



PARABLE X

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FADE IN:

EXT. MOUNTAINS - NARROW GRAVEL ROAD - LATE AFTERNOON

Sunshine pours down out of the cloudless, rich blue sky, blanketing the glistening, snow-covered vista.

A TAXI's tires CRUNCH gravel down the trail, stopping at a rope gate - NATIONAL FOREST - dangling between wooden posts.

A MAN climbs out of the back of the cab and reaches into his pocket with a scarred hand - the disfigurement is in the shape of an X, which is how we will know this man, simply: X.

He hands the driver three \$100 bills, then grabs a backpack from the back seat and slides into the straps.

CAB DRIVER

How long you gonna be?

X

Not long.

X zips up his sweatshirt and takes off down the path.

EXT. MOUNTAINS - WOODS - LATE AFTERNOON

X's gaunt face, buzzed head, and bagged eyes cast a ghostly, almost sickly, image of a once-handsome man.

He trudges through the thicket of the woods.

EXT. MOUNTAINS - FIELD - LATE AFTERNOON

X steps into a field and slows, scanning the ground around him on his way to the center. Then he finds it -- a patch of dirt out of place in the green, snowless grass.

X removes his pack, kneels and sifts through supplies: lighter fluid, matches, a nondescript prescription bottle of white pills, a bottle of water, and a foldable spade.

He retrieves the spade, unfolds it into a sturdy shovel and spears it into the dirt. He begins digging.

Now sweaty, he unearths icy mud and earth before the spade CLINGS. He kneels and brushes away loose dirt with his hands, revealing a metal case the size of a small carry-on.

He heaves the case from the ground and opens it. An old parachute expands, snaking its way out of the box. X pulls it out and pours the 'chute into a pile next to him in the hole.

X then grabs a stack of cash from the box and pockets it, along with a newspaper with sharpie writing on it.

Lastly, he retrieves a pistol -- a police-issue M1911. He pulls the pistol's slide and checks the chamber. Then he grabs a clip from his backpack and pops it in. X evaluates a few scrapes on the gun's grip. Mishandling at some point.

Moments later, X is dousing the parachute with the lighter fluid. He flicks a match, tosses it, and the parachute goes up in flames. X then tosses the stack of money into the fire.

He stands there, his hands in his sweatshirt pocket. Watching the parachute and the money burn.

Then his fingers discover something in the sweatshirt - a plastic bracelet, like one received at a hospital. The writing on it: PINE GROVE REHABILITATION.

He pulls out the bracelet and studies it sentimentally. Then he tosses it on the fire and it, too, goes up in flames.

INT. TAXI - LATE AFTERNOON

As the cab driver snores peacefully against the window, we see X emerge from the woods and walk toward the car. When he reaches the driver's side, he knocks on the window, JARRING the tubby old man. X climbs into the back, where we are.

X

Let's go.

Before the cab driver can say anything, X hands him another \$100 bill. The cabbie takes it, reluctantly this time.

INT. TAXI - NIGHT

X rests his head on the back seat's window, squinting. He soaks in the drive. Red taillights reflected off every wet surface, as if warning him to stop whatever he's about to do.

He turns his attention to the cab-TV embedded in the back of the seat in front of him. NEWS reporting on the weather - RAINY/SNOW mixture. Then it switches to Jimmy Kimmel Live.

Paying closer attention, we see a banner graphic scroll by:
AMBER ALERT - 12 Y.O. GIRL MISSING FOR THREE WEEKS. TAKEN FROM HER HOME IN ARLINGTON. POLICE REQUEST ANY INFORMATION--

X wipes his bagged, heavy eyes. He suddenly COUGHS. Raggedly.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

X hops out into the fine mist of the evening weather. He reaches into his pack, pulls a few \$100s and hands them over. The cab eventually pulls away and passes him, into the sea of traffic. Then X begins his journey down the road.

EXT. AFFLUENT NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

X walks down the cul-de-sac, staring up between the expensive houses and the newspaper he pulled from the box. We see permanent marker written onto the newspaper: **JIMMY - 121 OAK STREET**. He glances at the addresses. 121 Oak. A Victorian.

X ambles by a bird fountain and past the garage before finally disappearing into darkness. We wait on the image for a long moment before the garage door opens, revealing a high-end SUV idling in the large space.

The SUV backs out and drives off. And as the garage door closes, X appears from the darkness; kneels down and slides under, into the garage.

INT. VICTORIAN HOUSE - NIGHT

X wanders through the GARAGE, studying items as if they're all foreign to him. Then he's in the MUD ROOM, then through the door and into the KITCHEN, where photos on the fridge grab at his attention.

His eyes drift from picture to picture, taking in a happy family. A mother and her teen son. Then X's eyes fall onto a COLLEGE ACCEPTANCE LETTER to Yale Law for: **JAMES KENMORE**. X's eyes darken. A hatred suddenly filling them.

JIMMY (O.S.)

Mom?!? What'd you forget--

JIMMY, the gangly teen from the photo, appears on the stairs. Sees X and stops. Stunned. X pulls the M1911.

Jimmy can't move - paralyzed by fear...

X

I'm sorry.

Then in a heartbeat it happens. Jimmy opens his mouth to plead. To bargain. To ask why. But nothing comes.

Because X pulls the trigger. CRACK. The shot echoes indoors.

And blood paints the stairwell wall as Jimmy falls. X is stunned, as if surprised that he actually pulled the trigger.

X then begins COUGHING violently. He reaches into his bag and pulls another pill -- his shaky fingers spill them onto the floor. He kneels quickly, scooping them up.

Then he dry-swallows a pill and calms himself. Stares intently at Jimmy's body. As if waiting for something.

The teen suddenly CONVULSES, WHEEZING a breath. Blood pooling out of the kid's chest - not a heart shot, but damn close.

X's face slacks with the smallest hint of relief. He picks up the phone. Dials 9-1-1. Sets the phone down.

He slowly sets the M1911 next to the phone, leaving the murder weapon purposefully. Then he walks out.

EXT. OVERPASS - NIGHT

An old sedan is parked on the side of the two-lane overpass.

INT. GAGE'S SEDAN - NIGHT

Inside, ROBERT GAGE (40s) waits patiently, the radio pumping R&B. His early-onset crow's feet wrinkle as he spots an old Caddie pulling up behind him in the rear view.

A FIGURE hops out of the Caddie and walks up to the sedan, opening the door--

GAGE

'Bout fucking time.

NOLAN BRADFORD (30s) - handsome, pragmatic, with a hint of urbanized attitude - hops in. Tosses a drug baggy to Gage.

NOLAN

Think that'll do?

GAGE

Jesus, we didn't need heroin. You could've got-- Where the fuck'd you get this?

NOLAN

You really wanna know?

Gage mulls it over as Nolan pulls his pistol -- a .45 M1911 pistol that looks eerily similar to the one that X used to kill Jimmy. Nolan empties the clip.

GAGE

Lot a shit can go wrong.

NOLAN

You brought this to me. If we're gonna find DeMarco, this is how we do it.

GAGE

You really think Bennie'll roll?

NOLAN

Only thing I'm worried about is whether Bennie'll actually pull the trigger. As long as does that, he'll roll.

Nolan notices headlights; a Subaru WRX (rice rocket) passes.

NOLAN (CONT'D)

Look look, here we go.

Gage starts the sedan, pulls out and follows the WRX. Nolan slides the M1911's clip into his pocket. Empties the pistol's chamber. His gun is completely empty.

Gage keeps a comfortable distance from the sports car.

NOLAN (CONT'D)

Aaaand...

Nolan flips the switch on a dash light -- police issue blue. It FLASHES, illuminating Nolan and Gage in an eerie hue.

Gage closes the distance -- both men are wary.

NOLAN (CONT'D)

(about the Subaru)

Don't you run. Dooooon't run.

The WRX pulls to the side of the road. Gage slides the sedan up behind it, the blue light still flashing.

NOLAN (CONT'D)

You know what to do.

EXT. URBAN STREETS - NIGHT

Nolan and Gage climb out of the sedan, flashlights ready as they approach the import. Nolan reaches the driver's side.

NOLAN

Turn off the engine and put your hands out. I said turn off the--

BENNIE (O.S.)

A'right, god damn!

The import's engine shuts off. Hands appear out the window. Nolan approaches the driver, peering in. BENNIE, a thug decked in street colors and a platinum grill, peers out.

BENNIE (CONT'D)

Ah, shit, Nolan. I thought you was the fuckin' real shit.

NOLAN

I need some info, Bennie.

BENNIE

(looking Nolan over)

You know my M.O, man: know shit, but know shit.

NOLAN

Yeah, well, you're gonna have to put that M.O. on a shelf. Need to know where your cousin's holed up.

BENNIE

DeMarco? Shit, man, he's underground. Ain't nobody know.

NOLAN

Get outta the car.

BENNIE

Man, c'mon.

NOLAN

Get out, Bennie. Slowly. I ain't in the mood to repeat myself.

Bennie slowly climbs out of the car.

NOLAN (CONT'D)

Step over here. Keep your hands on your head.

(then to Gage)

You wanna search it?

BENNIE
This some bullshit. This some
bullshit right here. I've done
helped you with other shit. Why you
gotta be doin' this to me?

Nolan gives him a sidelong "talk and we'll stop" look.

BENNIE (CONT'D)
You know what? Go on. Search the
fuckin' car. Ain't nothin' in it.

Gage, across the car, looks right at Bennie. Pulls the heroin
baggy. Holds it up, then tosses it into the WRX.

BENNIE (CONT'D)
Oh, ok. That's how it's gon' be?

NOLAN
That's how it is, *homey*.

BENNIE
Look, whatchu want him for anyway?

NOLAN
You know damn well what we want him
for.

BENNIE
If I knew what you wanted him for,
I wouldn't be askin'. All I know's
DeMarco had beef with them Souldja
Boys 'round the way. Got themselves
into a little scuffle up north.

NOLAN
Yeah, that "scuffle" ended with two
kids catching a few slugs that
weren't meant for them. Ten year
old girl and her fourteen year old
brother. You know about that?

Bennie eyes Nolan, then Gage. Remains defiantly quiet.

NOLAN (CONT'D)
Gage, you wanna call it in?

Gage steps away, back to his car. Waits a beat, watching as
Bennie grows nervous.

BENNIE
C'mon, man. You know I can't be
goin' back. Don't do me like this.

NOLAN

You had your chance.

Bennie's nervousness amplifies. Nolan shoves Bennie against the import and grabs for his cuffs - the sign. Gage notices it. And pulls his phone. Dials.

Nolan's phone RINGS. It's Gage - a ploy - but Nolan plays it off, answering--

NOLAN (CONT'D)

Yo. No, this is a bad time.

Nolan studies Bennie from the corner of his eye, seeing Bennie weigh the gravity of the situation. Then, it happens. Bennie SLAMS his head his back, head-butting Nolan.

And then Bennie's gone, SPRINTING AWAY.

Nolan grabs at his bleeding nose.

NOLAN (CONT'D)

Fuck!

Then he spots Bennie sprinting through lawns. Nolan puts the pain on the back burner and chases after the thug.

Nolan closes the distance quickly as they round a corner. They race along the side of a few houses, hopping patio furniture and toys before Bennie hits a fence, attempting to climb it. Nolan BARRELS into him, knocking them both back.

Nolan's gun comes away, sliding along the ground and scratching its coating. Nolan hops up, but Bennie is at the gun -- grabs it. Has it trained right on Nolan.

NOLAN (CONT'D)

Don't do anything stupid.

(then)

Put the gun down.

(then)

Fuck me? Fuck you!

BENNIE

Shut the fuck up!

(then)

Fuck you!

BENNIE (CONT'D)

You think I won't? You think I'm playin', whiteboy? I'll fuck your crooked-ass up.

Nolan doesn't give Bennie the option to back down -- he walks defiantly towards him, catalyzing Bennie's fear and anger.

NOLAN

You won't pull the trigger, you pussy ass motherfu--

Nolan's almost there when Bennie tenses -- pulls the trigger.

CLICK. Nothing happens. He pulls again. CLICK. Nothing.

Nolan smacks the gun away and uses the confused moment to deck Bennie, sending him staggering back into the fence.

Nolan slams Bennie in the gut -- a boxer's jab. Bennie drops, unable to catch his breath. With Bennie down, Nolan takes a moment to poke at his own nose and blooming black eyes.

Gage jogs over, gun in hand.

GAGE
He actually do it?

Nolan, pinching his nose, just looks at Gage, who starts laughing. Nolan shakes his head, but finds it amusing.

Gage kneels to Bennie. Open palmed slap to Bennie's head. Then he grabs Bennie's head and cranes it around to a security camera on the nearby house.

GAGE (CONT'D)
Smile, fuckhead. You just tried to kill a cop on camera. That and the heroin gets you, what, raped in prison, I'd say. Now, you wanna tell us where DeMarco is? Or should I let all them big men know your tight little ass is on its way?

INT. DENNY'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Nolan is staring into the mirror, evaluating his black eyes and broken nose. He's ragged. Worn. Now beaten. He puts his fingers on either side of his nose to set it.

CRUNCH. Nolan GRUNTS through the pain.

INT. DENNY'S - NIGHT

We follow Nolan out of the bathroom, through the semi-crowded diner and back to a booth, where Gage is sitting over a plate of finished breakfast and coffee. Nolan slides in.

GAGE
(playfully worried)
You gonna be ok?

NOLAN
Fuck off.

GAGE

I can get you a tampon if you want.

NOLAN

How 'bout I break your nose and you tell me if it hurts.

GAGE

So you're saying you were whining?

NOLAN

He broke my fuckin' nose.

GAGE

Well, I think that shade of purple really brings out the color in your eyes.

Nolan smiles mockingly. Then finishes some of his food and drinks his coffee cautiously, avoiding hitting his nose.

GAGE (CONT'D)

You know... Bennie's a lying little shit. What if he just gave us some random shit-hole address? We give that to the Feds, they go looking and find nothing. Now we look like assholes and Bennie's walkin' outta county in two weeks.

NOLAN

He didn't lie.

Nolan returns to his food.

GAGE

"He didn't lie"? You say it like it's not possible.

NOLAN

'Cause he didn't. Nobody lies when they're up against the wall. That hero shit only happens on TV.

GAGE

People lie under pressure all the time. It's what they do.

NOLAN

They lie because they're not completely bent over.

(MORE)

NOLAN (CONT'D)

If you find what really matters to 'em and press on it, threaten it, eliminate all options but the ones you give 'em... they'll show you who they really are. They may not give you what you want, but they'll show you the truth. We've seen guys sell their souls for bullshit. And we've seen guys die for families that fucked them over. I know Bennie. And he's a rat. And a rat'll eat concrete when they're starving. They do what it takes to survive. Bennie had two options: fuck over his cousin for two weeks in county or stay loyal and die in prison.

GAGE

But you're saying Bennie picked survival. I'm saying he didn't. DeMarco'll find out it was his cousin that gave us the address... He ain't gonna make it outta county.

NOLAN

Yeah, well, fuck him. Shoulda thought ahead. Bad shit happens all the time. Better those assholes than us. Or some innocent kids.

Nolan finishes his coffee, then realizes it's quiet.

NOLAN (CONT'D)

What?

GAGE

You're a misanthrope.

NOLAN

And what's that mean?

GAGE

Means you hate everybody.

NOLAN

I hate when my partner rains on a perfectly good parade I planned.

Gage flips Nolan off just as Nolan's phone rings.

NOLAN (CONT'D)
(on the phone)
Bradford. Yeah. Yeah, why? I got it
right here. What do you mean you
wanna see it? But-- Now?!? It's
fuckin' one am. Can't I just--
Jesus, ok. Yeah.

Nolan ends the call, confused.

GAGE
Wassup?

NOLAN
I dunno. Keyes wants me to come in.
Just asked about my gun.

GAGE
'Bout tonight?

NOLAN
I dunno, he didn't say.

Nolan grabs his coat and walks off. Gage looks at the meals,
then realizes he was left with the check.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Nolan walks in, finding an old, brick shithouse of a man,
CAPTAIN JOHN KEYES, in the bull pen, waiting for him with an
INTERNAL AFFAIRS OFFICER (I.A.) - HUTCHINSON.

KEYES
(ref: Nolan's black eyes)
You look like shit.

NOLAN
You call me down here to insult me?

KEYES
You got your gun on you?

NOLAN
I told you I did-- What the fuck?

KEYES
Let me see it.
(then)
Nolan, show me your gun.

Nolan retrieves his gun. Slides out the clip. Pops the one
out of the chamber. Hands it to Keyes. He evaluates it. Hands
it to Hutchinson, who looks perplexed.

KEYES (CONT'D)
Alright, come with me.

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

The door opens and Keyes leads Nolan in.

KEYES
We gotta post somebody outside, so
just... wait in here. When I can,
I'll be back to explain it all.

NOLAN
John--

KEYES
Jesus, what'd I say? Just sit
tight, ok? Get comfortable.

Keyes walks out, slamming the door. Leaving Nolan alone to
stare at himself in the mirror.

LATER:

Nolan is in a chair, leaned back. His eyes closed, but he's
not asleep. The door suddenly opens and Keyes walks in.

Keyes drops Nolan's gun down. Then, next to it, he drops
another, this one in an evidence bag. Two M1911s. Colt .45s.

KEYES (CONT'D)
Earlier tonight, unies responded to
a call in the Hills. They found a
teenage boy shot in the chest.
Shooter called nine-one-one, then
left the gun on the counter and
walked out. Nobody saw anything.
Boy's up at St. Mary's, in a coma.

Nolan glances down at the guns. Nolan pulls the bagged gun
toward him. He studies it. Then pulls his gun and compares
the two. They look like they could be the same gun...

NOLAN
So? So he used a gun like mine, why
the fuck am I here?

KEYES
Look at the serial numbers.

Nolan looks closer, spotting the numbers. They match.

NOLAN

Wait wait wait. You thought I broke into a house and shot some kid?

KEYES

No. The fact that I *didn't* think that is why you're in here and not in an orange jumpsuit.

(sits across from Nolan)

When we ran the serial on the shooter's gun, it came up as yours. My hand was forced - I had to call in I.A., but I convinced them to let me get you in here and see if we could clear this up. I thought maybe it was stolen until you told me you still had it. I had to bring you down.

NOLAN

So someone added a serial number to that gun to match mine?

KEYES

Not out of the realm of possibility. Maybe some asshole you roughed up tried to frame you. But here's the real Twilight Zone shit: not only do these two guns have the same serial numbers, but they have the same scratches and abrasions. The only difference between these two guns are two gashes on the grip and some corrosion in the barrel of the shooter's weapon.

Nolan studies the guns. Keyes is right. The imperfections are identical, except for two gashes on the shooter's gun.

KEYES (CONT'D)

Know anyone that would do this?

NOLAN

Know anybody that would? Yeah, it's not like you got me running a charity. But *could* one of these assholes do this? I mean, most of these guys still gotta hold their pants up when they shoot at me.

Nolan glances down at the guns again. Keyes rises--

KEYES

Someone took a swing at you
tonight. I want you to swing back.

NOLAN

What about I.A.?

KEYES

Fuck I.A. I'll deal with them. You
take this and you figure it out.

Keyes walks to the door, but turns back.

KEYES (CONT'D)

And just a word to the wise: I'm
not the only one aware of your
elastic treatment of the law. They
got a spotlight on you. I can't
step between you and I.A. if you
fuck up on your own.

INT. BOX TRUCK - BOX - NIGHT

C/U on X's eyes. Bloodshot. Worn. Deep in thought. Lit by the
light of a Coleman lantern. As he continues to stare at us,
we pull back, revealing the back of this box truck is
cluttered with canned food, water bottles, strewn clothes.
He's been living out of this truck...

As we continue pulling away, we pan around to reveal that
he's staring at the opposite interior wall--

ON THE WALL: a massive weave of thin, pen-drawn lines.
Connecting at various points, then straying away. The anchor
point of each convergence is a bubble, with most of them [the
left-hand portion] filled in with red ink.

Lines indicating the expected paths of people's lives.
People's lives intersecting with others' at crucial points
[bubbles]. Filled in with red ink to indicate X's
involvement. Empty for those yet to come...

X rises to the wall and, where a major portion of the lines
intersect, he fills in an empty bubble with a red marker.

An involvement. Jimmy. The shooting.

Then X sits and grabs a nail file. And he begins shaving his
thumb nail down to an inconspicuous, sharp point.

EXT. POLICE STATION - PARKING LOT - EARLY MORNING

A few POLICE SQUAD CARS pull into the lot in the B.G.

Nolan is in his Caddie. A cigarette pinned between his lips and a file in front of him, against the wheel. He reviews Jimmy's shooting. A few phrases stand out:

--HOME INVASION-- --NO KNOWN ENEMIES-- --MOTHER WAS NOT IN THE HOME AT THE TIME OF THE SHOOTING-- --FATHER DECEASED--

Nolan flips to see photos: spattered blood against the wall by the stairs; the gun next to the phone.

Nolan closes the file and pinches his busted nose. Fatigue--

There's a sudden KNOCK! KNOCK! on the Caddie's window.

Nolan jerks. A uniformed policewoman -- GINGER HAYES -- smiles, knowing she startled him. He rolls the window down.

GINGER

What the hell are you doing here so early, Detective Bradford?

NOLAN

Long day.

GINGER

Jesus. You got a story for me?

NOLAN

Maybe. You free?

GINGER

Well, we just finished shift change. You wanna get coffee?

Nolan glances at the clock, then back to her. Her smile.

INT. NOLAN'S CADDIE - EARLY MORNING

Coffee cups jostle creamy joe back and forth in the cup holder as the Caddie continues rocks up and down. The windows are fogged and the radio is ROCKING to cover the sex.

Ginger -- half naked - her toned, dark skin exposed -- releases a stream of moans that crescendos with Nolan's panted breath as she rides him. Not love. Fucking.

When Ginger finishes, she slides off Nolan and they both catch their breath.

GINGER
Now I'll be able to sleep.

Nolan grabs his cigarettes. Lights one -- cracks a window.
Ginger opens the glove box, grabs some paper towels and wipes herself, cleaning him off her.

She tosses them in the back.

NOLAN
Hey.

She rolls down the window and tosses them out. Then as she reaches to close the glove box, she finds the shooter's gun, still enveloped in the evidence baggy. She grabs it.

GINGER
What's this?

NOLAN
Some kid got shot tonight.

GINGER
With this?

Nolan blows smoke, his silence confirming for him.

GINGER (CONT'D)
Shooter just left it behind?

NOLAN
Mmm. Set it down next to the phone
after dialing nine-one-one.

GINGER
He dialed nine-one-one?

Ginger rolls the gun in her hand, looking it over.

NOLAN
Let me ask you something. Let's say
you wanna frame somebody for
something. What's the first thing
you make sure of?

GINGER
(thinking, then)
Motive. It's gotta be believable.
Why, you think it's a frame job?

Nolan glances at her, unable to say.

GINGER (CONT'D)
Alright. Alright, I get it.

She shoves the bagged gun back into the glove box. She buttons her shirt, grabs her things.

GINGER (CONT'D)

Listen, I don't wanna break fuck-buddy protocol, but I thought that since we've been doing this for a month now, maybe we could include some food beforehand. Maybe move our little sessions to a bed? Not that I'm complaining, but I feel like a goddamn teenager doing the walk of shame.

Nolan finishes his smoke, evaluating her words...

NOLAN

Sure.

She nods, irritation seeping into her face.

GINGER

Sure... Jesus. I'll see ya.

She opens the Caddie's door and climbs out. Shuts the door. Nolan watches her go, then leans back. His eyes fall on the dash-- the clock. He flies into motion--

EXT. NAN'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - MORNING

NAN (60s), an old bird with wise eyes, helps her granddaughter, EMMIE (7), into a station wagon.

Nan glances up from the station wagon when she hears the sounds of Nolan's Caddie RATTLING down the street.

EMMIE

Daddy!

Emmie quickly hops out of the station wagon.

NAN

Emmie, hold on. Don't run out--

Nolan's Caddie swings up to the curb. Emmie jogs out just as Nolan emerges from the car in time to sweep her up.

NOLAN

How's my little Robin Hood?

EMMIE

What happened to your face?

NOLAN
When it saw you, it broke.

EMMIE
Nuh uh-hh.

Emmie sticks her tongue out at him. He does the same.

NOLAN
Get your stuff. I'll drive you to school.

He puts her down and she hops off to grab her things.

NAN
You ok?

NOLAN
(ref: his black eyes)
Yeah, aside from this and a general lack of sleep, I'm fine.

Emmie zips by him with her backpack, toward his Caddie.

NOLAN (CONT'D)
Emmie, you say bye to Nan.
(to Nan)
Thanks for watching her.

EMMIE
Bye, Nan.

Nolan chases Emmie to the car and helps her in.

EMMIE (CONT'D)
What's that smell?

NOLAN
(realizing; lying)
That's... just sweat. Daddy was running around all night.

Nan watches Nolan's Caddie driving off, B-I-N-G-O bumping the woofers in the back of Nolan's car -- the bass pounding.

INT. HIGH-END APARTMENT - LOBBY - MORNING

Waiting for the elevator in the lobby, seen only from behind, is a shaking, nervously-fidgeting WOMAN IN HOOKER CLOTHING.

The elevator doors open, revealing a BEAUTIFUL WOMAN of high pedigree making her own walk of shame. When she sees the hooker's face, which we can't, she makes a disgusted face.

But the hooker moves past her and onto the elevator.

INT. HIGH-END APARTMENT - HALLWAY - MORNING

The elevator DINGS and the hooker paces out, still with her back to us, moving quickly.

She reaches a beautifully designed door. KNOCKS. It opens to reveal Gage--

GAGE
(first)
You forget something?
(noticing the hooker)
Vera...

We finally see her face. VERA is a tragically beautiful, strung out junkie with sunken eyes -- one black and blue -- and rail-thin arms. Also bruised.

GAGE (CONT'D)
What the hell happened?

She shakes nervously, scratching at one arm before she drops to her knees. Gage grabs her just before she passes out.

EXT. HOSPITAL - E.R. - MORNING

Gage's sedan swings under the canopied E.R. entrance. He climbs out, runs around, and pulls Vera from the passenger side. He carries her into the E.R.

INT. HOSPITAL - E.R. - MORNING

Gage barrels through the double doors with Vera's body limp in his arms -- his face determined -- scouting eyes.

GAGE
Nurse! Nurse!

A NURSE turns to him-- sees the situation--

NURSE
Here--

The nurse grabs a gurney, wheels it quickly over. Gage carefully places Vera's body onto it. A DOCTOR paces over, fingers at her neck, his eyes peering into hers.

DOCTOR
What happened?

GAGE

I don't know. I... found her like
this. I don't know.

DOCTOR

Let's move her into bay four.

The nurse wheels the gurney quickly down the hall as the doctor hovers over her until they're out of sight. Gage stands alone in the hallway.

EXT. NOLAN'S HOUSE - LATE MORNING

The ghetto. UNDERPRIVILEGED KIDS -- delinquent from school -- stroll by Nolan's rundown house. LOUDLY.

INT. NOLAN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATE MORNING

The living room is a cluttered mess. A bachelor pad with a daughter as a roommate. Emmie's toys are strewn about. Dust everywhere. Pizza box. Pillow and blanket on the couch.

INT. NOLAN'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - LATE MORNING

Nolan exits the bathroom with a towel around his waist and his cell in hand. He dials as he passes Emmie's toy-cluttered room and pulls the towel from his waist to finish drying--

INT. NOLAN'S HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM

Nolan walks into the immaculate room -- the only clean room in the house -- and tosses the phone on the well-made bed. Nolan disappears in the closet as the phone RINGS.

This room is different than the rest; a woman's touch here. Styled. Warmer than the rest of the house. And a bed that doesn't seem to get much use.

Gage's voice now emanates from the phone -- VOICEMAIL.

GAGE (O.S.)

Detective Robert Gage.

Nolan, now dressed, walks out of the closet--

NOLAN

Yo, it's me. Call me back.

He ends the call, pockets the phone and paces by a photo of Nolan, Emmie as a baby, and a BEAUTIFUL WOMAN -- JENN.

INT. VICTORIAN HOUSE - GARAGE - EARLY AFTERNOON

Through the open garage door, we see Nolan's Caddie pull up on the street -- his THUMPING music stops. He climbs out and ducks under police tape. Walks up to the garage.

He evaluates the garage before walking into--

INT. VICTORIAN HOUSE - MUD ROOM - EARLY AFTERNOON

Nolan walks in, looks around. Kneels to a few pairs of shoes. Notices dirt on the ground. Pokes at it with a cigarette.

INT. VICTORIAN HOUSE - KITCHEN - EARLY AFTERNOON

Nolan walks in. Takes in the broad scan first. Police tape on the banister to the stairs. Photos on the fridge.

Nolan hits the photos first, finding Jimmy in a few of them. Along with his mother. A younger Jimmy with both his parents.

Nolan finds the Yale acceptance letter. Straight-A kid.

Nolan then moves to the stairs. Blood. Spattered on the wall. Nolan spins slowly, looking around. Ceiling. Walls. Floor.

Floor... spots more dirt. He kneels to it. Studies it. He opens a few doors, finding cabinets, closets.

In one, he spots a pair of snowboarding boots. Dirty. The same dirt. A dead end on the dirt.

Nolan GRUNTS. Irritated. He pulls his phone. Dials.

NOLAN
(getting Gage's voicemail
again)
Pick up your fucking phone.

He hangs up. Lights his cigarette (in the house).

Then he reenacts the shooting. Aims his hand version of the gun. Fires. Mimes blood spraying the wall. Sighs again.

Turns to find the house phone on the counter. The same one that the shooter (X) had used to call 911. Nolan studies it.

Then he gives up. Starts away, but hears a CREAK. Turns back. Steps on it. CREAK. Steps back. CREAK.

Nolan kneels, snooping around. He applies pressure to the floor. It CREAKS again.

But this time he sees a separation from the base of the floor and the kitchen's island. An imperfection in the design.

Lo and behold, something is caught there. A white thing. With gloved hands, Nolan pinches at it. Pulls it away.

It's a pill. A plain, white pill. One of X's pills.

INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING AREA - MIDDAY

Gage is asleep in the uncomfortable seats when a NURSE appears, touching his leg gently, but RATTLING him awake.

NURSE

You're the officer who brought in Ms. Adams?

GAGE

Yeah. Yeah, is she ok?

NURSE

She's fine. Bruised and beaten up pretty good, but she's fine. The fetal ultrasound didn't show anything unusual. Baby's strong.

GAGE

Baby?

NURSE

She's... two months pregnant...

GAGE

Right. That's right.

But it's not right. He didn't know...

NURSE

We can keep her here for a few days-
- I can say we need to monitor the baby, but what she'll need is a shelter, a battered women's home, something.

GAGE

Yeah. Yeah, I'll see what I can do.

She walks away, leaving Gage perplexed.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - MIDDAY

Gage peeks around a curtain to a small bay, finding Vera on the bed, asleep. A few I.V.s running from her bruised arms to a monitor. Her face pale, washed out. Black and blue.

Gage studies her for a long moment, his eyes telling us that he had no idea she was pregnant.

EXT. MIDDLE SCHOOL - EARLY AFTERNOON

A BELL rings and PREPUBESCENT KIDS pour out of the doors, milling about, jostling each other, climbing into school buses and cars. One in particular, LEVEN CADE, a short, lanky 14-year-old with a docile face, moves along the grass.

We're with him along the sidewalk away from the school. And as we pull around him, we see X in the distance, following.

EXT. BAD NEIGHBORHOOD - EARLY AFTERNOON

Leven, now with headphones in, paces casually along the road by rundown houses and dilapidated businesses.

And behind him, vigilantly, is X.

EXT. RUNDOWN APARTMENT COMPLEX - EARLY AFTERNOON

Leven rounds a corner, passing a few houses before cutting through a dirt-covered lawn up to an apartment complex.

X rounds the corner and spots Leven walking inside. X takes note of the complex. Then he checks his watch.

INT. POLICE STATION - LAB - AFTERNOON

CLOSE UP: on the white pill Nolan found, in a sterile bottle.

A LAB TECH evaluates an analysis readout as Nolan leans on the counter across from him.

LAB TECH

Heavy traces of potassium iodide.
Some Prussian blue. Diethylene
triamine pentaacetic acid. This is
what we call a cocktail. Just not
one I've ever seen before.

He hands the paper to Nolan, who glances down at it as if expecting to understand any of it.

NOLAN

What do you think it could be used for?

LAB TECH

By themselves, a few things. Prussian blue is used in paints. DPTA is commonly found in paper bleaching. Potassium iodide is salt. But together... that's where it gets tricky. The only common denominator I've found here is a few of their effects on radioactive elements.

NOLAN

Radioactive... you saying that whoever's taking this is... what, staving off the big green monster?

LAB TECH

I'm saying that if I *had to say*, somebody's experimenting with warding off the effects of radioactive poisoning. But that's not what I'd say. Officially. Sorry, detective.

The lab tech walks off. Nolan exhales. He's gotten nowhere.

INT. NOLAN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Nolan and Emmie are on the couch watching TV. Robin Hood.

EMMIE

Does the Sheriff hate Robin Hood because he steals from him?

NOLAN

Yeah. But the Sheriff isn't that nice a guy anyway. Besides, Robin Hood steals from the rich and gives to the poor.

Emmie mulls that over.

EMMIE

Won't that make the rich poor?

NOLAN

It could, I guess. But do they seem like good people?

EMMIE

What would they do if they caught Robin Hood?

NOLAN

I don't know.

EMMIE

Would they kill him?

NOLAN

Kill him? Where's that coming from?

(off her silence)

Emmie. Emmie.

EMMIE

Some kids at school got on the internet.

Nolan can't form a quick, fatherly response. He sighs.

NOLAN

Emmie, mommy died. She had a bad thing inside her. She wasn't killed.

EMMIE

Is she still in heaven?

NOLAN

Of course. She's looking down, watching us all the time.

EMMIE

All the time?

NOLAN

Even when you're looking at things you shouldn't be.

She grabs his hand.

EMMIE

I'm sorry.

Her hand on his. Secretly tears him apart.

NOLAN

Let's go, it's time for bed.

He pulls her up and plops her on the ground.

EMMIE

Would Robin Hood go to heaven?

NOLAN

I think he would. He's good in his heart. Right?

EMMIE

Even though he steals?

NOLAN

Sometimes you gotta do bad things for a good reason.

EMMIE

What about the Sheriff?

NOLAN

He's just a bad man. Now come on. Let's go. Bed time.

She trots away, leaving him in the living room.

NOLAN (CONT'D)

Fucking internet.

INT. RUNDOWN APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT

X moves quickly through the dimly-lit hallway.

INT. MINA CADE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The place is a sty, from old food to beer bottles. A broken home with literally broken memories - shattered photos stacked against a wall -- the signs of transient living.

The front door handle JIGGLES, then turns. Door opens. X comes through, a knife in hand. But there's no one there.

He studies the living room. Anger boils inside him.

INT. MINA CADE'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY - NIGHT

X makes his way down a dark hallway to a door emitting a laser-line of light from its base.

He slowly opens the door, revealing stained carpet, closet doors lined with dirty mirrors, clothes strewn about. And a queen-sized bed with MINA CADE atop.

A needle on the night stand. A rubber band next to it.

She's in a drug-induced stupor, incapable of discerning who this stranger is. Or why there's a knife in his hands.

He puts a hand gently on her head. Then grips her hair. Pulls her up by it - hard. She grimaces until he lets go, then her drugged out face returns to lethargy, eyes half closed. This woman has aged four drug years for every one God's given her.

MINA
(no clue who he is)
Hey baby.

She reaches lazily for him and he backs away to the mirrored closet doors. Angry, he slams a fist into them, shattering one. Frustration and rage boil up through his thin body.

Then something in the shattered mirror catches his eye. He spins to see Leven Cade, this drug addicted fuck-up's son, standing in the doorway.

But the boy isn't horrified. Isn't crying or shaking. He's emotionless. Staring up at X.

Then in a bolt of nervous energy, Leven sprints away-- X reacts quickly, chasing after the boy.

INT. MINA CADE'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Leven darts down the hallway, making it to the living room archway before the SHADOW that is X spills over him, slamming the boy to the ground.

X's hands find their way around the boy's throat. Squeezing. Fingernails piercing. Leven's eyes redden... life... fading.

X peers down at the boy, dark eyes beaming curdled hate into the boy's soul. Then all of a sudden a realization washes over X. He jerks away from Leven, releasing the boy.

Leven COUGHS, trying to suck air back into his lungs. X watches the boy regain air, color, life.

Then Leven gets to his knees, crawling back to the wall.

X
Run. Now. Before I snap your
fucking neck.

Leven's whole world has upended. He can't move.

X (CONT'D)
RUN! RUN! RUN!

Like a cattle prod, X's words electrify Leven, who gets to his feet, slides along the shelf, knocking everything off.

Then the boy runs from the apartment, as X demanded.

X heaves a few breaths. His core shaken. Then his watch BEEPS. Several times. Nagging him about something.

He rises slowly and proceeds back into Mina's bedroom. And shuts the door on us, leaving us in the dark.

INT. NOLAN'S HOUSE - EMMIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nolan is passed out alongside Emmie, a children's book in his hands. He wakes. Carefully pulls himself away from her.

INT. NOLAN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Nolan cleans up the house - throws trash into a bag.

EXT. NOLAN'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Nolan carries the trash to the dumpster. Notices Gage's sedan parked on the street. He walks over.

NOLAN
Jesus, you fuckin' creep. What're
you doing out here?

Then Nolan sees Gage's empty stare as the man sees him.

INT. NOLAN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Gage in a chair as Nolan paces the kitchen. A few beers on the table. There's a quiet tension thrumming through the room. Nolan exhales loudly.

NOLAN
Fuck, man.
(then)
You know who did it?

GAGE
No.

NOLAN
You think you can get her to say?

Gage gives Nolan a level look. Nolan gives it right back.

GAGE
Maybe.

NOLAN
And the baby?

GAGE
I don't know.

NOLAN
What the fuck you mean you don't know? Is it yours or not?

GAGE
She's a prost. She's had half the city up in her.

NOLAN
Jesus, man. When the fuck did this happen? Wait, you know what? I don't wanna know. Less I know, the better--

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. NOLAN'S NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

The silhouette of X makes its way down the sidewalk.

GAGE (O.S.)
Somebody hurt her.

A WOMAN walking her DOG notices X and turns to stare. Then rushes away as X peers up at Nolan's house.

BACK ON NOLAN AND GAGE:

NOLAN
How long she work for us? A year? At most? We gave her a chance. We set her straight. She went back to all that shit.

GAGE
You don't want part of this, say so. I'm not gonna walk away.

There's a KNOCK at the door. Nolan rises to go answer it.

NOLAN
Fuck you, I'm not saying that. I've always been there for you. And I'm here for you now. You wanna do--

INT. NOLAN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

When Nolan opens the door, he's greeted with the gruesome image of X, shivering. Dried blood all over his shirt.

NOLAN
What the fuck...

X
It's time, Nolan.

Nolan backs up, grabs his gun from his holster hanging near the door. Pushes forward to X, aiming at his face.

NOLAN
Get down! Get down! Get the fuck
down! Now! Faster FASTER!

X exhales an almost relief as he kneels. Nolan shoves him down just as Gage sprints around the corner, drawing his own gun and aiming at X. A stupefied look in his eyes.

EXT. FARMLANDS - NIGHT

A quivering, rain-soaked Leven paces down a long stretch of road under dim streetlights, toward a plot of land with a small house and a barn.

EXT. PAUL'S FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Leven scans the area like prey searching for a predator. He RINGS the doorbell. Again and again. Then POUNDS on the door.

An unassuming, middle-aged man, PAUL CADE, answers, cracking only enough of the door to spy outside.

PAUL
Leven? What're you doing here?

LEVEN
Mom's dead.

PAUL
What? What did you do?

LEVEN
Me? I didn't--

A tear streams down Leven's face. Then Paul sees the bruises on Leven's throat...

PAUL

Jesus.
(then)
Hold on.

Paul closes the door on Leven, who grabs the handle, trying to open it. It's locked. Leven BANGS more. Finally, seconds later, the door opens again, fully this time.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Come on, come in. Hurry up.

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION - VIEW ROOM - NIGHT

Nolan waits in darkness, staring through the glass at X, who is getting his hands examined by FORENSICS. Gage is at the table, laptop open, feet up, researching databases.

GAGE

Nothing in the database. Guy's
never committed a crime, or at
least got caught. Check this out.

(reads off the screen)

Lab says the blood on his shirt's
his own. Found traces of vomit with
it. Looks like he emptied himself
out somewhere between two and four
hours ago.

Nolan says nothing, staring into X's eyes. Keyes bursts through the door, all business.

KEYES

Here's what he had on him.

He dumps the contents of a manila folder onto the shoddy desk. A handful of Tylenol and a key.

Nolan scans through the Tylenol before grabbing the key.
"FORD" engraved into the head.

KEYES (CONT'D)

Which one of you wants to go first?

NOLAN

(to Gage)
You go.

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

Gage walks in, sits across from X, who's alone now -
Forensics got what they needed. X studies Gage, the hint of a
smile on his face, something warm, remembered.

GAGE
My name is Detective--

X
Robert Gage. I know.

GAGE
Well, I feel a little embarrassed,
I don't seem to remember who you
are. Or should I?

X
No. We've never met.

GAGE
So how do you know my name?

X
(after a moment)
Where's Detective Bradford?

GAGE
Right now it's just you and me.

X
Am I under arrest?

GAGE
Should you be?

X studies Gage, then rises and walks to the one-way glass.

X
Is he back there? Can he hear us?

X taps lightly on the glass.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION - VIEW ROOM - NIGHT

Nolan watches X with growing curiosity. Their eyes almost
meeting through the glass that X can't see past.

GAGE
What were you doing at Detective
Bradford's house?

X

I have something to tell him.

GAGE

You said, "It's time." What's that mean, "it's time"?

X

What were you doing there?

GAGE

Where else would I be?

X finally turns back to Gage, a look as if he should know.

X

At the hospital. With her.

It takes a second, but Gage's face slacks with disbelief.

X (CONT'D)

That's where Vera is, right? Beaten and bruised. And bursting at the seams. Or didn't you know she was pregnant? I don't think you did. You don't seem like the type...

Gage's stare darkens.

On the other side of the glass, Keyes glances at Nolan.

KEYES

What the hell's going on?

Nolan quickly jogs out, through the HALLWAY, and opens the door to the INTERROGATION ROOM.

NOLAN

Yo, lemme talk to you.

Gage rises, his fists balled.

NOLAN (CONT'D)

Hey! HEY!

Gage hesitates, glaring at X, then exits. Nolan follows, but risks a glance back at X.

IN THE HALLWAY:

Keyes meets Nolan and a pissed-off Gage.

KEYES

What's going on?

(when no one answers)

Hey! Somebody talk, right now!

GAGE

An old C.I. showed up at my door
this morning. Beaten to shit, so
I... I took her to the hospital. I
don't know how this guy knows that.

KEYES

And the pregnant shit?

(Gage looks away)

Jesus fucking Christ, you've got to
be kidding me.

NOLAN

She's a hooker. Could be anybody's.

There's a moment of silence as it all sinks in.

KEYES

He's her pimp-- that's what this
is. He finds out she's pregnant,
beats her till she gives you up,
then follows her to Nolan's house--

GAGE

To do what? Fuckin' puke all over
himself?

NOLAN

He's fucking with us.

They cease fire and glance at Nolan, waiting for the rest...

NOLAN (CONT'D)

He wasn't looking for you.

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

Nolan walks in, but doesn't sit. X glances up. The same worn,
yet warm, smile. Like a tired man seeing a bed.

X

I'm sorry for showing up like I
did. These pills I take... like a
meat grinder in your stomach.

NOLAN

The Kenmore kid, you shoot him?

X

Right to the point.

NOLAN

Did you shoot him?

X

Would you believe me?

NOLAN

Answer the question.

X

I give you an answer and you just believe me?

NOLAN

That's how this goes.

X

"That's how this goes." People say things and you just believe them. Don't fuck with me. Nobody believes anybody.

(after a long moment)

Did you know that every time you get on a plane and fly somewhere, that you age slower than the rest of the people on the ground? Do you believe that? It's called time dilation. It's imperceptible, but it's true.

NOLAN

Did you shoot the kid? That's all I'm asking.

X

(ignoring him)

Did you also know that if you could get even close to the speed of light, you could slow down time enough that everyone you knew would grow old and die. Ten minutes to you, a lifetime of change.

NOLAN

Am I supposed to know how this ties to James Kenmore?

X

No, not yet. Right now I'm not talking about James Kenmore. Right now I'm talking about time.

(MORE)

X (CONT'D)

I'm telling you that it's relative. It's nonlinear. You know only that the past defines the future. I'm telling you now... the future can define the past. Do you believe that? Now, I've just told you something, do you believe it?

NOLAN

Are you aware of how fucking stupid you sound?

X

I am. It's hard to hear. The existence of something so far out of your mental reach.

NOLAN

My mental reach...

X

People, collectively.
(then)
Do you believe in God?
(then)
Do you believe in God?

NOLAN

Sitting across from you it's a little tough.

X

Half the planet believes in God. But there's no proof. The entirety of this deity's existence is predicated on a single word: faith. Believing in something that you can't prove. People tell you that they shoot someone and you believe them on blind faith. People tell you to believe in religion, and you do. Blind faith. But... I tell you something that's theoretically proven and you stare at me. Time travel is theoretically proven. That's more than anyone can say about God.

NOLAN

Half the planet would disagree.

X

People disagree all the time. A flat world...

(MORE)

X (CONT'D)

Newton's physics superceding
Aristotle's. The effects of
smoking. You don't need faith to
know that there's a future and that
in years, hours, minutes, seconds,
you'll be there. And that, through
the discovery of relativity,
getting there quicker is a
possibility. A theoretical
possibility, but a possibility
nonetheless. Tell me you at least
believe that.

Nolan's silence is neither agreement or disagreement.

X (CONT'D)

So now let me play to your blind
faith. Would you to believe that
moving something backwards through
time is an equal possibility?

NOLAN

It'd take a pretty big leap of
faith. And some mental sacrifice.

X smiles. Leans back and holds up his hand. The X-marked scar
on the top of it. Nolan studies it.

X

This is sacrifice. The incisions on
my body, those are sacrifice. Even
with the advancements in
chronophysics, there are
limitations. You don't know what
sacrifice is until you become a
living suitcase.

Nolan rises, frustrated. Paces.

X (CONT'D)

Every night that you look at the
stars, you're looking into the
past. A graveyard in the cosmos,
whose light is just now being
delivered. That doesn't take faith.

NOLAN

You're telling me that you're a
time traveling drug mule. And you
came back to shoot James Kenmore?
That about sum it up?

X

I see what you're doing.

(then)

Tell you what, tell me that you believe me.

NOLAN

I say I believe you, you'll tell me you shot James Kenmore?

X

If I believe you.

NOLAN

(debating it)

Alright. Alright, I believe you.

X

(studying Nolan)

We both know that you don't believe me, Nolan.

NOLAN

Where's your faith?

X smiles.

X

What if I made my story more personal? See if you believe that.

NOLAN

Personal? Sure. Let's hear it.

X

How about this...

(then)

Twenty two years from now a man named Leven Cade rapes and kills a woman named Emily Marie Bradford.

The world slows to a stop around Nolan. His eyes narrow.

X (CONT'D)

See, you believed that. Some of it, at least. I tell you a wild story about time travel and you shuck it off. I tell you a man will rape and murder your daughter, you put half your faith down on it.

The door opens. Gage looms in the aperture.

GAGE

Nol'... Nol', come on. It's over.

X

Nolan, one more thing before he grabs you. And he will grab you. Emily didn't blame you for what happened to her mother.

Nolan jerks toward X, but, as X said, Gage grabs him. Shoves him out the door. Gage turns back once more--

X (CONT'D)

I'll take a lawyer now.

GAGE

We haven't charged you with anything yet.

X

You will.

IN THE HALLWAY:

Nolan exits from the interrogation room, fuming. Rips his arm away from Gage's grip and storms away.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE (V.O.)

Nine-one-one, what is your emergency?

PAUL (O.S.)

I--I need help. My ex-wife is dead.

Keyes and Gage watch Nolan plod away.

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP: A COMPUTER SCREEN. A blank cursor. Until... the distorted sounds of the off-screen emergency call narrate the forming pixilated sentences on the computer screen.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE (O.S.)

Ok, calm down, sir. Tell me what happened.

EXT. RUNDOWN APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT

A POLICE CRUISER pulls up to the buildings, where a CROWD has formed. The cruiser's red and blue lights illuminating them.

Nearby, Paul Cade's junky car rests, half-crooked in a spot. From within, Leven Cade watches the events.

PAUL (O.S.)
I--I don't know. My son said a man
came in and--and attacked him.

Two uniformed officers emerge from the cruiser: Ginger and her partner, MARTINEZ. They jog up the pathway to the apartment, where Paul is waiting, his hands raised.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE (O.S.)
Is the intruder still in the home?

PAUL (O.S.)
No. No, I think he's gone.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE (O.S.)
Are you in the home now?

PAUL (O.S.)
Yes, I went in. I needed to see--
My son lies sometimes.

INT. MINA CADE'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY - NIGHT

We watch Ginger move through a GROUP OF ONLOOKERS in the exterior hallway, then into the apartment cautiously.

She checks the living room, then we follow her down the hallway to a bedroom, where she stops.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE (O.S.)
Emergency personnel are on their
way. What's your name, sir?

PAUL (O.S.)
Paul. Paul Cade.

We pull around Ginger to reveal Mina Cade, arched up in the air, a handful of needles in her arm. And the kitchen knife that X had brought sticking boldly up out of her chest.

EXT. NAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Nolan's Caddie pulls into the driveway. Engine off. Nolan sits in the car, finishing his cigarette. Mulling over X.

INT. NAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Nolan keys into the small house to find Nan asleep in a reclining chair and Emmie slumbering on the couch.

Nolan sits quietly next to Emmie's head. He runs his hand over her hair and watches his daughter with soft eyes.

Nan stirs, sees Nolan.

NAN
Hey, when'd you get in?

NOLAN
Few minutes ago.

NAN
I got a bed made up for you.
(then, sees his face)
You want some coffee?

INT. NAN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Nolan and Nan sit across from one another, coffee mugs between their hands like tiny furnaces.

NAN
What are they gonna do with him?

NOLAN
Well, he didn't actually break any laws. They'll keep him for twenty four hours, then let him go.
(off her look)
They'll put someone on him. Follow him around. It's standard for a threat.

NAN
I can keep Emmie for a few nights, just in case.

NOLAN
Yeah. Yeah, might be best for a bit. Just in case.

Nolan leans back, the weight of the day finally apparent.

NOLAN (CONT'D)
I feel like she spends more time here than with me.

NAN
It's hard. With everything that's happened. And your job.

Nolan wipes his face in frustration. Then Nolan's phone BUZZES. He checks it. A text, from Ginger:

"ROUGH DAY. OFF AT 3AM. COULD USE A SESSION. IF UR GAME."

NAN (CONT'D)
Work?

NOLAN
Naw.

NAN
Girl?

NOLAN
And if it is?

NAN
No one can expect you to just sit around forever. To be honest, it'd be a relief. I was beginning to wonder about you.

Nolan nods, but there's no heart in it.

NAN (CONT'D)
You know I'm the reason you and Jenn got together way back then?

NOLAN
I don't think sending your only daughter to serve me a subpoena counts as a set-up.

Nan smiles. Nolan glances back at Emmie on the couch. Sighs.

NOLAN (CONT'D)
Sometimes it... it still feels like it all just happened.
(then)
She was too fuckin' young. She had her whole life ahead of her.

Nan rises and walks to a high cabinet, drawing down a bottle of whiskey and pouring herself and Nolan shots. They down the liquor and sit in silence. Then Nan, standing over Nolan, puts her hand on his shoulder. A mother's touch.

NAN
If you don't let Jenn go and start living your life, Emmie's not gonna have the father she needs to live hers. Honey, I don't care what you do, you'll always be a son to me. But for her sake, and your own, you gotta get over it.
(MORE)

NAN (CONT'D)
(then)
Now, I'm gonna go to bed.

Nolan rises--

NAN (CONT'D)
Sit. Relax. I'll tuck Emmie in.

Nolan watches as Nan moves into the living room, picks up a dozing Emmie and carries her away into a room.

Nolan sighs. Pours another shot. Pulls his phone. A photo of Jenn as his background. He can't let go.

He launches a Police Database app. Searches for Leven Cade. "**No results.**" He downs his shot. Pours another.

Then he pulls up Facebook. Searches for Leven Cade. This time, he finds a few. Clicks on the one from his city.

Leven Cade. Age: 14. Sex: Male. Interested in: "**Your mom.**" Under 100 friends. Nolan scrolls, reviewing the FB Wall. Abhorrent, crude posts about sex, violence, light drugs. The kind any normal parent would detest.

Nolan pulls up a photo. It's Leven. Brooding. Dark eyes.

INT. PAUL'S FARMHOUSE - GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT

Leven sits on the edge of the bed, his hand around his sore throat. Paul knocks and enters with a pillow and blanket.

PAUL
Here you go.
(then)
How're you feeling?

LEVEN
How do you think I feel?

PAUL
Sorry.

LEVEN
No you're not.
(then)
You hated mom. You always helped everyone else but never us.

PAUL
You don't know what you're talking about.

LEVEN

You're a dickhead.

PAUL

And you're an asshole little kid. You know, when I first met your mother, it was two days after she tried to commit suicide. The court mandated her to see me. Do you even know what that means?

(off Leven's hard look)

It means they made me help your mom. She didn't wanna get better. Your whore mother used me to get out of it.

(then)

Hell, she didn't even want you. I'm the only reason you're alive.

LEVEN

I wish it was you. I wish you were the one who died.

PAUL

Right. That's why you came to me.

Leven is frustrated. Paul walks back to the door, stops.

PAUL (CONT'D)

You know, for what it's worth, you're probably better off without her.

Paul slams the door. Locks it from the outside. Leven plops down on the bed, a stream of emotions cascading through him. He eyes the window. Moves to it; tries to open it. No luck.

Glancing through it, he spies his father walking from the main house to the barn. Paul unlocks the barn door -- multiple locks -- and steps inside, where a light is on.

There's motion inside, motion that isn't his father. But before Leven can see anything, the barn door shuts. Darkness.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Gage sits in his sedan, which rests at an awkward angle in the hospital parking lot space it currently occupies. Gage puffs on the joint pinched between his fingers.

Moments later, a low-rider pulls up, its bass BANGING. DUANE, a fat, charmingly gangster street thug, climbs out. Walks over to Gage's window.

DUANE

G-man, you know I don't take calls
at night. Cuts into my play time.

(off Gage's hard look)

Unless it's you, baby. Wassup,
whatchu need?

GAGE

I need a VIN.

DUANE

Aren't you a cop? Don't y'all have
databases and shit?

GAGE

Off the books.

DUANE

A'right.

(then)

Well, you want me to just get you a
random one or what?

Gage offers up the key found on X.

DUANE (CONT'D)

The fuck's this?

GAGE

Need a VIN for that. Can you do it?

DUANE

Shit, maybe. Locksmiths can cut
keys based on VIN. Might be able to
reverse engineer that shit. Depends
on what you're offerin'?

GAGE

Subaru. WRX. Ridin' on twenties.
Tricked intake.

DUANE

Hmmm. This little search ain't gon'
be easy. I want my shop off radar
for another two years.

(Gage nods)

A'ight G-Man. See what ol' Duane
can do. I'll get at ya.

Gage watches as Duane climbs his fat ass into the car and
drives off. Then Gage gets out and walks into the hospital.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - NIGHT

In a bay, Vera is on her back, asleep. Gage approaches, waiting by the wall, not willing to venture in just yet.

BAY:

Gage finally walks over, sits in the plastic chair next to the bed. He looks over her wounds. Purple. Lacerations.

After a few moments, she wakes. Sees him. Tears form. She looks away. He grabs her hand. She doesn't look at him.

GAGE

Who did this to you?

(then)

Vera. Vera, tell me who did this.

VERA

Nobody.

GAGE

Vera-- god dammit, tell who did this to you.

She ignores him. He lets her hand go. Silence.

GAGE (CONT'D)

Is it mine?

VERA

(crying)

It ain't no one else's.

GAGE

What're you gonna do?

She finally looks back at him. Daggers in her teary eyes.

GAGE (CONT'D)

Vera, we can't do this.

VERA

I can. I got straight.

GAGE

You had heroin in your system when--

VERA

That was-- I had to. You don't understand, I had to.

GAGE

No, I understand.

VERA
I worked hard before that.

GAGE
Vera, listen to me. You know what
it's like for those girls. For
their kids. You were one of 'em.

VERA
I'll be fine. You don't want this,
fine, but this baby's mine.

GAGE
Vera--

VERA
Get out.
(then, when he doesn't)
Get the fuck out of here. Go away.
GO AWAY! GO AWAAAAY!

Anger finds him, but he rises and paces down the hall. Vera
leans back again. Crying.

INT. HOLDING CELL - EARLY MORNING

Lying on his back, X stares at the ceiling. He suddenly
bursts into a horrid COUGH. He rolls off the bunk and
shimmies to the toilet, where he coughs up BLOOD.

INT. PAUL'S FARMHOUSE - GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT

Leven wakes violently in bed. Breathing shallow. Tears in his
eyes. He checks the door -- still locked. He moves to the
corner and pisses on Paul's guest bedroom floor.

Then he goes to the window. It, too, locked. The barn catches
his attention again. Specifically a window. Light on.

INT. GAGE'S SEDAN - MORNING

An AMBULANCE blares by Gage's sedan, waking him. He winces at
the smell of his car. Climbs out, swings the door a few times
to let the stench out.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY / BAY - MORNING

Gage approaches Vera's bay to find her gone.

Gage finds a NURSE pacing the hallway.

GAGE
 Hey. Hey hey hey.
 (she stops)
 Where's the girl that was here?

NURSE #2
 I don't know.

GAGE
 Can you find out?

The nurse approaches the Nurse's Station. Checks paperwork.

NURSE #2
 She checked herself out about two
 hours ago.

Gage's phone rings. He answers.

GAGE
 Yeah? Alright. Yeah.

He paces away, out of the hospital.

INT. GINGER'S HOUSE - MORNING

Nolan sleeps peacefully in Ginger's fluffy bed. His PHONE suddenly RINGS. RINGS. RINGS. Finally, he wakes, groaning.

In the nearby bathroom, Ginger - in her uniform - is brushing her teeth. Notices Nolan's confused look.

GINGER
 Morning, sunshine.
 (then)
 Phone's rang three times.

Nolan checks it. Two missed calls from Keyes. One from Gage. She tosses him a tooth brush and the tooth paste.

GINGER (CONT'D)
 I'm guessing you don't remember?

Nolan studies the tooth brush and paste as if it's nuclear.

GINGER (CONT'D)
 You showed up around four am with a
 bottle of whiskey. Told me you
 loved me. Asked me to move in with
 you and your daughter.
 (turns to spit)
 I'm not an idiot, Nolan. I just
 wanted to get laid.

She walks back out, grabs her utility belt, straps it on.

GINGER (CONT'D)
 You know I've never even met her?
 (on the way to the door)
 Tylenol and Tums are in the
 medicine cabinet.

Then she's gone, leaving Nolan alone. He checks his phone. A stream of TEXTS. SEVERAL. To GINGER HAYES.

NOLAN: "WHERE ARE YIOU?"; GINGER: "GETTING OFF WORK."; NOLAN: "NEED TO SER YO."; GINGER: "MY PLACE?"; NOLAN: "OK"; GINGER: "20 MINUTES. I HAVE TO SHOWER. WANNA JOIN?"; NOLAN: "I LOHWE YUO." GINGER: "CAN YOU DRIVE?" GINGER: "HELLO?"

Nolan grimaces. He shuts his phone and lies back in her bed, nursing the hangover. His phone suddenly RINGS.

NOLAN
 Yo. What?
 (then, serious)
 What?

INT. PAUL'S HOUSE - HALLWAY / GUEST BEDROOM - MORNING

Paul, in a loose, wrinkled shirt and tie (government attire), unlocks the guest bedroom door to find Leven sitting on the edge of the bed, waiting.

PAUL
 I'm gonna drive you to school.

LEVEN
 I'm not going to school.

PAUL
 I'm not leaving you here alone.

LEVEN
 Because of what you got in the
 barn?

Paul's dark glare forces Leven to cower.

PAUL
 Let's go. Now.

Leven defies his father for a long moment before Paul grabs the back of Leven's shirt and shoves him toward the door.

Paul sniffs. Sees the corner. Wet carpet. Piss.

INT. KEYES' OFFICE - MIDDAY

Keyes sits across from TRAVIS ADELMAN, attorney. Gage sits in the other chair as Nolan stands father away, hungover.

ADELMAN

Look, here's how it goes. My client is willing to give you information on the shooting of James Kenmore in exchange for two requests. First, he wants to know when, and if, Mr. Kenmore's medical status is changed from critical to stable.

NOLAN

(mumbling)

Fuck that.

ADELMAN

Excuse me?

NOLAN

I said "fuck that". Keep tabs on the kid? Why, so that he knows whether to finish the job?

Keyes holds up a finger -- "shut up." Momentary silence.

ADELMAN

He asked me to relay that he only wants to see the boy recover. Says, and I quote--

(reading)

"What happened to him was a tragedy, but I hope and believe"-- he had me underline *believe* -- "that the boy has a bright future in law ahead of him."

Nolan and Gage share a look, then back to the sloppy lawyer.

KEYES

What's the second request?

ADELMAN

Second... the information he provides about the kid's shooting must be done under polygraph.

GAGE

A poly? Why?

ADELMAN

I don't know and he didn't say.
What he did say was how he wanted
the polygraph administered. He'd
like your fine Detective Bradford
here to ask the questions.

KEYES

I'm not playing games with this
asshole. If he's got information on
a shooting, I can hold him for
suspicion of murder. For as long as
I need.

ADELMAN

To which he said he's prepared to
wait.

Keyes mulls it over with a deep, annoyed exhale.

NOLAN

Fuck him, John, let me give him the
poly. He wants to do it, fine.

KEYES

(reluctantly succumbing)
Alright. Alright, but it happens
today. And he signs an affidavit.

ADELMAN

I'll relay the news to my client.

Gage gets a TEXT. Steps away and replies as Adelman leaves.

KEYES

(to Nolan)

I told you you could hit back, so
do it now. If he's guilty, fine. If
not, walk him into an insanity
case. Just keep the Q and A on the
up and up. Don't let him flip the
table again.

NOLAN

He ain't flippin' shit.

GAGE

Yo.

Nolan glances back to see Gage waving him out.

INT. POLICE STATION - BULL PEN - MIDDAY

Gage leads Nolan through the bull pen.

GAGE

Got a lead on the asshole's key.
You remember Duane?

NOLAN

Duane? Duane "Make It Rain"? You're
kiddin' me, right?

GAGE

He got the VIN.

NOLAN

Off the key?

GAGE

He's fat and happy, but the asshole
ain't dumb. Meetin' him at his
shop. You gotta drive yourself.

Gage breaks off from Nolan, heading away.

NOLAN

Where you going?

GAGE

I'll meet you there. I gotta get
his payment.

EXT. DUANE'S CHOP SHOP - EARLY AFTERNOON

On the wrong side of town, Nolan's caddie pulls up to Duane's shop, parking at the curb. The music dies out just as a Subaru WRX -- Bennie's recently confiscated WRX -- pulls up to the large garage doors, its engine REVVING.

Nolan climbs out of the Caddie and walks over, just as the chop shop doors swing open, allowing the WRX entry.

INT. DUANE'S CHOP SHOP - EARLY AFTERNOON

Nolan flanks the WRX, stopping with it near a front bay, where CHOP SHOP THUGS -- mean, unruly, tatted -- all work at stripping ordinary cars and vans.

Duane emerges from an office--

DUANE

Shit, G-Man, you didn't say you were givin' me Bennie Reyes' whip.

GAGE

Yeah, well, this is it.

DUANE

Yeah, now it's fuckin' not.

NOLAN

What the fuck you care if it's Bennie's car? You're just gonna strip it down.

Duane glances sidelong at Nolan a moment, then back to Gage.

DUANE

I break this piece down, start selling it off, and word gets back to DeMarcus... man, I don't need that shit.

NOLAN

DeMarcus ain't around anymore.

DUANE

(to Gage)

Yo yo, you bring him in here, I let it go 'cause it's you, but he runs his mouth again, I'm gonna have to put your dog outside.

NOLAN

Fuck you, fatass. Try it.

Duane turns, ready with his bulk to take on Nolan--

GAGE

Duane, look, you know that shootout a few weeks ago? The one with the Souldja Boys? Well, Feds caught wind that two kids got hit in the crossfire. They liked DeMarcus for it. Picked him up.

DUANE

I heard D went underground.

GAGE

You heard wrong. Guess what dumbass cousin of his gave him up just to keep his ass outta County.

(MORE)

GAGE (CONT'D)

I'd say right about now DeMarcus
would pay you to strip ol' Bennie
himself down and sell the parts.

Duane thinks it over.

DUANE

Life. I want my shop off the books
for life. That and the car gets you
the VIN.

GAGE

Done.

Duane reaches into his pocket and hands over a strip of paper
with a VIN number on it.

DUANE

Now... no offense, G, but why don't
y'all kindly get the fuck out.

Gage leads Nolan out of the shop. Nolan turns back once to
see Duane blow an insulting kiss at him.

EXT. DUANE'S CHOP SHOP - EARLY AFTERNOON

As Gage and Nolan walk to Nolan's Caddie--

NOLAN

You're not serious about street
amnesty for that asshole, are you?
For a fuckin' VIN?

GAGE

We get a VIN, we get a name. We get
a name, we get a background.
Besides, you see him getting any
thinner? His fatass'll be dead in
two years and it won't be a bullet.

Nolan unlocks the Caddie, but stops, watching Gage, who moves
with purpose, climbing into the car.

EXT. LONG ABANDONED ROAD - AFTERNOON

As a CITY BUS drives by, kicking up dust, we see Leven
behind, walking along the polluted road.

EXT. PAUL'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Leven paces up the long dirt road to the house that sits on the outskirts of the city.

When he reaches the porch, he tries the handle. It's locked. He checks the underside of a few rocks. No such luck.

He grabs one of the rocks and smashes the window. Unlocks the door and goes in.

INT. PAUL'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Leven drifts through the living room and kitchen, looking at photos on the wall. All of PAUL'S MOTHER AND FATHER -- none of Leven and his mother.

INT. COMMUNITY COLLEGE - COUNSELING OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Paul finishes a counseling session with an EX-ADDICT.

PAUL
Have a good night.

The ex-addict nods and walks out. Paul grabs his backpack.

INT. COMMUNITY COLLEGE - MAIN COUNSELING OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Paul walks out with his backpack, locks the door. A pretty, young counselor, ANNA, Paul's colleague, glances over from a desk. She hesitates before asking--

ANNA
Clocking out early?

PAUL
Yeah.

ANNA
Paul, I... I heard about Mina. I'm really sorry.

Paul ignores her, moving to the door.

INT. PAUL'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Leven stares out through the broken glass of the door window, gazing at the barn. What's inside?

EXT. PAUL'S HOUSE - BARN - AFTERNOON

Leven tries the barn door. It's locked. He looks for windows, but they're all too high for him to reach, let alone climb.

INT. PAUL'S CAR - AFTERNOON

Paul talks on the phone as he glides his car through traffic.

PAUL

Hi, yes, I'd like to speak to someone in Adoption. Yeah. Ok, thank you.

(long delay)

Yes, hi, my name's Paul Cade. I need to speak to someone about an Adoption. He's my son. Yeah, of course. Fourteen. No, his mother had custody. She's... recently deceased. It's ok. No, no, I don't want custody. We're not close. I thought... I thought he would do better with another family. Yes, tomorrow? Thank you.

EXT. PAUL'S HOUSE - BARN - AFTERNOON

A WRENCH STRIKES the BARN DOORHANDLE, over and over until it finally busts off. Leven shoves the door open.

INT. BARN - AFTERNOON

Leven moves into the barn, where boxes of paperwork greet him. He pulls a few -- counseling documents. Elsewhere, a few bikes. A grill. Clutter.

Leven moves through the small barn to a door. The only door in the barn. He grabs the handle. Locked.

He puts his ear to the door. MUFFLED movements. Leven KNOCKS. No response. He BANGS. No response.

LEVEN

Hello? Hello?

After a silent moment, Leven uses the wrench to SMASH the door handle. He pushes the door open and steps in.

There's a bunk bed. Mini-fridge. Toys. Another door leading to a tiny, rudimentary toilet.

And in the corner, afraid, is a GIRL. JASMINE BARNES. The missing girl - from the scrolling news in X's cab. She's twelve, at best. Dirty. Almost pretty.

For a long moment, Leven can't make sense of this. Then--

JASMINE
Where is he?
(then)
Is he gone? Is he gone?

LEVEN
Who are you?

JASMINE
Is he gone?!?

LEVEN
What are you doing here?

She moves to him and hugs him. Awkward for him. But he pushes. **SHOVES** her away from him.

JASMINE
Please--

Leven's grip on the wrench tightens.

INT. PAUL'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

Leven's hand grabs the phone. 9-1-1.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE (O.S.)
Nine-one-one, what is your
emergency? Hello? Hello, what is
your emergency?

Leven, teary, stares down at the phone, not sure what to say. Then up at the photos on the wall. None of Mina. None of him.

He wings the phone at the wall, hitting a photo. **CRASH!**

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION - VIEW ROOM - AFTERNOON

Nolan pulls his phone. Checks texts. None new.

As X is fitted for the polygraph in the B.G., Nolan juggles the phone. Then he texts GINGER: **"I'M SORRY."**

Then he waits a moment before typing: **"IT'S BEEN ROUGH. BUT I WANT YOU TO MEET MY DAUGHTER."** He reads it over before finally deleting it.

He constructs a new text: "**C U LATER?**" Thumb hovers over SEND. Then he presses it. Sent.

Nolan glances into the interrogation room, where, when they pull up X's shirt, Nolan sees scars along X's body. Long ones along the abdomen. "A living suitcase," X had said.

Keyes enters with Hutchinson (I.A.) and Adelman.

KEYES

You ready?

NOLAN

Yeah.

KEYES

Remember what I said.

NOLAN

I got it.

INT. POLICE STATION - CITY TRAFFIC DEPARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Gage waits in a tiny area, his feet up, as DESK CLERKS all sit behind computers performing the city's ticket duty. He pulls his phone, dials.

GAGE

Yeah, this is Detective Gage, badge one nine eight five. I need a BOLO on a white female. Sixty four inches. Hundred and ten pounds. Name is Vera Williams. Yeah, I know. She's pregnant. Uh, two months. If any officers spot her, just have them radio it in. No. Just call me with the location. Yeah. Thanks.

He hangs up as a DESK OFFICER approaches with a document.

DESK OFFICER

Here you go. Three previous owners. Currently unregistered. Never been reported stolen.

GAGE

Thanks.

As the officer strolls away, Gage glances over the sheet. Latest PREVIOUSLY REGISTERED TO: **HAROLD ARSENAULT.**

MOMENTS LATER:

Gage dials. RINGS. RINGS. RINGS. Voicemail.

HAROLD (O.S.)
This is Harold Arsenault, leave a
message.

INT. SQUAD CAR - AFTERNOON

Ginger, riding shotgun for Martinez, checks her phone. The
text from Nolan. She types back: "OK."

MARTINEZ
Your boy?

GINGER
He ain't my boy. He don't want
that.

MARTINEZ
So you just givin' it to him?

GINGER
Fuck you, I'm not just giving it to
him.

MARTINEZ
MmmHm.

A moment of silence.

GINGER
I'm not just givin' it to him.

MARTINEZ
Hey, I can't say shit, right? Fuck
him, don't fuck him, just don't say
I'm a sexist.

She smiles, shaking her head. The radio blares.

CENTRAL (O.S.)
One Two One, what's your location?

Ginger grabs the radio.

GINGER
Central, this is One Two One, we're
just outside Woodland. What's up?

CENTRAL (O.S.)
We got a nine-one-one hang-up, you
wanna go check it out?

GINGER

Not really.
 (then in to the radio)
 Copy, what's the address?

CENTRAL

Six Four Three, Carline Street.
 Belongs to a Paul Cade.

GINGER

(to Martinez)
 Cade? Wasn't that the guy whose
 wife was shot?

Martinez gives her a knowing, displeased look.

GINGER (CONT'D)

(on the radio)
 We're on, Central.

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION ROOM - AFTERNOON

Nolan is seated at an angle, across from X, with the
 POLYGRAPH ADMINISTER directly across. The polygraph device on
 the table between them, the paper shifting and the needles
 moving lethargically, back and forth like a wave.

POLYGRAPH ADMINISTER

Alright, if you're both ready, we
 can begin.
 (then, to X)
 I'll begin with some calibration
 questions. Please state your name.

X

No.

The administer glances from X to Nolan, who shakes his head.

POLYGRAPH ADMINISTER

Alright. What color is the sky?

X

Blue.

The needles remain steady.

POLYGRAPH ADMINISTER

What is two plus two.

X

Four.

POLYGRAPH ADMINISTER
The current president of the United States?

X
Barack Obama.

Steady needles. The administer nods to Nolan to take over.

POLYGRAPH ADMINISTER
One word answers, preferably yes or no will provide the best results.

Nolan shuffles his seat closer. Looks over X.

NOLAN
Were you at James Kenmore's house the night he was shot?

X
Yes.

Steady needles. Truth.

NOLAN
Did you shoot him?

X
Yes.

Truth. Nolan glances back at the mirror.

NOLAN
Were you trying to kill him?

X
No.

Truth.

NOLAN
You weren't trying to kill him?

X
No.

Truth.

NOLAN
What is your name?

X
Martin Fox.

The needles dart up and down the paper. A lie.

NOLAN
Why won't you tell me your name?

X
Because it doesn't matter.
(then)
Ask what you really wanna know.

NOLAN
When were you born?

X
October Twenty First.

Truth. Nolan debates the next question.

NOLAN
What year?

X
(smiling)
Twenty fifteen.

The needles remain steady. A truth. The administer subtly glances over the machine. Nolan watches. Uneasy.

NOLAN
Do you know a woman named Vera Williams?

X
Yes.

Truth.

NOLAN
Did you assault her?

A pause. X studies Nolan. Then...

X
No.

Truth. Nolan hesitates now.

NOLAN
Do you know who did?

X
Yes.

Truth.

NOLAN

Who?

X

Felix Pearce.

Truth.

NOLAN

Who is he?

X

After Leven Cade raped and murdered
your daughter... Felix Pearce
helped him move her body.

Truth. The ambers of Nolan's anger begins to glow.

NOLAN

And who's James Kenmore?

X

Their lawyer.

A silence stretches as the needles lazily move.

NOLAN

When?

X

September Second. Twenty Forty Two.

Truth. Nolan leans forward. The ambers white hot now.

NOLAN

Do you know my daughter?

X leans forward. Suddenly, Keyes and Adelman enter.

ADELMAN

That's it, we're done.

NOLAN

(ignoring Adelman)

How do you know my daughter?

KEYES

Get him the fuck out of here and in
a cell! Now!

NOLAN

HOW DO YOU KNOW MY DAUGHTER!

X
I loved her.

The ambers in Nolan erupt into an apoplectic flame. He's out of his seat in a flash -- the table slides away -- and Nolan SLAMS X against the wall. An OFFICER grabs Nolan, pulling--

NOLAN
I'll fucking kill you!

The officer locks Nolan up in a move and drags him away. X falls over, COUGHING up blood.

INT. POLICE STATION - HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Nolan jerks away from the officer holding him, then storms away. Keyes emerges from the interrogation room.

KEYES
Nolan! NOLAN!

Nolan never looks back. Keyes and Hutchinson share a look.

EXT. PAUL'S HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

The police cruiser pulls up into the long driveway. Ginger and Martinez climb out, cautious but calm.

Ginger follows Martinez to the door, where they see the broken window. Both officers draw their guns, but are still warily alert. Martinez inspects the broken window.

MARTINEZ
Mr. Cade?

He pushes the door open. Takes in the scene. Broken photo on the ground, surrounded by the frame's glass. The phone.

MARTINEZ (CONT'D)
Mr. Cade?

Ginger, just outside, glances around. Sees the barn door.

GINGER
Martinez...

He turns back. She motions to the barn's broken door knob.

GINGER (CONT'D)
I'll check it out. Call it in?

Martinez nods, then pushes farther into the house.

MARTINEZ
(on his shoulder radio)
Central, this is One Two One, we
got a possible break-in.

Ginger paces hesitantly to the barn door. Inspects it. Spots the knob on the ground. Looks it over. Then moves in--

INT. PAUL'S HOUSE - BARN - LATE AFTERNOON

Ginger steps in, checking all possible hiding spots. As she nears the back room, she spots a few dark drops of liquid on the barn's floor -- congealed in the dirt.

Her gun comes up, extended out skillfully. Weaver stance.

GINGER
Police! Come out now!

No response. No one exits. Ginger takes a breath, then moves forward to the door. Slowly. When she reaches it, her foot accidentally kicks a bloodied wrench. She looks down.

Then she looks into the room.

And her reality shatters. She's stilled by something awful. Ginger's mind can't process what's she's seeing.

We see FLASHES of blood and matted hair on the ground.

Ginger flusters, not sure what to do. She moves back, out of the tiny living space and into the barn and stops abruptly.

Half silhouetted in the aperture of the door is a man. Paul Cade. A serious, yet slightly shocked look on his face.

Ginger's gun comes up, trained on Paul.

GINGER (CONT'D)
Get down on your knees. Now.

PAUL
What happened?

GINGER
On your knees. Now!

PAUL
Why is there blood?

GINGER
Listen to me. Get on your knees
right now. Do you hear me?

Then the gravity of the situation hits him all at once. The girl he was hiding. Blood. A cop. Pointing her gun at him.

GINGER (CONT'D)
Drop down to your knees and
interlace your hands behind--

That's when he runs.

GINGER (CONT'D)
Fuck--

She sprints after-- we follow her through the door--

EXT. PAUL'S HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

Ginger bursts through the open doorway, her gear slowing her to Paul's surprisingly fast speed.

INT. PAUL'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - LATE AFTERNOON

Martinez stares down at the locks on the guest room--

GINGER (O.S.)
Martinez!

Martinez moves quickly into the room, to the window, then sprints back out into the hall toward the stairs.

EXT. PAUL'S HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

Ginger chases Paul down the driveway -- across the half-dirt lawn -- through a GARDEN toward a fence on the other side.

Ginger closes the distance at the garden's edge. She throws a foot out, clipping Paul's leg, tripping him--

He TUMBLES down -- CRASH -- into the dirt, sliding. Ginger rolls him over, snatching at his flailing arms.

She manages to grab one, sliding handcuffs on his wrist, but he pins the other beneath him. His face in soil.

GINGER
Give me your other arm.

She wrenches his cuffed arm. He SCREAMS in pain and launches his free arm out in front of him, grabbing for anything. His hand finds a ROCK, one of many boxing in the garden.

She grabs the hand with the rock, forced to let go of his other. He writhes under her, spinning slowly, wrestling away. He gets his cuffed hand on her neck. She grabs for it--

And he swings -- CRACKS the large stone across her head. She jerks back, dazed. Blood trickles down her scalp to her face.

He pulls away from her. Rises. Sees Martinez sprinting down the path, still far away. He drops the blood-stained rock.

And Paul Cade runs... as Ginger Hayes falls over. Dying.

Martinez reaches his partner -- gun raised. He FIRES once at Paul. Misses. Then Paul is around the fence. Martinez struggles with the decision -- chase or stay.

He chooses his partner, dropping down to her side.

MARTINEZ

Hayes, c'mon.

He applies pressure to her head, but the blood finds a way.

MARTINEZ (CONT'D)

Shit. Shit, fuck.

(on his shoulder radio)

Central-- One Two One-- Officer down. Officer down.

INT. POLICE STATION - KEYES' OFFICE - EVENING

Keyes sits across from Hutchinson, as Nolan lingers by the door, his blood still boiling -- a smoldering look.

HUTCHINSON

D.A.'s looking over the poly, but it's not gonna look good.

NOLAN

Oh give me a fucking break.

HUTCHINSON

(turning to address Nolan)

You assaulted a perp.

NOLAN

He threatened my daughter.

HUTCHINSON

Have you never had one of these assholes use your family against you before?

NOLAN

Have you? When's the last time you actually worked a case that didn't involve you fucking over one of your own? And he's not a perp, he admitted to shooting the kid.

HUTCHINSON

And now the entire session will be inadmissible.

KEYES

The threat's enough to overlook the assault. The D.A.--

HUTCHINSON

The D.A. knows of Bradford's past. The civil suits against him. He'll also see exactly what we all saw. A suspect who apparently knew exactly how to manipulate the polygraph. And it's in writing that the suspect even requested the test, specifically citing that Bradford administer it. What it looks like is a case of manipulative revenge against a dirty cop with a very colorful past.

NOLAN

Fuck you.

HUTCHINSON

Blame me all you want. But it's I.A.'s determination that you be relieved of duty immediately.

The room goes silent. Hutchinson turns to Keyes.

HUTCHINSON (CONT'D)

I can contact the commissioner directly and--

KEYES

I'll handle it.

HUTCHINSON

If you--

KEYES

I said I'll handle it. Now, if you would, kindly get the fuck out of my office.

Hutchinson rises, unaffected by Keyes request. And walks to the door, opens it and turns back.

HUTCHINSON

(to Nolan)

For what it's worth... while I was reviewing your case, there was a time in your career that I admired. No one can blame you for your wife's cancer, but what you've become... you need to be held accountable.

Nolan studies Hutchinson's face. Truth in it. Then he's gone.

EXT. POLICE STATION - PARKING LOT - EVENING

Nolan climbs into his Caddie and sits for a long moment, staring out at the cop cars, the POLICEMEN and WOMEN. His phone RINGS. He looks it over. Finally answers.

NOLAN

Bradford.

EXT. PAUL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The blue, red, and white lights from the emergency vehicles casts an eerie glow on the scene. EMS, POLICE, and FBI move around, cordoning off the area and investigating.

Nolan's Caddie swings wildly up to the other vehicles. We follow him as he darts desperately through the CROWDS, toward AGENT RYAN GLOVER, FBI directs an OFFICER.

AGENT GLOVER

Get the Press back, please. This isn't a circus. Please, thank you.

Nolan passes the Officer on his way up to Glover.

NOLAN

Where is she?

AGENT GLOVER

Nolan--

NOLAN

Where is she?!

AGENT GLOVER

EMS took her to Field Hospital but--

Nolan turns, ready to go--

AGENT GLOVER (CONT'D)

Nolan!

(Nolan stops, turns back)

They lost her on the way. Twenty minutes ago.

Nolan's face slacks with disbelief and utter despair.

NOLAN

Who did it? Ryan, who did it?

AGENT GLOVER

Suspect's a man named Paul Cade. Thirty nine. City counselor.

NOLAN

Cade?

AGENT GLOVER

Yeah, I got a full background check running now. Hayes' partner ID'ed him. They'd met him before. Responded to a nine-one-one call a few nights ago when Cade's wife was found murdered down in the Heights.

NOLAN

Who had the case?

AGENT GLOVER

I don't know. She was a junkie though, so I doubt anyone looked into it too hard. Cade's son said someone broke in and killed the mom and tried to kill him. Might have been Cade himself.

(then)

Nolan, this fucker had a little girl in his barn, took her from a couple he was counseling. Pictures in his nightstand.

NOLAN

Where's the son?

AGENT GLOVER

Missing. We think Cade might have him. Put out an Amber Alert about an hour ago.

An FBI AGENT walks briskly to Glover.

FBI AGENT
Background's ready.

AGENT GLOVER
Yeah, gimme a second.
(to Nolan, when the agent
walks off)
Look, we've helped each other
before. I wouldn't be where I'm at
if you didn't do what you do. I
promise you: if I know anything,
you'll get a call.
(then)
I'm sorry. I am. Hayes was a good
cop. We'll get him.

Glover walks off. Nolan reels. The world caving in.

EXT. LIQUOR STORE - NIGHT

Nolan sits on the back of his car. A bottle of whiskey in
hand. He swigs it several times.

Gage's sedan pulls into the lot. He climbs out, walks to
Nolan's Caddie and sits next to him.

GAGE
What're you doing?

Nolan takes a pull on the bottle. That's his answer.

GAGE (CONT'D)
This it? This what you're doing?

NOLAN
Fuck you.

GAGE
Yeah, I'm the asshole here. You got
a little girl at home and I'm the
asshole.
(then)
She's slipping away, man.

Nolan takes a SWING but Gage dodges and pushes him into the
car. Nolan stumbles and hits his face on the window.

NOLAN
Fuck!

Nolan grabs his broken nose. His GROANS become a laugh.

GAGE
You're losing it, man.

Gage walks to his car, but Nolan's next words stop him.

NOLAN
Hey, I got the guy's name. The guy
that beat Vera.

Gage turns back. Stares deep into Nolan's eyes.

EXT. LOW-RENT NEIGHBORHOOD - BOARDING HOUSE - NIGHT

Nolan's Caddie pulls up in front of the house. Quiet.

INT. BOARDING HOUSE - NIGHT

FELIX PEARCE, a tubby alcoholic, is in his recliner, playing video games, beer bottles lining the coffee table.

A KNOCK at the door draws him lethargically from his throne.

He peers through the peephole, seeing Nolan and Gage, who is holding up his Detective's Badge.

FELIX
The fuck you want?

GAGE
You Felix Pearce?

FELIX
Yeah.

GAGE
Open the door.

FELIX
You got a warrant?

GAGE
Do we need one?

Felix evaluates the logic, then turns to TWO ROUGH-LOOKING KIDS (8), who appear at the top of stairs.

FELIX
Go to bed. Go to bed!

The kids scurry away. Felix opens the door.

GAGE
You're Felix Pearce?

FELIX
Yeah, what do you--

Gage SLAMS a fist into Felix's pudgy face, sending him reeling back, grabbing desperately for his nose.

As Felix reactively grabs for a baseball bat, Nolan moves in and shoves him into the wall. Then Gage grabs Felix by the hair and we follow them through the house: Gage dragging Felix along to the back door, where Nolan opens it so Gage can shove Felix through.

EXT. BOARDING HOUSE - BACK YARD - NIGHT

Felix flies down the concrete steps, tumbling until he lands hard on the concrete below.

Nolan tosses Gage the baseball bat that Felix tried for.

FELIX
Help!

Gage slams the bat into Felix's thigh.

GAGE
Scream for help again and I swing higher.

FELIX
What do you want?

GAGE
You know a woman named Vera?

FELIX
No.

The baseball bat HITS his ribs. Not hard, but hard enough.

GAGE
Try again.

Felix tries, but is silent too long. Gage winds up--

FELIX
I met a girl. I met a girl. Few nights back. I didn't know her name. Just some whore on the street.

GAGE
You hurt her?

FELIX
No.

(Gage readies the bat)
Ok, ok, yes. Yeah. She was fuckin' blowing me and-- and she bit my dick. Almost took it off. What you want me to do? I wasn't even gonna let her but she said-- she said it was a freebie. What the fuck you want me to do, man?

Nolan watches the words hit Gage, who lowers the bat.

GAGE
Free? She did it for free?

FELIX
Yeah, yeah, she said she liked me. I didn't know who she was, but she-- she, uh, she looked good, so I let her. I wish I could take it back, man. Bitch was crazy.

Gage can't speak. Nolan sees it, so he pulls his gun.

FELIX (CONT'D)
Whoa whoa whoa.

Nolan points the gun at Felix.

FELIX (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. I'm sorry. Please.
Please please. Don't don't.

Nolan kneels to Felix.

NOLAN
Open your mouth.

FELIX
Please.

NOLAN
Open it. Now!

Felix opens. Nolan slides his M1911's barrel in. Gage steps forward, not sure whether to stop Nolan or not.

NOLAN (CONT'D)
You know anyone named Leven Cade?

Felix shakes his head desperately. Nolan evaluates it. Gage glances away. Spots the kids in the window. Watching. He and the children share a short moment.

GAGE

Yo.

(turns back to Nolan)

Yo!

Nolan turns to Gage, then sees the kids, all of whom don't appear to be too concerned by the violently unfolding events. Nolan tosses Felix down to the ground and walks off.

Gage steps over Felix, holding the baseball bat.

GAGE (CONT'D)

You put a hand on anyone else in
your entire shitty life and I'll
come back and fuck you with this,
you hear me?

Felix nods hysterically. Then Gage leaves. Felix sobs.

INT. NOLAN'S CADDIE - NIGHT

Nolan climbs into the car, starts it. Then Gage climbs in. Nolan lights a cigarette. And before words can be said, he starts the car and turns up his music. THUMPING BASS. He puts it in gear and drives off.

INT. BOWLING ALLEY - BAR - NIGHT

A handful of DEGENERATES mill about the tiny bar as, in the alley proper, BOWLERS whip balls down the slick, oily lanes. In the corner of the bar sits a black and blued Vera.

She fidgets nervously, scratching at the table, where an aged, unfolded flyer for a REHAB CENTER sits. On the flyer, in black magic marker, is:

LANES AND GAMES - APRIL 5.

Vera's eyes are alert -- too alert. She's scanning the alley.

The distant door opens, catching Vera's attention. And in walks Leven Cade -- freaked out, exhausted, and suspicious.

INT. BOWLING ALLEY - NIGHT

Vera follows Leven, careful not to arouse his attention. He moves farther down the alley and sits down in one of the plastic seats. Watches the News reports on the TV overhead...

The death of an Officer -- Ginger. The abducted, now dead, girl -- JASMINE. Vera sees it too, almost surprised by the story. She glances down at the Rehab Center flyer again.

LANES AND GAMES - APRIL 5.

She turns to leave, then stops. She struggle with a decision. Then she approaches the boy cautiously.

VERA
Leven Cade?

He twists, his nerves a wreck. Spots Vera -- ready to jump.

VERA (CONT'D)
Don't. Don't run.

LEVEN
What do you want?

VERA
I'm here to help.

LEVEN
Leave me alone.

Leven walks away. Vera watches, her mind trying to remember something. Scrambling to find a memory of what to say...

VERA
Your father sent me!

Leven turns.

VERA (CONT'D)
He... he said he's sorry. He's outside, waiting in the car. You can talk to him yourself.

Leven studies her. Bruises. Sympathy.

INT. ANNA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The simple city worker's living room is dark, quiet. Peaceful. Until a barrage of POUNDING erupts at the door.

Moments later, the bedroom light flicks on, illuminating the apartment. Anna, half asleep, emerges from the bedroom. She shuffles to the door, guardedly, as the BEATING continues.

She peers through the peephole, then opens the door, revealing a harried, sweaty Paul Cade.

ANNA

Paul?

PAUL

I'm sorry, I didn't know where else to go.

ANNA

Come in. Come in.

He nods. Enters, tracking in mud. She notices.

ANNA (CONT'D)

What's wrong-- what happened?

PAUL

My-- my car broke down.

ANNA

Do you wanna use the phone?

PAUL

No, I... I was hoping I could use your car?

She studies him, dubious. But he seems sincere.

ANNA

Sure. Yeah.

As she digs through her purse, Paul's eyes watch. His hands balled into fists, prepared. She turns back with the keys.

PAUL

Thank you.

He backs away to the door--

PAUL (CONT'D)

Thank you.

She nods. And he's gone, leaving behind only confusion.

INT. NAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The door rattles as Nolan keys his way in. He STUMBLES through the living room -- the alcohol -- and into--

INT. NAN'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nolan enters, his drunken eyes finding Emmie asleep in bed. He spots Emmie's backpack on the ground -- snatches it up and begins to put some of her strewn out clothes into it.

Emmie wakes--

EMMIE

Daddy?

NOLAN

(slurring)

Hey baby, grab the rest of your stuff, we're going home.

She sits up, at the edge of the bed. Sleepy. Nolan notices--

NOLAN (CONT'D)

Emmie, come on.

She watches as he SHOVES clothes into her bag carelessly.

NOLAN (CONT'D)

Emmie!

NAN (O.S.)

Nolan?

Nolan spins to see Nan in the doorway. Turns back to Emmie.

NOLAN

Emmie, come on. We're going home.

He grabs her hand, a little too hard.

NAN

Nolan. Nolan!

Nolan drags Emmie out, blowing by Nan, who gets a whiff--

EMMIE

Daddy, you're hurting me.

INT. NAN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Nolan makes it halfway to the door with Emmie before Nan rushes over and grabs his arm--

NAN
Nolan, you're hurting her!

Nolan yanks his arm away, his eyes enraged.

NOLAN
She's my daughter!

NAN
I know that. But look at her.
(then, placating)
You're scaring her.

Nolan glances down at Emmie, her eyes afraid. His daughter's reaction frightens him. He lets go and she moves to Nan, which crushes Nolan. He drops her backpack.

NAN (CONT'D)
(to Emmie)
Go back to bed, honey. It's
alright, your dad's just upset. Go
on to bed, I'll be in in a second.

Emmie shuffles back to the room, leaving Nan with Nolan.

NAN (CONT'D)
What are you doing?
(then)
Nolan, what the hell's happening to
you?

Nolan's eyes lay heavy on Emmie's door. Then fill with tears. Nan walks over and embraces him. For a long moment.

INT. GAGE'S SEDAN - NIGHT

Gage watches as hard-featured PROSTITUTES strut down the street in conspicuous defiance of the law.

One of the prosts, a GANGLY WHORE, sashays over.

GANGLY WHORE
How you doin', baby?

GAGE
You know all the girls around here?

GANGLY WHORE

Some, why?

GAGE

You know one named Vera?

She moves to leave, but he grabs her hand.

GAGE (CONT'D)

I'll bust your ass right now.

Gage's demeanor switches. He pulls a wad of bills. Holds out five twenties. She takes the bill, massages her wrist.

GANGLY WHORE

She was here, few days ago. Bought her way out. And a buncha skag. Ricky alsmot shit himself. She was all fucked up, though, talkin' 'bout her kid and shit.

GAGE

You got her number?

GANGLY WHORE

Ricky does. All us girls get burners.

Gage holds out another two hundred. The whore looks it over, then glances back at a PIMP -- RICKY.

INT. HOLDING CELL - NIGHT

X lies on his side, fetal position. A few feet away, the door RATTLES as a GUARD knocks.

GUARD

Hey dickhead. That kid you shot's gonna live.

Then the guard moves on. X sits up slowly, like an old man aching from arthritis. He COUGHS a few times.

Then, X glances down at the scar on his hand. The X. He takes his sharp thumbnail and begins to dig into it. Wincing as he methodically slices and reopens an old wound.

Within the bloody hole, X spots a silver strand. He grabs it, exhales to prepare, then pulls, dragging a necklace from within his arm, out of a hole in his hand.

He holds it up, looking over the necklace, medical gauze encasing the charm at the end.

INT. NOLAN'S CADDIE - MORNING

The waking rays of the morning sun splash down on Nolan, who's passed out in the backseat of his car. As we pull around, we see Emmie at the car, staring in.

EMMIE

Daddy?

Nolan wakes, squinting, and forces a smile at her.

NOLAN

Hey you.

EMMIE

Nan said you were sick. Do you feel better?

NOLAN

Yeah.

He sits up, his face now closer to hers.

EMMIE

Will you drive me to school?

He studies her, gathering his wits. The moment seems fragile, like the tipping point of a father/daughter relationship.

NOLAN

I have a better idea. You wanna play hooky today?

EMMIE

What's that?

NOLAN

Oh, you don't know what hooky is?
It's when you don't go to school
because your dad wants to spend the
day with you.

A smile creeps across her face and she lights up.

NOLAN (CONT'D)

What do you wanna do?

EMMIE

(smiling)

Can we go to the science museum?

NOLAN

You gonna tell Nan?

She shakes her head fervently. Their secret.

INT. GAGE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Gage paces the feng shui living room, his cell to his ear.

GAGE

Yes, hi, this is Detective Gage,
badge-- you do? Ok, great. Um, I
want to get a trace on a cell
number. Yeah. The number's six oh
eight, four two six, four eight two
two. It might be a burner, I'm not
sure. Yeah. No, I can hold.

Gage stares out his window at the city, waiting.

GAGE (CONT'D)

Yeah, I'm here. It is? You can't
remotely power it on? Or-- What
about last known location? God
dammit! No, sorry. Yeah, can you
let me know if it powers back on--
You can? Yeah, just give me a call.

He ends the call. Frustrated, he throws his cell at the
couch. He falls back into the couch. He grabs his phone.
Looks through it. Sees a random number. Dials.

HAROLD (O.S.)

This is Harold Arsenault, leave a
message.

Gage ends the call. He rises, moves to his laptop. Searches
for **HAROLD ARSENAULT** in the Police database. One conviction:
Illegal purchase of narcotics.

INT. SCIENCE MUSEUM - LATE MORNING

Nolan follows an excited Emmie through the CROWDED museum as
she sprints to a wall display.

NOLAN

Slow down.

But, like a kid, she ignores him. At the wall display, Emmie
studies the image. A SILHOUETTE of the human body at
different ages, scaling taller as it flows down the wall.
Height lines above it, marked with age.

EMMIE

Here's me. This is how old I am.

Emmie stands under the **5-YEARS-OLD** marker, just slightly shorter than the average height as noted by the silhouette.

EMMIE (CONT'D)

Am I tall?

NOLAN

You're the tallest.

As Emmie tries to crudely measure herself, Nolan soaks in the image. His daughter at 5 years old. All the silhouettes marking her future flowing down the wall.

AT A KIOSK:

Nolan kneels down to Emmie's height, peering at all the charms they could purchase. All science oriented.

EMMIE

This one.

Emmie points to an Arrow.

NOLAN

That one?

EMMIE

Like Robin Hood.

NOLAN

Alright, let's do it.

EXT. PAWN SHOP - LATE MORNING

Gage's sedan pulls up to the shop. Notices a new box truck sitting outside, ready to haul pawned items.

INT. PAWN SHOP - LATE MORNING

Gage walks into the store -- the door RINGS. A bulky, barrel-chested man, HAROLD ARSENAULT, emerges from the back, carrying boxes. Spots Gage.

HAROLD

Can I help you?

GAGE

Yeah. You check your voicemail?

Harold pauses. Eyes Gage more intently.

HAROLD
What do you want?

GAGE
Someone steal one of your box
trucks?

HAROLD
Nope.

Harold begins putting boxes away.

GAGE
Then I'm wondering how it is that a
murder suspect got ahold of one of
your keys.

HAROLD
Murder suspect?

GAGE
Yeah, guy shot a kid the other
night. Turned himself in. We found
a key that matches the VIN to one
of your box trucks.

HAROLD
Yeah. Look, I sold a box truck to
this guy. David. He wanted it off
the records. Said he didn't wanna
deal with the registration
transfer. Even offered me an extra
thousand.
(then)
But I don't know. Doesn't sound
like the dude I knew. This guy
wouldn't hurt a fly.

GAGE
How do you know that?

HAROLD
I spent two months in rehab
listening to him talk about how
fucked up his life was.

GAGE
When?

HAROLD
Uh, I had to do six months. Ended a
few weeks ago. I think he was still
there. Said he was gonna wait it
out for some girl.

GAGE
What girl? You know her name?

HAROLD
Naw. She was quiet.

Gage nods. Starts to walk away, then stops. Turns back.

GAGE
Would you recognize her?

HAROLD
Yeah, I guess.

Gage pulls out his phone. Pulls up an image of Vera.

HAROLD (CONT'D)
Yeah, that's her. Jesus, who the fuck did that to her?

Gage's cell image disappears, replaced by an incoming call. He answers, walking to the door.

GAGE
Gage.
(then)
Where?

EXT. ABANDONED WALMART - PARKING LOT - EARLY AFTERNOON

Gage's sedan pulls into the lot and up to a police cruiser. Just beyond them are a handful of abandoned diesels, with a box truck between them, barely noticeable.

Gage climbs out of the car, walking to the POLICE OFFICER.

POLICE OFFICER
I do rounds through here at least once a shift. Kids like to tag the trucks.

GAGE
Thanks. Gimme a hand?

Gage and the officer make the long walk to the box truck.

They reach the truck and as the officer unlatches the back, Gage pulls his gun, ready for whatever may pop out.

But nothing does. Gage climbs up and in.

INT. BOX TRUCK - EARLY AFTERNOON

Dust, swirling ethereally in the light.

The outside sunlight can't fully penetrate the dark space, but it's enough for Gage to see what needs.

INT. CAFE - EARLY AFTERNOON

Nolan and Emmie are at a booth, plates of burgers and fries between them. Emmie glances down at her new necklace. Nolan steals one of Emmie's fries.

EMMIE

Hey.

NOLAN

Look at my plate. It's pretty poor on fries. I thought I could steal from the rich.

EMMIE

But I caught you.

NOLAN

What now?

EMMIE

You can have it.

NOLAN

You're so generous.

Nolan's phone RINGS; ignores it. It RINGS again. He answers.

NOLAN (CONT'D)

What do you want?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. BOX TRUCK - EARLY AFTERNOON

Gage, cell to his ear, stares at X's diagram of time on the wall of the box truck, a flashlight splash on it.

GAGE

I got something you need to see.

NOLAN

I'm done, man.

GAGE

Yeah, I know. I wasn't gonna call.
But this is... you need to see it.

Nolan studies Emmie. Her smile. Ketchup on her face.

GAGE (CONT'D)

Nol'...

NOLAN

Where you at?

INT. BOX TRUCK - LATE AFTERNOON

Nolan's Caddie swings up outside. Gage glances from out the back of the truck as Nolan climbs out and takes in the truck.

Then Nolan climbs in, soaking in the eerie scene. Gage hands him a set of plastic gloves. He slides them on.

Nolan moves to the wall, staring at the intricate lines, the filled in bubbles along them and the few remaining empty ones, all at intersections with other lines.

Now there are names to identify the lines.

JAMES - a bubble next to it, and then it keeps going indefinitely. **FELIX** - his line goes on, like James'. **MINA** - her line ends at a bubble. Her death.

Nolan's finger hovers over Felix's name. He glances back.

GAGE

Yeah. Look at that.

Felix's line has a few intersecting bubbles, each with their own IDs: **VERA** and **NOLAN**. Nolan studies it, then follows his line backwards, where it intersects, with bubbles, at several spots with other lines.

GAGE (CONT'D)

Look where it ends.

Nolan follows the line to its premature end-point, where it intersects with another line that continues on.

LEVEN.

It's as if it's predicting Nolan's death.

GAGE (CONT'D)

And check this out.

Nolan turns as Gage hands a wad of cash.

NOLAN
What am I looking at?

GAGE
Look at the series number.

Nolan peers harder, seeing the number. **SERIES 2022.**

GAGE (CONT'D)
Then, there's this...

Gage hands Nolan the newspaper article. With the sharpie names written on them: **JIMMY. MINA. FELIX.**

GAGE (CONT'D)
Read the headline.

Nolan looks it over: **ACCUSED RAPIST AND MURDERER ACQUITTED.**
Then Nolan reads the story:

ATTORNEY JIMMY KENMORE CONVINCED A JURY OF TWELVE THAT LEVEN CADE, THE ACCUSED, HAD UNDERGONE SERIOUS PSYCHOLOGICAL DAMAGE AS A CHILD, BROUGHT ON BY HIS PARENTS, WHO HAD, PRIOR TO THEIR DEATHS, ABUSED HIM PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY. THE JURY ACQUITTED CADE AND MANDATED HIM TO A MENTAL FACILITY NEARLY SEVEN MONTHS AFTER THE RAPE AND MURDER OF EMILY BRADFORD--

Nolan stops. Emily Bradford. Emmie. He looks up at Gage.

GAGE (CONT'D)
It's bogus. Nolan, it's bogus, but
we got him. All this--

Nolan crumples the paper. Walks to the opening and hops out.

GAGE (CONT'D)
Nolan-- shit.

Gage follows.

GAGE (CONT'D)
Nolan, don't do--

But Nolan is in his Caddie. Starts up. Skids away.

INT. HOLDING FACILITY - EVENING

Nolan waits at a security door before it BUZZES and lets him through. He walks the artificially lit hallway to a door.

Peers in at X, who is in the fetal position, shivering. Sweating. Looking deathly sick. Nolan BANGS once.

X glances up at him. Barely able to push himself up and to the door, where he stands, face to face with Nolan, who slaps the newspaper on the window.

NOLAN

What is this?

X

You found it...

NOLAN

What is it!

X

Her future.

NOLAN

Bullshit.

X

You wouldn't be here if it was bullshit.

NOLAN

What the fuck's that mean?

X

Everything I've done has led you here. To me. Right now. So I can tell you again that you have to kill him. You have to see it.

NOLAN'S FACE: trying to make sense of this in his head.

NOLAN

It says you were engaged to her-- you were gonna marry her.

X

I love her. And I know right now you still refuse to believe me. But everything I do here, everything I've done, ensures that I get to be with her again. I always come back. Always. I kill his mother for making him. I shoot the lawyer for defending him. I hurt people. Not for what they've done. But for what they will do. And there's a part of me that enjoys it. The part of me that knows what they've done.

(MORE)

X (CONT'D)

It's what always happens. It's a loop, Nolan. My life starts and ends here. But everything in between, I get to spend with her.

NOLAN

This isn't possible.

X

Tell me what you did with her today. I'll tell you...

(At Nolan's incredulity)

You took her to the science museum.

You had lunch.

Nolan can't believe what he's hearing.

X (CONT'D)

She told me. She told me about the last day she spent with her father. She told me about this.

Then X holds up the necklace, the gauze removed from the charm. Revealing an Arrow. Emmie's necklace.

Nolan backs away. Unable to believe this.

X (CONT'D)

I told you I brought things back. The gun. Your gun. This. I had to prove it to you.

(then)

I've closed the loop. I've left myself notes about all of this. So that when you don't do it... when you don't save your her, when she's raped and murdered again, I'll know what to do. The future will repeat itself.

Nolan slams his hand against the door. A futile gesture.

X (CONT'D)

Unless you stop it, Nolan. You can break the loop. It's always your decision.

Nolan's eyes tear. He's disgusted.

X (CONT'D)

All you have to do is kill him. He's who he is. He's done it before. He'll do it again. Over and over and over...

X COUGHS violently. Wavers.

NOLAN

Why me? Why didn't you just kill him?

X

Because... because I've tried. And failed. Because I'm weak. I'm afraid.

NOLAN

Of what?

(then)

Of what!?!

X

Never being with her!

X COUGHS again, his emotions rising.

X (CONT'D)

If he lives, I know I meet her. If I come back, and I do all this, I know we end up together. It's how we meet. It's what brings us together. It's the way it was and it's the way it is. And it'll destroy her in the end, I know, but... but it means I get to be with her.

(then)

And I know what that makes me. I know that letting it happen makes me as bad as him, but I need her. I'll take that to hell with me.

Nolan's eyes are fiery flames--

X (CONT'D)

But you don't have to let it happen again. You can be better than me. You can stop it all.

NOLAN

You're asking me to kill a child.

X

I'm asking you to save one.

(then)

Please. I don't care how you do it, but find a way to believe me. Make it stop, Nolan.

X COUGHS again.

X (CONT'D)

I've been here before. We've had this conversation before. It's all played out before. But you're in control. You're in control. You can change it. You can pull the trigger. I'll die, Nolan. I'll die here. And I'll be back. I have to. Because it'll happen again. Because I need to be with her. But you--

X's COUGHING resurfaces; he's unable to stop.

NOLAN

It's not real!

But X can't hear him -- he's COUGHING UP BLOOD. And then he drops, unconscious, into the spatters of crimson.

Nolan can only stare for a moment, before--

NOLAN (CONT'D)

Hey. Hey! Somebody! Hey!

The guard rushes over, peering in -- seeing X.

GUARD

Open cell four eight.

The door BUZZES and opens. The guard rushes in, checks X's pulse. He turns back--

GUARD (CONT'D)

Get EMS in here now!

Nolan's eyes drift from X's limp body to the necklace in his hands. Clutched tightly.

EXT. HOLDING FACILITY - EVENING

Nolan walks out of the facility in a fog of emotion. Gage is at his car, waiting.

GAGE

You alright?

NOLAN

Yeah.

GAGE

What'd he say?

Nolan doesn't answer, unable to.

GAGE (CONT'D)
Captain's got guys going through
the truck. None of that shit's
gonna be inadmissible.

Nolan's phone RINGS. He ignores before finally answering.

NOLAN
Bradford.

Nolan listens a moment, then glances up at Gage--

EXT. GROCERY STORE - PARKING LOT - EVENING

FBI VANS litter the lot, along with Nolan's Caddie.

Nearby, Nolan and Gage stand at the back of a group of FEDS,
whose attention are all on Agent Glover.

AGENT GLOVER
Alright, listen up. Suspect is Paul
Cade. Local PD got a call from one
of Cade's coworkers saying he
showed up at her place last night
asking for her car. She says she
loaned it to him and never heard
back. Traffic cams caught it a few
blocks away at seventeen hundred
hours, pulling into a motel. We got
eyes on the place -- car ain't
moved. No word on whether Cade's
inside. Given the danger posed to
his son, who he may have with him,
we're gonna go in. Alright, let's
get coordinated, people.

The agents disperse, prepared to go. Nolan approaches Glover.

NOLAN
Ryan--

AGENT GLOVER
There's nothing I'd like more than
to have you in there with us, but
my ass is already on the line by
calling you.
(then)
Don't worry. All my guys know what
he's done.

Glover walks off, meeting with other agents. Nolan watches as Gage kicks back with him.

INT. HOLDING FACILITY - INFIRMARY - NIGHT

We're on an E.K.G. It BEEPS. Then it's a long moment before it BEEPS again. Now on X's eyelids, they pop open. They're dilated. His newly blistered lips part. Breath grows shallow.

EXT. RUNDOWN MOTEL - FRONT - NIGHT

The FBI TEAM, split up, emerges from two outside hallways and converges on a motel room door.

Agent Glover gives the signal. One of the Feds knocks the door in with a handheld battering ram.

As soon as the door SNAPS off its hinges--

INT. HOSPITAL - ROOM - NIGHT

Quickly back on X. His breathing shallower. Breath. Breath.

INT. RUNDOWN MOTEL - ROOM #1 - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Feds are through, SHOUTING COMMANDS, guns raised.

SWAT

Clear.

AGENT GLOVER

Bathroom.

The Feds take positions at the bathroom door.

AGENT GLOVER (CONT'D)

Cade! You have three seconds to
come out.

Glover counts down silently, then gives his guys the order. The battering ram comes out again. Raised.

SMASH!

INT. HOSPITAL - ROOM - NIGHT

X's chest rises and falls rapidly. Breathbreathbreathbreath--
A DOCTOR and NURSE rip open his johnny, revealing a blistered body. Radiation poisoning...

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Nolan and Gage watch the Feds from a distance, waiting.

INT. HOSPITAL - ROOM - NIGHT

X's eyes are open. His lips still parted. Breath breath
Breath Breath Breath Breath Breath.

EXT. RUNDOWN MOTEL - NIGHT

Agent Glover emerges from the motel room, dismayed and empty-handed. Nolan soaks it in, frustrated. Walks away.

INT. HOSPITAL - ROOM - NIGHT

X's blistered body lies unmoving. His patchy-haired head to one side. The doctor pulls a sheet over his face.

EXT. GROCERY STORE - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Nolan and Gage walk back to Nolan's Caddie. Nolan BANGS the front of the car, denting it. Then he straightens, gazing off at the grocery store. Defeated.

We pull around him to see PEOPLE watching from a distance. And amongst them is Paul Cade, standing in entryway to the 24-hour grocery store with two handfuls of grocery bags.

Nolan squints, trying to believe it.

Paul seems to notice. Feels the heaviness.

There's a moment of almost pure, random awkward comedy as the two men stare stupidly at each other. Then Paul drops his bags and bolts back into the store.

NOLAN

Hey!

Nolan tears off after Paul. We're with Nolan the entire way to the grocery store's automatic doors.

INT. GROCERY STORE - NIGHT

Nolan's momentum sends him slamming into the not yet opened automatic glass doors. He peels himself away and races on.

Adrenaline blurs Nolan's vision, but he sees Paul turn down an aisle. Nolan blazes forward, arcing around the aisle. He takes aim, but Paul is around another corner.

Nolan rounds the corner and watches Paul SLAM into TWO UNSUSPECTING SHOPPERS toward the back of the store.

NOLAN
GET THE FUCK OUT OF THE WAY!

While sprinting, Nolan pulls his M1911 -- takes aim, but there's too many BYSTANDERS.

Paul hits black double-doors leading to the back and blows through them. Nolan follows, slowing as he reaches the doors, raising his M1911 again. He pushes through apprehensively.

INT. GROCERY STORE - BACK AREA - NIGHT

Nolan comes through the doors and rounds a corner stealthily, finding a BUTCHER on the ground. The butcher scurries away.

NOLAN
Which way? WHICH FUCKING WAY!

The butcher points down the aisle. Nolan moves quickly, but carefully, checking each hallway cross-section. The door at the end of the hallway comes open. Nolan's gun comes up--

An EMPLOYEE stares wide-eyed at Nolan and drops a BOX. It hits the floor as movement to Nolan's side grabs him--

Nolan turns -- sees -- evades -- but it's too late. A BAR SMASHES into Nolan's shoulder, sending him sprawling to the ground, his gun skittering along the floor.

Nolan dodges another blow as Paul flings the bar at him before running away. Nolan slides forward and grabs his gun. He aims, but sees Paul BARREL through the double doors.

Nolan gets to his feet as Gage pops into the back.

GAGE
Where!

NOLAN
Back in the store!

Gage disappears back through where he came. Nolan pushes onward in the direction Paul escaped.

INT. GROCERY STORE - NIGHT

Nolan comes through new double doors slowly. Spotting Paul racing toward the front again, Nolan bolts after him, finding new adrenaline. He's a blur as he passes each aisle.

From across the store, Gage catches a glimpse of Nolan.

EXT. GROCERY STORE - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Nolan explodes through the automatic doors. Where? Where? There! Paul is sprinting down a street.

Nolan blazes after him. And we're with him. Fiery lungs heaving breath-after-lumbering-breath.

EXT. URBAN STREETS - NIGHT

Paul rounds another corner. In seconds, Nolan turns it.

In the distance, Gage flies out of the grocery store, barely spotting Nolan. He flees after, pulling his phone.

Nolan is right on Paul's heels until he disappears into--

INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT

Paul flings open a door and races up metal stairs into a maze of hallways. He pushes on each door, trying to get in. He hears the door open behind him and he dashes away.

Nolan comes through - empty hallway. He leaps up the stairs and moves into the hallway, gun raised, his injured arm tucked into his side. He hears glass shatter -- races on.

But as Nolan reaches the hallway--

WHOOSH. A fire extinguisher goes off in Nolan's face. He stumbles back. Nolan fires blindly. CRACK--CRACK--CRACK.

But the shots go wide as Paul comes through the white chemical cloud with the red metal extinguisher raised--

Nolan falls back, catching only part of the blow; loses his gun. He scurries away, blinded by the chemicals, before climbing to his feet and lumbering away backwards.

He's a few feet from Paul, who still has the extinguisher.

PAUL
I didn't kill her.

Nolan wipes frantically at his face -- white powder.

Nolan surges forward, swings and misses -- Paul hits him in the gut with the extinguisher, forcing Nolan back down the hallway, where Nolan slips on the metal stairs. He falls--

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT

Gage rushes up to the apartment complex. He tries a door -- locked. He rushes to another and tries -- it opens.

INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT

Squinting, Nolan, sees the desperation and rage in Paul's face as he descends the stairs with the extinguisher.

Nolan scurries backwards, but Paul is lumbering forward. He raises the extinguisher for the finishing blow--

CRACK!

Paul's head is jerked to one side, spraying BLOOD. His body drops to the hallway floor.

Gage is at the end of the hallway, his gun still up.

GAGE
Nolan? Nolan!?

NOLAN
Yeah...

GAGE
You ok?!?

Nolan pushes himself up, using the wall, but slips back down. Gage rushes over, checks on Cade, who's dead, and helps Nolan to his feet.

GAGE (CONT'D)
You alright?

NOLAN
Yeah.

Nolan wipes his eyes, and in doing so, spots his gun. He grabs it from the concrete stairwell flooring. He looks for the gashes, the two marks that would now make it the same gun as the one X brought back. But they're not there.

We pull back and sound fades.

NEWSCASTER (O.S.)
 Authorities, this morning, released
 information on the man responsible
 for the death of Officer Ginger
 Hayes, a respected and decorated
 patrol officer.

INT. HOSPITAL - E.R. - MORNING

We hold on a pixilated eerie image of Paul Cade. He's frozen
 in a pleasant smile that contradicts what we know about him.

NEWSCASTER (O.S.)
 In a gruesome turn of events, Paul
 Cade had abducted ten-year-old
 Jasmine Barnes from a couple he had
 been counseling. The girl, who has
 also been killed, had been missing
 for two months until Officer Hayes
 and Officer Jose Martinez
 discovered her on Cade's property.

Nolan sits on a gurney with a wrapped shoulder, eyes
 bloodshot, as Gage and Keyes chat in the distance.

Nan and Emmie walk into the E.R. Seeing his daughter, Nolan
 stands. Emmie sprints to him and he scoops her up in a hug.

INT. NAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Nolan sits at the edge of Emmie's bed, his hand on his
 daughter lovingly, protectively, as she sleeps. He sees
 Emmie's Arrow necklace on the night stand.

He sinks to the floor, against the bed. Staring at the wall.
 Then he begins to cry. A HARD, SILENT CRY.

INT. NOLAN'S HOUSE - EMMIE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Emmie is at the center of her room, looking over her things.

NOLAN (O.S.)
 Are you packing?

She ignores him. Nolan enters.

NOLAN (CONT'D)
 What're you doing?

EMMIE
 I don't wanna live with Nan.

NOLAN

We're only gonna stay there for a little while. Come on.

Nolan grabs a stuffed animal.

NOLAN (CONT'D)

You wanna bring Poppers?

EMMIE

No. He's old.

NOLAN

Ok, well, we can come back for anything you want. It's all still gonna be here.

EMMIE

Ok.

Nolan walks out, leaving her to decide.

EXT. PINE GROVE REHAB FACILITY - MORNING

Gage's sedan swings into the parking lot. In the car, Gage stares at the facility with hopeful eyes.

INT. PINE GROVE REHAB FACILITY - OFFICE - MORNING

Gage sits across from DR. PARKER in her cramped office.

DR. PARKER

She didn't say much, but I remember her. She admitted herself a few months ago.

GAGE

And you let her go?

DR. PARKER

We're only required to prevent discharge by a court mandate or if we feel the person may be a danger to themselves.

GAGE

You didn't think she posed a threat to herself?

DR. PARKER

Technically, speaking, detective, everyone in here poses a threat to themselves. That's why they're here. But no, I didn't.

(then)

Vera was quiet, and though I knew she'd benefit from an actual psychiatrist, she got along with everyone and she showed significant signs of improvement before she left.

GAGE

You say she got along with everyone. Anyone in particular?

DR. PARKER

There was a man who showed up shortly after her. Showed an affection for her. She rejected him in the beginning, but she seemed close with him by the end of her stay. I thought maybe they were family. Estranged.

GAGE

What do you mean?

DR. PARKER

They shared the same last name. Williams. Vera and David Williams. They even checked out around the same time.

GAGE

They leave anything behind?

DR. PARKER

He did.

INT. NAN'S HOUSE - LATE MORNING

Nolan walks in a few boxes, behind Emmie, who carries in a tiny box of her own. Nan emerges from a room--

NAN

We can put 'em all in the back bedroom for now. Sort it out later.

Nolan's phone RINGS. He shuffles the boxes to get it until Nan grabs them from him, giving him access to his phone.

NOLAN

Thanks.
 (answers the phone)
 Bradford.

VERA (O.S.)

Nolan...

Nolan turns, away from Nan and Emmie, who disappear into the back room. He walks to the door.

NOLAN

Vera?
 (then)
 Where are you?

VERA (O.S.)

Waiting for you.

NOLAN

What are you talking about?

VERA (O.S.)

You know. He told you.

NOLAN

Who?

VERA (O.S.)

David.

NOLAN

Vera...

VERA (O.S.)

I'll text you the address.

NOLAN

Vera-- Vera--

But the other end of the line is now empty. Nolan stands there silently until Nan emerges from the back room.

NAN

I got her set up back there. I hope
 you don't mind the couch until we
 can get you a bed in there.
 (noticing Nolan)
 Nolan? You ok?

NOLAN

Yeah. Work call.
 (forces a new demeanor)
 (MORE)

NOLAN (CONT'D)
You, uh, you mind watching her for
about an hour?

NAN
Yeah. Yeah, of course.

NOLAN
Emmie!

Emmie comes out of the room. Nolan kneels to her.

NOLAN (CONT'D)
I gotta go... do some work.

EMMIE
(clueless)
Ok.

NOLAN
We can watch Robin Hood when I get
back.

Nolan smiles, but it's full of despair. He hugs Emmie, then
watches as she drifts off - a child's ignorance to the world.

INT. PINE GROVE REHAB FACILITY - STORAGE ROOM - LATE MORNING

DR. PARKER leads Gage into the room - a narrow passageway
lined on either side by boxes. She digs through a box.

DR. PARKER
We get a lot of people come
through. Seems no one wants to keep
anything they brought. Guess this
is as good a place as any to let
the past be the past.
(thumbing through files)
Here it is.

She pulls the file and hands it to Gage, who opens it, seeing
a single photo and a note.

DR. PARKER (CONT'D)
Gotta say, when we saw the note, we
were pretty puzzled.

Gage pulls the note first. Looks it over.

**IF HE CAN'T DO IT-- IF HE DIES, DOCUMENT EVERYTHING. TIMES.
DATES. EVERYTHING. AND LEAVE IT HERE:** Next to the writing is
several numbers. Longitude and Latitude coordinates.

DR. PARKER (CONT'D)
You know what it means?

Gage ignores her, pulling the photo. It's X -- **DAVID** -- with a BEAUTIFUL WOMAN who looks uncannily like Emmie.

Gage's phone RINGS. He answers.

GAGE
Gage. Yeah. When? Ok. What's the location?
(then)
Did it make any calls? Give me the number it dialed. And get a patrol out to the address.

EXT. ABANDONED BUILDING - PARKING LOT - LATE MORNING

Nolan's Caddie rests outside the lot next to another car -- Vera's. Inside the Caddie, Nolan studies the decrepit building and evaluates the idea of going in.

His phone RINGS. Caller-ID: GAGE. He ignores it.

It RINGS again. He places it on the dashboard. Climbs out.

INT. ABANDONED BUILDING - LATE MORNING

Nolan shoves a door open. It CREAKS wildly. And he enters. The M1911 in his hand, though at his side.

He paces through the dusty, cobwebbed building.

INT. ABANDONED BUILDING - OFFICE - LATE MORNING

Nolan appears in the doorway and stops. Sees Vera. She's standing near a non-working walk-in freezer door, looking at him - expecting him. There are cans of food and water bottles littering a dirty desk.

VERA
He's back here.

NOLAN
Who?

VERA
You know who.

NOLAN
What have you done?

Nolan pushes through, past her, to the door. He wipes the door's window, and spies a SMALL BODY cowering inside.

Nolan whips his head back to Vera, aghast. Then back to the boy inside and back to Vera again.

He trains the gun on her, making his way to her.

NOLAN (CONT'D)
Turn around and put your hands
behind your back.

She does as requested. As he cuffs her--

VERA
David told me everything. We spent
two months together. I'm so sorry.

NOLAN
Stay here.

Then he moves to the door. Pulls the handle -- opens.

INT. ABANDONED BUILDING - NONWORKING FREEZER - LATE AFTERNOON

At the sound of the door, Leven looks up. He's bound at the wrists. Tears have formed lines in the dirt down his face. He's terrified, but there's a twinkle of rage in his eyes.

Nolan walks in, gun at his side.

VERA (O.S.)
Look at the picture. He said for
you to look at the picture. I did
what he asked me to do. I brought
him here for you.

Nolan glances back, then returns his eyes to Leven.

Nolan scans around the boy, seeing a photo taped to the wall above Leven. Nolan moves closer to the boy, who backs away to the corner. Nolan pulls the photo -- looks it over.

VERA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
He said you can change it.

THE PHOTO: an older woman, HINTS of Vera in her, standing next to X and the same BEAUTIFUL WOMAN that resembles Emmie. An Arrow necklace around her neck. Her belly pregnant. And her hand held up to show the ring on it. An engagement ring.

VERA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 I know you don't wanna believe. I
 didn't at first. But it's true.
 It's all true.

Nolan glances from the photo to Leven, who looks up at him with pleading eyes -- the ire subtle, but there. A potential outcome. A potential criminal. A potential murderer.

EXT. ABANDONED BUILDING - PARKING LOT - LATE MORNING

A POLICE CRUISER pulls into the lot. Parks next to Nolan's Caddie. TWO COPS climb out. One evaluates Nolan's Caddie, while the other calls it in.

COP #2
 Central, this is Eight Zero Zero, I
 got two cars out here. We'll take a
 look inside.

INT. ABANDONED BUILDING - NONWORKING FREEZER - LATE AFTERNOON

Nolan, gun still in hand, kneels to Leven.

NOLAN
 Did you kill that girl?

Leven's eyes twitch, but he shakes his head.

NOLAN (CONT'D)
Did you kill that girl?

Leven nods his head. Over and over. Angrier.

NOLAN (CONT'D)
 Why?

LEVEN
 Because he wanted her. He was my
 dad!
 (then)
 And he hated me.

Nolan can see the rage and despair in Leven's eyes before the boy looks away, ashamed of himself.

NOLAN
 Your father can't hate you anymore.

Leven looks up, into Nolan's eyes. Trying to understand what that means. Nolan lays his gun down and unravels the rope from Leven's wrists.

VERA (O.S.)
What're you doing?

Nolan glances back to see Vera in the doorway, her arms pinned behind her by the handcuffs. Disbelief in her eyes.

Leven sees her and snatches Nolan's gun from the ground. Nolan spins, finding Leven pointing the gun at him.

LEVEN
What did you mean? What'd you mean
he can't hate me anymore?

Nolan can say nothing.

LEVEN (CONT'D)
Is he dead?

NOLAN
Put the gun down.

LEVEN
Is he dead?!?

Nolan gazes into the swirling hell behind the boys' eyes. His look confirming the worst for the boy. Rage in his eyes.

CRACK!

Nolan stumbles backward -- shot in the chest. Grasping helplessly for the wound. He drops to his knees. He COUGHS.

EXT. ABANDONED BUILDING - PARKING LOT - LATE MORNING

The officers, having heard the shot, RUSH IN.

INT. ABANDONED BUILDING - NONWORKING FREEZER - LATE AFTERNOON

Nolan drops to his knees. Breathing heavily. Then lighter. Lighter still. Then he falls over.

VERA
No...

Leven's rage disappears, replaced by a weighted remorse.

INT. ABANDONED BUILDING - OFFICE - LATE MORNING

The officers sprint through to see Vera in cuffs, cowering away from the freezer door. The first officer, gun drawn, moves through to the door, cautiously peeking in.

Inside, Leven is sitting on his knees, the gun in front of him. Tears streaming down his face.

COP #1
Get your hands up. Now!

Leven turns to him. An empty look in his eyes.

COP #1 (CONT'D)
Get your fucking hands up now!

Leven slowly surrenders his hands to the sky as the officer kicks the gun away. It slides across the rough floor...

EXT. ABANDONED BUILDING - PARKING LOT - LATE MORNING

Gage's sedan speeds into the lot, sliding as it stops near the police cruiser. Gage hops out, sprinting to the doors--

INT. ABANDONED BUILDING - OFFICE - LATE MORNING

SILENT:

Gage races through, halting as he sees Vera in cuffs, by the first officer. He slowly moves in. Vera cries out silently for him. The officer points -- shouting something.

Gage puts his hands up -- points slowly to his badge.

INT. ABANDONED BUILDING - NONWORKING FREEZER - LATE AFTERNOON

Gage moves into the doorway. Leven on the ground in cuffs. The second officer near him. Nolan's body on the ground.

Gage's face slacks with disbelief. It's too much. So much that his brain nearly shuts down.

Then he sees the photo on the wall. Vera... older. David, their son, with Emmie, Nolan's daughter. And, no... wait... she's pregnant. Gage can only stare. Stupidly.

He looks back over the room with unfocused eyes. And he spots the gun. Nolan's gun. He kneels to it, picks it up.

He sees two new GASHES on the handle. Now it's identical to the gun X brought back. The same gun...

Then Gage turns back to Leven, who looks up at him with that empty, hellish stare. And as casually as a wave hello, Gage pulls up his gun and--

CRACK-CRACK!

We're close on Gage's face as the gunshots flash. He's ended it. He's put the boy down. Ended the loop. Ended it all. And gave the future a new chance.

Gage suddenly jerks and is thrown to the right by the second officer on the scene. The gun falls, sliding away.

Gage is brought down to the ground. He's given up. The act itself, killing this boy, defeating him.

Sound fades. In fact, it was barely there at all.

EXT. ABANDONED BUILDING - PARKING LOT - LATE AFTERNOON

Squad cars litter the parking lot now. Gage sits peacefully in the back of one of the cars. The gravity of the situation still not sitting as heavy as it should.

Instead, there's a slight relief in his face. In his muscles.

He watches a body bag being wheeled away. A man's body bag. Nolan's body bag. But it doesn't seem real.

Then he sees Keyes. Others. All moving around so slow. Ignorant to what he's truly done. Ignorant to what it'll truly do to him. He's taken the weight of the world, the weight of all the actions set forth thus far...

...and he's swallowed them for his own.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

It's a cold day. No snow, but a fine mist. Black-clad MOURNERS stand around an open grave topped with a hanging flag-draped casket, ready to be dipped down into eternity.

Nan sits at the front. Emmie by her side. Keyes nearby. Their eyes jerk as the CRACKS of the DETAIL GUARD fires off the 21 Gun Salute. Emmie cries. Nan cries. Even the sky cries.

EXT. NAN'S HOUSE - LATE MORNING

A car pulls into the driveway. The engine dies and Vera climbs out. She opens the car's back door--

INT. NAN'S HOUSE - LATE MORNING

Nan sits on the couch alone watching television. The doorbell RINGS. Nan rises slowly -- arthritis -- and ambles over.

She opens the door to reveal Vera... holding a young boy in her arms, roughly ONE YEAR OLD: DAVID (X).

VERA

So sorry.

NAN

It's ok, come in, come in.

Vera carries David in like they've been here before.

VERA

I couldn't get him down for his nap, then he wouldn't wake up. It's been a hell of a morning. Hasn't it, David?

She hands Nan a bag and rattles off nervously--

VERA (CONT'D)

I'm not sure how long I'll be, so I packed enough food for the rest of the day. There's carrots in here, which apparently he doesn't like anymore. If you just play the airplane game, he'll eat 'em. Oh and he'll get cranky around three, so he may need another nap.

NAN

Vera-- Vera.

Nan grabs Vera lovingly, settling her.

NAN (CONT'D)

You're gonna be ok. Just go ahead and go. Besides, we've watched our little man here before.

Nan takes David from Vera. He smiles at Nan.

VERA

Thank you so much. I should be back by six, maybe seven.

NAN

Go on. You're gonna be late.

VERA
(kissing David on the
head)
I love you.

Vera smiles at him, hesitates, then leaves. Nan bops David on her side before walking to a room down the hall.

She opens the door--

Inside, Emmie, now a year older -- her hair longer and styled differently -- glances up from coloring. No smile.

NAN
Look who we've got for the day.

Emmie hops up and walks over to Nan, who sets David down. He wobbles and grabs onto Emmie's hand. She notices.

NAN (CONT'D)
You wanna help me watch him this
time?

Emmie says nothing. But she kneels to little David. And he fixates on the hanging, shiny thing at her neck.

EMMIE
It's an arrow.

He glances up at her. Her foreign words. And smiles. And it cracks the coldness in her. And she smiles.

INT. FEDERAL PENITENTIARY - VISITOR'S AREA - AFTERNOON

The large room is bleak and empty, save for Vera, who fidgets on the bench seat, staring out through the mesh windows at the cold day. She's biting her nails.

There's a BUZZ and the far door opens. Vera pops up.

A PENITENTIARY GUARD enters first, followed by a man in the DOC orange jumpsuit. GAGE.

The guard leads Gage to the bench and sits him down.

PENITENTIARY GUARD
I can get you thirty minutes.

GAGE
Thanks.

The guard walks away. Gage sets his shackled hands on the table between him and Vera, who looks healthier. Prettier.

She stares at him, the sort-of smile on her face fading. His hair is longer. His beard has grown out. And there's something behind his eyes. A tortured soul punishing itself.

GAGE (CONT'D)
Where is he?

VERA
I... I can't bring him here.

Gage nods, the tortured soul flashing again.

VERA (CONT'D)
Not yet.

GAGE
Yeah.

VERA
I just... Give me some time.
(then)
I brought you this.

She slides a photo of young David across. Gage pinches it off the table and looks it over. The dark soul disappearing momentarily as he stares his son in the eyes.

Gage's eyes well with tears.

VERA (CONT'D)
Are you doing ok?

Not looking up from the photo, Gage nods. But it's an empty gesture. One meant to make the other person feel better.

Gage sets the photo down. His hands shaking. His eyes down.

GAGE
Will you tell me about him?

She grabs his hand. The guard notices, but ignores it.

VERA
He's smart. He's a pain in the ass,
but he's smart.

Finally, the tears in Gage's eyes slip down his cheek.

VERA (CONT'D)
He's walking all over the place. I
had to take two extra shifts just
to buy a couple baby gates.

The sound drains away. And as her lips continue moving, as she continues to open up about their son, Gage stares up at her with the weight of the world he's swallowed down.

And the torture in his eyes is back, betraying the forced smile spread across his chapped lips.

FADE OUT.