your mother was selling this family
the fucking fuck out, and I'm sorry,
but she got what she deserved, okay?
She had to go, *she had to go*.

(another bump)

She had to fucking go.

-- and Mildred, something very *sad* washing over her a beat.

MILDRED

Fucking shit, I tried for us to be
something, Jimmy.

Jimmy Mike, this hallucinatory burst of honesty from Mildred.

MILDRED (CONT'D)

For a moment there. I really *tried* it,
but-- you broke my heart. You broke my
heart when you *killed her*. When you
shoulda *saved* her. Saved *us*...

JIMMY MIKE

Nah, I didn't break no hearts, I
didn't break no fucking hearts, see
that-- that kinda *shit*? That *emotional*
bullshit? Kinda shit made the kids
soft. Made 'em never stand a chance.
You stood against your *father*. And *you*
broke this family's heart, Mildred,
that's what *you fucking did*.

(beat, slows, lost)

That's what you fuckin' did, you-- fuck.

INT. THE KING HAUS - MEANWHILE - NIGHT

The Lucky Tridents and the Kings having dinner. As festive as possible the night before storming a crime boss' quarters --

-- as we head to THE BAR. Right where Sebastian and Vick had their final conversation. As Devlin arrives, grabs a bottle of LIQUOR, doesn't matter what kind. Pours. Drinks. As --

-- a HAND on his shoulder. He turns. POPPY. A beat.

POPPY

Hey.

And another beat. These two having been through hell. As Devlin slams another drink -- and gives his sister a **massive hug**.

DEVLIN

hey.

And Poppy sits with him. Looking her brother over.

POPPY

Where's Dad?

DEVLIN

The house with Mom.

POPPY

Woof. Twenty years in the making.

DEVLIN

Seventeen I thought.

Poppy smiles. This fucking wise ass. Right as:

HUEY arrives. Just beyond Poppy. Pouring himself a drink as he looks to him, back to Devlin. Avoidance mingled with acceptance.

POPPY

Huey. This is my *brother*, Devlin.

And a beat with Huey. His response to being in Poppy's presence *palpable*. A conversation that must be had but not right now.

DEVLIN

Hey--

HUEY

--good to meet ya.

Poppy looks to Devlin a beat, before:

POPPY

Huey here's Mom's old Biker Boyfriend.

And Huey. Ever-so-slightly, *chokes* on his drink. This brutal, vicious fighter -- and his estranged daughter. *Fucking with him*.

DEVLIN

Damn. No shit? You the one gave her all those dumbass tattoos?

HUEY

...few of 'em, I guess.

DEVLIN

Huh. Mm. Welcome to the family.

And Huey nods at that. Devlin's generosity almost unintended, and yet... significant. Which is when -- **it dawns on Huey**.

HUEY

She still in the house?

EXT. THE KING FAMILY HOME - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

Huey strolls up, notices: **TIRE TRACKS** shooting out from where Devlin's car was parked -- **and is now gone**. He heads inside --

INT. THE KING FAMILY HOME - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

-- and sees MILDRED'S **BLOOD** at the floor of the bar. **FUCK**.

INT. DEVLIN'S CAR - MOVING - MEANWHILE - NIGHT

Jimmy Mike, still spiraling at the wheel. When Mildred's **PHONE BUZZES**. Quietly enough -- not that Jimmy Mike would notice anyway. She struggles for it: **HUEY CALLING**. She **FLIPS IT OPEN** --

-- looks to Jimmy Mike -- *and into her phone, signaling* to Huey:

MILDRED

Simon Stanley, Jimmy.

JIMMY MIKE

Yeah, Simon fucking Stanley.

MILDRED

Simon Stanley.

Jimmy Mike without a fucking clue he just gave himself away.

EXT. THE KING FAMILY HOME - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

And with Huey taking the lead, **THE LUCKY TRIDENTS ARE MOBILIZING**. Huey walking along with Bexter, Murphy, Devlin --

-- and Poppy trailing behind them, trying to eavesdrop.

HUEY

Still keep a flare on your bike?

BEXTER

'course.

Bexter's MOTORCYCLE, Huey reaches into a side pouch, finds a **WHITE PLASTIC BOX: "EMERGENCY"** -- opens it. A **FLARE GUN**. Perfect.

HUEY

We can't go rollin' in there loud
'til we know where she is, if we
do, they'll panic. You and the
crew'll hang back, wait for *this*.

Huey holds up the flare gun. Bexter understands.

HUEY (CONT'D)

Devlin. It's me, you, and Murphy.

Devlin nods. Sure. No problem. And as the The Lucky Tridents mount up, tear out of here -- as Devlin looks to spot: Poppy in the window. A silent exchange between the two --

-- before Devlin follows Huey and Murphy away. Poppy watching them go for a few beats.

EXT. SIMON STANLEY'S POCONOS "FORTRESS" - LATER - NIGHT

And, oddly. It's quiet. No mass amount of guards standing sentry. No anyone. Jimmy Mike just able to drive on up to:

EXT. SIMON STANLEY'S MASSIVE COTTAGE - NIGHT

Large, but modest. Nestled seemingly thousands of miles from anything -- as Jimmy Mike arrives, sees **FIVE GUARDS** on the front deck. So, he gets out. Looks these guys over a beat.

JIMMY MIKE

I'm lookin' for Simon *Stanton*.

SIMON steps out onto the porch. His jaw bandage sucks.

JIMMY MIKE (CONT'D)

You're the mouth guy? Guy got shot in the mouth?

Simon chuckles. Thinks that was funny.

SIMON

And you?

JIMMY MIKE

You don't know who I am?
(they do not)
I'm Jimmy fuckin' *Mike*.

And off Simon, amused by this lumbering clown. As Jimmy Mike moves to the back of Devlin's car -- **and pulls out Mildred**.

JIMMY MIKE (CONT'D)

And, see, I know how to create a little value in myself, you know. I mean, she's a little banged up, but she ain't leakin' too bad or nothin'.

As Simon registers that, looking Mildred over. Value indeed.

SIMON

Bring her around back.

Jimmy Mike, swaying in his revitalized sense of purpose --

INT. SIMON'S BACK ROOM - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

-- a HOOK IN THE CEILING. Mildred's zip-tied wrists slung onto it. Jimmy Mike having to do the honors; Mildred's eyes held on him --

-- and he clocks that, but. Beats back all hesitation.

SIMON (O.S.)
Why you doing this?

He turns to find Simon. Sitting in a nearby chair.

SIMON (CONT'D)
She's your wife, isn't she? Mother
of your kids?

And Jimmy Mike, eyes sloshing as he looks back at Mildred.
The slightest pain of regret, but, again: **he beats it back.**

JIMMY MIKE
She's a deserter.

And Mildred. This level of delusion truly something to behold.
As Simon nods. Not exactly impressed, but he'll take it --

SIMON
And what do you want from me?

-- Jimmy Mike drops into a chair. Needs the rest.

JIMMY MIKE
I wanna come back from the dead.
(off Simon's look)
Lemme come work for you. Lemme do
what it is I do. For **you**.

And Simon, *feigns* being impressed. As he looks to Mildred.

SIMON
How about that, Mildred? What a
little twist, huh?

As **Simon's PHONE buzzes**. He looks to it. Intrigued.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Excuse me a minute.

He steps out. Jimmy Mike, fidgeting, unable to look at his wife.

MILDRED
You can still fix this.

Jimmy Mike absorbing that from her. Contemplating his purpose.

JIMMY MIKE
I *am* fixing it.

Simon returns, looks to Mildred hanging. Approaches. A beat.

JIMMY MIKE (CONT'D)
You need *me* to do it?

SIMON

No, Jimmy Mike, don't worry. Your days of killing family members are over.

JIMMY MIKE

So, what about my offer then?
Workin' for you...

SIMON

Sure, buddy. Meantime, why don't you step outside. Get some air.

And a beat. Before a confused Jimmy Mike leaves Simon with Mildred. Quiet a few beats. Before Simon smiles, nods at her.

SIMON (CONT'D)

What was it you were telling me about hunting, Mildred? That I don't-- *work* for my way of life. But, see, I think you might just have me all wrong. That *maybe*. Maybe I'm just a *different* kinda hunter, you know?

As he puts his finger in her knee's bullet wound. She winces.

SIMON (CONT'D)

That deal we offered? My colleagues and I; we were being sincere. But then. I woulda started feeling a little wound in my pride. Woulda festered. And I woulda *waited* you out, you know, make sure you felt you were safe. Then I woulda come up there, sniffed you out, burned your shop down. Kill that Natalie chick, her dum-dum brother. Anyone else who you might care about.

And he pats her on her belly. Smiles nice.

SIMON (CONT'D)

So, for what it's worth. I suppose you made the right choice.

EXT. THE KING FAMILY HOME - MEANWHILE - NIGHT

And here's Poppy. All alone. On the porch, fidgeting, anxious. A few beats before -- she looks to her CAR. And --

-- **MOMENTS LATER:** Poppy's CAR tears away from the compound.

INT. MURPHY'S SPRINTER VAN - MOVING - NIGHT

Murphy slowing the van down. Huey and Devlin beside him.

MURPHY
Don't see no one.

HUEY
Let's get out here then.

Murphy pulls to a stop, they hop out --

EXT. SIMON STANLEY'S POCONOS "FORTRESS" - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

-- and Murphy, armed with an AUTOLOADING SHOTGUN; Huey, his AR PISTOL; and Devlin, with Mildred's M1A, holding it awkwardly.

HUEY
Remember. If we get spotted,
it's over. Gotta find her
before they find us.

And this place is *sprawling*. Tough to navigate. And even though it merely *seems* like no one is here -- it's clearly a trap.

INT. SIMON'S BACK ROOM - MEANWHILE - NIGHT

Simon sits now. His knees bouncing with anticipation. *Waiting* for something. As he stares at Mildred -- and pulls *his* THUMB DRIVE out. A chain around his neck, he holds it up, regards it.

SIMON
Final piece of the puzzle, huh? So
close, and yet...
(regards her hanging)
Gotta say though: you *did* get my
superiors all up in a tizzy. So.
Mission accomplished there, my friend.

And off Mildred, hanging here -- we HEAD OUT TO:

EXT. SOMEWHERE IN THE POCONOS - NEARBY - NIGHT

BEXTER and The Lucky Tridents, chomping at the bit, as Bexter checks his watch. Nervous -- when he spots:

POPPY'S CAR. Twisting up the road -- zooming *past* them. Poppy unable to see them through the trees, as we --

INT. POPPY'S CAR - MOVING - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

-- Poppy driving now. Gripping the wheel. Battling such anxiety, these tears, but keeping. Her fucking. *Composure* --

EXT. SIMON STANLEY'S POCONOS "FORTRESS" - MEANWHILE - NIGHT

Devlin, Huey, Murphy; still stalking about. When Devlin stops. *Notices: JIMMY MIKE. Smoking a cigarette. Odd. When --*

-- Poppy's CAR passes behind them. Devlin clocking that. *Shit.*

INT. SIMON'S BACK ROOM - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

Simon and Mildred, sitting in silence. When: a CAR is heard outside. Engine dying, door opening, shutting. Simon smiles.

SIMON

Ah, and who might that be?

The DOOR OPENS. And in steps POPPY. Drained. Dejected. As she stares at her mother. And Simon rises to greet her.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Is this the one and only Poppy?

As Simon lifts a SHOTGUN from behind a nearby BAR. Steps to Poppy, and *HANDS IT OVER TO HER*. She hesitates a beat --

SIMON (CONT'D)

Christ. What a long and winding little road, huh? Deals made, deals falling apart. Deals made again.

-- before she *TAKES IT*. Considers its heft in her hands. Simon holding on her. Boring deep into her eyes.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Some trust has gotta be re-earned, Poppy Walsh. Only one way to do that.

POPPY

Sometimes you've gotta forgive yourself.

Poppy repeating Mildred's own words back to her.

POPPY (CONT'D)

Or sometimes. Fuck it. Go your own way.

Which is when Poppy **RACKS THAT SHOTGUN**, and Mildred. Watching her daughter *tragically* do what must be done, which is:

POPPY (CONT'D)

Simon. I asked you for the keys to the kingdom --and you were stupid enough to give them to me--

MILDRED

--Poppy, *don't*--

But Poppy *swiftly*, albeit *clumsily*, SWINGS THE SHOTGUN --

-- **BWOOOOMMMMM** -- and has just SHOT SIMON IN THE SHOULDER --

-- SPINNING HIM TO THE GROUND, AS HE *DUCKS BEHIND HIS BAR* --

EXT. SIMON STANLEY'S POCONOS "FORTRESS" - MEANWHILE - NIGHT

-- and Huey and Devlin, *freezing* as they heard that GUNSHOT. And Devlin sees: *SO DID JIMMY MIKE, WHO'S PULLING OUT HIS .45, AND RUNNING INTO THE HOUSE -- AND DEVLIN MOVES FOR HIM --*

HUEY

-- *WAIT.*

-- Huey stopping him. Because Huey's noticing. In the windows. *MOVEMENT. LIGHTS TURN ON.* And INSIDE A **LIVING ROOM:**

GUARDS. All with WEAPON LOAD-OUTS. Ready for a party. Hearing the same gunshot everyone else heard -- and Devlin and Huey *slow* at this. Because holy fucking shit, is Simon prepared.

DEVLIN

You gotta *call* 'em. Now!

HUEY

We don't know where she is--

DEVLIN

--*CALL 'EM.*

And as Devlin starts to run in the direction where Jimmy Mike once was -- Huey pulls his FLARE GUN, and -- **FWOOOOOSSSSHHHHH** --

-- the flare shooting up and out into the night sky -- and:

WITH BEXTER

Watching as the FLARE ARCS THROUGH THE SKY. **WHISTLES** -- AND: THE LUCKY TRIDENTS REV THEIR FUCKING ENGINES, **EN ROUTE TO:**

INT. SIMON'S BACK ROOM - MEANWHILE - NIGHT

Here's Simon behind his bar, pulling a HANDGUN. RACKING IT. FUCKING *FURIOUS*. Takes a beat to examine his wound, before:

SIMON

Fucking-godFUCK. Th'hell is it with you Kings, huh? A *gift horse*, the fucking **MOUTH**, you understand that? *Christ*.

And find Poppy, zero experience in standoffs and yet here she stands, SHOTGUN trained on the bar, quietly, *tensely*, waiting for Simon to make the slightest fucking move, as:

MILDRED

Poppy-- go. Get outta here.

But Poppy can't leave Mildred with Simon. She's got him pinned, just with no plan to get them out of this. When --

-- the DOOR BURSTS OPENS. **JIMMY MIKE**, his .45 raised, but -- *confused*. Because here's Poppy. His daughter. Been ages.

JIMMY MIKE

...Poppy? Th'hell you doing here, girl?

But Poppy doesn't waver. Keeps the shotgun on Simon's bar...

SIMON

That you, Jimmy? You want the job, then now's your chance, champ. Shoot her. Shoot 'em both.

Everyone slows at that. The first time it's been vocalized. Poppy stealing a side-glance at Jimmy Mike, as -- in the BACKGROUND, we can hear: *THE TRIDENTS COMING*.

Engines from hell. As Jimmy Mike locks eyes with Mildred a beat. Solemn. Before he raises his .45, *trains it on Poppy*.

EXT. SIMON STANLEY'S POCONOS "FORTRESS" - MEANWHILE - NIGHT

And we track with HUEY. The Tridents arriving all around him, which means the GUARDS *inside* are now coming *outside* -- Huey running in the direction Devlin went, when -- *HE'S BLINDSIDED* --

-- A GUARD. Knocking Huey to the ground. But Huey's *quick with it*. Kicking the guy's legs out, jumping to his feet -- and now this sudden fight to the death. Nothing fancy. No martial arts.

Just pure rough-n-tumble *violence*. Raw. Improvised. Kill each other. As, *around* them, a BATTLE BUILDS. THE TRIDENTS HAVE ARRIVED.

INT. SIMON'S BACK ROOM - MEANWHILE - NIGHT

Jimmy Mike with his .45 on Poppy. Poppy with her shotgun on the bar. And Mildred, fucking *helpless*. As Simon --

-- the audacity of this asshole. *He lights a cigarette.*

SIMON

Jimmy, Jimmy, Jimmy, Jimmy. What's it gonna be now, friend?

And a beat with Jimmy Mike here. Crossing a rubicon. As he tenses, raises his .45 a bit more, about to pull the trigger, when --

-- Devlin. Out of fucking *nowhere*. Comes CRASHING INTO JIMMY MIKE. **HIS .45 SCATTERING**. And now, here's Devlin, demonstrating his prowess as a boxer once again, but here --

-- a son. Fighting his abusive father. There's an intensity. One that Jimmy Mike, for all his abilities, isn't prepared for. This brutal *thrashing about*, Jimmy Mike trying to subdue --

-- **AS POPPY**. Comes around the bar, her shotgun raised, only to find -- SIMON IS GONE. *Fuck*. As she notices: a **bloodied handprint**. Streaking across a nearby SWINGING DOOR --

-- and as Poppy goes after him -- here's Devlin trying to give himself an advantage. Trying to establish a boxer's proximity. This push and pull, until -- *finally* --

-- he hits Jimmy Mike with a one-two, *stunning* him, before another combo, **and Jimmy Mike's on the fucking floor**.

Devlin huffing a beat. Unsure what he should do next. Kill him? Kill his father? Which is when -- he snaps out of it.

Realizes: Mildred. His mother. Strung up. He quickly moves to her, reaches down to his ANKLE SHEATH -- **BUT HIS KNIFE'S GONE** --

MILDRED

-- *DEVLIN* --

-- but it's too late. As Devlin turns: **shumpf**. Here's Jimmy Mike. Driving Devlin's own KNIFE INTO HIS FUCKING CHEST.

And a look between these two. A father killing his son. A quiet beat. Mildred watching as Devlin slides to the floor.

JIMMY MIKE

You know. This really is something I shoulda done a long fucking time ago--

--but before he can spew any of his bullshit, MILDRED **SWINGS HER LEGS UP**, HOOKS ONE AROUND JIMMY MIKE'S **ARM**, THE OTHER AROUND HIS **NECK** -- and now he's locked right on up in this struggle --

-- as MILDRED'S HOOK IS BEGINNING TO *CRUMBLE* FROM THE CEILING, as she **PULLS DOWN FUCKING HARD**, USING JIMMY MIKE AS AN ANCHOR --

-- before she finally comes **CRASHING DOWN ONTO JIMMY MIKE**, doing her best to keep him gripped up -- but he wrestles free --

-- and Mildred tries to drive a **SHOULDER** into Jimmy Mike, but he **GRABS HER BY HER ZIP TIES**, *WHIPS HER TO THE FLOOR* --

-- and he **AIMS**. But then, *AGAIN*, THE DOOR OPENS. **HUEY**. But Jimmy Mike wastes no time -- **BLAM-BLAM** -- and yeah, HE'S SHOT HUEY --

-- the tables constantly fucking turning in this room --

-- *BUT HUEY'S STILL COMING FOR JIMMY MIKE*. These beasts. Two streets. Two different styles of killing human beings. Now in their own fucking fight to the death, until, Mildred, **NOTICES**:

JIMMY MIKE'S .45 on the floor. And it happens so fucking fast, *she SWIPES it*, and: **BLAM. BLAM. TWO TO JIMMY MIKE'S HEAD**. He's gone.

And Mildred considers that a beat. Such a complicated history meeting such an uncomplicated end. As Mildred, tries to stand --

-- but her shot up knee has other issues -- struggling to her feet. Looking at a dead Devlin. Her dead son. All of this too much. As Huey. Also tries to stand. But his **GUNSHOT WOUNDS**.

He simply falls. This can't be the end. It can't. He's come this far, and yet, there seems to be no farther. Mildred moves to him, tries to *LIFT HIM*. Nothing dramatic --

-- *but it's not working*. Huey's too incapacitated. They huff a beat more. Growing more helpless.

HUEY

Hey, stop-- stop.

Huey, hurt real bad. He gestures to her, pulls a **SMALL BLADE** from his belt -- and cuts her ties loose. Tries to catch his breath.

HUEY (CONT'D)

Go after her--

MILDRED

--no, I know, but--

HUEY (CONT'D)

--woulda liked to gone hunting with you, Mildie. Heh. Maybe in the next life, huh?

And she doesn't want to leave him again. She *can't*. But...
 Poppy... So. Mildred smiles as much as she can at the thought.

HUEY (CONT'D)
 C'mon. Go save our girl.

And yeah. Go save their girl... So, she takes one more look at Huey -- before looking to his nearby AR PISTOL. She hoists it. A HANDGUN. A KNIFE. RACKS. LOADS. SHEATHES. *LET'S END THIS.*

One more complicated look with a fading Huey, before --

INT. A HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

-- Mildred's on the move, lurking down this hallway, as we SEE OUTSIDE: **THE BATTLE**. THE LUCKY TRIDENTS v. SIMON STANLEY'S BUNDLE OF MOBSTER GUARDS **IS IN FULL FUCKING SWING** --

EXT. SIMON STANLEY'S "FORTRESS" - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

-- Mildred comes *OUTSIDE*. Finally **sees: GUNFIGHTING AND FIST-FISTING AND KNIFE-FIGHTING ALL AROUND HER**. But she only cares about one thing. *Staying the fuck alive, and:*

MILDRED
 Poppy--

Mildred's voice meek. Desperately searching for her daughter. However -- **there's still a FIGHT to endure** -- Mildred's attacked, but musters her strength -- a swing, a miss --

-- she uses the butt of the AR, CRACKS a KILLER to the ground, **BLAM-BLAM**, dispatches -- and, again. The fun here. *The brand of fucking FIGHTER Mildred is*. But only **one. Thing. Matters:**

MILDRED (CONT'D)
 POPPY!

Mildred navigating her way through trees, fighting, butting, taking cover from gunfire -- when she's ATTACKED AGAIN, as:

AN EXPLOSION IN THE HOUSE -- this battle getting out of hand, Mildred's hobbled knee being of no issue. She's fighting with an absolute goddamned *passion*. Because only one. Thing. Matters --

ELSEWHERE IN THE WOODS

-- we find **POPPY**. On her own hunt, but still way the hell out of her element. Searching. Dodging. Ducking. *Searching*, when:

SIMON. Hobbled by himself. An ABDOMEN WOUND now. Hurt, but making his way for a **CAR**, parked in a DRIVEWAY downhill.

POPPY

Simon--

He stops. Turns to Poppy. Almost can't believe it. What a shame.

SIMON

Deal was a deal, Poppy.

POPPY

Yeah, well. Family's *family*.

A beat. Simon, almost *smiling* at how fucking *adorable*, as --

-- POPPY MOVES TO LIFT her SHOTGUN, but -- **--BLAM.**

And Poppy stumbles. This shotgun, again, too bulky, Simon too quick. As we see: **Simon has just shot Poppy through her THROAT.**

And he doesn't nod. Doesn't say anything. Just watches Poppy fall to a knee -- and then to the ground -- and Simon leaves --

-- as here lies Poppy. Writhing. Grasping for her throat, but she can't -- as we RACK TO: MILDRED. Stumbling across this --

-- and she slows. Approaches Poppy, kneels down to her. Desperate to do something, *anything*, but -- Poppy's wound...

MILDRED

Poppy... *Christ*, please. **Poppy...**

And **Poppy can't look at her mother** -- this unbearable shame --

POPPY

I'm sorry-- I'm so sorry--

-- as Mildred notices: Poppy's *hand*. So, she takes it, *comforting*--

MILDRED

No, you can't go. You *can't*--

POPPY

--make sure she's safe, **Mom**. *Louise*--

A beat. The two of them processing this moment here. Mildred saying goodbye to her daughter -- *Poppy calling her "Mom"*.

POPPY (CONT'D)

--make sure she's safe.

As Poppy stops moving. Her eyes distant. Life gone. And Mildred considers that a moment. Every failure. Every mistake. Festering. *Here*. Which is when she spots, down that hill:

SIMON GETTING IN HIS CAR. Mildred's eyes narrowing, this rage festering as she lurches to her feet, shuffles the hell down to:

THE DRIVEWAY

Just as Simon's CAR SPEEDS OFF. But Mildred looks -- and lo and fucking behold: **A LUCKY TRIDENT MOTORCYCLE** on its side.

A QUICK GLIMPSE: The motorcycle propped up, Mildred climbing on, **ROARING** it to fucking life -- **AND SHE ZOOMS THE FUCK OFF.**

EXT. A VERY WINDING ROAD - NIGHT

And we're with Mildred, finally getting to see how she's not only a capable fighter -- **but she can fucking RIDE** --

-- handling her speed, the turns, keeping her eyes on Simon's fleeing car -- these hills no fucking joke, but she's got it, as:

EXT. SMALL DOWNTOWN - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

This tiny little town up here. Everything closed for the night. Peaceful -- until **SIMON'S CAR SQUEALS** OUT OF A TURN --

INT. SIMON'S CAR - MOVING - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

-- Simon struggling to control the wheel, because he's *really* fucking **HURT**. The car careens, **SLAMS INTO A STREET LIGHT** --

EXT. SMALL DOWNTOWN - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

-- and Simon stumbles out. *Laughs* to himself. Right as. Mildred. Coming to a stop on her motorcycle. Simon with a bloodied smile.

Mildred steps off. Simon pulls a **HANDGUN**. A few beats before:

BLAM-BLAM-BLAM-BLAM-BLAM- Mildred and Simon **EXCHANGING FIRE** --

-- until. Simon runs out of bullets. **LAUGHS** again. And Mildred, not out of ammo -- clocks that. So, she tosses the AR --

-- and on the march. Simon **PULLS A KNIFE**, Mildred, closing their distance on this lone street fast. When they reach each other --

-- Simon surprisingly has the upper hand, KICKING MILDRED'S SHOT KNEE OUT -- Mildred lurching, but fighting back quick --

-- and what's clear: the only reason Simon even stands a fucking chance here is because Mildred is fucking **wounded**.

However. Simon. Makes one slight misstep, and -- *locks arms with Mildred*. Stuck a beat. As Mildred, a moment of clarity:

MILDRED

See that, Simon? The things you
can learn from a hunt?

And Simon. No clue what she's referring to, just trying to get the upper hand -- but he can't unlock himself from Mildred --

MILDRED (CONT'D)

You realize: an animal, it
doesn't ever deserve to *suffer*.

-- **SHHPFF**. Mildred. DRIVING SIMON'S OWN KNIFE up into his THROAT. Looking him in his eye, looking right back at her --

MILDRED (CONT'D)

Because you've learned to *respect*
it. *Relate* to it, even.

-- and he DROPS. *CHOKING ON HIS OWN BLOOD*. It's agony. Miserable. As Mildred steps over him, raises Jimmy Mike's .45 --

MILDRED (CONT'D)

But *you*? You're no animal, are
you, Simon?

-- which is when she *lowers* it. Watching his writhing frame --

MILDRED (CONT'D)

No, you're something else entirely.

-- and holds a beat. Holds another. Watching Simon *suffer*. His eyes descending into a pathetic *plea*. Mildred considers that --

-- before she kneels down to him -- AND PULLS HIS THUMB DRIVE FROM HIS NECK. And we GO WIDE. Mildred in the distance. This lone warrior on a very quiet night. As we then -- **CUT TO BLACK**.

Only for a few beats. Before -- OPEN BACK ON:

INT. A MERCEDES - MOVING - DAY

A **WOMAN**. 30s. Someone we've yet to meet. Giant white sunglasses. Thousand dollar suit. Elite of the elite. In the backseat.

She rides in silence. Until her car slows. Her window rolls down.

THIS WOMAN
I'm here for Mildred King.

GUARD (O.S.)
Name?

THIS WOMAN
IDA LONG.

And the window rolls back up. **IDA** with an appointment, as we --

EXT. KING'S LONG CUTS - DAY

-- reveal that Ida Long is arriving at KING'S LONG CUTS.

IDA (PRE-LAP)
*We were unaware of Simon's deal
with your **daughter**.*

INT. SEBASTIAN KING'S FORMER OFFICE - LATER - DAY

CLOSE: Mildred. Pale. Gaunt. A heroine at the end of her tale. As Mildred looks to Ida, sitting across from her now.

IDA
To say it was *inappropriate* would,
of course, be an understatement.

Mildred nods. *Thanks for that.*

IDA (CONT'D)
FBI's been trying to place you at
the scene, but they can't. Which
is great, but. We did have *one*
concern: You suffered wounds--

MILDRED
--no one went to a hospital.

Ida nods at that. *Great.* These two feeling each other out.

IDA
So, then. As we discussed, we're
prepared to offer a **decoupling** from
King's Long Cuts. As long as you're
willing to reverse the transactions.

Mildred looks around this office a beat. Nods to herself.

MILDRED

You can have the place. I'll still reverse 'em, just -- give me up north. Full independence.

Ida, taking Mildred in a beat, all that she's been through.

IDA

You know, I work for my father myself. Sunrise Holdings. Know what it's like to live in a flawed man's shadow, always making his little *mistakes*.

(beat)

Which is why, Lordy, if I ever got the chance to take over? Come on. You'd find no humility here, friend.

Ida shifts, something about this next part uncomfortable.

IDA (CONT'D)

And while I wish I could say my father's typically a *predictable* man, or even a *forgiving* one... even with this deal -- I'd just like to express some caution. Because the trouble is gonna lie in the issue of **Simon**.

And Mildred looks to her. Waiting for the explanation.

IDA (CONT'D)

I knew my *brother* well. Which is why my grievances are quite *limited*, to say the least. But my *father's*? Well...

Mildred reading into what Ida's signaling to her.

MILDRED

A forgiving man.

Ida gestures with a frown. *Precisely*. So. Mildred forces a terse little smile. Weakened by such pain in her eyes. But also:

MILDRED (CONT'D)

Well. In any case then. He'd know where to find me, wouldn't he?

And off Mildred, Ida, a mutual respect not long for this world --

-- we **DISSOLVE TO:**

EXT. A FOREST - ANOTHER CRACK-OF-DAWN BLUE KINDA MORNING

November. This dense forest now skeletal trees beneath gray skies. Autumn a distant memory. And this time, its serenity is unbroken --

-- no animal cries. The wind sits still. And as before, TWO HUNTERS enter frame, their backs to us, following them to:

ANOTHER **BUCK**. However, *this* one is dead. Arrow lodged right through its heart. As we reverse to find Mildred; Natalie.

Natalie as before; Mildred -- well. Her bruises are healing, her eyes are not -- but they're still as present as anything.

INT. NATALIE'S DAD'S PICKUP TRUCK - LATER - DAY

Natalie drives this time. Mildred the passenger. Knight's Highway humming along this quiet morning. Until:

MILDRED

You tell the Sheriff you recognized them?

NATALIE

No.

Natalie staying out of the Ivan investigation being for the best.

MILDRED

What were people saying then?
When they found out I knew them?

Natalie struggles to respond, Mildred clocking that.

MILDRED (CONT'D)

Yeah. People up here always pretended they didn't know about my family, but--

NATALIE

--no. It was nothing like that.

Natalie wipes away a tear. Takes a breath to compose herself.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

They were just worried. **We** were worried. All of us.

(beat)

We were all just hoping you were gonna make it home.

Mildred. Smiles small at that thought. Her neighbors. Community. *The family that she's come into.* And as we head outside --

EXT. KNIGHT'S HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS - DAY

-- watch as **NATALIE'S PICKUP TRUCK** ZOOMING away, as --

MILDRED (V.O.)
*My mother's name was **Louise**. Means
 a lot to me for you to know that.*

-- a V.O. kicking in. Mildred, but it's unclear from where. As:

INT. A RENTAL CAR - A LITTLE WHILE AGO - DAY

Mildred. A few steps in the past. The driver's seat of a rental car -- and looking out at a spot called **FINN'S IRISH PUB**. MOURNERS entering, leaving. Mildred considering them --

MILDRED (V.O.)
*Because I think she understood the
 duality of families long before I did.*

-- before she licks a **SMALL ENVELOPE**, seals it. A beat, before --

INT. FINN'S IRISH PUB - LATER - DAY

-- a PORTRAIT OF **POPPY** on a TABLE. People placing **SYMPATHY CARDS** beside it. Flowers. Some gifts. This **WAKE** a somber vibe in here. And Mildred. Lost in the sight of Poppy's photograph.

MILDRED (V.O.)
The ones you come into.

As we find BRADLEY across the room. Speaking with a family member indiscernibly, when he looks to spot MILDRED at the table, conflicted as he eyes her. And when Mildred notices him --

MILDRED (V.O.)
The ones you make.

-- they hold on each other a beat. So much to say with no words required. Which is why Mildred gives him a *slight* nod. And while Bradley can't find it in his heart to respond --

MILDRED (V.O.)
*And there's -- no real way to know
 which one might... well. Cause a
 little trouble. Until they reveal
 themselves. But **your** mother --*

-- he can't hide his curiosity. When Mildred places her **SMALL CARD** in the pile. Takes one more look at him -- and leaves.

INT. THE WALSH RESIDENCE - LATER THAT DAY

A FLURRY OF SYMPATHY CARDS scatter across a KITCHEN TABLE. And find BRADLEY, eagerly parsing through them, *searching for --*

MILDRED (V.O.)
*-- your name meant something
different to your mother than mine
did to me. Because your mother
figured it out. And she was right:*

-- MILDRED'S CARD. He grabs it, AND SLOWS. Suddenly reluctant. Fighting an urge. Before he flips it over, moves to open it --

MILDRED (V.O.)
*You fight like hell for **both** of them.*

-- and then stops. Makes a decision not to. Unclear why at first.

INT. A NURSERY - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

CLOSE: A more MODEST PHOTOGRAPH OF POPPY. Atop a DRESSER. Poppy holding LOUISE in it. When MILDRED'S CARD is set beside it --

MILDRED (V.O.)
*You do what needs to be done to
protect the ones you **love**.*

-- where we find it reads: **TO LOUISE, WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT.**

MILDRED (V.O.)
*That's why I'll always be here,
Louise. To fight like hell. For
you. Just as your mother knew to.*

Come out from the photograph. Find Louise asleep in her CRIB. And Bradley exiting, closing her door behind him.

MILDRED (V.O.)
*Because another thing I've come to
realize. Just as important --*

EXT. MIDGE'S MEATS - LATER - MORNING

Natalie's truck pulls up, find her and Mildred looking out at Midge's Meats, its lights still powered down this morning.

NATALIE
C'mon. Supposed to be lit by now.

Mildred. Considering that a beat. Before she smiles small.

MILDRED
Fucking new guy, am I right?

And as they open their doors to get out --

MILDRED (V.O.)
*-- when life gives-- **whichever**
family a second chance --*

INT. MIDGE'S MEATS - BACK ROOM - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

-- the door opens. Mildred and Natalie hauling the buck in, when they stop. Looking to find JACKSON prepping the place, just as they did before, but this time, someone else is here --

-- **HUEY**, coming out from one of the freezers, box of meat in his arms. Still a bit wobbly. Still favoring one side. But still able to carve some meats. And as he smiles at them --

MILDRED (V.O.)
-- you don't let it go.

-- and as Mildred smiles back, gets to hauling the buck --

EXT. MIDGE'S MEATS - CONTINUOUS - MORNING

-- those NEON LIGHTS finally flicker to life. A bit late today, but. Coming to life nonetheless.

end.