

REPTILE

Written by

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INSPIRED BY REAL EVENTS.

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FADE IN:

A SWELLING, ORCHESTRAL PIECE OF MUSIC SUDDENLY ROARS...

EXT. SUBDIVISION - EARLY MORNING

The sun rises over a neighborhood of new construction homes; an expensive enclave in a quiet New England town, possessed with every luxury of suburban life save for one key element—the people.

The homes are deserted. Not a person in sight, or a car in a driveway.

The only evidence of human connection is a forgotten realty sign sitting in the grass of an overgrown lawn. It reads: 'Grady Realtors'.

The music abruptly ends.

PRE-LAP: THE SOUND OF A CELL PHONE RINGING.

INT. CAMILLE GRADY REALTORS - SUMMER'S OFFICE - DAY

SLOW PUSH IN ON SUMMER ELSWICK, a real estate agent in her mid 20s, as she walks towards her desk and picks up her cell phone.

SUMMER
(into phone)
Hello.

A woman with a thick, indistinguishable accent is on the other end of the call.

WOMAN WITH ACCENT (ON PHONE)
Is this Summer?

SUMMER
(into phone)
Yes. Who am I speaking with?

WOMAN WITH ACCENT (ON PHONE)
*My husband is moving to Scarborough
for his job and we're looking for a
new house.*

Summer sits behind her desk and opens her laptop.

WOMAN WITH ACCENT (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)
Something ready to move into. Three
bedroom, big master, three
bathroom.

Summer's eyes are focused on the computer screen, clicking through a luxury site's various high-end handbags.

SUMMER
(into phone, pretending to
write it down)
Three...bedrooms...alright. Is
there a price you have in mind?

WOMAN WITH ACCENT (ON PHONE)
Up to a million.

The figure is surprising. Summer closes out of the website, grabs a pen and writes it down.

SUMMER
(into phone)
Okay, great.

WOMAN WITH ACCENT (ON PHONE)
We're in a rush. Coming tomorrow on
the ferry. Two days we have to look
at places.

SUMMER
(into phone)
I'm just curious, how did you hear
about me?

WOMAN WITH ACCENT (ON PHONE)
We found you online. We like your
name.

An awkward moment.

WOMAN WITH ACCENT (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)
We have to go now.

SUMMER
(into phone)
And is this the best number to
reach you at?

WOMAN WITH ACCENT (ON PHONE)
Yes.

SUMMER
(into phone)
Perfect. And I don't think I got
your name.

Pause.

WOMAN WITH ACCENT (ONE PHONE)
Sylvia.

SUMMER
(into phone)
It was a pleasure talking with you
Sylvia-

WOMAN WITH ACCENT (ON PHONE)
Goodbye.

The woman hangs up.

Summer looks at her phone screen- the call is ended. She puts
it back on her desk, puzzled.

INT. CAMILLE GRADY REALTORS - CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Summer walks past elegant yet mostly uninhabited cubicles
through an office that has seen better days. She holds a
piece of paper in her right hand.

INT. CAMILLE GRADY REALTORS - WILL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Summer knocks on the open door and peeks her head inside.
WILL GRADY, early 30s, sits behind his desk, talking on his
cell phone.

His face brightens at the sight of Summer, motioning for her
to step inside.

WILL
(into phone)
She's here right now.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. 1502 WHITCOMB PLACE - DAY

Summer leans against the granite center island in the kitchen
of a large new construction cape that has been fully
furnished and tastefully staged for viewings.

Will's voice comes from elsewhere in the first floor of the house.

WILL (O.S.)
You're right, the closet's small
but if you knock that wall down it
could be a walk-in.

Will whirlwinds in to find Summer distracted, staring out the window facing the street at a WHITE SEDAN that passes the house moving incredibly slowly.

SUMMER
Nothing like a little deafening
construction before the fairytale
begins. I'll be sure to mention
that.

WILL
What do they need the room for? Do
they have kids?

Will moves past Summer to the sink, washing his hands while looking out the large window facing the backyard.

SUMMER
I don't know.

WILL
You didn't ask?

SUMMER
We didn't speak for very long.

Will looks for something to dry his hands on. He notices the brochure for CAMILLE GRADY REALTORS sitting on the counter near the sink, a large picture of his mother CAMILLE on the front. She's wearing a kind smile that appears too earnest to be on the front of a realtor's marketing materials.

Will shakes off his hands, moving closer to Summer.

WILL
You're still good for dinner
tonight with my mom, yeah?

SUMMER
(smiling)
Of course.

Will moves in between Summer's legs and kisses her neck. Summer playfully pulls away.

WILL
You used to love fooling around in
the nice ones.

Summer closes her eyes and tilts her head back.

WILL (CONT'D)
(softly)
What did the woman's voice sound
like again...?

SUMMER
Sort of...

Summer prepares an impression of the voice, trying not to
laugh.

SUMMER (CONT'D)
(in a funny accent)
Three bedroom, three bathroom.

Summer bursts out laughing. Will unbuttons his shirt.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Summer and her friend RENEE GIFFORD, late 20s, change out of
their clothes and into their swimsuits.

SUMMER
We're in one of those really long
tunnels. In the middle where you
can't see either end and the car
just dies. Will thinks we ran out
of gas so I start looking for a
flashlight. But then he just gets
out and leaves me there.

RENEE
He left you there?

SUMMER
Totally alone. Sitting in the
middle of the road. In complete
darkness. Then I hear a car coming.

RENEE
Shut up.

SUMMER
But I can't see it.

Summer removes her shirt, revealing a thick black tattoo that
encircles her ribs and her shoulders like a belt.

SUMMER (CONT'D)

So I start feeling for the keys
near the ignition to turn the
battery on and flash the lights.
But they're gone. He took them.

INT. INDOOR POOL - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Summer and Renee, in their bathing suits, walk down the a
long and narrow hallway holding their towels and respective
water bottles.

SUMMER

I can hear the car speeding through
the tunnel towards me. And I know I
need to get out but I can't. I
freeze. I can't move. Not a muscle.

RENEE

And then what?

SUMMER

Nothing. That's it.

RENEE

Okay, I love you but I have no idea
what that dream means.

Summer and Renee enter the pool area. A few ELDERLY WOMEN
paddle in the shallow area.

INT. INDOOR POOL - MOMENTS LATER

A DIVER practices on a nearby high dive while a COACH yells
instructions. Summer and Renee are at the edge of the lap
pool, winded.

RENEE

Ready?

SUMMER

Just give me a minute.

Summer catches her breath.

SUMMER (CONT'D)

Go.

They push off simultaneously, racing each other.

Summer comes up for air in the middle of the swim. She
freezes. *She sees something. Someone.*

At the far corner of the room by the entrance. However, we cannot see what she sees.

A minute later, Renee finishes the sprint. She looks in the adjacent lane but it's empty.

Renee looks to the side of the pool. She's not there either. Summer is gone.

EXT. CAMILLE'S HOUSE - EARLY EVENING

Will's Range Rover pulls off a private road and onto a long driveway, leading to a cape-style mansion. Pine trees surround it on three sides, and the back opens out to a cliff-walk running along the jagged ocean coastline.

NPR (PRE-LAP)

Two men were arrested in Yarmouth Monday afternoon on suspicion of drug trafficking. Police seized thirteen pounds of heroin in what they believe--

INT. WILL'S RANGE ROVER - SAME

Public radio is on. Will pulls up, cell phone to his ear, waiting for his call to be answered.

NPR

--to be a significant development amidst the recent rise of opioid fatalities, according to--

Summer's voicemail picks up.

SUMMER'S VOICEMAIL (ON PHONE)

This is Summer Elswick of Grady Real Estate. I'm sorry I missed your call. If you leave your name--

Will hangs up, putting the car in park.

INT. CAMILLE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Light classical music plays from a radio on the counter.

CAMILLE GRADY, late 50s, an apron over her cashmere sweater, dices an onion for soup. Her perfectly manicured nails gently wrapped around the hilt, she chops at an incredible speed.

With her other hand she feeds the rapidly slicing blade, her fingertips millimeters away, the knife so sharp it barely makes a sound.

A small tear falls from her eye.

Will ENTERS. Camille stops putting the knife down and carefully wipes her hands on her apron.

She kisses her son. Her voice is soft, but clear.

CAMILLE
Hello, sweetheart.

WILL
Hi.

CAMILLE
I'm just putting the soup on. Is Summer here?

WILL
She should be on her way. I think she's running late.

Will notices the tear on Camille's cheek. He goes to wipe it.

CAMILLE
Oh, don't bother. I already did my makeup. We're gonna let it dry.

INT. CAMILLE'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - LATER

Mid dinner. Camille sits at the head of the table. DAVID MARK (60s), and his wife SHARON (50s), are on either side of her. Will sits across from their pretty daughter VALERIE (30s).

A chair sits empty. Summer is a no-show.

DAVID
One on one, I'm great. In front of that many people, I clam up.

SHARON
Camille, I'm sure you have your speech ready for tomorrow.

CAMILLE
It's hardly a speech.

DAVID
(to Will)
She's the best speaker we have.
(MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)
It's not easy talking to a room
full of a hundred people wishing
they were somewhere else.

Camille humbly accepts the compliment.

SHARON
Especially this year.

DAVID
I know for a fact with the market
doing belly flops there's gonna be
a lot of unhappy faces in that
crowd.

Will has been busy chewing steak and staring at his plate.

WILL
(mouth slightly full)
I don't think it's as bad as it
seems. There are opportunities in
commercial assets, REOs,
foreclosures...

David can feel Camille tense up with embarrassment. Her image
is selling seaside mansions, not bank-owned Mom-and-Pop
shops.

DAVID
Foreclosures? Really- in town?

CAMILLE
No.

WILL
Some, sure.

Camille laughs awkwardly, shaking her head.

SHARON
It's just awful having to see these
places that I've been going to
since I was a kid shutter for good.

CAMILLE
I know. It's a shame.

Everyone can feel the awkward disconnect between Camille and
her son.

David changes the subject.

DAVID

Valerie and her fiancé are thinking of purchasing a home in the not too distant future.

VALERIE

Yeah, we're thinking about it.

WILL

You should call me. I'd be happy to help.

Valerie blushes and takes a sip from her water glass.

CAMILLE

Well, look who it is!

Will looks up to see Summer standing in the doorway.

SUMMER

I'm so sorry I'm late. Hello!

CAMILLE

David, Sharon, and Valerie.

SUMMER

Summer- hi...

Summer takes her seat next to Will.

WILL

(under his breath)

I've been calling you. Where were you?

SUMMER

(quietly)

I left my phone at the pool.

CAMILLE

Summer, can I pour you a glass of wine?

SUMMER

Yes- please, thank you.

Summer pushes her glass towards Camille.

PRELAP: A CELL PHONE RINGING.

INT. WILL'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - MORNING

Morning light fills the room. Will opens his eyes.

WILL
(groggy)
Just let it ring.

Summer reaches for her phone and notices the number.

SUMMER
Shit. It's the Spanish woman.

Summer clears her throat and picks up, putting it on speaker phone.

SUMMER (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Hello?

WOMAN WITH ACCENT (ON PHONE)
Is this Summer?

Will is surprised at the strange temperament of the caller.

SUMMER
(into phone)
Yeah, how are you?

WOMAN WITH ACCENT (ON PHONE)
You called.

SUMMER
(into phone)
I did. I wanted to make sure you
received the address and that I can
still expect you this afternoon.

WOMAN WITH ACCENT (ON PHONE)
Yes.

SUMMER
(into phone)
Okay, amazing. I think you'll love
the house I found.

WOMAN WITH ACCENT (ON PHONE)
Yes.

SUMMER
(into phone)
I meant to ask you, do you have
children?

A pause. The woman hangs up.

SUMMER (CONT'D)
She hung up.

Will swings his legs over the bed, yawning, and heads to the bathroom.

WILL
Maybe she lost service.

Summer calls the number back and puts the phone to ear. It goes straight to voicemail.

WILL (O.S.) (CONT'D)
What time's the showing today?

INT. 1502 WHITCOMB PLACE - LATE AFTERNOON

Summer, slightly hungover, floats through the exquisitely staged home, making sure everything is in order...

She runs the faucets, flushes the toilets, stands on a chair and uses a dust buster to get a few stray cobwebs.

As she walks out of the kitchen she notices something in the corner of the room. She bends down to get a closer look --
A DOZEN TINY REPTILIAN EGGS laid in a pile on the carpet.

SUMMER
Egh.

Just as she reaches for a broom, her cell phone rings.

Summer picks up.

SUMMER (CONT'D)
(into phone)
This is Summer.

MAN WITH ACCENT (ON PHONE)
*I just wanted to let you know my
wife is not feeling good. She's not
going to make it today. It will
just be me.*

Like his wife, the voice on the other end of the call has an unusual, hard to pinpoint accent.

SUMMER
(into phone)
I'm sorry to hear that. Is
everything alright?

Pause.

MAN WITH ACCENT (ON PHONE)
She's not feeling good.

SUMMER
(into phone)
Okay, well, I hope she feels
better.

MAN WITH ACCENT (ON PHONE)
I'm almost there.

SUMMER
(into phone)
Great.

MAN WITH ACCENT (ON PHONE)
Goodbye.

Summer ends the call. Distraught, she stares at her phone.
Something doesn't feel right.

INT. BLAKE'S HARDWARE - LATE AFTERNOON

Piles of dust and empty metal shelves are all that remains of
the small business.

A large sign for "Blake's", written in big loopy letters,
hangs faded over the cashier's counter where BENNETT ROSSOFF,
30s, a professional stoner turned real estate lawyer, lays
out the pages of a contract.

Will stands near the entrance, finishing a call.

WILL
(into phone)
Great, okay. Yup. Gotta go.

BENNETT
Makin' deals.

Will puts his phone in his pocket.

WILL
Sorry, crazy day.

Bennett hands Will a pen and motions for him where to sign.

BENNETT
Take your time. I'm in no rush.

Will looks over the contract, signing and initialing pages.

BENNETT (CONT'D)
This place is an incredible deal.
You were smart to move on it.

Will gives a perfunctory nod without looking up. Bennett collects the signed document.

BENNETT (CONT'D)
Thank you sir.

Will notices a hand-painted sign by the door:

'Hope to See You Soon!'

He feels a pang of guilt. Bennett continues reading over the contract.

EXT. 1502 WHITCOMB PLACE - EARLY EVENING

Summer is standing in the driveway as a TAN BUICK pulls up. She's on her phone finishing up a text then looks up. The headlights hit her face. She smiles professionally, welcoming whoever is driving.

The Buick parks and turns its engine off.

CLOSE UP of the passenger door SLOWLY OPENING, however we do not see any person exit the vehicle.

SUMMER (O.S.)
Hey there. How was the trip?

Silence.

ON A CLOSE UP OF Summer as she graciously greets the persons exiting the vehicle.

SUMMER (CONT'D)
Oh good, you both made it.

We TRACK BEHIND Summer as she approaches the front door, occasionally she turns and speaks to the people behind camera whom we never see.

SUMMER (CONT'D)
(nervously)
Okay. So here we are. This is a brand new construction, beautifully redone. I think you'll enjoy the modern amenities with the more traditional cape charm.

E./INT. BLAKE'S HARDWARE / WILL'S CAR - SAME

Will and Bennett get into Will's Range Rover parked in the deserted lot of the hardware store.

Will starts the engine.

His phone beeps- a text message from Summer: "come to the house"

Will types back: "Everything okay?"

Will stares at the screen a moment- Summer initiates no response.

WILL

Do you mind if we make a stop?

BENNETT

Nope.

Will pulls the car around to the EXIT while calling Summer.

SUMMER'S VOICEMAIL (ON PHONE)

*This is Summer Elswick of Grady
Real Estate. I'm sorry I missed--*

Will hangs up, dropping the phone into his lap as he makes a hard left.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. 1502 WHITCOMB PLACE - EARLY EVENING

The sun has now set and the light is even bluer and darker.

We SLOWLY TRACK towards the front door, only hearing the sound of WIND CHIMES coming from a neighboring home.

Through the opaque glass on either side of the front door we can see TWO SILHOUETTED FIGURES moving around.

The LIGHT inside the home's entryway turns OFF.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. 1502 WHITCOMB PLACE - MOMENTS LATER

An AERIAL SHOT of the Tan Buick leisurely backing out of the driveway and driving out of frame.

We SLOWLY DESCEND and TILT TO REVEAL Will's Range Rover rounding a corner before pulling into the driveway behind Summer's White Volvo, where the Buick was just moments ago.

INT. WILL'S RANGE ROVER - PARKED - CONTINUOUS

Will puts the car in park and turns off the ignition.

WILL

This'll only be a second.

Bennett types away on his Blackberry.

BENNETT

I'm good.

EXT. 1502 WHITCOMB PLACE - CONTINUOUS

As Will makes his way up the driveway he turns towards Summer's parked Volvo.

He then turns towards the house and notices all the lights are off.

Will tries the handle and the door easily OPENS.

INT. 1502 WHITCOMB PLACE - ENTRYWAY - CONTINUOUS

Will steps inside the pristine home. Nothing looks out of place yet it's very quiet.

WILL

Hello. Summer?

Will sees Summer's HEELS placed carefully upright near the front door.

WILL (CONT'D)

(louder)

Summer?

Will takes out his cell phone and dials her number. He hears it RINGING from upstairs.

THE STAIRCASE

Will casually walks up the staircase and turns right, following the RINGING which is coming from...

AN UPSTAIRS BEDROOM

Will ENTERS the bedroom as the RINGING gets LOUDER.

A CLOSE UP on Will's face as he STOPS in his tracks. A look of sheer paralyzing terror on his face.

INT. FRENCH RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The restaurant is busy- mostly romantic dates and quiet anniversaries.

One table stands out from the rest: a crew of ruddy-faced middle aged men who appear to be exhausting the restaurant's back closet of free suit jackets.

They are SCARBOROUGH DETECTIVES. Two rounds of drinks sit empty in front of them.

WALLY, PAUL, and VICTOR- all late-50s- sit puzzling over their leather-bound menus. They all speak in thick accents.

Wally looks down at his menu: everything is written in French. He sees Paul next to him rubbing his brow with exasperation.

WALLY

What looks good to you, Paul?

PAUL

Not sure...

WALLY

What about you, Vic?

Victor closes his menu, the most honest of the bunch.

VICTOR

I can't fuckin' read this.

Paul and Wally crack up. They're drunk.

WALLY

Al, we're retiring, we're not going to the Sorbonne.

CHIEF ROBERT ALLEN, mid 60s, sits across from the three laughing drunk detectives, sipping a Campari and soda.

ALLEN

You gotta ask Tommy. He picked this place.

Sitting next to Allen with a face like a boxer after a lost fight is DETECTIVE TOM NICHOLS, late 40s. He's the only guy in the crew dressed for the occasion.

WALLY

Tom, look at your uncle's face...

Tom glances up at Chief Allen.

WALLY (CONT'D)

That's the face of a man who is about to spend more money on one dinner for three guys he doesn't even like than he has on his wife, his kids, Christmas, birthdays, vacation.

Vic and Paul are dying. Chief Allen's phone buzzes. He gets up to take the call.

PAUL

(to Nichols)

Hey Tom. Is this how they retire detectives in Boston?

ALLEN

Excuse me.

WALLY

That's the bank!

Vic and Paul roar. Nichols laughs as well.

A WAITER approaches as Allen ducks into an area near the restrooms, still within view of the table.

CHIEF ALLEN

(into phone)

This is Allen. Uh-huh. Yup, go ahead...

Allen waits to be connected...

AT THE TABLE

Wally directs his attention to Nichols.

WALLY

When you take over for your uncle next year, don't be like him. Just cause he grew up in the depression-

This gets an immediate laugh.

WALLY (CONT'D)

-doesn't mean you gotta follow in the footsteps. When you're chief and you wanna keep cops happy? Two words. Toilet roll. The good pillow- not that tissue paper.

Nichols catches a glimpse of his Uncle in the mirror mounted on the wall above Paul and Wally, standing next to the Men's Room...

Allen hangs up the phone, looking as if he just spoke to the Angel of Death.

INT. NICHOLS'S CROWN VIC - NIGHT

Nichols drives Allen down the dark neighborhood streets of the affluent suburb, homes illuminated only by the graze of his headlights.

Nichols turns onto Whitcomb Place and immediately sees the blinding show of emergency lights awaiting them.

EXT. 1502 WHITCOMB PLACE - STREET - CONTINUOUS

A DOZEN POLICE CARS are sprawled along the street. The home is taped up with various FORENSICS emerging from the house collecting evidence.

Concerned NEIGHBORS stand on their lawns, watching this unfold.

POLICE deploy K9 units who are scouring the scene.

Nichols and Allen cross the lawn towards the house.

FRONT OF HOUSE

Allen approaches OFFICER DAN CLEARY (30) nervously standing by the front door. They have a conversation which WE CANNOT HEAR.

WE STAY WITH Nichols who wanders to the driveway. He inspects the front console of Summer's Volvo with his flashlight.

Nichols turns and surveys the neighboring homes. He subtly observes all the WINDOWS that would have had a direct eyeline to the front of the house. He looks to the UPSTAIRS WINDOW ACROSS THE STREET where a SILHOUETTED FIGURE appears to make eyes with him.

Nichols shifts his focus to the OFFICERS and ONLOOKERS barricading the crime scene and their shared restrained panic. Inside this house is the gateway to hell, and outside are the people afraid of it.

Allen gestures to Nichols, waving him over.

ALLEN
It's a mess.

NICHOLS
Who's inside?

ALLEN
Forensics.
(then)
The boyfriend and his friend are at the station. We're trying to get a hold of the victim's next of kin, her father, he's a local recluse. No one's seen or heard from him in years.

NICHOLS
Any witnesses?

Chief Allen shrugs.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)
Where am I going?

ALLEN
Upstairs.

INT. 1502 WHITCOMB PLACE - ENTRYWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Nichols STEPS INSIDE the entrance to the home. All the lights are off aside from WORKLIGHTS staged in various corners while they collect evidence.

He slowly makes his way through the first floor and into the living room as he gazes upward. Nichols points his flashlight towards the ceiling, illuminating a DARK BROWN CIRCULAR STAIN seeping through the drywall.

He walks directly underneath the stain just as a FORENSICS GUY startles him from behind.

Nichols turns to him.

FORENSICS GUY
We found her purse, her watch, wallet, money. Shoes were by the door.

The Forensics Guy leads Nichols towards the staircase as Officer Cleary approaches.

CLEARY

We got a neighbor who says she saw something. Wanna talk to her?

NICHOLS

Later.

Cleary walks away.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)

(to Cleary)

Get a statement-

NICHOLS (CONT'D)

(to Forensics)

And the backyard?

FORENSICS GUY

Working on it.

UPSTAIRS BEDROOM

Nichols ENTERS the room where a FORENSICS TEAM have formed a RING around the center of the room, PHOTOGRAPHING evidence while obstructing Nichols's vantage point.

...ON A CLOSE UP of Nichols as he stops, viewing a body WE CANNOT SEE.

He tilts his head, objectively studying and staring at what is no doubt a gruesome scene.

Nichols's POV: A CLOSE UP of two BLOOD-RIDDEN FEMALE HANDS, tied behind the back. Hogtied.

INT. SHERATON HOTEL - EVENT ROOM - NIGHT

Outside the room, an agenda board reads "Scarborough Regional Chamber of Commerce Mixer" with the current date and time.

CATERERS prepare an open bar and chafing dishes towards the back, while in the center of the room a hundred folding chairs sit only half occupied.

Camille holds a microphone, delivering remarks to the crowd, while a small committee of other speakers sits behind her.

CAMILLE

People often ask how it was that our business was able to survive when so many others didn't. Was it luck? I don't know.

(MORE)

CAMILLE (CONT'D)

But I will say this...I don't consider my business to be in property, I consider it to be in people. My job is to hear what a person wants, and then know what they need. Right now everyone in this room wants the same thing. We want to get our community back on its feet...but I think what we need is confidence. We need to be confident in our town and what it provides; something you can sell, but never put a price on: an escape into beauty, serenity, and peace. Thank you.

Applause.

Camille hands the microphone to the MODERATOR, taking her seat next to David Mark and the other speakers.

A member of the HOTEL MANAGEMENT STAFF taps Camille on the shoulder.

He whispers into her ear.

Camille leans towards him, trying to hear over the sound of the MC.

The message is repeated.

The Manager waits for Camille to nod and confirm that she understands what he has told him.

She does. He steps away.

Applause for the next speaker begins. David rises to deliver remarks.

Camille stares into the dark red patterns woven into the flame retardant carpeting, frozen.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. LOBBY - SCARBOROUGH POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Camille, clutching her purse, sits in the waiting area, staring at the floor, distraught.

Chief Allen shuffles into the lobby.

ALLEN

Hi, ma'am. I'm Chief Allen.

Camille rises.

ALLEN (CONT'D)
You don't have to get up.

CAMILLE
I'm Will's mother.

ALLEN
He's talking to one of our
detectives right now.

CAMILLE
When can I see him?

ALLEN
(gentle, reassuring)
As soon as they're done, I'm gonna
have you come in, okay? As soon as
they're done.

CAMILLE
Okay.

ALLEN
Now...I should tell you...he found
the body. So he's in shock. We
think.

CAMILLE
He found her?

ALLEN
Yes.
(then)
I'm sorry.

The blood drains from her face. She starts to tremble.

CAMILLE
How, um, how--?

ALLEN
That's what we know right now.

Allen reaches out, gently placing his hand on the back of her
shoulder.

ALLEN (CONT'D)
We just need a little more time to
talk to him about what happened,
and then we'll bring you back so
you can see him. Okay? Does that
sound okay?

Camille nods. And then bursts into tears, burying her face in her hands. Allen guides Camille to her chair.

ALLEN (CONT'D)
Why don't you sit down.

Allen nods to a YOUNG DISPATCH OPERATOR, who walks over with a glass of water, handing it to Camille.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - SCARBOROUGH POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Will sits quietly at a metal desk with his arms at his sides.

He can see through the glass window of an adjacent INTERVIEW ROOM where Bennett is being questioned.

Bennett nods and says 'okay'.

The doorknob CLICKS, and Will looks up to see Nichols taking a seat across from him, placing his notebook on the table.

WILL
Hi.

NICHOLS
Hi Will. I'm a detective here with the Scarborough police. I want to talk to you about what happened tonight.

Will looks up at the SECURITY CAMERA mounted in the corner. Nichols notices and glances at the camera.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)
Ever been interviewed by the police in a room like this before?

WILL
No sir.

Nichols reaches into a folder and produces a map of the neighborhood where Summer was murdered, as well as a floor plan of the house itself.

NICHOLS
This is a map of the neighborhood and the floor plan of the residence. If you need to make reference to this, feel free to do so...

Will places his arms on the metal table as Nichols slides the map and floorplan towards him.

Nichols sees that Will's HANDS and SHIRT SLEEVES are STAINED RED with Summer's blood.

He watches Will study the map, scratching his nose with a blood stained finger.

Nichols can sense he's in a complete state of shock.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM - SCARBOROUGH POLICE STATION - LATER

Will stands profile against a white wall as a FORENSICS EXAMINER photographs him from various angles.

FORENSICS GUY
Other side.

Will turns.

FORENSICS EXAMINER
Lift your arm.

Will is in another world. He ignores her.

FORENSICS EXAMINER (CONT'D)
Can you lift your arm.

Will lifts his arm. The Examiner snaps a photo.

FORENSICS EXAMINER (CONT'D)
Now remove your shirt.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - SCARBOROUGH POLICE STATION - NIGHT

The room is long, and from inside it one can observe both interrogation rooms through the two way glass mirrors.

Will is in one room, putting an oversized Scarborough PD sweatshirt on over his bare torso, while Bennett sits in the other room, sleeping with his head against the wall.

Allen and Nichols watch them.

ALLEN
No scratches, nothing under his nails, no signs of struggle. He tried to give her CPR.

Nichols's gaze is fixed on Will.

ALLEN (CONT'D)
Tom.

Nichols turns.

ALLEN (CONT'D)
Let him go home.

Nichols sighs.

ALLEN (CONT'D)
He's cooperating with us. I don't
see a reason to-

NICHOLS
What? Make his night worse?

Allen doesn't dignify Nichols with a response. And Nichols acquiesces.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)
Alright.

Allen pats his nephew on the back.

INT. LOBBY - SCARBOROUGH POLICE STATION - LATER

Camille hears a door open and looks up from her seat.

An OFFICER leads Will into the waiting area, the oversized sweatshirt making him look like a child.

She recalls the death of Will's father when Will was thirteen. It was the most difficult experience of their lives. And they never spoke about it. They would talk about their memories of him, but never their grief.

Camille stands and embraces her son.

I./EXT. CAMILLE'S CAR / MUNICIPAL PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Camille drives Will in her Mercedes E-Class. They sit in silence as they descend this three-story parking structure, resembling their own descent into something profoundly endless.

AT THE TICKET BOOTH

Camille slows down and lowers her window as they pull up to the ATTENDANT waiting in the booth.

Camille searches the center console for the parking ticket.

CAMILLE
Hi. It's here somewhere.

Will comatosely stares out his passenger window. Numb.

CAMILLE (CONT'D)
Give me one moment. I think it's...

Camille finds the ticket in the compartment near her door.

CAMILLE (CONT'D)
Got it.

Camille hands the Attendant the ticket who processes it into her computer.

ATTENDANT
That'll be ten.

CAMILLE
Did I not validate? Shoot.

Camille looks back, possibly contemplating trekking back to the station to get the ticket validated.

Will is disconcerted by the hold up.

CAMILLE (CONT'D)
Do you take card?

ATTENDANT
No, we don't.

INT. APARTMENT - MORNING

The morning light burns along the edges of the window blinds.

There are books piled around a mattress on the floor. A sink full of rancid dishes. A bureau full of stacked hard drives and audio cables.

A YOUNG MAN (30s) sits hunched over the kitchen table, headphones on, bathed in the glow of his laptop.

This is ELI.

Next to Eli's computer is a condenser mic from the 80s, plugged into a small sticky mixing board.

ON THE LAPTOP: An audio editing program is open. We see the waveform of audio move across the screen as Eli listens.

A FOLDER OF PHOTOS ON HIS SCREEN:

Images of a brown clapboard house with tall grass, one of the oldest in the country;

a portrait of a late 17th century settler, a REVEREND, looking like the Americas had devoured his soul; an engraving of Indians and the French slaughtering dozens of townspeople, carrying off the women and children.

ELI'S VOICE

Stripped naked and led out into the snow, the Reverend was beaten and stabbed until he succumbed to his wounds. His wife and son were taken captive by the Penobscot, carried off into the freezing winter, where she would perish and the Reverend's son would never be seen again.
January 24th, 1692.

Eli pulls the microphone over to his mouth and hits record.

ELI

(into mic)

If you'd like to support The Arcadian, please visit the donation page on our website. I'm Eli Phillips, thank you for listening.

Eli takes his headphones off and leans back, staring at the ceiling.

EXT. ELI'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Eli emerges from his apartment, which sits above the two-car garage of the main house, an OVERGROWN COTTAGE, unexpectedly bright and charming.

On his front landing is a NEWSPAPER with a handwritten note attached:

"RENT 3 DAYS LATE -Mort"

Eli heads down the outdoor steps running along the side of the garage, down towards his dark blue VOLVO STATION WAGON sitting in the driveway.

Eli can see his neighbor and landlord MORT (80s) watering his flower boxes.

MORT

Hey Eli!

ELI

Morning, Mort. Sorry about the rent it slipped my mind. I'll get you a check today.

MORT
Not a problem! Beautiful day today!

ELI
Sure is!

I./EXT. ELI'S CAR / FAST FOOD DRIVE-THRU - CONTINUOUS

Eli pulls up to the window to collect his food and pay. He is listening to public radio.

NPR (ON RADIO)
*We'll now go live to the
Scarborough Police Department.*

CHIEF ALLEN (ON RADIO)
*Yesterday at approximately six
thirty pm, patrol officers--*

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - SCARBOROUGH POLICE STATION - DAY

Chief Allen holds a press conference addressing the media and room scattered with JOURNALISTS and REPORTERS.

Nichols stands behind him.

CHIEF ALLEN
*--received a call in the East Oak
neighborhood of Scarborough. The
victim has been identified as
Summer Elswick, white female, age
twenty six. She was pronounced
deceased when officers arrived.*

INT. ELI'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Eli sits at a traffic light, listening intently to the press conference.

CHIEF ALLEN (ON THE RADIO)
*The residence was on the fifteen
hundred block of Whitcomb Place.*

Eli perks up at hearing Whitcomb Place. He raises the volume.

CHIEF ALLEN (ON THE RADIO) (CONT'D)
*That's all the information we have
at this time. Thank you.*

EXT. 1506 WHITCOMB PLACE - DAY

Eli steps out of his car carrying his messenger bag.

TWO POLICE CARS and a CRIME LAB VAN are parked in front of 1502 Whitcomb. The perimeter of the property is enveloped by police tape with partitions blockading the street just in front of the house.

TV CREWS have set up to record segments for the local news.

Eli gets as close as he can to the partitions.

TWO YOUNG WOMEN (late 20s) gather nearby, seemingly too jovial considering the circumstance.

YOUNG WOMAN

She was in my third grade class.
Miss Schaeffer.

An OLDER NEIGHBOR (60s, female) comes from behind, speaking to no one in particular.

OLDER NEIGHBOR (O.S.)

Poor girl.

Eli turns to her.

ELI

It's awful.

OLDER NEIGHBOR

They said it was a man and a woman
but they're wrong.

ELI

What do you mean?

OLDER NEIGHBOR

I saw 'em.
(pointing directly across
the street)
I live right there.

Eli looks where the woman is pointing- she has a perfect view of the crime scene.

OLDER NEIGHBOR (CONT'D)

I tried telling them. They said
they'd call if they needed
anything.

Eli, recognizing an opportunity, takes out his recorder from his messenger bag.

ELI
Can I ask you some questions?

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - EARLY EVENING

Eli sits at his table listening back intently to the Older Neighbor's account on his headphones.

OLDER NEIGHBOR'S VOICE
The one had blonde hair, short blonde hair. White dress, with a black and red polka dot type design. The other was in a brown suit. And that's what the police put out. Except...except I told them it wasn't a woman at all, it was a man dressed like one.

ELI'S VOICE
So they said it was a man and a woman, but you think it was two men, one in women's clothing.

OLDER NEIGHBOR'S VOICE
I'm positive it was.

WE HEAR the sound of CHILDRENS' VOICES playing in the distance.

Eli hits pause and slowly takes off his headphones.

He has something.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - NIGHT

DOZENS OF CARS are parked in front. TOWNIE LOOKING FOLKS about Summer's age file into the house, some carry cases of beer.

Will parks his Range Rover on the side of the road, between two old pickup trucks.

Dressed like he's going to a nephew's communion, Will walks the long line of cars leading to the house. He doesn't recognize any of them. "Don't Tread On Me" bumper stickers, Grateful dead bears marching, stuff about Jesus.

He gets to the front of the house and stands with his hands in his pocket.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Music from Summer's life plays in the background: The Smashing Pumpkins, Alice in Chains, Hole, KORN.

A COLLAGE OF PICTURES OF Summer, taken throughout her life, sits by the fireplace. A few of her high school CLASSMATES examine it, pointing themselves out in the photos and reminiscing.

Renee sits with a FRIEND at the table, crying.

Will ENTERS the friend memorial, which at this point has more in common with a typical party -- people are talking louder, laughing, getting drunk.

He floats through the house, bringing silence to every conversation that he passes.

Will finds the collage of Summer photos. He scans it, finding that their relationship occupies only a small corner of the board -- a ski trip to Aspen.

Summer is with the same DEAD EYED GUY in many of the photos: boating trips, ragers, camping.

The man himself, SAM GIFFORD (late 20s), cropped buzzcut, stands in the back of the room with a group of GUYS, one of whom we recognize as Cleary, the Officer from Summer's crime scene.

Sam watches Will from a distance. He's very still, like an animal that wandered in through a door left open.

Will turns to look at him, and Sam immediately shifts his gaze.

EXT. CAMILLE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Nichols walks up the long walkway towards the front door.

A man approaches, leaving the house- CRAWFORD, (60s), a balding, stout man with glasses and an expensive suit. He has his jacket folded in his arm, and gives Nichols a friendly nod.

Nichols turns to watch Crawford continue down the driveway, curious about his identity and the nature of his visit.

As Nichols rings the doorbell, he notices a giant HAIRLINE CRACK in the picture window adjacent to the front door. There is a carefully applied piece of translucent tape holding the fractured window together.

Nichols stares at his distorted reflection through the cracked glass.

INT. CAMILLE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Nichols sits in silence on a couch across from Camille, who sits on a leather wingback chair, sipping a cup of tea.

His attention turns towards the wool sofa to his right. Its intricate upholstery worn with a small tear in the cushion.

Compared to similar homes Nichols has seen, where wealth is hidden beneath pretend modesty, Camille's decor presents her like the Jackie Kennedy of Scarborough.

Nichols senses that everything about the Grady family is a careful construction, even down to the mournful outfit Camille has on: a thin grey cardigan over a darker grey shirt, and no makeup.

Nichols waits to see what other performative details Camille might reveal if he's patient.

NICHOLS

Quite the art collection.

CAMILLE

Thank you. It was my husband's passion. Are you a painter?

Nichols pauses, letting the absurdity of the question build.

NICHOLS

No.

Nichols is quick to move the topic away from himself.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)

Where's Will?

CAMILLE

Summer's friend Renee is hosting a get together. Will wasn't planning on going, but...

NICHOLS

Why wouldn't he be there?

Camille carefully considers her words.

CAMILLE

I don't think he felt like he
belonged with her friends. She kept
him separate.

Camille places her cup of tea on the table next to her.
Nichols notices TWO FRAMED PICTURES next to the lamp...

The first: Camille (young), Will's father, and Will (a little
boy), standing in front of a freshly-built snowman.

The other framed photograph: A portrait of Will in full pads
and uniform for his varsity hockey team.

NICHOLS

Why?

CAMILLE

Summer had a different life before
she met Will. She dated a young man
who was abusive. And Will helped
her find her way out of it. He paid
for her to get her broker's
license. Helped her make her first
sales.

Nichols takes out a small notepad and pen.

NICHOLS

Did she press charges against the
boyfriend?

CAMILLE

No.

NICHOLS

Restraining order?

Camille shakes her head. Nichols lets his pen relax.

CAMILLE

Will wanted to but... Sam is
Renee's brother, and they remained
friends.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - BACKYARD - NIGHT

Will wanders out to the backyard. Smokers sit under an
umbrella at a glass patio table, eyeing him.

Will looks back towards the house, through the glass sliding
door of the MAIN BEDROOM where he sees Renee, sitting on the
bed, talking with Sam, who paces in front of her.

He gesticulates and shouts. Renee tries to calm him down.

INT. CAMILLE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nichols jots down a few notes.

CAMILLE

Something happened here that Will doesn't know about. I never told him. I would prefer not to.

NICHOLS

Okay.

CAMILLE

It was three weeks ago. I was hosting a baby shower for a colleague's daughter. Summer was there. Everyone was in the backyard, and I heard the doorbell ring. I went in the house and answered the door...there was no one. So I headed back towards the party, and the bell rang again. But when I opened the door the second time, I saw a young man with a shaved head. And he looked...*out of sorts*.

NICHOLS

Out of sorts- angry, or?

CAMILLE

On drugs maybe-

NICHOLS

Okay.

CAMILLE

I asked him if he needed help. And he smiled and said, 'How's the weather in there?'

Camille lets that hang in the air.

CAMILLE (CONT'D)

And I just figured he was, you know, unwell or, uh, bipolar. But then I turned around and Summer was standing behind me. She was begging me not to let him in so I shut the door.

(MORE)

CAMILLE (CONT'D)
And then a few minutes later I
realized it was Sam. He looked
different, but that's who it was.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - BACKYARD - SAME

Will is hunched over, staring absently at the ground, unable
to engage with anyone, yet unable to leave.

VOICE (O.S.)
Do you mind if I sit here?

Will looks up. It's Eli.

WILL
Go ahead.

ELI
I'm so sorry.

Will nods, but offers nothing more. An uncomfortable moment.

Eli doesn't know how to proceed so he contemplates lying and
goes out on a limb.

ELI (CONT'D)
We had the same teacher in third
grade. Miss Schaeffer.

Will smiles at the thought. Appreciates it.

WILL
What's your name?

ELI
Eli.

Will watches as the crowd gets rowdy.

ELI (CONT'D)
No one knows what to do when
something like this happens.

Eli knows he has to tread lightly.

ELI (CONT'D)
I don't know if this will...when I
was five, my uncle was murdered.
Home invasion. He was in law
school, newly married. Thirty One
years old.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Eli stands at the sink, loading the dishwasher, listening to A RECORDING of his conversation with Will as it plays from his computer speakers.

ELI'S VOICE (O.S.)
He was home sick one day and these
guys came to the door, tied him up
and shot him. We found out later he
was selling drugs to pay for
school.

Eli returns to the cluttered kitchen table with his laptop open and microphone set up.

ELI'S VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
His best friend's brother knew
there was money and--.

WILL'S VOICE (O.S.)
(cutting him off)
Did they get the guys?

Long moment.

ELI'S VOICE (O.S.)
No.

Eli PAUSES the recording, leans back in his chair and looks up at the spinning ceiling fan.

INT. MORGUE - MORNING

Next morning. Nichols is being led into the morgue by a MEDICAL EXAMINER (50s) who rolls out Summer's body from the wall.

SMASH CUT of the door shutting to:

MEDICAL EXAMINER
Her wrists were bound by a
polyethylene cord. No prints on
anything. There's no evidence of
sexual assault. No bruising
sustained below the waist. Sharp
force wound of neck, left side.
Multiple stab wounds in the chest,
her front, her flank, and back.

Nichols looks at the severity of the wounds.

The CAMERA remains waist height, just beneath the body, focused only on capturing the reaction of both men. WE NEVER SEE Summer's body.

NICHOLS

How many?

MEDICAL EXAMINER

Thirty-three in total.

Nichols takes this in.

NICHOLS

A knife was missing from the kitchen at the scene.

MEDICAL EXAMINER

What kind of knife?

Nichols holds his hands 10 inches apart.

MEDICAL EXAMINER (CONT'D)

That's not consistent with the scoring of the bone. I'd be looking for something like a switchblade.

Nichols nods.

MEDICAL EXAMINER (CONT'D)

See this on the edge of her palm.

Nichols leans for a closer look: A CLOSE-UP of a SMALL CRIMSON STAIN at the base of her thumb which extends into her palm.

MEDICAL EXAMINER (CONT'D)

That's not blood.

(then)

It's paint. They call it Calcimine. They don't really use it anymore. Only if you were repainting an old house and too cheap to strip off the wood.

INT. EVIDENCE ROOM - SCARBOROUGH POLICE STATION - DAY

Nichols and Cleary are sitting in two chairs facing one another. Beside them is a table with a 17" VIDEO MONITOR. Cleary is studying a report inside an open MANILA FOLDER.

NICHOLS
You and this Sam guy. You guys grew
up together. Heard you two are
pals.

Cleary places the folder on the desk.

CLEARY
He's an acquaintance.

NICHOLS
He seem violent to you?

CLEARY
(shaking his head)
No. Not at all. He's a run-of-the-
mill weed dealer.

Nichols swivels his chair towards the VIDEO MONITOR and
CLICKS PLAY.

NICHOLS
Take a look at this.

ON THE MONITOR: SURVEILLANCE FOOTAGE taken from a local city
bus.

In the tape, dated 07-23-03, we see Sam Gifford walk onto a
bus and sit behind a FEMALE PASSENGER.

Nichols hits FAST FORWARD for a few seconds before pressing
PLAY.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)
Here we are.

In full view, we see Sam reach for something in his jacket.
Cleary moves in closer to the monitor.

CLEARY
What's he doing?

NICHOLS
Just watch.

In the footage, Sam uses a pair of scissors to cut six inches
of hair from the head of the woman sitting in front of him.
Cleary winces.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)
There's more.

Cleary slouches back in his chair.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)
Does that look like a run-of-the-mill weed dealer to you?

INT. INCIDENT ROOM - SCARBOROUGH POLICE STATION - LATER

A short time later. Nichols briefs Cleary and a circle of COPS, passing them a stack of photocopied police SKETCHES.

NICHOLS
White. Thirty-five to forty. Our first individual was seen wearing a cropped blonde wig.

Nichols holds on that.

Through the glass partition, a few officers catch Renee entering the station.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)
Other suspect is approximately six feet tall. Dark hair. Medium build. Seen driving a tan or light colored sedan.

Nichols notices the cops distracted.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)
What's up.

CLEARY
Nothing.

NICHOLS
Am I missing something?

OFFICER
No.

Nichols sees they are staring at Renee.

NICHOLS
Is she interesting to you?

CLEARY
No, it's not that. It's just. She's a, uh...

OFFICER 2
Badge bunny.

The cops try to hide their laughter.

NICHOLS

Hey!

They go quiet.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)

Mackie's wife was a badge bunny,
show some respect.

The cops scream with laughter.

INT. NICHOLS'S DESK - SCARBOROUGH POLICE STATION - LATER

Renee sits on a metal chair next to Nichols, looking at a police sketch artist's rendering of the suspects.

She shakes her head, struggling to speak.

RENEE

(softly)

I don't recognize them.

Renee hands the paper to Nichols.

NICHOLS

You can keep it. So I'm trying to figure out a gap in my timeline where Will couldn't get a hold of her and he says she was with you.

RENEE

We were at the pool together.

NICHOLS

What time?

RENEE

I don't remember. 5 or 5:30.

NICHOLS

It wasn't later? 7 or 8?

RENEE

No.

NICHOLS

Do you know where she went?

Renee shakes her head.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)

Did you speak to her after?

RENEE

No. I just figured it was some work thing.

A beat.

NICHOLS

How long have you known Summer?

RENEE

Our whole lives.

NICHOLS

Same goes for your brother, Sam?

Renee nods.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)

How would you describe their relationship?

RENEE

They were crazy for each other.

NICHOLS

Why'd they split?

She won't answer that.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)

Are you afraid it'll make your brother look bad?

Renee straightens, dissatisfied with his assessment.

RENEE

No, he...she just wanted a better life, I think.

NICHOLS

A better life in what way?

Renee wipes the tear forming under her eyes. Nichols hands her a box of tissues.

RENEE

No, I'm fine. Sorry.

NICHOLS

It's okay.

RENEE

It feels weird talking about her, you know?

NICHOLS
I understand...

A moment.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)
Did your brother and Summer fight a lot? Did he get angry?

Renee knows immediately where the detective is going.

RENEE
I saw Sam last night. And it broke my heart because...he doesn't even get to deal with what's happened because he's so convinced you guys are gonna pin it on him.

NICHOLS
That's not what's going on here.

Renee is crying. She stands up.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)
I'm here to do my job. I'm not here to hurt your brother.

RENEE
You say that now.

Nichols hesitates. Then gently eases the tone by handing her his business card.

NICHOLS
Call me anytime.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - DAY

Eli at his desk. He's wearing headphones and recording into a microphone that's mounted beside his computer.

ELI
(into mic)
"Barbarously murdered, cut and mangled by the sons of the devil" were the words used to describe the massacre of settlers here in 1692. Now, 316 years later, the violent murder of Summer Elswick has reminded us all that the idyllic little town we call home was once christened in blood.
(MORE)

ELI (CONT'D)

I will be piecing together the strange events surrounding Summer Elswick's death through the stories and testimony of the people who knew her, in an attempt to answer one simple question: Why? Why her?

(beat)

This...is The Arcadian.

Eli hits PAUSE and takes a sip of his beer, acknowledging the implications of what he's about to do. He flips the pages of his notebook, scans the information, and hits RECORD...

INT. WILL'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Will opens the refrigerator to find rotten food. He throws it out. This is the first time he's been back since the murder happened over a week prior.

ELI (V.O.)

According to Summer's boyfriend, Will Grady, Summer left their house sometime in the afternoon and arrived early to get the home ready for the prospective clients.

INT. WILL'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - LATER

Will exits his closet and steps into his bedroom wearing a black suit and tie.

Will peeks outside his bedroom window, shielded behind the drapes.

ELI (V.O.)

He received a text shortly after five thirty pm from Summer that said, "come to the house".

He sees Camille in the driveway, engulfed by a HALF DOZEN REPORTERS with CAMERAS.

We can hear Camille muffled through the glass, putting on a very public face.

CAMILLE

We appreciate your concern but we'd like some privacy at this time.

He collapses onto the bed and closes his eyes. He grabs the pillow and holds it tight, her scent still on it.

He opens his eyes as he finds one of Summer's long brown hairs in the sheets. He slowly wraps it around his finger. Haunted by it.

EXT. BLACK POINT CEMETERY - DAY

A large, solemn gathering of friends and loved ones watch Summer's casket descend into the ground.

I./EXT. ELI'S CAR / BLACK POINT CEMETERY - LATER

From a safe distance, Eli sits in his parked car watching the mourners disperse, heading for their cars.

Eli's POV: Will, despondent, accompanies Camille and Crawford to Camille's Mercedes.

EXT. BLACK POINT CEMETERY - SAME

Crawford opens the door for Camille. Will gives his mother a kiss as she gets into the passenger side.

Will walks towards his own car- parked at the head of the motorcade. He scans the tearful crowd- old and young alike.

That's when he notices THE STRANGER- a man standing in the shadow of a tree, watching Will from afar. He has a shaved head and a suit that looks like it was purchased for court dates.

Will stares into the Stranger's eyes, unsure if he's actually staring back... Will slows down to a stop.

The man immediately heads off into the cemetery in the opposite direction.

Will can feel his heart racing. There's something going on.

Will crosses in the direction of the man, trying to follow without being obvious.

The Stranger walks briskly across graves and enters a large STONE MAUSOLEUM.

INT. MAUSOLEUM - CONTINUOUS

The heavy wooden door of the stone building creaks open... Will ENTERS.

The tomb is empty and quiet- a long corridor with separate wings lined with internment chambers branching off.

Will listens for the sound of movement. Nothing.

He steps silently, looking down each corridor, the lockers of the dead, a flower positioned in a brass fixture on the front of each...

Will sees at the end of one aisle a flower on the ground, and above it, the door of a crypt swung open.

He moves to the open door- the vault is empty. He picks up the flower and shuts the door. Two initials are engraved in the marble:

W.G.

It sends a chill through Will's body. The moment is interrupted by the loud creak and slam of the front door-- the Stranger is gone.

INT. SARDINE CANNERY - DAY

Sam, wearing gloves and rubber yellow coveralls, walks past racks of gutted fish and conveyor belts of tin cans into a HALLWAY leading past the FOREMAN'S OFFICE.

He takes off his gloves and pulls a dollar from his wallet.

INT. BREAK ROOM - SARDINE CANNERY - CONTINUOUS

Sam rounds the corner into the break room.

Nichols sits at a table by the coffee machine, waiting for him.

NICHOLS

Hi Sam, I'm Detective Nichols.

SAM

Hello.

Sam sighs and moves to the VENDING MACHINE in the corner, placing his dollar in and punching a number.

NICHOLS

How are ya?

SAM

Fine.

NICHOLS
I'm sorry you weren't able to
attend the funeral.

SAM
I wasn't invited.

A CAN OF SPRITE thunks into the vending machine receptacle.
Sam leans over and picks it up, then slowly makes his way to
the table and sits across from Nichols.

NICHOLS
I wanted to ask you a few questions
if that's alright.

SAM
No problem.

Nichols opens his notebook.

SAM (CONT'D)
I was in Yarmouth with my
girlfriend all weekend. She'll tell
you the same.

Nichols ears perk up.

NICHOLS
What was that?

SAM
I said I was in Yarmouth with my
girlfriend.

Nichols jots it down, feigning indifference around a person
offering an alibi he didn't ask for.

NICHOLS
Okay. Good. You grew up here,
correct?

Sam nods.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)
You knew Summer for how long would
you say?

SAM
Since we were kids.

NICHOLS
And you had a relationship as
adults?

Sam thinks that's funny. Nichols doesn't.

SAM

Uh-huh.

NICHOLS

What were you doing in Yarmouth?

SAM

Fishing trip.

NICHOLS

Bay or the ocean?

SAM

Bay.

NICHOLS

Oh, *beautiful*.

Sam watches Nichols add this to his notes.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)

When's the last time you saw her?

SAM

I dunno.

NICHOLS

You don't?

SAM

We saw each other a lot.

NICHOLS

In what way?

Sam gives Nichols a look.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)

Was her boyfriend aware of that-
Will?

Sam shakes his head 'no'.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)

You sure about that?

Sam considers Will, a weak man in his eyes, and smiles.

SAM

Yes.

Nichols flips his pad.

NICHOLS
How long were you together?

SAM
Five years.

NICHOLS
How long were you apart?

SAM
Three.

NICHOLS
Were you seeing each other during that time?

SAM
Yes.

NICHOLS
Which part?

SAM
The whole time.

NICHOLS
You ever hit her?

SAM
(taken aback)
I'm sorry?

NICHOLS
Slap her, push her- anything like that?

SAM
Who said that? I don't hit women.

NICHOLS
What about cut their hair?

Sam is tilted.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)
Why'd she leave you?

Sam lets his anger dissolve. He looks up at Nichols, studying him for a moment.

Then he smiles.

SAM
Man...where'd they get you?

A SHIFT BELL rings, interrupting the moment.

SAM (CONT'D)
I want to help.

NICHOLS
Great. I'll give you my card.

Nichols slides his business card across the table. Sam picks it up and reads it as he exits through the door.

Nichols's cell phone rings. He answers.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Hey.

CLEARY (ON PHONE)
Phone records are back. We have her cell pinging a tower near Limerick the night before...

NICHOLS
(into phone)
Limerick- where the hell's that?

CLEARY (ON PHONE)
About 30 miles west. Forty minute drive.

NICHOLS
(into phone)
Does it work with our timeline?

CLEARY (ON PHONE)
To the minute.

NICHOLS
(into phone)
Alright. Good work.

EXT. FARM ROAD - LIMERICK - DAY

Telephone poles crookedly line a single road cutting through miles of farmer's fields.

Nichols's Crown Vic makes its way down along the straight-away, pulling over at a turn out.

The door opens, Nichols gets out. He places a FOLDER on the roof and removes a series of print-outs:

MAPS of the area relating to the satellite data from Summer's phone, with a large circle drawn on each to demarcate the approximate position.

Referencing the maps, Nichols takes in the area. To his right, an expansive marsh, ahead of him the forest, and to his left the lone structure for miles in any direction...

An OLD RED CHURCH.

EXT. RED CHURCH - MOMENTS LATER

Tire tracks dug into the muddy field lead Nichols to the front of the church.

He kneels and moves grass aside to look at the tread- a pickup truck or panel van.

Nichols rises, breathing deeply. A smell permeates the hot country air. It's pungent and chemical...

Nichols turns to look at the church. He approaches the front and places his hand on the crimson-colored wood of the clapboards...

His fingers return, sticky and stained slightly red by the paint...

Nichols notices tucked behind an overgrown clump of weeds are a painters drop cloths, a bucket, and two rusted cans of dark, RED CALCIMINE PRIMER.

INT. RED CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

The door opens. Nichols steps inside a church that hasn't been active in years. Almost demolished from the inside except for the pews which remain intact.

He walks down the aisle, looking. Searching for something. A clue. Anything.

His hand grazes the wood of the pew. It's dry.

He opens a closet door. Nothing.

What the hell was she doing here?

EXT. RED CHURCH - MOMENTS LATER

Nichols exits from the side door. He looks to his left, at the road in the distance.

HANDYMAN (O.S.)
Can I help you?

Nichols turns towards a HANDYMAN (50s) near the back of the building, holding a scraper.

NICHOLS
Hi.

HANDYMAN
You looking for something?

NICHOLS
What's the story with this place?

HANDYMAN
Oh, I'm just trying to fix her up.
She's become a bit of an eyesore if
you ask me.

NICHOLS
Does anyone still come here?

HANDYMAN
What do you mean?

NICHOLS
Does anyone go inside?

HANDYMAN
No sir. No one comes out here.

NICHOLS
What about a girl, a young woman
over here about a week ago? Early
evening.

HANDYMAN
I would tell you but there ain't no
one here but me.

Nichols approaches him and takes out a PHOTOCOPIED PICTURE of Summer from his folder.

NICHOLS
You ever see this girl?

The Handyman looks at it.

HANDYMAN
No, I don't recognize her.

NICHOLS

Okay. Do you know who the owners are?

HANDYMAN

I own it.

A moment of dread.

HANDYMAN (CONT'D)

I live back over there.

(points to a tiny house 50 yards away)

It's like having your own private place to worship the lord.

The Handyman laughs.

NICHOLS

Thank you for your time.

Nichols heads back towards his car.

HANDYMAN

(yelling)

I hope you find her.

EXT. WALLY'S BACKYARD - DAY

The families of the retired police detectives enjoy a barbecue in the backyard of Wally's house, a sea cottage overlooking a rocky inlet.

Paul and Chief Allen sit at a table under an umbrella. Paul feeds cake to his BABY GRANDSON.

Victor, wearing a bright floral-patterned bathing suit and bleached tank top, stands in a kiddie pool listening to the Red Sox game on enormous headphones with a radio rabbit ear antennae poking out of the top. His nose is white with zinc.

PAUL

Vic stop soaking your bunions in my grandson's pool.

VICTOR

(shouting back)

Sox down 3-2.

Paul turns to Allen.

PAUL
Tom isn't taking his exams til the
fall now?

ALLEN
He's got a lot on his plate.

PAUL
You can't keep your seat warm
forever.

ALLEN
He knows.

INT. WALLY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - SAME

Nichols stands with Wally, who wears a chefs apron while
applying sauce and seasoning to three large racks of ribs.

NICHOLS
As I was walking away, he said I
hope you find her.

WALLY
So?

NICHOLS
I never said she was missing. I
just showed him a picture.

A beat.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)
This is why I need help. I'm
drowning in shit like this.

WALLY
I'd love to help ya, I really
would. But I'm afraid I can't.

NICHOLS
Why not?

Wally gives Nichols a serious look.

WALLY
'Cause I have dementia.

NICHOLS
You don't have dementia.

WALLY
I do.

NICHOLS
No, you don't.

WALLY
Every day I'm slipping away a
little more.

NICHOLS
There are no fingerprints, no
footprints, no weapon. We're
waiting on DNA and phone records,
but I'm not holding out hope.

WALLY
Look- you're from Boston fucking
Homicide. I'm from...the *Andy
Griffith Show*...

Nichols laughs.

WALLY (CONT'D)
I'm serious- so listen to me. You
think you're screwed? You got
something better than fingerprints,
better than DNA, better than all
that shit. You got an ex-boyfriend
with a record, and a motive the
size of Sebago Lake.

Wally wants it to be all jokes, but Nichols needs more than
that.

NICHOLS
It was a *hit*. Made to look like a
crime of passion but they knew
exactly what they were doing.

Wally looks at Nichols as if he just told him Ted Bundy
bought the house across the street from him.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)
I know.

WALLY
I know you know...

Wally grunts as he picks his two trays of ribs.

WALLY (CONT'D)
I'm just telling you what I know.

Nichols watches Wally EXIT to the backyard. He stays in the
kitchen, sipping his beer.

IN THE BACKYARD

Paul cups his hands, yelling at Victor still standing in the pool with his headphones on.

PAUL
You look mentally ill.

VICTOR
(yelling back)
They're pulling Wakefield.

Allen laughs.

INT. HANNAFORD MARKET - LATE AFTERNOON

Will strolls down an aisle, pushing a cart.

A CUSTOMER walks past, glancing at Will with a suspicious stare.

At the checkout line, Will reaches for a pack of gum as an OLDER GENTLEMAN in front of him turns around, does a double take. Will catches this, says nothing.

EXT. HANNAFORD MARKET - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

As Will exits the store carrying his groceries, he's ambushed by a REPORTER and a CAMERAMAN, shining a LIGHT in his face.

REPORTER
Will, was Summer going to leave
you?

Will walks quickly to evade them.

REPORTER (CONT'D)
How did it feel to find her body?
Was she dead when you arrived?

WILL
Please leave me alone.

Will rushes to his car, reaching for his keys, but unable to locate them.

REPORTER
Did she tell you who she was
meeting?

He looks through the driver's side window and sees his keys lying on the seat.

Unsure of what to do, he moves past the Reporter just as a dark blue VOLVO STATION WAGON pulls to a stop beside him.

It's Eli.

ELI

Get in.

INT. WILL'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Will and Eli stand on either side of the island, two drinks in. A bottle of whiskey between them. Will is in a state.

WILL

I don't sleep. It's pain
then...nothing.

Eli listens. He knows there's nothing he can say to make it better, and Will finds the silence comforting.

WILL (CONT'D)

I saw her in front of the mirror.
She was putting in her contacts and
I came behind her. I kissed her and
said goodbye. I don't think she
looked at me.

Will swallows that and closes his eyes for a second.

WILL (CONT'D)

Do you know what it's like to wake
up thinking about someone before
you even realize you're alive or
where you are.

Will looks at Eli. He has to get this off his chest.

WILL (CONT'D)

I think it's my fault.

ELI

Why would you say that?

WILL

She was seeing someone else. I told
her she had to end it. She did. And
I think that's why she's gone.

INT. LOBBY - SCARBOROUGH POLICE STATION - MORNING

As Nichols crosses, a middle-aged DESK CLERK gets his attention.

DESK CLERK

Tom these are yours. More leads.

NICHOLS

Hi, Linda.

Nichols picks up a thick stack of papers with a rubber band around them.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)

This just this morning?

DESK CLERK

Uh-huh.

INT. NICHOLS'S DESK - SCARBOROUGH POLICE STATION - MOMENTS
LATER

The lines on Nichols desk phone FLASH with incoming calls. He sorts his leads into piles while taking a call, the phone wedged between his ear and shoulder.

OLDER WOMAN (ON PHONE)

*I don't make it a habit of calling
the police.*

NICHOLS

(distracted)

Uuh-huh.

OLDER WOMAN (ON PHONE)

*But I feel I have to voice my
concern. I don't think it's in our
best interest-- and when I say
'our' I'm referring to those of us
who live here year round--*

NICHOLS

(into phone)

Right.

OLDER WOMAN (ON PHONE)

*--to let an individual
sensationalize what happened here
with that girl. I'm not interested
in letting some radio program
destroy my property values
broadcasting about what happened
here. I mean, to be blunt about it.*

NICHOLS
(into phone)
What are you talking about? What
radio program?

OLDER WOMAN (ON PHONE)
The one on the murder.

NICHOLS
(into phone)
My murder?

EXT. ELI'S APARTMENT - DAY

Eli pulls his car down the driveway and parks in front of the back house.

From far away, we see a figure approach Eli's window. The figure closes in -- it's Nichols.

He knocks on the window, startling Eli. Eli rolls his window down.

NICHOLS
Who the fuck are you?

ELI
Oh, I just live in the guest house--

NICHOLS
Who the fuck are you?

ELI
Eli Phillips.

NICHOLS
I didn't ask your name, I asked who
the fuck are you.

Eli sees Nichols's badge strapped to his belt.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - DAY

Eli opens the door and leads Nichols in. He takes one look at the grandmother couch, the *2001: A Space Odyssey* poster framed on the wall, and the overwhelming mess.

NICHOLS
No, I can't.

INT. TWO LIGHTS LOBSTER SHACK - DAY

A fried food mainstay overlooking the rocky coastline of the state park.

Eli and Nichols sit at a booth by the window. The place is quiet, but you can tell it's a madhouse in the high summer season.

Nichols eats the Fisherman's plate -- fried clams and shrimp over french fries, while Eli picks at a garden salad.

NICHOLS

Can I give you a tip? If someone brings you to a place like this, don't order the salad. You'll never win back their trust.

Eli takes a sip of diet coke.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)

You ever work at a proper newspaper before?

ELI

The Prouts Neck Cricket.

NICHOLS

So no- okay...if you had worked at a proper news organization before, you'd know up front that I don't work for you. The police *don't* work for you. You work for the police. You aren't the public. You protect the public interest.

Eli wipes his mouth and takes out his notebook, writing down what Nichols just said.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)

Are you writing down 'protect the public interest.' This is unbelievable. How far we've fallen.

Eli doesn't care. He caps his pen.

ELI

I guess I can't figure out how talking to people and letting them tell their stories could not be in the public interest-

NICHOLS

Cause people don't know what the fuck they're talking about. That's how. Look...uh, I can't arrest someone until I have enough evidence to convict them, right? But I can't get evidence to convict someone until I clear every lead that comes in. *Every* lead. That's my job. And right now, every looney tune from here to bar harbor's calling my desk cause of you.

ELI

I didn't know.

NICHOLS

There's a reason why we don't approach things the way you're doing it. You end up with a *trash heap*- it's when the case stops being about getting the guy who did it and starts being about taking this confusing pile of shit and putting it in front of a judge without getting an immediate motion for dismissal. This is how the world works, in case you were curious at all about that. If you want the killers to be brought to justice in this *century*, then you gotta- and I'm sorry to say this 'cause you seem nice enough- but you gotta fuck off.

Nichols writes his number on the back of a plastic lobster bib and hands it to Eli. The cartoon Lobster stares goofily up at him.

ELI

Can I ask you something...?

NICHOLS

Depends.

ELI

I heard that you've been approaching former detectives to come out of retirement and assist in the investigation, but so far they've all said no.

NICHOLS

No comment. Do you have a question?

ELI

A young woman, with no known enemies, was violently murdered in the middle of the richest town in the richest county in the state, and no one except you and me wants to figure out who did it?

Nichols stares into Eli's eyes. He looks left, then right, and then leans forward...

NICHOLS

I think the cops were in on it.

Eli is losing his sense of humor, and Nichols is too good a guy to leave him on a sour note.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)

Let me tell you a story- can I tell you a story?

Eli nods.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)

Years ago, on a hot summer day, a buddy of mine found a Shiba Inu hiding under a truck down by Old Orchard Beach.

ELI

What's a Shiboo-?

NICHOLS

It's a dog, a Japanese, uh... doesn't matter- *unusual*. So my friend tells me that he found this pup and he brought it home to his kids. And I tell him 'I hate to break it to ya, but there's no such a thing as a stray Shiba Inu. That's just a *missing dog*.' But he says the thing was dehydrated, emaciated, it's fur was all fucked up, and it's doing better now, and the kids are all excited, and they named it Simba- this was a while ago- and so I leave it alone.

Nichols sips his water.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)

What happens? A week later, what happens?

ELI

Someone was looking for the dog?

NICHOLS

Signs *everywhere*. Missing Shiba Inu, Old Orchard Beach, Yellow collar. Please return our beloved pet. It went missing on the exact *same day*. I show it to my friend, he takes one look at it and he goes 'That's not Simba.' And I say 'that absolutely is Simba,' and he goes 'No, our dog had a blue collar, *not yellow*! And that dog has a big spot on its nose. Simba don't got a spot on his nose.' Total denial. So what would you do? If you thought you had to do that right thing, what would that right thing be?

ELI

Return the dog.

Nichols unwraps a toothpick and bites it.

NICHOLS

I'm driving home from work...and what do I see? But a Shiba Inu with a yellow collar, and a big spot on its nose, running down the side of Route 1. The point of the story is this: sometimes one thing leads to the next, leads to the next, leads to the next. And then sometimes there are two fucking Shiba Inus in Old Orchard Beach.

Nichols, amused with himself, slides down the booth, gets up and crosses to the ordering counter.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)

Bathroom back here?

CASHIER

Yup- first on the right.

Eli sits back, tapping his pen on the table.

INT. LIBRARY STACKS - DAY

Eli sits in a dark archive of the library looking at microfilm of an OLD ISSUE of the PROUTS NECK CRICKET.

PHOTOS from the Scarborough High School Class of '96 hockey team Division II semi-finals. Will (17) stands in the center. Eli scans the names running along the bottom, twisting the knob of the microfilm reader slowly...

MICROFILM MACHINE SCREEN:

Eric Willers, John Hattaway, Will Grady, Rudi Rakoczy, Luke Strickland, Brady Strickland...

With Eli's eyes transfixed on the screen, his cell phone buzzes. He picks up.

ELI
(into phone)
Hello?

VOICE (ON PHONE)
Hello.

ELI
(into phone)
I'm sorry, who-

VOICE (ON PHONE)
This is Summer's father. You called me?

Eli almost falls over.

ELI
(into phone)
Oh. Hi. Thank you for calling me back.

SUMMER'S FATHER (ON PHONE)
How can I help you?

ELI
(into phone)
Can you just give me, sorry- just give me ten seconds.

SUMMER'S FATHER (ON PHONE)
Okay.

Eli covers the phone with his palm. His eyes dart around, deciding how to proceed.

ELI
(into phone)
Hi, sorry.
(MORE)

ELI (CONT'D)

Uh, Mr. Elswick, I'm a local journalist who's reporting on the, uh- I was wondering if you would want to, I don't know where you are, but-

SUMMER'S FATHER (ON PHONE)

Are you the one whose been making that show?

ELI

(into phone)

Yes. Yes, I am.

Eli can hear Summer's father breathing into the receiver.

SUMMER'S FATHER (ON PHONE)

Why don't you come to my house. Do you have a pen?

Eli quickly grabs a pen with his left palm.

EXT. BACK ROAD - DAY

Eli's car pulls through a metal gate left open on a long unpaved driveway snaking into the woods.

INT. ELI'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Eli's car bumps along. He notices deer decoys and other objects for target practice left in the open fields.

The trees clear to reveal a rustic A-frame cabin with a barn nearby. Eli notices a car sticking out of the barn -- Summer's Volvo.

He parks his car next to a HORSE TRAILER and an OLD FORD PICK UP and gets out.

EXT. BRIDGET'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

At the front door, Eli pulls back a screen and knocks, then steps back letting the screen door shut.

A woman with a portly 60-year-old frame and chin-length platinum blonde hair answers the door: BOB "BRIDGET" ELSWICK.

Summer's father identifies as a woman, something that Eli wasn't aware of until this moment.

BRIDGET

Eli, hi.

Bridget shakes Eli's hand.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

Bridget. I was on the phone. Come in.

Eli politely steps inside.

INT. BRIDGET'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

With the assistance of a cane, Bridget leads Eli to the LIVING ROOM. Eli gets a glimpse of the DINING ROOM as they pass it: the dining room table is covered in PHOTO ALBUMS, FRAMED PICTURES, FOLDERS, HIGH SCHOOL ART PROJECTS, anything pertaining to Summer's life.

BRIDGET

Slipped disc. I'm supposed to get it taken care of--

Bridget mumbles off...

IN THE LIVING ROOM

Eli sits on the couch, looking up at a Thomas Hart Benton painting hanging over the dark stone fireplace.

Bridget sits in a corduroy recliner, a full ashtray and three TV remotes sit on a formica stand next to it.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

Can I get you something to drink?

ELI

I'm fine, thank you.

Bridget studies Eli- such a polite slob.

BRIDGET

You're the first person to get all the way to that couch without expressing your condolences.

ELI

(very sincere)
Oh, I uh-

BRIDGET

You're fine, honey. I know why you're here. And I appreciate it.

Bridget looks away towards the dining room. Eli can feel the energy in the room shift.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)
We appreciate.

Eli fumbles through his bag, taking out his recorder.

ELI
May I-- sorry, before we talk about anything, I'd like to...

He hits record.

ELI (CONT'D)
It's 3:45 in the afternoon, October fifth, this is Eli Phillips, interviewing Bridget Elswick.

Eli extends the recorder towards Bridget. With great pain, Bridget scoots forward in her chair to get closer to the microphone.

ELI (CONT'D)
You don't have to- it's very sensitive.

BRIDGET
Oh, okay.

ELI
Sorry, I have a lot of questions, but just tell me if it's too much.

Bridget takes out a cigarette, lights it, and takes a long drag.

BRIDGET
What's the one question that you want answered more than any other?

Eli glances behind Bridget, through the doorway, to the dining room, the shrine erected to her daughter's memory, a monument to the criminal justice system and its knack for failing regular people.

ELI
Why haven't they arrested anyone?

Bridget's eyes go wide as she drags on her cigarette, nodding slowly.

BRIDGET
And you don't know why.

ELI

Do you?

They sit in silence. Bridget stares at the recorder, the seconds melting by. She blows a cloud of smoke and smiles at Eli.

She's not going to answer on the record.

ELI (CONT'D)

A former Boston homicide detective
is the lead on the case.

BRIDGET

Tom Nichols.

ELI

Do you know him?

Eli can tell that she does.

BRIDGET

Be careful with Mr. Nichols.

ELI

Careful in what way?

Bridget ashes her cigarette.

BRIDGET

The police haven't arrested anyone
because they think this is a crime
of passion.

ELI

You don't think it is?

Bridget once again stares into the red RECORD light...

BRIDGET

The last time I saw my daughter was
the Sunday five weeks ago. She came
over for dinner. She seemed
depressed. She had a few glasses of
wine. I thought maybe something
happened with Will, so I asked her
about work. She looked at me, and
I'll never forget this, she said:
'Dad, I saw something.'

Bridget chokes up. Survivors guilt.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

Can you turn it off?

Eli does.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)
That night I drove her home. And
that was when I learned that she
had been staying in one of her
unsold listings. Sleeping on a
mattress in one of the bedrooms.
That was the last time I saw her.

Eli takes a moment to process this...

ELI
Do you think you could remember
where the house is?

Bridget stares at Eli. He doesn't avert his eyes, or back
down from his question.

She nods.

EXT. BRIDGET'S HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

Bridget walks with Eli to his car with the help of her cane.
Eli opens the passenger door for her.

Eli looks around the vacant land surrounding Bridget's
property.

ELI
(softly)
You don't get scared? Being this
far out in the middle of nowhere.

Just as Bridget's about to enter his car, she stops:

BRIDGET
I got a forty five, a knife, and a
cane. Anyone who fucks with me, is
fucking with God.

She steps into the passenger seat and buckles her seatbelt.
Eli shuts the door.

EXT. NEW CONSTRUCTION - GARDEN STREET - NIGHT

Eli and Bridget get out of his car and walk up the driveway.
Eli inconspicuously glances around to see if there are any
neighbors in sight. Bridget follows just behind, slowly with
her cane.

They stop at the front door and Eli tries opening it. It's locked. He reaches into his jacket and pulls out a flashlight.

ELI
Wait here.

SIDE OF THE HOUSE

Eli notices a window that leads into the den. He pops off the screen and pushes the glass beneath, feeling the window give a little. He gently slides it open.

Eli lifts himself up and into--

INT. NEW CONSTRUCTION - GARDEN STREET - CONTINUOUS

Pitch black. Eli uses his flashlight to navigate through the room.

He flips the light switch on the wall but it doesn't work.

Eli unlocks the front door and opens it for Bridget.

ELI
There's no power.

Bridget takes out her flip phone and uses the light from the screen to see what's in front of her.

A SOUND from the other side of the house.

BRIDGET
Somebody's here.

Eli folds the paper back up and slips it into his jacket.

ELI
That might be the heater.

THE BEDROOM

Bridget's phone illuminates a mattress with unmade sheets sitting in the corner of the room.

IN THE KITCHEN

Eli scans the room with his light, discerning a FILE BOX resting on the counter.

He sorts through it to find a STACK OF PAPERS.

ANGLE ON a FORM for a WIRE TRANSFER which is signed by Camille Grady at the bottom in cursive.

Eli reaches into the file box and picks up an AUTOMATED STAMP.

He studies the rubber impression at the base of the stamp.

He depresses it onto the form just beneath Camille's signature to reveal that the stamp is an EXACT REPLICA of her signature.

THE BEDROOM

Bridget walks towards the sliding closet door which is left open.

Moving her light, she sees an OPEN SUITCASE perched to the side of the closet wall.

IN THE KITCHEN

Eli picks up a DATE BOOK resting on the other side of the counter.

He peruses the entries, going back to the day of Summer's murder. It's left blank.

Eli flips back five weeks, the last time Summer visited her father.

His eyes scan the page. *SUNDAY.*

There it is, in Summer's handwriting, *"Everyone is empty."*

THE BEDROOM

Bridget is sitting on the bed, staring at nothing, withdrawn.

Eli ENTERS. She glances at him, then looks over towards the direction of the closet, where Summer's CLOTHING is in disarray flowing out of the suitcase.

Eli walks over and kneels down at the suitcase. Resting on top is a TRAVEL BELT. He lifts it up and unzips it. He takes out FORTY-FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS in BILLS which were wedged inside.

He looks back at Bridget sitting on the bed and notices she's holding a piece of Summer's clothing. Eli sobers immediately to the sight of this: he's pursuing a story, Bridget's pursuing a ghost.

Eli turns back to the travel belt, counting the money of Summer's escape fund, and feels the creeping hopelessness of Bridget's suspicions being suddenly and unexpectedly confirmed.

Eli opens his mouth as if he were about to speak but stops himself.

INT. EVIDENCE ROOM - SCARBOROUGH POLICE STATION - LATE AFTERNOON

Nichols is focused on the 17" monitor. SURVEILLANCE FOOTAGE from the parking lot of Blake's Hardware the day Summer was killed.

In the footage, we see Will's parked Range Rover on the upper lefthand corner of the frame. Then, we see Will and Bennett exit the front door and walk towards Will's Range Rover.

Nichols hits pause. He studies Will's body language for a moment then hits play.

Then, very clearly, we see Will walk around the car to his driver's side, and as he does he looks up DIRECTLY INTO THE SURVEILLANCE CAMERA.

Nichols hits pause on a frame where Will is staring directly into camera.

INT. LOBBY - SCARBOROUGH POLICE STATION - LATER

Eli sits slumped over in a chair. Police officers walk past him. He's waiting, he's been waiting.

The FRONT DESK OPERATOR answers her phone. Eli waits for her to hang up, and then approaches.

ELI

Hi, I've been here all afternoon.
Is there anyway you can check in
with Detective Nichols and just
remind him that I'm here?

FRONT DESK OPERATOR

I promise, he'll be with you as
soon as he can.

Eli returns to his seat. He gazes out the window to see...

ELI'S POV: Nichols hustles across the front parking lot to his Crown Vic parked next to a bunch of cruisers. He hops in and turns the engine on.

ELI
 (to himself)
 Fuck.

Eli rushes his way out of the waiting area, and towards the EXIT, as outside Nichols takes a left out of the station.

INT. ELI'S CAR - LATER

Eli, in his blue station wagon, follows a safe distance behind Nichols, through a winding wooded back road.

A police scanner chirps over the sound of the old engine. Eli clicks it off and takes out his recorder.

ELI
 (into recorder)
 Pulled off 95, still heading south.
 We're now about- I'd say- 16 miles
 outside Scarborough. The police
 scanner's clear.

Eli clicks off the recorder. He stares at Nichols's car as it disappears around a bend, going deeper into the unknown.

I./EXT. ELI'S CAR / TRUCKER BAR - NIGHT

Parked on the side of the road across the street, Eli watches Nichols get out of his car and approach the entrance of the rundown dive.

INT. TRUCKER BAR - LATER

The bar smells like beer and rotting wood. 'SAID I LOVED YOU...BUT I LIED' by MICHAEL BOLTON is playing from the speakers.

Nichols sits at the bar, sipping a beer, alone.

A SHIRTLESS MALE BARTENDER (40s), muscly and affable, approaches Nichols from behind the counter.

SHIRTLESS BARTENDER
 You good?

NICHOLS
 Yeah, thanks.

Nichols smiles at him. This very well may be the first time we've seen Nichols smile.

His phone rings. Eli.

Nichols picks up.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Hey, it's the Hardy boy.

The Bartender turns and smiles, thinking it's his boyfriend.

Nichols can hear Michael Bolton echoing on the other end of the line.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Hello?

Nichols feels eyes on him. He looks up.

On the other side of the rectangular bar, through racks of hanging pint glasses, sits Eli with his phone pressed to his ear.

Nichols hangs up his phone, and, taking his beer, slowly rises from his chair.

Eli watches as the detective makes his way around the bar to where Eli is sitting.

He takes the seat next to Eli without saying a word, and stares at him. He looks like he's about to break his beer bottle and slit Eli's throat.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)
Do you know who Jesse James is?

Eli nods.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)
One time Jesse James and his gang robbed a train. He held everyone at gunpoint and said "Alright- give us your money or we're gonna kill the women and rape all the men." One of the fellas with his hands raised says, "I'm sorry, but don't you mean *kill* the men and *rape* all the women?" And then a gay guy in the back yells, "Excuse me, I think Mr. James knows how to rob a train!"

A joke. Eli is dumbfounded- he has the sense of humor of a heart attack.

Nichols gets the attention of the shirtless bartender.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)
Two more, Gus.

LATER

Nichols and Eli sit in a booth. Empty beer bottles in front of both of them.

ELI
Are you a good shot?

NICHOLS
Me? God no, I can't shoot for shit.

ELI
(laughing)
Really?

NICHOLS
Not my forte. I have a different
secret weapon.

ELI
And what's that?

NICHOLS
I know what lying looks like.

ELI
How?

NICHOLS
Certain tells...body language...
There's one phrase no guilty person
will ever say when they're denying
something they've done...

ELI
And what's that?

NICHOLS
'I didn't do it.' They'll swear on
their mother's life, they'll talk
about their good reputation, but
they'll never just say 'no.' They
avoid it.

Eli takes out a notebook. Nichols gestures with his hand
"no". Eli puts the notebook down.

ELI
Has anyone ever fooled you?

Eli intends the question to be playful, but Nichols grows solemn, nodding slowly.

NICHOLS

Once. Yeah. I was in Boston for 14 years. My partner was killed one night off duty, and it was a cop who did it. I helped his family file a civil suit against the police. They settled outta court.

Nichols takes a deep breath.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)

Then a year later it came out that my partner had been skimming from dealers all over town. Those guys are relentless. They'll follow you for months before they make a move. The cop who shot him was just the knucklehead who was in on it with him. No one would believe me when I said I didn't know about it. That was it; I was done. Then my uncle offered me a job. Now I'm here...in paradise.

Nichols takes a sip of his beer, his eyes wandering to the other patrons- small groups of forlorn men, nursing mixed drinks, sick of each other at this point, but not in a position to reject the company.

ELI

There's two hours where no one knows where she was the night before.

NICHOLS

I do.

ELI

You do?

Nichols nods.

ELI (CONT'D)

Where was she?

NICHOLS

Why are you doing this?

Eli looks down into his lap.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)
Did you even know her?

ELI
I did.

Something in that answer hits Nichols's ear wrong. Eli can tell, as Nichols immediately presses forward.

NICHOLS
How?

Eli takes a moment.

ELI
Before the newspaper closed, I used to have to go door to door to sell ads. Whenever I went to their office, she was nice to me.

Nichols nods. It checks out.

EXT. TRUCKER BAR - NIGHT

Nichols and Eli EXIT the bar. The parking lot is deserted.

Nichols watches Eli lumber towards his old station wagon in his ratty t-shirt and cargo shorts. He's the only person who cares. And, like Nichols, he can tell Summer's murder is all he really has.

Eli turns back.

ELI
I'm pretty sure she was skimming from her company.

NICHOLS
They usually are.

ELI
She and Sam were planning to run away together.

NICHOLS
He doesn't strike me as the 'run away' type. The guy lives 40 feet from where he was born.

Eli processes that.

ELI

I saw the video of Sam cutting that girl's hair on the bus. He's left-handed. The person who killed Summer used his right.

Fuck the kid's right. But, regardless, Nichols can't encourage Eli.

NICHOLS

Get home safe.

ELI

You too.

Eli gets into his car. Nichols does the same.

INT. WILL'S HOUSE - MORNING

Will, shirtless and disheveled, answers his front door. It opens on Camille, in a beautiful blouse and black mini-skirt.

She takes one look at Will, pained by her son's appearance.

CAMILLE

Come on. Let's get you dressed.

Her tone is careful and encouraging.

INT. WILL'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Nice trousers and a blue-collared shirt are laid out on his bed. Will ENTERS from the bathroom, hair wet, fresh from the shower, seeing the outfit placed before him.

CAMILLE (O.S.)

Can I come in?

The door is ajar.

WILL

Ma, you didn't have to do that. I can pick my own outfit.

Camille ENTERS.

CAMILLE

I know sweetie.

Camille goes for the shirt, lifts it, then puts Will's arms through it. Will winces.

WILL
Please. I can do it.

Camille backs off.

WILL (CONT'D)
I can't go anywhere. The way people
look at me.

Camille approaches again, rubbing Will's shoulders.

CAMILLE
This wont be forever. I promise.

WILL
They think I did it.

CAMILLE
They wont for long.

Will finishes buttoning his shirt.

WILL (PRE-LAP)
I came up the stairs and--

INT. 1502 WHITCOMB PLACE - ENTRYWAY - DAY

The walk-thru of Whitcomb is a bit of a circus. Nichols, Cleary, and four other LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS are scattered throughout, taking notes.

Will stands on the bottom step of the staircase, guiding them through his every move of the evening of Summer's death.

He speaks slowly. His movements are over-medicated and relaxed.

NICHOLS
Okay. Timeout. Walk me through when
you entered.

WILL
I stopped right where you are.

NICHOLS
Right here?

WILL
Yeah.

NICHOLS
Let's do it. I'm you.

Nichols steps outside and closes the front door behind him. After a moment, he opens the door.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)
And you stop?

WILL
Just like that.

NICHOLS
Why'd you stop? You hear something?
Did you see something?

WILL
I was calling her and then I noticed her shoes by the door. So I called her phone and I heard it ringing upstairs.

NICHOLS
Okay, and I'm Bennett. Where am I right now?

WILL
I don't-- I guess still in the car.

UPSTAIRS BEDROOM

Will slowly walks into the room, flanked by Nichols and Cleary. Will stops in his tracks, transfixed as he sees *something*.

In a flash, WE SEE SUMMER'S BODY for the first time the way Will found her: a mutilated mess of blood and traumatic wounds, and hear the SOUND of her PHONE RINGING. And most shockingly, she's *not dead yet*. She is breathing and blinking, but not able to move or speak.

Then, in an instant, WE ARE BACK IN THE PRESENT.

Will stares at the area where he found Summer, but the body in the room is in fact a CONTRACTOR hired to replace the blood-stained carpet. The Contractor turns, stares back at Will while he cuts through layers with a carpenter's knife.

WILL (CONT'D)
(quietly)
I kneeled down and...gave her CPR.

Nichols can hear the strain in Will's voice to keep it together.

NICHOLS
Okay. That's good.

Will quickly heads towards the door and Nichols joins him.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)
We figured out where she was the
day before. She drove out to a
church in Limerick.

Will stops. So does Nichols.

WILL
Limerick?

NICHOLS
She know anyone over there?

Will is genuinely confounded.

WILL
No. I don't think so. That's weird.

NICHOLS
What's weird?

WILL
She hated churches.

A FEMALE OFFICER peeks her head in the room.

FEMALE OFFICER
(to Nichols)
Can you come downstairs?

EXT. 1502 WHITCOMB PLACE - MOMENTS LATER

Nichols is called downstairs where another OFFICER is waiting for him just outside the kitchen.

They happen to be standing in the EXACT SAME SPOT where Summer had discovered the reptile eggs the afternoon she was killed.

NICHOLS
What's up.

The Officer hands Nichols a paper.

OFFICER
Prints came back. DNA hit a match.

Standing just outside the room is Cleary, whose ears perk up at the sound of 'DNA hit a match.' He subtly steps closer to listen...

NICHOLS

Who?

OFFICER

Samuel Gifford.

NICHOLS

You're shitting me.

INT. NICHOLS'S CROWN VIC - DAY

Nichols races past the depressing housing blocks of Biddeford, his cell phone pressed to his ear.

CLEARY (ON PHONE)

The number belonged to a burner that was purchased at a convenience store in Bennington last April. It only dialed one number-- Summer's. Phone was activated the day before the murder. The day she received the initial call.

NICHOLS

(into phone)

Go on.

CLEARY (ON PHONE)

It was used to make six calls to Summer. After the murder, nothing. Never used again.

NICHOLS

(into phone)

I'm here. I gotta go.

EXT. SAM'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Nichols parks his car and gets out.

He crosses through the front yard of the dilapidated farmhouse Sam calls home, passing a large fenced in enclosure that looks like it was once used as a DOG KENNEL.

He knocks on the door.

No answer.

NICHOLS

Sam? It's Detective Nichols. Hello?

Nichols knocks again. He steps to the side and peers through a window.

INSIDE: he can see a figure cross the doorway of the back mudroom.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)
I can see you!

Nichols knocks on the window.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)
I saw you!

Nothing. Nichols turns and looks back towards the driveway and sighs.

BLAST-- the glass of the window shatters with gunfire. Nichols shields his face and moves back in front of the door.

A hole blasts through the wood. Nichols drops to his knee, taking out his gun.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)
Fuck.

Nichols moves in a crouched position to his CRUISER in the driveway. He opens the passenger door and grabs the radio.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)
(into radio)
Shots fired, shots fired. 622 Clark
Court. Requesting backup. Shots
fired. White male-

BANG BANG- bullets tear into the car door, coming from the broken window.

Nichols drops the radio and shuffles to the back, returning fire at the window.

He hears a back door open. He looks past the hood of the car to see Sam, in shorts and a tank top, sprinting for the tree line at the edge of the backyard.

Nichols aims low and fires. He misses.

Sam gets closer to the forest.

Nichols closes his eye and aims carefully at Sam's legs, knowing it will be his last shot.

He squeezes the trigger, just as Sam trips on a stump and falls forward.

BAM- the bullet misses Sam's legs and rips through the back of his falling head.

Nichols keeps his gun aimed, but he immediately knows he just took someone's life.

He listens to the sound of distant crows cawing and the echoes of trucks moving down highway 90, staring at the hump of Sam's body sticking up from the bed of tall grass where he fell.

AT THE BODY

Nichols approaches, gun still drawn. Sam lays facedown, his head bleeding horribly.

Nichols looks to the open back door of the house. A BROWN MALE PITBULL stands in the doorway, staring.

INT. SAM'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

The pitbull growls at Nichols as he ENTERS through the back door, gun drawn but lowered.

He sees a dozen dog dishes and three industrial-sized bags of kibble sitting messily in the corner.

IN THE KITCHEN

THREE RESCUE MUTTS scamper away as Nichols clears the space. A pregnant dog lays on a bed near the sink.

Nichols enters...

THE LIVING ROOM

He finds it empty. FIVE MORE DOGS occupy two sunken leather chairs, sitting in front of a big screen TV.

Nichols realizes that everything in the house is *chewed up*: furniture, baby toys, the walls.

Nichols enters...

THE HALLWAY

A pit bull paws at the door to the MASTER BEDROOM.

Nichols tightens his grip on his gun...

He quietly places his body against the wall by the door. He takes a deep breath, and then, in one motion, reaches over and twists the doorknob, pushing the door open.

The dog runs in. Nichols follows.

A YOUNG WOMAN in a hoodie and flannel pants puts her hands up.

NICHOLS
Hands above your head and face the wall. Now!

Nichols sees a LITTLE GIRL-- a toddler, standing up in her crib.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)
Is there anyone else in the house?

SAM'S GIRLFRIEND
No, sir.

Nichols holsters his gun and takes out his handcuffs, pulling the young woman's arms down one by one and placing her wrists in the restraints.

NICHOLS
Get on your knees and face the corner.

She does as she's told.

And that's when Nichols sees it...

Next to a mess of costume jewelry on the nearby vanity, perched carefully on a styrofoam mannequin head, is a BLONDE BOB-CUT WIG.

INT. INCIDENT ROOM - SCARBOROUGH POLICE STATION - DAY

Nichols stands before a small audience of POLICE.

The MAINE STATE POLICE SUPERINTENDENT delivers remarks. CHIEF ALLEN stands next to him.

POLICE SUPERINTENDENT
Detective Thomas Nichols displayed incredible courage in the face of a deadly attack. He kept a cool head, followed protocol, and upheld his duty to protect the public welfare. On behalf of the Attorney General, who could not be here, and the Maine State Police Major Crimes division, allow me to present you with this commendation for your bravery.

Light applause as the Police Superintendent hands Nichols a small wooden plaque with a bronze medallion in the center emblazoned with the state crest.

Nichols makes eye contact with Cleary, staring daggers at him while Cleary shifts his gaze away, uncomfortably.

Nichols accepts the plaque, and then smiles for a photo for the precinct's newsletter.

INT. ALLEN'S OFFICE - SCARBOROUGH POLICE STATION - LATER

Nichols sits across from Allen, the plaque resting on his lap.

ALLEN

The AG called earlier to tell me if you want a job in Boston, you just say the word.

NICHOLS

(insincere)

Yeah.

Allen clocks Nichols's apathy.

ALLEN

The kid wasn't his... the little girl.

NICHOLS

I know.

ALLEN

So what is this?

NICHOLS

You find it odd that a murder that was probably a hit left DNA all over the place?

ALLEN

Tommy, seriously?

NICHOLS

And only from one suspect?

ALLEN

We found the wig-

NICHOLS

We found a wig. Not a match.

ALLEN
Not yet. They still got work to do.

NICHOLS
I bet they do.

ALLEN
The fuck does that mean.

Nichols rubs his face.

ALLEN (CONT'D)
He *shot* at you.

NICHOLS
Who? Oh, right.

Allen hates sarcasm. He mutates his frustration into a dispassionate, straight-forward tone.

ALLEN
Let this town breathe for a second.

Nichols nods, looking down at the wooden plaque in his lap, the embossed words beneath the state crest staring up at him:

FOR BRAVE CONDUCT

NICHOLS
Cleary tipped him off.

ALLEN
What?

NICHOLS
He was there when the DNA on
Gifford came in. They're friends.
'Cause of him I almost got my
fucking head shot off.

ALLEN
I'll look into it.

NICHOLS
Maybe the AG would like to hear
about that- the fuckin' keystone
cop routine happening down here-

ALLEN
ALRIGHT!

Nichols has never heard his uncle raise his voice to this degree. His boiling point was previously thought to be unknowable.

Allen doesn't know how to deal with his anger. He's shaking.

ALLEN (CONT'D)

I don't give you a hard time, Tom.
I know you aren't out here living
the life you thought you'd have.
You don't wanna be lieutenant, fine-

NICHOLS

It's not about that-

ALLEN

I'm talking. You look down on us.
That's your choice. I honestly
don't blame you. But don't you dare
rub my fucking face in it. I'll
talk to Cleary. You're dismissed.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - DAY

Weeks later.

Eli is arched over his desk, the bright screen illuminating his sunken, unshaven appearance. Wearing pajama pants and a 'Hail to the Thief' t-shirt, he has headphones on, listening back to a RECORDING OF A CONVERSATION he had with Bridget.

BRIDGET'S VOICE

*Every other realtor went under with
the crash, but not Camille. Why?
Because she's protected by larger
interests. That's why. She's
liaison for every big ticket under
the table contract- I'm talking
land developers, chemical plant
manufacturers. She's an Aries with
her moon and sun in Scorpio, and
we're not even in retrograde and-
what did you say your sign was?*

Eli removes his headphones and places them on the desk beside a half-eaten salad bowl of Rice Krispies. He closes his eyes and exhales. He's starting to understand why Nichols warned him about this kind of reporting, it leads nowhere but deeper.

The apartment, once dominated by the mess of a slob, is now dominated by the mess of a mind, one fixated on a single topic: the murder of Summer Elswick.

Stacks of file folders, wrinkled photocopies, and handwritten notes represent comprehensive histories of every human being involved in the case.

The TELEVISION is playing from the other side of the room.

TV ANCHOR (O.S.)

A violent night in Biddeford comes to a close as the Portland Police Department makes what is shaping up to be the largest drug bust in the city's history. It was here in this abandoned storefront behind me last night that five suspected drug traffickers were apprehended by the police after a violent shoot out, where thankfully only minor injuries were sustained.

Eli swivels his chair to face the TV. The Anchor stands in the parking lot in front of Blake's Hardware.

Eli recognizes it.

Eli flips through a notebook and finds a page of handwritten notes detailing Will's account of looking at the foreclosure before meeting Summer at the house.

There it is in his own writing: *Blake's Hardware*

TV ANCHOR (CONT'D)

Cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine were found in the store along with a dozen semi-automatic weapons.

Eli moves closer to the TV and sees FIVE MUGSHOTS from the arrest, names under each face. He scans the names... RUDI RAKOCZY.

Rudi also happens to be **THE STRANGER** Will followed while leaving the funeral.

The name immediately stands out. Eli racks his brain for the answer.

TV ANCHOR (CONT'D)

Now in heartwarming news, a twelve-year-old boy with MS got his wish to meet his favorite gymnast--

He turns the TV OFF and goes to his front door, opening it to find the PORTLAND PRESS HERALD on his doorstep.

There's a note taped to the front of the NEWSPAPER:

"RENT 20 DAYS PAST DUE. STRIKE 3 -MORT"

Eli quickly discards the note on the ground and brings the newspaper to his desk.

He flips through to the police blotter. There's the name:
RUDI RAKOCZY.

Eli goes to the kitchen table, covered in research, and digs out a folder filled with photocopies from the library.

He flips through until he finds the picture of Will's high school hockey team from the newspaper...

He scans the names at the bottom of the photo.

There he is: *Rudi Rakoczy*. Right next to Will's name.

He looks at the photo -- Will and Rudi have their arms around each other.

Eli is suddenly back with his drug of choice, the small high of getting to add one more tangle to the messy web of information that has consumed him for months.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

RUDI RAKOCZY (30s), head shaved, stares at his feet as he crosses to the defendants bench next to the FOUR OTHER SUSPECTS.

Eli sits in the mostly empty audience, studying Rudi's physicality as he takes his position with the other men and their TWO PUBLIC DEFENDERS.

The JUDGE looks over the arrest sheet.

JUDGE

Please state your names for the
court.

The men do so, stepping forward one at a time.

Eli feels a figure pass him, walking down the aisle. He looks up to see Crawford, the man who accompanied Camille at Summer's funeral, making his way towards the defendants.

He stands next to Rudi, whispering into his ear.

RUDI

Rudi Rakoczy.

JUDGE

And you sir?

CRAWFORD
Counsel, your honor.

Eli's hand goes to his mouth, unconsciously, forgetting himself. He braces his neighbor, a MIDDLE-AGED MAN, with his free hand, causing the man to give Eli a perplexed look.

INT. MEEHAN'S BAR - NIGHT

Renee ENTERS, a puffy down jacket over her work uniform.

The room is mostly empty- only a few regulars spread out watching football on wall-mounted flat screens.

Renee sits at the bar.

RENEE
Vodka soda, please Doug.

DOUG THE BARTENDER turns and sees it's Renee. His eyes go wide and his body freezes. After a few seconds he responds.

DOUG THE BARTENDER
You got it.

Renee takes her gloves off while Doug pours her drink. She notices a man sitting alone at a booth in the corner, drinking a beer, his back to her.

It's Nichols.

Renee feels her breath leave. The vodka soda lands in front of her. She looks up at Doug, but he avoids eye contact.

She thinks about taking a sip of her drink, and then stands up instead...

The other bar drunks check out Renee as she slowly crosses towards the man who killed her brother.

It's not until she is standing over him that Nichols sees her, or that we see him.

He looks poor, to say the least.

Renee sits down across from Nichols. She can't tell if it's alcohol or shame that's holding his nervous system hostage.

RENEE
Look at me.

He does.

RENEE (CONT'D)
 I'm not here to hurt your brother.
 You remember saying that? Huh?

Nichols says nothing.

RENEE (CONT'D)
 He knew. He knew. Sam was fucked up
 but he was sweet. And everyone
 treated him like an animal. Even
 Summer. Half the time at work she
 was fucking him in one of her
 houses.

Nichols says nothing. Renee stands up.

RENEE (CONT'D)
 People feel better when they can
 point at someone and say "that's
 what evil looks like." Well, guess
 what? I get to point at you now.
 How does that feel?

Renee heads back to the bar, leaving Nichols alone to digest
 everything that was said.

He stares at the empty beer bottle in front of him, listless,
 until his eyes suddenly light up, as sober as a bolt of
 lightning.

EXT. MEEHAN'S BAR - LATER

Nichols stands beside the open passenger door of his car.
 He's reviewing the forensic report from Summer's murder.

CLOSE UP on the words: MASTER BEDROOM.

Nichols tosses the report down on the seat, unsettled. He
 takes out his cell phone and dials a number.

FORENSICS GUY (ON PHONE)
Hello.

NICHOLS
 (into phone)
 Hey Mike, Tom Nichols, how are ya?

FORENSICS GUY (ON PHONE)
*Good, just having dinner with the
 lady. What's up?*

NICHOLS
 (into phone)
 Listen I'm reviewing the Whitcomb
 report, and I'm only seeing prints
 and DNA for Gifford in the master
 bedroom.

FORENSICS GUY (ON PHONE)
Yes.

NICHOLS
 (into phone)
 Where are the rest? The victim's
 room-

FORENSICS GUY (ON PHONE)
Those were the hits we got.

NICHOLS
 (into phone)
 You're saying that the rest of the
 house is clean, it was just in that
 one bedroom?

FORENSICS GUY (ON PHONE)
That is correct.

NICHOLS
 (into phone)
 Ok thanks.

Nichols hangs up, mind racing. A floor plan of the upstairs
 reveals:

The MASTER BEDROOM sits at the other end of the hall from the
 room where Summer's body was found.

EXT. CAMILLE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Nichols- still drunk- heads across the front lawn towards the
 glow of the Grady mansion; a formal social gathering is in
 full swing.

INT. CAMILLE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Nichols enters the large FOYER to find himself noticeably
 underdressed for the occasion.

He crosses into...

THE LIVING ROOM

Wearing a suit and standing on the far side of the room is Chief Allen. He chats with a group of IMPORTANT-LOOKING MEN AND WOMEN his age.

CHIEF ALLEN

Tom.

Nichols turns. His uncle embraces him.

CHIEF ALLEN (CONT'D)

(into Nichols's ear)

I thought you said you weren't coming...

Allen welcomes Nichols into the circle.

CHIEF ALLEN (CONT'D)

There's some people I'd like you to meet- Tom, this is Mr. Crawford, criminal attorney, Ed Riley from the States Attorney's office, and Martin Graeber, our ADA on the Elswick case.

Each person shakes Nichols's hand enthusiastically, the hero. Nichols might recognize Mr. Crawford- Rudi Rakoczy's lawyer- if he weren't distracted searching the room for someone else.

NICHOLS

Where's F. Lee Bailey?

Nichols chuckles at his own joke. Allen gives Nichols a sharp look- fuck, he's drunk.

Nichols sees- through the window- Will sitting alone at the edge of the backyard

NICHOLS (CONT'D)

Sorry, can you excuse me for a moment...

Allen watches Nichols with caution as he leaves. Camille approaches.

ALLEN

He's just gettin' some air.

Camille peers out the window to see Nichols approaching Will sitting by the edge of the lawn outside.

Her eyes narrow.

EXT. CAMILLE'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - SAME

Will sits on an Adirondack chair, listening to the waves crash in the darkness.

NICHOLS

Will.

Will turns.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)

Can we talk?

INT. CAMILLE'S HOUSE - STUDY - LATER

Will's father's old office. The decor records the history of a man's man: black and white photos of his fraternity at Bowdoin on the walls, lacquered rowing oars mounted above the desk; on another wall, an antique Winchester rifle.

Nichols and Will sit across from one another.

NICHOLS

This your dad's office?

WILL

Uh-huh.

NICHOLS

He was quite the man.

Nothing.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)

Did you know she was seeing Sam?

WILL

Who?

NICHOLS

(shaking his head)

Don't...don't.

Will sits in silence. Nichols takes out a folded piece of paper from his pocket.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)

Now I got a list here of everyone who had access to that house. I want you to look at this, and I want you to tell me which of these people also knew they were sleeping together.

Will looks at the paper...

NICHOLS (CONT'D)
The people who killed her are still
out there, *man*.

Nichols hands Will the paper, making sure to place a hand on his shoulder as he does so.

Will hands the paper back.

WILL
They were not sleeping together.
She was afraid of him.

Nichols sighs, standing up and moving over to a STEREO SYSTEM on the wall. Without saying a word, he plugs in a PORTABLE DIGITAL AUDIO RECORDER and hits PLAY.

WILL (ON STEREO) (CONT'D)
*...Do you know what it's like to
wake up thinking about someone
before you even realize you're
alive or where you are....*

Will sits up straight, like he's being visited by a supernatural presence.

WILL (CONT'D)
What is this?

Nichols turns the volume up.

WILL (ON STEREO) (CONT'D)
I think it's my fault.

ELI (ON STEREO)
Why would you say that?

WILL (ON STEREO)
*She was seeing someone else. I told
her she had to end it. She did. And
I think that's why she's gone.*

WILL (CONT'D)
You've been recording me?

Nichols studies the look of shock and dismay on Will's face. He's genuinely mystified.

NICHOLS
I haven't.

The door opens- Camille ENTERS.

CAMILLE

Oh, there are you are. It's good to see you Tom. Your uncle wasn't sure you'd be coming.

NICHOLS

I was just leaving. Enjoy the party.

Nichols EXITS.

Camille looks at Will's face, listening to Eli on the secretly recorded conversation...

ELI (ON STEREO)

You know, grief can often lead to guilt...

INT. CAMILLE'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Nichols heads for the EXIT. Chief Allen stops him.

ALLEN

Now you're leaving?

NICHOLS

I gotta get home.

ALLEN

You gonna drive yourself?

NICHOLS

It wasn't that kid. The one I got, it wasn't him. They slept together in the house. That's why we got a hit on the DNA. I'll see ya tomorrow.

Nichols moves past his uncle, running his hands along the expensive antique wallpaper to steady himself as he walks.

Allen watches him go.

INT. CAMILLE'S HOUSE - STUDY - SAME

Camille stands over Will, who sits with his head in his hands. The sound of Eli's podcast continues in the background.

CAMILLE

Do I know him?

Will shakes his head.

CAMILLE (CONT'D)
How do you know him?

WILL
He was at Renee's. He said he knew
Summer from when they were kids.

CAMILLE
What's his name?

WILL
Eli.

CAMILLE
Eli *what*?

WILL
(whispering)
I don't know.

CAMILLE
How do you not know?

WILL
Mom I don't fuckin' know!

ELI (ON STEREO)
*Thank you for supporting The
Arcadian. Until next week, I'm Eli
Phillips.*

Will stands and turns the stereo off, except the music of the
outro keeps playing. In a rage he KICKS THE RECEIVER.

CAMILLE
Will!

The receiver hits the ground in pieces. Will picks it up and
THROWS the plastic and metal across the room. The electronics
fly past Camille's head, crashing into a TROPHY CASE behind
her, shattering the glass into a hundred pieces.

Will didn't mean to throw it at his mother. He tries to catch
his breath, unable to look at Camille, an emotional mess.

Camille turns and steps to the door.

INT. CAMILLE'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Camille EXITS the study and heads down the long hallway
leading back to her party...

During the walk, the look of horror on her face transforms back into that of the genteel host.

A CATERER walks past. Camille stops him with a warm smile.

CAMILLE
Would you mind helping me with
something?

The caterer changes course, following Camille away from the STUDY.

EXT. MEEHAN'S BAR - LATER THAT NIGHT

It's 1 am. The neighboring businesses have all closed. The parking lot is mostly empty, aside from a few cars from the bar's regular patrons.

Renee EXITS the bar alone and walks to her MAROON TOYOTA CAMRY.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT

Pulling off the main road, The Camry crawls to a stop in front of a drab cluster of apartment buildings.

Renee gets out of the car and walks towards the front door of her lower level unit. It's *quiet*. Each step echoes in silence.

INT. RENEE'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Renee enters and double locks the door behind her.

THE BATHROOM

Renee showers and washes her hair.

THE BEDROOM

In an oversized shirt, Renee turns off her bedside lamp and steps into bed. Just as she's getting comfortable the landline RINGS.

It startles her. *Who would be calling at this hour?*

Renee grabs the phone from her bedside table and picks up.

RENEE
(into phone)
Hello?

WOMAN WITH ACCENT (ON PHONE)
Am I speaking with Renee?

The SAME WOMAN WITH AN ACCENT who called Summer is on the other end.

RENEE
(into phone)
Who is this?

WOMAN WITH ACCENT (ON PHONE)
Renee? Are you home?

The Woman on the other end hangs up.

RENEE
(into phone)
Hello?

Renee hangs up and slowly places the phone on the bedside table. Staring at it. Waiting to see if it's going to ring again.

THE LIVING ROOM

Renee packs a bag. She emerges from the bathroom with her arms filled with toiletries and clothing.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - CONTINUOUS

Renee shuts the trunk of her car. As she walks around to the driver's side door, she anxiously looks around to see if anyone is there.

She hears *something*.

Renee quickly opens the car door and steps inside. Almost immediately turning on the engine and reversing.

INT. RENEE'S CAMRY - CONTINUOUS

Renee drives down a secluded road through a pine forest.

The headlights of ANOTHER CAR appear behind her.

She looks in her rearview mirror.

AT AN INTERSECTION

Renee sits at a stop sign and signals to turn right onto a deserted section of Route 1...

The car behind her signals to turn right as well...

Renee pulls out, making a hard left instead...

Continuing down the road, her eyes remain fixed in the mirror on the car behind, still sitting at the stop sign...

Renee's view of the waiting car slowly vanishes beneath the crest of the road...

But before the car disappears completely, the headlights turn left to follow her...

EXT. ROUTE 1 - NIGHT

Renee speeds towards the turnpike -- past an old water park, a closed movie theater, the entrance to a campground -- hitting all green lights...

INT. RENEE'S CAMRY - CONTINUOUS

Renee winds along a coastal road. The speedometer climbs: 45, 50, 55...

The car behind keeps pace.

56, 57, 58, 59, 60.

Renee's eyes leave the mirror and return to the road.

She SLAMS on her brakes.

EXT. BRIDGE - NIGHT

Renee's Camry stops short behind a long line of cars and TRACTOR TRAILERS waiting to cross the Saco River, while the bridge itself is raised to allow A GARBAGE TRAWLER to pass beneath.

INT. RENEE'S CAMRY - CONTINUOUS

In her rearview mirror, Renee watches the car slowly pull directly behind her. The DRIVER exits and approaches Renee's window.

The Driver, whose face we cannot see, places their hand on the door handle of Renee's driver's side.

Renee HITS THE GAS.

The Camry shoots between the two lanes, scraping against parked trucks and trailers.

She swerves around the partition, driving full speed as her car hops onto the middle section of the bridge just as it begins to lift.

EXT. BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Renee's Camry SPEEDS ACROSS the 250 foot middle section, lifting at about a foot a second.

INT. RENEE'S CAMRY - CONTINUOUS

As she reaches the other end of the bridge, Renee accelerates as it DROPS OFF the other side, falling about 6 feet, nose first.

EXT. ROUTE 1 - CONTINUOUS

Jostled, and car wrecked, Renee's Camry pulls over the to the side of the road, adjacent to idling trucks and cars waiting in the opposite lane to cross.

Renee parks the car and gets out. Shaken. Truckers stare at her.

She takes a few step backwards, surveying the damage. Then looks to the other side of the bridge, at what she was able to escape.

INT. CAMILLE GRADY REALTORS - NIGHT

Middle of the night. All the lights are off.

SLOW PUSH IN ON THE CLOSED DOUBLE DOORS leading into the office. The HANDLE jitters up and down. *Someone is trying to break in.*

Then. The door pops open. Slowly.

REVEALING: Eli, camouflaged in a black hoodie, flashlight in his mouth.

INT. CAMILLE GRADY REALTORS - CAMILLE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The spacious corner office. Eli's lit by one lamp tucked on the majestic desk.

He rummages through a drawer and with the help of his flashlight, he finds a KEY hidden underneath papers.

He uses it to open the LOCKED FILING CABINET.

Inside the cabinet he finds SALES CONTRACTS for several deals in Summer's name- all done in CASH to different corporations, all located on the SAME STREET:

CELESTINA; NIGHTWATCH, LLC; OLYMPIA INC...

On closer look, Eli sees a line item for 'SUBDIVISION' with a corresponding amount of \$30,000,000. It lists Summer ELSWICK as 'BROKER', BENNETT ROSSOFF as 'ATTORNEY', and 'FOXCROW, LLC' as 'BUYER'.

He turns the page, now seeing various ARCHITECTURAL RENDERINGS of the homes and a PAMPHLET for this massive development.

Eli stares at the words "FOXCROW, LLC", racking his brain on who it could be...

He turns around, now facing the back wall.

Thinking.

Then.

He looks up and notices, with his flashlight, hanging over Camille's desk is a framed print of WINSLOW HOMER'S '*The Fox Hunt*', which depicts a fox being harassed by two black crows.

Eli grimaces.

Though it might be a coincidence, he is too far down the rabbit hole of seeing connections to tell which are real and which are imagined.

EXT. SUBDIVISION - EARLY MORNING

The sun rises over a neighborhood of new construction homes; an expensive enclave, possessed with every luxury of suburban life save for one key element- the *people*.

The homes are deserted. Not a person in sight, nor a car in a driveway.

The only evidence of human connection is a forgotten realty sign sitting in the grass of an overgrown lawn. It reads: 'Grady Realtors'.

**WE ARE IN THE SAME SHOT AS THE OPENING OF OUR FILM, EXCEPT
INSTEAD OF CUTTING AWAY, WE SLOWLY PAN RIGHT TO REVEAL:**

Eli's car pulling up, then shifting into 'park'.

He slowly steps away from his car, walking down the middle of the street...

Each home is identical: cape style, vinyl siding, empty driveways.

Eli can hardly believe the difference between its depiction in the marketing pamphlet and how it exists before him: a complete *ghost town*.

According to Summer's financial records, she sold each of these homes.

Following along the winding road, an endless serpentine graveyard, Eli finally hits the end of the cul-de-sac...

He stands alone, notebook in hand, at the epicenter of a suburban development that spiraled completely out of control.

ELI
(under his breath)
Every one is empty.

Eli takes out his phone.

EXT. HIGGINS BEACH - EARLY EVENING

The beach is deserted, save for a few surfers in full-body wet suits waiting for waves by the break. Nichols, bundled up against the wind, approaches Eli, who has a MANILA ENVELOPE tucked under his arm.

NICHOLS
(impatient)
Okay.

ELI
Do you know who Rudi Rakoczy is? He was one of the five men they arrested in that huge drug bust.

Nichols offers nothing.

ELI (CONT'D)
Camille Grady owns the property where the bust happened. And Will knows Rakoczy...

Eli digs through the manila folder and hands Nichols the xerox of their HIGH SCHOOL HOCKEY PHOTO.

ELI (CONT'D)

That's-that's him, that's Rakoczy
in the middle, the one Will has his
arm around.

Nichols squints at the photo. Eli hands him another paper: a copy of the SALES CONTRACT detailing the Blake's REO transaction.

ELI (CONT'D)

This is one of three locations they
raided, an old hardware store. 24
kilos.

Nichols smiles with strange relief.

NICHOLS

Okay. I'll look into it.

Nichols starts to walk away.

ELI

There's more.

Nichols sighs. He stops.

ELI (CONT'D)

Summer was nervous about showing
the place on Whitcomb because it
would've been her biggest
commission to date. That's the only
reason she went through with it.
She was ignoring all kinds of red
flags when she met up with those
people.

Nichols says nothing. But he's listening.

ELI (CONT'D)

Right? You agree?

NICHOLS

Go on.

ELI

But look at her commissions. That's
not even close to her biggest one.

Eli takes out the MANILA ENVELOPE. He pulls out...the stolen quarterly reports from Camille's office.

ELI (CONT'D)

According to these, Summer's the highest earning broker they have!

Nichols shakes his head, taking a deep breath.

ELI (CONT'D)

I went to the homes. I saw them. They're empty. All of them. They were sold in Summer's name to a shell company using the same attorney who happened to be there the day she died.

Eli points to a form.

ELI (CONT'D)

This is her client list. You see the names? Right there. They're all from famous paintings.

This catches Nichols's attention. He thinks about Camille's house and the baroque display of paintings smothering every surface. He steps away, covering his mouth and looking at the surf.

ELI (CONT'D)

What? What is this?

Nichols looks back to Eli.

NICHOLS

Have you shown anyone this? Her father?

Eli shakes his head.

ELI

I don't understand why someone would pay above market value for any of this stuff.

NICHOLS

They're just cleaning money. It's laundering. Drugs probably. They use real estate like a bank.

ELI

Is that who did it then?

Nichols stares at the pages in Eli's hand, the evidence in black and white. He wants to say 'yes', but doesn't.

Eli slides the pages back into the envelope and hands it towards Nichols. Nichols doesn't take the envelope, and instead steps within a few inches of Eli's face.

NICHOLS
Get rid of it.

ELI
What?

NICHOLS
Destroy it.

ELI
Are you serious?

NICHOLS
So far you haven't listened to a
fucking thing I've said, but right
now I'm begging you. This is no
bullshit. Turn and walk away.

Eli looks down at the manila envelope, and then up at Nichols. He can feel Nichols practically shaking with anger.

Eli extends the envelope, insisting.

ELI
Everything you need is right here.

Nichols looks at the envelope, knowing Eli is right.

He takes it.

Sighing, Nichols begins the trek back across the beach. He stops to wave a SIGNAL at the PARKING LOT...

ELI (CONT'D)
Check Rakoczy's phone records. See
who he called the day of the
murder! I'm not wrong.

Eli is interrupted by THREE OFFICERS cresting the sand.

They close in on him.

Eli looks at Nichols with an expression of utter betrayal. It will be the last time they see each other.

The Officers apprehend Eli, handcuffing him behind his back.

ELI (CONT'D)
(shouting)
Check Rakoczy's phone!

Nichols makes his way slowly back to his car, hiking up a dune, disgusted with himself and everything.

Eli never takes his eyes off him.

INT. NICHOLS'S DESK - SCARBOROUGH POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Nichols is at his computer processing the paperwork on Eli's arrest.

He glances at the closed dossier Eli handed him, then immediately goes back to his computer.

Unable to control himself, he grabs the dossier.

Nichols examines the folder of stolen records.

He sees the XEROXED HIGH SCHOOL HOCKEY PHOTO with Rudi Rakoczy's arm around Will.

Then, a handwritten note with the word "CRAWFORD" adjacent to "Rudi's attorney."

He puts the dossier down.

INT. CUMBERLAND COUNTY JAIL - DAY

A visiting room in the penitentiary. Rudi, in an orange prison jumpsuit, sits with his hands cuffed at a metal table. A GUARD waits near the door.

Nichols ENTERS.

NICHOLS

Rudi. Hi. Thanks for taking the time to meet with me. This won't take long.

Nichols pulls a chair out to sit across from him.

RUDI

No problem.

NICHOLS

How are you? You doing alright?

Rudi glares at him in silence.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)

Well, you got a good lawyer.

RUDI
What's this about?

NICHOLS
I wanna talk to you about Camille
Grady.

Rudi gives him nothing. Not even a blink.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)
No?

Rudi looks at him like, *I don't know what you're talking about.*

NICHOLS (CONT'D)
She's Will Grady's mother.

Rudi is stone-faced.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)
Do you know *Will* Grady?

RUDI
No.

NICHOLS
You do, you just don't-- here...

Nichols takes out the HIGH SCHOOL HOCKEY PHOTO and slides it across the table.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)
You guys were on the same hockey
team. Will Grady.

Rudi glances at the photo.

RUDI
I don't know who that is.

Nichols is confused.

NICHOLS
That's you, right? I'm talking
about the guy next to you with his
arm on your shoulder.

Rudi shakes his head.

They sit in silence while Nichols soaks in the absurdity...
followed by the tremendous implication of Rudi's denial.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)
Thank you.

EXT. CUMBERLAND COUNTY JAIL - DAY

Nichols exits the prison, talking on his cell phone.

NICHOLS
(into phone)
Yeah, he's fine. But I need his
phone records.

INT. HOLDING CELL - SCARBOROUGH POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Eli is crouched, attempting to sleep on the cold bench of a crowded communal cell.

He hears the SOUND OF KEYS unlocking the cell door.

GUARD
Phillips, Eli.

Eli sits up and looks to the GUARD at the open door.

GUARD (CONT'D)
Bail is posted.

ELI
Who paid it?

GUARD
Ask the bondsman.

EXT. ELI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A TAXI reverses out of the driveway as Eli climbs up the staircase, fatigued.

A SENSOR LIGHT engages when he reaches the landing.

Revealing: Will standing by the front door.

Eli freezes.

ELI
(gathering himself)
You scared me.

WILL
Can we talk?

Eli looks at the door - he knows that his apartment is a mausoleum of documents pertaining to Summer's murder, and that he's likely standing across from the person who bailed him out.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Eli and Will ENTER. Eli flips on the light- every surface of the apartment is covered with clippings, notes, and research pertaining to the murder, as well as beer bottles and empty takeout containers.

Will walks to the KITCHEN TABLE and picks up a random pile of papers: PHOTOCOPIES of his HIGH SCHOOL YEARBOOK.

ELI
Can I get you anything?

Will turns towards Eli.

WILL
You're insane. You know that,
right.

Eli is silent.

ELI
Look...

Eli steps towards him. Will puts out his hand.

WILL
Please don't come near me.

Eli stares blankly.

WILL (CONT'D)
Just tell me this...did you know
her? Was that true?

Eli remains silent.

WILL (CONT'D)
Then why did you do all this?

ELI
Because no one else would.

INT. NICHOLS'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - SAME

A wooden desk tucked in the corner. The place is simply decorated. The blinds are drawn.

What's interesting is that the space isn't too dissimilar to Eli's apartment, but is wildly more adult and well-kept.

Nichols sets his beer down on the desk as a FAX COMES IN.

RUDI'S PHONE RECORDS.

He combs through the call log, searching between the hours of 6PM and 7PM on the evening of Summer's murder...

Nichols's finger traces down the list and stops at a call at **6:37PM**.

Nichols notices the same number was called at **5:48PM, 3:19PM, 3:12PM**, and a half dozen times earlier in the day.

Nichols walks to his landline and slowly **DIALS THE NUMBER**.

INT. CAMILLE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SAME

A WIDE STATIC shot from the corner of the empty room.

The **HOME PHONE RINGS**.

INT. CAMILLE'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Camille plucks her eyebrows sitting inches from a vanity mirror.

She hears the landline ringing and gets up, placing the tweezers on the counter.

INT. NICHOLS'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - SAME

Nichols stands with his home phone pressed against his ear. It's ringing. He waits for someone to pick up.

INT. CAMILLE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SAME

Camille casually walks to the phone and picks up.

CAMILLE
(into phone)
Hello.

ALLEN (ON PHONE)
Hi Camille, it's Robert Allen.

Not who we were expecting.

CAMILLE
 (into phone)
 Is everything alright?

ALLEN (ON PHONE)
*The man who broke into your office,
 Eli, was released on bail. I
 thought you should know. We're
 gonna keep an eye on him.*

CAMILLE
 (into phone)
 Thank you for telling me.

ALLEN (ON PHONE)
Call if anything comes up, alright?

INT. NICHOLS'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - SAME

Ring. Ring.

Nichols has his landline held against his ear, he's getting impatient.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - SAME

Will scans the notes jotted on one of Eli's more paranoid-looking notebook pages.

WILL
 H-how did you get this?

A cell phone starts to **ring**. Neither Will nor Eli reacts.

ELI
 I can explain.

Will reaches into his pocket and takes out his phone:
 'UNKNOWN CALLER' on the caller ID.

Will ignores the call.

INT. NICHOLS'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - SAME

Nichols listens to the sound of Will's voicemail pick up.

WILL'S VOICEMAIL (O.S.)
*Hey you've reached Will Grady. I'm
 unavailable right now but you can
 try my office at--*

Nichols hangs up.

F U C K.

INT. BLAKE'S HARDWARE - LATE AFTERNOON - THE DAY SUMMER WAS KILLED

Will, on his cell phone, standing by the entrance.

Bennett approaches him.

IDENTICAL to how it was presented earlier in the film, but now we are CLOSE UP TO Will, over his shoulder, seeing it from a new perspective.

WILL
(into phone)
Great, okay. Yup. Gotta go.

BENNETT
Makin' deals.

Will hangs up.

WILL
Sorry, crazy day.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - SAME - BACK IN THE PRESENT

Will powers down his phone and picks up a PHOTOCOPY of a SALES CONTRACT.

Eli steps forward. Will puts out his hand.

ELI
Your mother is involved with very dangerous people. And I'm not the person who should tell you this- I know, but I don't know what else to do.

WILL
You think my mom had my girlfriend killed? Is that what you think?

Eli nods.

WILL (CONT'D)
You're wrong.
(lifts the photocopy)
How much of this do you have?

Eli says nothing.

WILL (CONT'D)
Give me all of it.

ELI
I can't do that.

Will turns away so Eli can't see his face, bracing himself against the kitchen table. Eli can feel Will's anger dissipate into grief.

Eli slowly approaches and reaches his hand out to Will's shoulder.

Will puts his hand on top of Eli's.

In one swift motion, Will reaches for an empty beer bottle on the counter and SMASHES IT ACROSS ELI'S FACE.

Eli grasps at his head, feeling blood.

ELI (CONT'D)
Ah fuck.

He looks up- Will SLICES THE BROKEN BOTTLE across the side of Eli's face. His cheek hangs lacerated, torn liked a ripped pocket.

Will strikes with the bottle once more. Eli resists, grabbing Will's arm. Will pulls it loose, shoving Eli backwards.

Losing his balance, Eli hits his head on the corner of the kitchen table as he falls to the floor.

Eli lays on his side, convulsing slightly, gasping for breath.

Blood starts gushing from Eli's broken skull.

His eyes stare up at Will, unblinking but still alive, paralyzed and unable to speak.

Will saw this same expression cross Summer's face as she died mere moments after he found her.

Will drops what's left of the bottle and walks towards the kitchen sink.

WE STAY ON ELI, staring at the ceiling fan, as we hear Will washing his hands OFF-SCREEN.

INT. NICHOLS'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Nichols answers the front door. It's Allen and he doesn't appreciate being called upon at such an hour.

It's clear to Nichols from his uncle's solemn expression that he still feels owed an apology from his nephew. But that'll have to wait.

ALLEN

Hi.

NICHOLS

Come in.

Allen steps inside.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)

You want some coffee.

ALLEN

I'm fine, thanks.

MOMENTS LATER

Allen occupies the center of the couch, and therefore all of it. Nichols sits across from him on an old metal chair probably taken from the station.

Allen has his reading glasses on, and is reviewing the papers of Eli's dossier.

NICHOLS

When the market crashed, Will started buying foreclosed properties for pennies on the dollar and flipped them for fifty times more. He kept his name off the contracts, using Summer's instead. Dozens of sales, all cash, all using her signature. He got in deep with the wrong people, and he threw her into the fire.

Allen puts down the file and removes his reading glasses.

ALLEN

The lawyers'll get this thrown out no problem.

NICHOLS

How?

ALLEN

How? They can drop charges against this Eli fella and file new ones against us. Claim he stole their files on your behalf. If he wants to avoid doing time, he'll back it up. That's what I'd do.

Nichols shakes his head, unsatisfied. Allen reads it, getting annoyed.

ALLEN (CONT'D)

Why are you asking me? You just want me to say 'go for it', is that it?

NICHOLS

No, no-

ALLEN

Then go for it. Take the big swing. You know how to do that. Except this time if it blows up in your face, I can't help you. No one can.

Nichols feels the sting. Allen regrets the low blow.

They sit in silence.

ALLEN (CONT'D)

Do you know how many times I wanted to nail people like this to the fucking cross? I don't have it in me. I never did. So don't ask.

Allen gets up and puts on his jacket.

ALLEN (CONT'D)

You gotta make a choice, Tom. Either be *this guy* and see it through or shut the fuck up.

He turns for the door, but stops, trying to offer something of some use before he leaves...

ALLEN (CONT'D)

Get the kid to sign something. I doubt he will, but you never know.

EXT. ELI'S APARTMENT - MORNING

The Crown Vic slowly pulls into the driveway. Nichols gets out of the car.

As he walks up the staircase leading up to Eli's apartment he notices that Eli's Volvo is not in the driveway.

He knocks on the front door and it immediately SWINGS OPEN.

NICHOLS

Hello?

Nothing.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Nichols steps inside.

Unlike the mess this place was when Nichols was first here, it's now neat and tidy. Spotless. Not a single thing out of place.

MORT (O.S.)

Ah, he finally cleared out.

Mort appears in the doorway. Nichols turns to him.

NICHOLS

What do you mean?

MORT

I've been trying to evict him for a month.

Nichols gazes towards the desk. No computer. No papers...

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. TUDOR HOUSE - ONE MONTH LATER

Clean shaven and wearing a linen blazer and pressed khakis, Will leads Valerie Mark and her HUSBAND through the living room of a spacious home. Valerie is now visibly pregnant.

WILL

What I love about this home is the privacy. I don't think you could hear your neighbors even if you tried. And I know the couple across the street has a little boy.

VALERIE

I like that.

VALERIE'S HUSBAND

I do too.

VALERIE

They can play together in a few years.

Will smiles. It genuinely fulfills him to be playing a small part in their future.

WILL

Let me show you the backyard.

I./EXT. WILL'S PARKED RANGER ROVER / TUDOR HOUSE - LATER

Will steps into his car and shuts the door behind him.

He smiles and waves to Valerie and her husband as they enter their car.

Just as they lose sight of him, his smile and friendly demeanor suddenly shifts into an impenetrable stoicism.

He turns on the engine.

INT. CAMILLE GRADY REALTORS - CORRIDOR - LATER

Will is met by Camille in the hallway. She can sense he's distraught as he barely makes eye contact.

CAMILLE

Hey.

She places her hands on his shoulders.

CAMILLE (CONT'D)

This is a formality, okay. It's all fine.

WILL

I know--I know. I just want this to be over with.

INT. CAMILLE GRADY REALTORS - CAMILLE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Nichols stands in the middle of the office, waiting with a file folder under his arm. The print of 'Fox Hunt' hangs over Camille's desk, sitting at eye level in front of him. He stares at it.

The door opens. Will and Camille ENTER.

NICHOLS

Hi. Hi, Will.

Will extends his hand, Nichols shakes it.

Camille gestures to the small conference table in the center of her large corner office.

CAMILLE
Please, sit down. Can I get you
anything?

Nichols picks a chair and sits.

NICHOLS
Nothing for me.

Camille retrieves an envelope from her desk. She hands it to Nichols and takes her seat next to Will across from the detective.

Nichols opens the unsealed envelope- a typed affidavit is inside.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)
(to Will)
And this is your complete
statement, correct?

WILL
Yes.

Nichols scans it quickly, flipping four pages to the end.

NICHOLS
Okay. The, uh, notary should be
here any minute, um...

Nichols checks his watch. They sit in silence, thinking about the ghost in the room.

CAMILLE
I just want to say- uh... I- we
know this has not been easy. That
you almost lost your life and...

Camille's voice sticks in her throat.

CAMILLE (CONT'D)
But we really are...so, so grateful
to you.

Nichols tries to hide a grimace.

Camille looks over at Will, who avoids eye contact. She rests her hands on his.

But Will's attention isn't on his mother...it's instead on Nichols's index finger, tapping against Will's written statement sitting on the table.

NICHOLS

(to Will)

The day Summer was killed you closed on a new property...Blake's Hardware.

Will nods.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)

Last month feds pulled 24 kilos of methamphetamine out of the back of that place.

Nichols sees that this is news to Camille. She looks at Will.

WILL

It happened before we took over the title from the bank. It voided the contract.

NICHOLS

I thought you guys sold seaside mansions.

WILL

We've been looking into acquiring assets with an eye towards rebuilding the community down the road.

NICHOLS

That's weird. That's exactly what your lawyer Mr. Rossoff told me.

Will bristles.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)

So let me ask you the same question I asked him: did you know what that building was being used for before you bought it? Yes or no.

A long pause.

WILL

We didn't buy it.

Nichols nods. They never say 'no'.

NICHOLS
I'm asking if you knew what it was
being used for.

WILL
I had no idea.

Nichols stares at Will, eyes of an executioner.

NICHOLS
Okay. One last question...

He takes out a copy of the contract's signing page from his
folder and slides it across the table to Will and his mother.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)
How did Summer's signature end up
on the contract?

Camille focuses on the signature line labeled 'broker'. There
it is, in cursive and black and white: *Summer Elswick*

NICHOLS (CONT'D)
This came from Mr. Rossoff. You
signed it in the hardware store,
while Summer was being butchered
eight miles across town. So if you
didn't know who owned the building
and what it was being used for, why
did you sign her name as the broker
instead of yours?

Camille looks at Will. His expression is cold, unmoved.

WILL
The bank cancelled the contract.
This is not legally binding. You
can call the bank.

Nichols waits a long moment, giving Will the chance to
rethink his strange denial.

Silence.

NICHOLS
Did she know you were doing that?
Signing her name.

Nichols produces a PHOTOCOPY, sliding it across the table.
Will examines it.

WILL
Where'd you get this?

NICHOLS

A little-known intelligence source called 'the newspaper'. It's the public record of sales from your company going back 25 years. The name Grady shows up on every single deal. Except these.

Nichols drops a stack of Summer's contracts, given to him by Eli.

CAMILLE

I think- if I could just interrupt a moment-

NICHOLS

No, you can't. Sorry. The only person I want to hear from right now is your son. I want him to explain to me why he kept this from you. And I want to know why he chose Summer. Tell me, Will- she wasn't exactly the most dependable girlfriend. You must've known your partners would eventually ask you to put her light out.

A knock at the door.

NICHOLS (CONT'D)

Right on time. So look- you got two options. The first- you say nothing, I open the door, and you get this bullshit story of yours etched into stone. But if you do that, I'll make sure your friends who took care of Summer hear from me. And I don't know how much they care about you in all this. Three people are dead, I certainly don't. Option two...well, option two.

Another knock. Will sits motionless, staring.

Camille looks at her son, waiting for him to speak. She can feel herself shaking, vomit rising in her throat.

Will says nothing.

Nichols sighs, gathers his things and gets up, handing Will his statement back. He opens the door- the NOTARY PUBLIC waits, looking up from her phone.

NOTARY PUBLIC
Hi, sorry I'm late.

NICHOLS
Not a problem. I'm gonna get out of
your hair.

The Notary sits down next to Will, setting up her kit.

She notices that Will won't look at his mother, and that
Camille is shaking.

Nichols EXITS, closing the door behind him.

Camille watches Will uncap his pen, ready to sign the two
spaces in the Notary's open ledger. Who is her son?

INT. CAMILLE GRADY REALTORS - CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Nichols makes his way down the corridor.

CAMILLE
Tom.

He stops and turns to see Camille. She approaches.

CAMILLE (CONT'D)
I think we should talk about this.

NICHOLS
I do too. So do your son a favor
and don't let him sign his own
death.

CAMILLE
I didn't know about any of this. I
swear to God, I didn't. I swear.

NICHOLS
Well, best of luck with that.

CAMILLE
You don't believe me.

NICHOLS
I do. That's why I said best of
luck.

Nichols turns and continues walking, leaving Camille alone in
the hallway...

He passes an office- Summer's office.

Inside a YOUNG BROKER the same age as Summer sits with perfect posture behind her computer.

Nichols tucks his folder under his arm and turns left, making his way towards the lobby.

But WE STAY ON the Young Broker just as her cell phone rings.

She picks up.

YOUNG BROKER
(excitedly, into phone)
Hello.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. SCARBOROUGH PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING - CLASSROOM - SEVERAL
WEEKS LATER

A DOZEN casually dressed LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS are scattered around the room taking their civil service exams, squeezed into desks they are unable to fit in.

At the back of the room sits Nichols. He puts his pen down.

Nichols walks up to the middle-aged SERGEANT PROCTOR sitting at the front of the room, handing him his exam.

SERGEANT PROCTOR
That was quick.

Nichols politely nods, and turns to the bulletin board behind the Proctor. Mounted on the wall are a variety of FLIERS relating to the town's public works program.

In the middle is a PHOTOCOPIED PICTURE OF ELI with the words "MISSING PERSON" at the top. A phone number is provided in bold letters to call with any information.

Nichols rips the photocopied picture off the bulletin board and takes it with him as he exits.

EXT. RED CHURCH - DAY

Early signs of winter have taken hold. The Crown Vic is parked in the driveway where ice has turned to slush.

Nichols walks up the steps to the church's front doors.

He reaches for a HAMMER inside his jacket and begins NAILING a PIECE OF PAPER to the front door of the church, though we cannot see what is on it.

He pauses for a moment, takes a deep breath. Then pounds the hammer once more with profound aggression.

INT. RED CHURCH - MOMENTS LATER

The empty church looks exactly like it did the last time he was here.

Nichols walks slowly down the center aisle.

He takes a seat on a pew in the second row.

From behind, we watch as he sits in silence facing the altar.

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END.