

Seven Pounds

by

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Property of:
Escape Artists
Sony Pictures Entertainment
10202 W. Washington Blvd.
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Culver City, CA 90232

Writer's Draft
5-18-06

FADE IN:

INT. BATHROOM -- NIGHT

We are tight on THE FACE of PAUL THOMAS talking into the handset of a telephone. His hair is dry but water laps at his neck. White bathtub porcelain is behind his head.

911 OPERATOR (V.O.)
911 Emergency.

PAUL
I need to report a suicide.

911 OPERATOR (V.O.)
I have you at 412 Fair Oaks Avenue
in Pasadena.

PAUL
Yeah, room twelve.

911 OPERATOR (V.O.)
Who's the victim?

PAUL
I am.

Paul reaches out of frame and hangs up the phone. He sits up and CLOSES HIS EYES as if steeling himself for something.

PAUL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
In seven days God created the world.
In seven minutes He shattered mine.
(beat)
This is my story. A love story.

FADE TO BLACK:

CHYRON READS: 31 DAYS EARLIER

FADE IN:

INT. HUMAN RESOURCE OFFICE -- DAY

Paul stands with a chubby OFFICE MANAGER, 29, as she photocopies an EMPLOYEE FILE. Paul is dressed in a PLAIN BROWN SUIT. Although lean, muscular and HANDSOME to the point of drawing attention, Paul's all-business demeanor is off-putting. He's also recovering from a BLACK EYE.

OFFICE MANAGER
He's a pretty happy person, all things
considered...

She keeps stealing glances at Paul, visibly nervous.

OFFICE MANAGER (CONT'D)
How did you get that shiner?

PAUL
(tersely)
Sparring.

She finishes the last couple of pages, then collects the FILE from the copier and hands it to Paul.

OFFICE MANAGER
Is Ezra in some kind of trouble?
The girls and I sort of like to look
out for him.
(proud)
I get him lunch on Tuesdays.

PAUL
(no eye contact)
Routine. No trouble at all.

OFFICE MANAGER
He's working upstairs in the call
center. I can take you up--

PAUL
No. I just need the 800 number.

INT. CHEAP MOTEL -- LATER

Paul sits on the bed. The EMPLOYEE FILE beside him.

PAUL
(into phone)
They had zero marble.

INTERCUT:

INT. CALL CENTER -- CONTINUOUS

EZRA TURNER, 40's wears a hands-free headset and a CAP ON HIS HEAD. A roomful of CO-WORKERS work the phones in cubicles.

EZRA
(into headset)
I understand, sir--

PAUL
Not at all the melt-in-my-mouth,
symphony-of-succulent-flavors that I
had been promised upon placing my
order.

Ezra laughs a tiny laugh at Paul. It's not shared.

EZRA

I can have four new filets overnighted.
I'll just need your first and last
name so I can pull up your account--

PAUL

I saved the meat, you know. After
my failed dinner party.

EZRA

How does that help us?

PAUL

It's evidence. I'm happy to ship
you the meat for your perusal.

EZRA

That won't be necessary. How about
we just start with your last name?

PAUL

Thomas.

Ezra types.

EZRA

First name?

PAUL

What if I don't want the filets?

EZRA

(slightly annoyed)

Well, we have pork chops. We also
have a rack of lamb and several other
beef selections other than filets.

PAUL

How many pork related complaints do
you receive on average?

EZRA

Almost never. They come highly
recommended. And taste excellent.

PAUL

So you've tasted the pork?

EZRA

No, I'm not much of a meat eater
myself. But everyone speaks very
highly of the pork. Can I get your
first name Mr. Thomas?

PAUL

Paul.

Ezra types in P-A-U-L. We see for the first time that his keypad has BRAIL on it. Ezra is BLIND.

PAUL (CONT'D)

What are you typing?

A few more clicks. An AUDIBLE BEEP is heard.

EZRA

I don't have an order for a Paul Thomas.

PAUL

What was that noise?

EZRA

What noise?

PAUL

The beep. It was very distinct.

EZRA

Just my computer.

Ezra's frustration is surfacing now as he exhales.

EZRA (CONT'D)

Is there another name with which you might have ordered the filets?

PAUL

You're lying. It's a special computer.

EZRA

No... I would just like to provide you with excellent service this evening and you're making that increasingly difficult--

PAUL

You're blind.

EZRA

(flustered)

What would make you say a thing--

PAUL

A blind beef salesman who doesn't eat meat.

(laughing)

That's rich.

EZRA

Did Lawrence in accounting... is this some kind of cruel joke?

PAUL
If it was, is there anything you'd
like to say to me?

EZRA
No... I'm at work...

PAUL
Fuck work, Ezra. Say what you mean
you blind vegan.

Ezra's eyes well up with tears. A moment passes while he
tries to compose himself.

Paul rubs his head, eyes crestfallen. HE APPEARS TORTURED
by having to do this, but his voice doesn't portray a thing.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Ezra... That's a Jew name isn't it?
(off non-response)
At least defend your honor.
(beat)
You are a disgrace to Jew-boy blind
beef salesmen everywhere, do you
know that?

Paul waits for a response. Ezra steels himself then...

EZRA
Thank you for calling Omaha Steaks.
(voice cracking)
Please take a moment to visit our
new website.

SFX: DIAL TONE

Regret washes over Paul as he looks down at a PIECE OF PAPER
with a typed list of names on it. He DRAWS A STAR next to
the name "EZRA TURNER."

EXT. BEACH HOUSE -- ESTABLISHING -- NIGHT

An unassuming one story mid-century home north of San
Francisco. It backs up to a private beach. LARGE GLASS
WINDOWS stretch across the back, but the DRAPES ARE DRAWN.

INT. LARGE AQUARIUM -- CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON a JELLYFISH moving gracefully through a HUNDRED
GALLONS OF SALTWATER. Lit delicately from above, it is the
only living thing in the tank and it doesn't seem to mind.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

PAUL'S SILHOUETTE sitting in a vintage Danish rocking chair
watching the jellyfish. He's on his CELL PHONE.

PAUL
 (into phone)
 I was down in Fresno for work.

WE SEE the house is sparsely furnished in Danish and American wood furniture most of which is COVERED WITH SHEETS and YEARS OF DUST. Paul lives here but his footprint is minimal.

PAUL (CONT'D)
 (listening, then)
 I made a blind man cry actually.
 (listening, sincere)
 Wish I was kidding, George-- Listen,
 they gave me all the details and I'll
 be seeing you bright and early in
 Chicago on the 19th.

INTERCUT:

INT. INNER CITY GYMNASIUM -- CONTINUOUS

GEORGE MAMONE, Italian, 50's, talks on his cell phone while TEENAGE BOYS of various ethnicities run a game of five-on-five basketball. George keeps an eye on the kids.

GEORGE
 (into phone)
 Are you sure you want to do this? I
 know I keep asking you--

PAUL
 I'm sure George. But I need you to
 keep this between us. I hate my job,
 but I don't want to lose it.

A SCUFFLE on the court. TWO BOYS FIGHTING OVER a loose ball.

GEORGE
 (blows his whistle)
 Knock it off Letam!

The SCUFFLE ENDS, the larger boy LETAM gets in one last shove.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
 Somebody want to remind Letam where
 we are?

SEVERAL BOYS
 In the sanctuary, coach!

The boys look disappointedly at Letam, then resume play.

GEORGE
 (into phone)
 Sorry about that, Paul.
 (MORE)

GEORGE (CONT'D)

(beat)

I know what you're doing for me here,
so rest assured, okay?

PAUL

Okay. See you on the 19th.

Paul hangs up the phone.

INT. PAUL'S SHOWER -- LATER

The WATER beats down over his sunken head. WE PAN DOWN to see that Paul has an old and very LARGE SURGICAL SCAR in the shape of an "M" across his chest.

INT. BATHROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Paul is brushing his teeth with a towel around his waist. He spits into the sink. Then takes a long look at his REFLECTION IN THE MIRROR.

PAUL

(to mirror)

Ken Anderson, John Kelso, Miguel
Nicita, Jason Jones, Allison Olsen,
Neil Brandt, Steve Chen.

INT. PAUL'S BEDROOM -- LATER THAT NIGHT

Paul LAYS ON THE FLOOR. No blanket, no pillow. He stares up at the ceiling UNABLE TO SLEEP. The room is empty except for a double bed, an alarm clock, and an old wooden dresser.

EXT. PRIVATE TENNIS COURT -- DAY

A pretty-boy, MITCH, late 30's towels off his sweaty face beside a polished blonde NICOLE, 29, who's packing up.

Paul, wearing the SAME BROWN SUIT, observes them from a bench just outside the court.

MITCH

You really hit the shit out of your
serve today.

NICOLE

You seemed to be hitting them back
just fine.

Mitch and Nicole start to cross off the court. Mitch SWATS NICOLE ON THE ASS with his towel flirtatiously.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

(mock anger)

Hey!

MITCH

I'm serious!

NICOLE

Not working together has you a little
pent up these days...

Nicole plays coy as Mitch discovers PAUL STARING AT THEM.
Paul is eating a BALANCE BAR.

As they pass, Mitch glances over his shoulder at Paul,
slightly put off. Paul MEETS HIS STARE and holds it,
deliberately.

INT. SENIOR CENTER PARKING LOT -- DAY

Paul in his brown suit, carrying a satchel, looks at the
DEALER PLATE on a brand new BMW 5-SERIES. A parking sign
reads, "RESERVED PARKING, Hospital Administrator Only."

INT. PATIENT ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

STEWART GOODMAN, 45, the hospital administrator wearing a
tie and an affable face, stands beside an elderly patient in
her 80's, INEZ. A WHEELCHAIR sits alongside her bed.

STEWART

I hear you're refusing to take your
meds again this afternoon?

Inez reaches for a PEN AND PAD OF PAPER on her night table
as Paul is escorted to the room by a NURSE.

STEWART (CONT'D)

Let's try using your words, Inez. The
silent treatment isn't doing anybody
any good, now is it?

Inez bristles then turns toward the window ignoring him.

NURSE

Mr. Goodman, you have a visitor, sir.

Stewart turns, a little annoyed at the interruption, but
flashes a smile upon seeing Paul.

STEWART

Mr. Thomas, I thought I was coming
to your office today.

PAUL

I had a case out this way. Thought
I'd save you the drive.

Stewart hurriedly ushers Paul toward the door.

STEWART

We can talk in my office.

Paul looks back at Inez troubled by her sadness.

INT. ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE -- MOMENTS LATER

Paul sits across from Stewart.

STEWART

I take a no-nonsense approach, cut the operating costs for this place by over seventeen percent last year alone.

PAUL

I take it they're happy?

STEWART

Hell yeah! Now if I could just get my personal finances in that good of shape. I wouldn't have you sitting here.

PAUL

I see you got yourself a new 5-series.

Stewart laughs a little nervously.

STEWART

I get a car allowance from the board here.

PAUL

Does it cover the whole payment?

STEWART

(stammering)

Close. I have to pitch in a couple hundee.

PAUL

The government would have preferred that you pitch in a couple hundee toward your tax bill--

STEWART

Look, Paul...

Paul looks irked at the casual reference.

STEWART (CONT'D)

When I found out my bone marrow transplant wasn't a success, I figured I owed myself a little encouragement--

PAUL

I'm well aware of your ongoing medical condition.

STEWART

That's right...

(straight shooter)

I have a bonus coming in January, gonna use it to pay my tab. I just need that six month extension we discussed--

Paul assesses Stewart. Stewart smiles a winner.

STEWART (CONT'D)

I'm doing the best I can here...

PAUL

Tell you what. I'm going to let myself out and I'll get back to you later this week.

STEWART

Thanks, Paul. That way everybody wins. Am I right?

Paul barely nods his head.

INT. INEZ'S ROOM -- LATER

Paul knocks on the door and enters halfway. Inez doesn't look away from the window.

PAUL

I'm very sorry to disturb you, Inez. I just wondered if I could have a moment of your time...

Paul waits patiently. Inez turns in his direction.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Thank you.

Paul crosses over and pulls up a chair next to Inez. When he gets close he WRINKLES HIS NOSE, SMELLING SOMETHING. This is not lost on Inez who looks away embarrassed.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I'm trying to figure out what kind of person Stewart Goodman is. It's in my power to change his circumstances...

After a long beat Inez reaches over and grabs her paper and pen and WRITES PAUL A NOTE.

PAUL (CONT'D)
(reading the note)
The drug they give me makes me dizzy.
I want a new one.
(to Inez)
That seems reasonable.

Inez writes a new note. Paul reads it confused.

PAUL (CONT'D)
(off note)
How is he punishing you?

Inez turns shamefully toward the window.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Maybe I can help.

Inez looks at Paul long and hard, assessing whether she can trust him. She takes back her pen and pad and writes feverishly. Anger filling her face.

INT. HALLWAY -- MOMENTS LATER

Paul comes out of Inez's room carrying Inez in his arms. She's wrapped in a STAINED AND SOILED SHEET.

A NURSE looks up from down the hall.

NURSE
Excuse me sir, what do you think--

PAUL
I need a bathroom.

The nurse confronts Paul blocking his way in the hallway.

NURSE
You cannot carry patients--

PAUL
(menacing)
The bathroom.

Seeing the look in Paul's eye and Inez's condition, her composure turns to that of a DEER IN HEADLIGHTS.

INT. PRIVATE BATHROOM -- LATER

The same nurse gives Inez a SPONGE BATH. Paul has his back to Inez, standing near the doorway out of respect.

STEWART
(bursting in the door)
Mr. Thomas, what in God's name do you think you're doing with my patient!?

PAUL
(ignoring him)
Excuse me, Inez.

Inez looks over her shoulder, then speaks for the first time.

INEZ
Thank you, Paul...

Paul regards her as they step outside.

INT. HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

They exit into the hallway and Stewart SHUTS THE DOOR.

STEWART
You have no right, Paul--

Paul FORCEFULLY THROWS HIM up against the wall, getting in his face.

PAUL
You're not getting an extension
asshole. Or anything else from me.

PEOPLE GATHER in the hallway to witness the altercation.

PAUL (CONT'D)
I'll be dropping by from now on, so
you better show these people some
fuckin' dignity. And if Inez isn't
tickled pink and smelling like a rose,
I swear to God I'll seize your new
car, your house and your balls.

Paul THROWS him up against the wall again. Stewart whimpers.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Why don't you try using your words.

STEWART
...I got it. I do.

Paul walks away. Stewart notices everyone staring at him.

INT. PAUL'S CAR -- MOMENTS LATER

Paul sits outside the senior center. He pulls out a PIECE OF PAPER WITH A TYPED LIST OF NAMES from his satchel. He takes a pen to it...

INSERT LIST: HE ANGRILY CROSSES OFF THE NAME "STEWART GOODMAN"

INT. PAUL'S BEACH HOUSE -- ESTABLISHING -- LATER THAT NIGHT

Paul enters his house sorting through HIS MAIL. He crosses to the garbage can and DROPS UNOPENED MAIL in, until he comes across ONE of interest.

It's addressed to "PAUL THOMAS" return address "CEDARS SINAI MEDICAL CENTER." Inside he finds a TYPED LIST OF NAMES accompanied by SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS. The memo is marked "CONFIDENTIAL." A handwritten note reads, "Paul, all candidates that meet your criteria here in Region 5. Remember, you don't know me."

EXT. I.R.S. BUILDING -- ESTABLISHING -- LATER THAT NIGHT

An austere cement and glass building with an understated ETCHED SEAL denoting the "Internal Revenue Service."

INT. OFFICE CUBICLE -- CONTINUOUS

A nondescript cubicle. No personal effects. Just office supplies and a computer. Paul accesses a mainframe.

INSERT COMPUTER SCREEN

Login: "Paul Thomas"

Password:

CLOSE ON Paul's fingers typing the password: "CRACKERJACK"

INT. OFFICE CUBICLE -- LATER

Paul sits with the LIST OF NAMES and corresponding SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS that came in the mail. He clicks around with his mouse then leans over and CROSSES OFF ANOTHER NAME from the list. Paul types in the next name "EMILY POSA," followed by her social security number "551-81-2600."

Paul seems to have found a person of interest.

PAUL
(scrolling)
Well now, Emily...

INSERT SCREEN: Paul scrolls through PIECES OF CREDIT, DELINQUENT ACCOUNTS, KNOWN ADDRESSES, all related to "EMILY POSA." There is an IRS collection history and paper trail showing she OWES BACK TAXES...

PAUL (O.S.) (CONT'D)
You're drowning in debt, aren't you.

Paul hits PRINT.

IN THE HALLWAY

A custodian name tagged, "MANNY," 40, comes by emptying garbage cans.

MANNY

Burnin' the midnight oil, huh?

PAUL

(glances at nametag)

You know we never sleep... Manny.

MANNY

Death and taxes, the only thing guaranteed, right?

Paul laughs politely as Manny empties his trashcan.

MANNY (CONT'D)

You new?

PAUL

Yeah, I guess you could say that.

Manny looks at him curiously. Paul notices his wedding band.

PAUL (CONT'D)

(changing the subject)

How's married life treating you?

MANNY

Good, good. No complaints. I mean my wife has complaints, you know...

Paul laughs with Manny as if he does, then reaches over to collect his PRINTOUT. Manny moves on down the hall.

INT. PAUL'S BEDROOM -- LATER THAT NIGHT

Paul LAYS ON THE FLOOR again. No blanket, no pillow. He stares up at the ceiling, unable to sleep.

PAUL

I did everything right and you know it. You fucked up. Not me.

EXT. BEACH -- DAY

A MOTHER, and her two young children, a BOY and a GIRL, walk along the beach. The boy runs ahead grabbing shells and throwing them back into the ocean.

The boy stops along the beach, seeing something in the sand that makes his FACE CONTORT out of confusion. The girl approaches and SCREAMS. The Mother runs up to find...

INSERT: A SEVERED AND BLOATED HUMAN HAND lying in the sand.

INT. PAUL'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Paul BOLTS UPRIGHT OFF THE FLOOR where he was sleeping beside the bed. He is bathed in sweat from his NIGHTMARE.

INT. KITCHEN -- MORNING

Paul in his suit leans against the island, eating another Balance Bar. The only signs of sustenance around are cases of the beverage ENSURE and stacks of BALANCE BAR BOXES that advertise, "ENERGY THAT LASTS WITH THE BALANCE RATIO OF CARBOHYDRATES, PROTEIN & DIETARY FAT."

SFX: CELL PHONE RINGS

Paul looks at his cell, SURPRISED BY THE INCOMING NUMBER.

PAUL
(into phone)
Hello?

BROTHER (O.S.)
(long pause)
...It's your brother.

PAUL
(long pause)
...Hey.

BROTHER (O.S.)
Where are you?

PAUL
...I'm still at the beach house.

BROTHER (O.S.)
Why did you disconnect the land line?

PAUL
I didn't need it anymore, Jack...

INTERCUT:

INT. KITCHEN -- CONTINUOUS

Paul's YOUNGER BROTHER, JACK, 33, bears a STRIKING RESEMBLANCE to Paul sans the remorse and fatigue. Through the window behind him we see his WIFE and TWO KIDS playing in the backyard.

JACK
You changed your cell, too. We had
no way to reach you...

Paul doesn't respond. Jack looks devastated at being cast aside like this.

JACK (CONT'D)

I had to call in a favor at the FCC
just to track you down.

PAUL

(changing subject)

How are you feeling?

JACK

Did I do something...

PAUL

No. Not unless you're smoking again--

JACK

Of course not. I'm in the best shape
of my life. I put on twenty pounds.

(emotional)

Did you get my letters?

PAUL

I read all of them. Thank you.

JACK

Okay... Good.

Jack looks relieved. A weight lifted.

JACK (CONT'D)

Now that the investigation is over,
have you given any more thought to
going back?

PAUL

No. I haven't.

JACK

It wasn't your fault--

PAUL

(cutting him off firmly)

Don't, Jack. I gotta run... Give
Melanie and the kids a hug for me.

JACK

Sure, okay.

(before he can hang up)

Hey, one more thing-- When you were
staying with us, you didn't pick up
something of mine, by mistake?

PAUL

No...

JACK

It's just that when I went back to
work I realized--

PAUL
I remember giving you something.
That's about it.

It just hangs there in the air.

PAUL (CONT'D)
(hanging up)
We'll talk soon.

INT. AIRPLANE -- LATER THAT DAY

Paul sits in the aisle seat. A BALDING MAN sits in the window seat. An incredibly SEXY STEWARDESS comes by giving out peanuts, first to the bald man, then to Paul who refuses.

PAUL
No, thank you.

Paul looks down avoiding further eye contact. She lingers.

STEWARDESS
(sotto)
I shouldn't really do this, but...
I've got a seat up in first class.

Paul looks over at the balding man who acts oblivious.

PAUL
Thank you. But I'm fine.

She's surprised but not done.

STEWARDESS
Are you traveling to Los Angeles for
business or pleasure?

Paul looks up to assess the intent of the question.

PAUL
Neither, really.

Paul looks down, not wanting to entertain anything. She bites her lip flirtatiously, not used to being ignored.

STEWARDESS
I like shy guys.

The balding man continues to act like he isn't listening.

PAUL
(looking up)
I'm sorry?

She leans in conspiratorially. Paul is uncomfortable. The closeness uninvited.

STEWARDESS
Especially when they look like you.

PAUL
I'm ugly on the inside.

Taken aback, she looks for him to make a joke or crack a smile.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Run.

He's not kidding and she knows it. She smiles the most awkward smile possible, and then starts down the aisle.

BALDING MAN
Miss?
(she looks back)
I'd be willing to move--

She pretends not to hear him.

EXT. SOUTH PASADENA HOUSE -- LATER

Modest two bedroom Craftsman bungalow. A black male GREAT DANE paces behind a side yard gate intermittently barking. There are several "BEWARE OF DOG" signs. Paul, holding a leather satchel, RINGS THE DOORBELL and waits.

ANGLE ON:

A NEIGHBOR LADY trimming back ROSES in her perfect yard, which is in direct contrast to the SEVERELY NEGLECTED YARD Paul is standing in. She makes eye contact with Paul, who is headed towards his BLACK RENTAL CAR.

NEIGHBOR LADY
She's not home.

PAUL
I gathered that.

She smirks.

PAUL (CONT'D)
I'm, sorry-- Do you know where she is?
(helping his case)
Emily. It's important.

NEIGHBOR LADY
More tests, I imagine...

EXT. CEDARS SINAI MEDICAL CENTER -- DAY (ESTABLISHING)

INT. ELEVATOR LOBBY -- CONTINUOUS

Paul gets in the elevator and pushes "5" as THREE DOCTORS get on the elevator and push "3." Just as the door is going to shut completely...

WOMAN (O.S.)

Hold the elevator please--

Paul STICKS HIS HAND OUT causing the door to RE-OPEN. The doctors all look at Paul, annoyed. Paul moves to the back of the elevator as a BEAUTIFUL WOMAN, 30's, pale, almost ethereal in a hospital gown, steps into the elevator. We'll come to know her as EMILY POSA.

EMILY

Thank you.

Seeing how attractive Emily is, doctor #1 takes credit.

DOCTOR #1

You're welcome. Least we could do.

The other two doctors look smugly at Paul as if he just got outplayed.

DOCTOR #1 (CONT'D)

Beautiful day today.

(taking her in)

Just beautiful.

Doctor #1 smiles stupidly at Emily, avoiding Paul's glare. The other two doctors go about UNDESSING her with their eyes.

DOCTOR #1 (CONT'D)

If you're not in good hands here,
you be sure and let me know, okay?

EMILY

...sure.

Emily looks down at her shoes uncomfortably. The other two doctors pat doctor #1 on the back with their smirks.

The door opens and all three doctors get off. Paul SURREPTITIOUSLY TRIPS doctor #1, sending him into a FACE PLANT just outside the elevator. The two other doctors lean down to help their fallen comrade as the DOOR CLOSES.

DOCTOR #1

Son of a bitch--

INSIDE ELEVATOR

Emily looks over at Paul for the first time. He doesn't look at her.

EMILY

Did you just--

PAUL

Yes.

Emily looks at him in utter disbelief as the elevator arrives on the fifth floor. Paul waits for her to get off.

EMILY

(hesitating)

Are you going to trip me, too?

PAUL

(not humorous)

Do you deserve to be tripped?

Emily gets off the elevator, unnerved yet a little curious. Paul exits behind her and heads toward the NURSES STATION.

Emily pauses by her door and can't help herself from looking back down the hall. A NURSE, who is speaking with Paul, POINTS IN HER DIRECTION. Paul looks over his shoulder and COOLLY IGNORES Emily as if it's about something or someone else. Emily goes in her room.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- LATER THAT NIGHT

Emily is in bed hooked up to an IV tube. The nurse pulls her drapes shut.

NURSE

I don't think anyone can see in.

EMILY

I just prefer the privacy. Thank you.

NURSE

No problem. Any more shortness of breath?

EMILY

No. I feel okay. Little foolish for having to stay the night, but okay.

NURSE

You listened to your body. Wore yourself out a little is all.

Emily knows it's true.

INT. EMILY'S ROOM -- LATER

It's dark. Emily is ASLEEP, hooked up to an EKG monitor and her IV tube. PULL BACK TO REVEAL Paul standing just inside the door. She stirs and Paul hesitates. He can't seem to tear himself away from watching her sleep.

Emily opens her eyes and turns over to get comfortable. A second later, she TURNS BACK OVER ALARMED to find the...

DOOR SWINGING SHUT

Emily looks at the clock 1:31 a.m. She springs up.

INT. HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

Emily pokes her head out into the hall. It's EMPTY. She starts down the hall, and her arm gets yanked back by the IV tube. She winces, then reaches back into the room and brings her ROLLING IV STAND into the hallway. She can't go far.

EXT. EMERGENCY ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Paul exits through the double doors as a BLACK PARAMEDIC and his CAUCASIAN PARTNER wheel a WOMAN in an oxygen mask inside.

BLACK PARAMEDIC

(mid argument)

You ride with me, you administer
until I tell you not to.

PARTNER

I got it.

Paul brushes past the black paramedic.

BLACK PARAMEDIC

We're in the business of saving lives.
Case you forgot.

Paul disappears into the darkness of the parking lot.

EXT. MOTEL -- ESTABLISHING

Generic two story "L"-shaped motel. The kind that lets you pull the car right up to the room to see how dilapidated it is.

INT. MOTEL OFFICE -- LATER THAT NIGHT

Wall to wall MONOCHROMATIC BEIGE except for a solitary GREEN FERN. Paul enters quietly and walks up to the counter to find the KOREAN MANAGER, name tagged "LARRY," watching a PORNO on a small TV behind the counter.

SFX: PORNO SOUNDS

PAUL

I'd like a room.

LARRY

(startled)

Shit... jeez...

Larry FUMBLES THE REMOTE and finally finds the off button.

Paul notices he's PITCHING A TENT in his pants.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Like three a.m. You sure coming late.

PAUL

(dryly)

Hope I'm the only one, Larry.

(off his confusion)

One night. Two, tops.

LARRY

Sure, fine.

INT. HOSPITAL CAFETERIA -- DAY

Paul in his brown suit takes a bottle of ENSURE out of his satchel and empties it into a glass. He throws the empty container out and sees EMILY WATCHING HIM closely. They regard each other, then Paul returns to his seat. Emily crosses over in her hospital gown and slippers.

EMILY

What do you think you're doing?

PAUL

I think they call it sitting.

Paul takes another sip.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Am I doing it wrong?

EMILY

You're watching me.

PAUL

I was actually in the cafeteria before you entered.

EMILY

It was you. In my room last night.

Paul considers lying.

PAUL

That was an accident.

EMILY

You were in my room, staring at me while I slept, by accident?

PAUL

No. It was an accident that you woke up. I meant to be gone long before--

EMILY

You do realize I'm about to scream,
don't you?

Paul tries to alleviate the tension with a SMALL SMILE.

PAUL

I was hoping we could just talk.

EMILY

Who the hell are you?!

PAUL

Paul.

EMILY

Paul what?

PAUL

The rest isn't all that fun.

EMILY

I see...

(taking control)

Well, I'm not interested in playing
any stalker games today. So I'm
just going to call my friend Frank
over here, and find out everything I
want to know--

(yelling across)

HEY FRANK!

PEOPLE turn around to see what all the fuss is about as FRANK,
25, a built-like-a-brick-shithouse SECURITY GUARD, looks up.

Emily glares at Paul like she's holding all the cards. She's
actually VERY SCARED but putting on a brave face.

PAUL

This is going to be embarrassing.

Frank arrives, he's all bravado.

FRANK

Hey, Emily. What's up?

EMILY

This is the guy. The stalker.

Frank looks at Paul confused, then...

FRANK

No shit!

Frank puts one hand on Paul's shoulder and another hand on
his HOLSTERED GUN. Paul looks up at him unfazed.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Let's see some ID, jerkoff.

PAUL
Is that thing loaded?

FRANK
Bet your ass.

PAUL
That scares me. I don't want to reach
for my ID and have you shoot me in a
steroid induced haze of confusion.

Frank smirks. Digs his hand into Paul's shoulder.

PAUL (CONT'D)
You have nice hands, Frank.

Frank lifts Paul right out of his seat by the collar. Hating
the fact that Paul is disrespecting him.

FRANK
ID! Now!

Frank looks ready to punch Paul. Paul produces his ID, which
in this case is called a COMMISSION. Frank OPENS IT and
immediately looks like he's seen a ghost.

Frank lets up on Paul's shoulder immediately.

FRANK (CONT'D)
I'm really sorry, sir.

Frank actually tries to straighten Paul's collar.

FRANK (CONT'D)
I had no idea.

EMILY
What are you sorry for-- He's
stalking me!

Emily rips the ID out of Frank's hand.

INSERT:

"PAUL THOMAS, REVENUE OFFICER, US TREASURY DEPARTMENT"

PAUL
Actually, I'm auditing you.

Emily is flabbergasted. She looks over the ID.

EMILY
US Treasury Department? The IRS?

PAUL

Told you the rest wasn't any fun.

Frank tries to make a hasty retreat.

FRANK

I'll just let you two...

PAUL

Frank?

FRANK

Yeah?

PAUL

Keep those receipts, buddy.

FRANK

(not getting it)

Okay.

PAUL

And lighten up on the juice.

FRANK

(getting this)

Yes, sir. I'm actually testing with the L.A.P.D., maybe you could put a word in...

Paul's smirk says it all. Frank beats it.

EXT. HOSPITAL GROUNDS -- LATER

Paul and Emily walk around a concrete courtyard. PATIENTS and their LOVED ONES visit at tables.

EMILY

Why were you in my room at one o'clock in the morning?

PAUL

I'm sorry about that. I didn't realize it had gotten so late. I'm a bit of an insomniac, as well as a workaholic.

Emily's not convinced.

PAUL (CONT'D)

(levelling with her)

Granted, it isn't exactly government protocol, but I was trying to figure out what kind of person you were. If you slept well.

EMILY

Why?

PAUL

You owe the government money, Emily.
A lot of it.

EMILY

I know. I got the letters.

PAUL

Now you get me.

EMILY

What's the damage these days?

PAUL

Thirty-six thousand dollars.

Emily scoffs in disbelief. She looks at her watch.

EMILY

I'm late for my blood work.
(not sure)

Can I leave? I'm not being hauled
off to IRS Jail am I?

PAUL

No, you can go. I'll be in touch.

Emily starts back toward the hospital. She turns around to
find Paul still looking in her direction. He realizes.

EMILY

Sorry if I made a scene earlier.
Calling you a stalker...

PAUL

No, please. You were right.

EMILY

(knowing, playful)
So...

Paul realizes what he just implied.

PAUL

(flustered)
No, just-- You know what I'm saying.
(off her smile)
Good, then.

Paul turns and walks off a bit embarrassed. Emily watches
him for a beat.

INT. MOTEL BATHROOM -- NIGHT

Paul shaves in the mirror. He finishes up and wipes off his face. He then takes a good look at his reflection.

PAUL

(to mirror)

Ken Anderson, John Kelso, Miguel
Nicita, Jason Jones, Allison Olsen,
Neil Brandt, Steve Chen.

INT. MOTEL ROOM -- MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

Paul lays on the floor next to the bed. He is wide awake on his back STARING AT THE CEILING.

PAUL

You ruined my life... Everything I
worked for. Did I deserve that?

Paul waits for God's response. None comes.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Did they?

INT. MOTEL OFFICE -- THE NEXT DAY

Paul KNOCKS LOUDLY on the glass door. Larry waves him in.

PAUL

Good morning.

LARRY

Yeah, yeah. Good morning. Sleep well?

PAUL

Like a baby. I'm sure you went to
bed relaxed.

Larry smirks and courtesy laughs.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Wondering if I could borrow your
yellow pages?

LARRY

You need a hooker?

PAUL

I need the yellow pages.

EXT. BRICK MEDICAL BUILDING -- LATER

Paul sits in his RENTAL CAR watching the door. A WOMAN clutching a MANILA FOLDER exits with a FRIEND. She looks like she's been through something traumatic.

The friend helps her into the passenger seat. They drive off.

EXT. BRICK MEDICAL BUILDING -- LATER

Another WOMAN, in sweats, hard and angry at the world walks past Paul glaring into his car.

Paul sees a MAN, 35, stylishly dressed, get out of his shiny MERCEDES. He goes over and opens the door for his GIRLFRIEND, 26, less made-up and apprehensive. He ushers her inside.

EXT. BRICK MEDICAL BUILDING -- LATER

Paul is trying to get comfortable. He continues to watch the door. An MTA BUS pulls up to the bus stop.

A YOUNG WOMAN, 22, gets off the bus and heads toward the door. She hesitates going inside, digs around her purse and retrieves a CIGARETTE. She lights it. After one drag she STOMPS IT OUT, upset with herself.

PAUL
(approaching her)
Excuse me.

YOUNG WOMAN
Yeah?

PAUL
You're about three months along, right?

She self-consciously covers her PREGNANT BELLY.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Can I buy you a cup of coffee?

YOUNG WOMAN
No. I've got an appointment--

PAUL
I know. I'll pay you two-hundred dollars to sit and have a cup of coffee with me. Before your appointment.

She looks inside the clinic and then back at Paul skeptically.

EXT. COFFEE HOUSE PATIO -- LATER

She sips her coffee and looks at Paul expectantly. Paul digs out TWO HUNDRED BUCKS and she greedily pockets it.

PAUL
I'm Paul.

JULIE

Julie.

PAUL

I just wanted to know if you're having
any second thoughts, Julie.

Julie gets it now.

JULIE

I should have figured you for some
kind of pro-lifer.

PAUL

I watched eleven women enter that
building today. Not one hesitated.
Except you.

JULIE

I wasn't hesitating--

PAUL

Why didn't you finish your cigarette?

Julie looks annoyed. She starts to gather her purse.

PAUL (CONT'D)

You couldn't finish your cigarette
because of the baby.

JULIE

(getting up)

Look, it's complicated. And I've
got better--

PAUL

Life is precious. I just want to
know if you're sure.

JULIE

(she's clearly not)

I gotta go.

PAUL

You have to finish your coffee.
Your decaf coffee. A deal's a deal.

Julie considers throwing it in his face then decides to humor
him. She sits back down.

JULIE

I have a semester left of college.
And loans.

PAUL

(gently)

What else?

JULIE
I don't have a car.

PAUL
What else?

Julie watches traffic go by for a while.

JULIE
My boyfriend told me he'd break up
with me, if I kept it.

Paul takes this in. Now he's getting somewhere.

PAUL
Your boyfriend's an asshole.

JULIE
(emotional)
Pretty much.
(tearing up)
The truth is, I don't know if I could
go through with it. Adoption. I
looked into it. If they give me money
to pay for expenses and the vitamins
then I have to sign a contract. I
have to give them the baby...

PAUL
What else?

Julie wipes her eyes and exhales. She laughs a tiny laugh.

JULIE
Isn't that enough?

Paul smiles.

PAUL
You tell me.

Julie is truly conflicted.

INT. GALPIN FORD DEALERSHIP -- LATER

Paul sits with Julie in a cubicle with a SALESMAN, late 20's,
as slick and polished as a Men's Warehouse suit allows him
to be. Paul has his leather satchel with him.

PAUL
I'd like to buy this car.

Paul slides an ADVERTISEMENT across the desk.

INSERT AD: "2006 Ford Focus, \$9995, automatic, air, 1 at
this price, this weekend only"

SALESMAN

(tons of attitude)

You look like a sharp guy, Paul.
So, I'll just cut to the chase. The
ad car is what we call bait. It
doesn't have any options--

PAUL

It says right here the car is
automatic and it has air.

The Salesman takes a closer look at the ad.

SALESMAN

No six disc, no rims, it's purple
for God's sake. I think it's probably
sold actually--

JULIE

(hating him)

I like purple.

PAUL

We called ahead. The car is here.

SALESMAN

Fine.
(getting up)
I'll go find the damn keys.

PAUL

Just go start the paperwork--

SALESMAN

I can't sell you something you haven't
driven. I'm a professional and the
owner requires that--

PAUL

Seriously. Fuck off. Dan or Todd,
whatever your name is.

The Salesman looks taken aback, Julie is surprised. Paul
produces ELEVEN STACKS of bank-wrapped-cash each marked "ONE-
THOUSAND" dollars. He pushes the money toward the Salesman.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Just go start the paperwork.

The Salesman gets up and starts to leave completely defeated.

PAUL (CONT'D)

You forgot something.

The Salesman returns, gathers the stacks of money. He's
about to speak but stops himself, then exits.

EXT. BANK OF AMERICA -- LATER

Paul exits the bank with Julie. They cross over to her new PURPLE FOCUS. Julie gets in. Julie looks down at a deposit slip in her hand.

JULIE

Why are you doing this? You can't just give someone fifty-thousand dollars...

Paul can see that she needs an answer. A real one.

PAUL

In my job... I hurt a lot of people. I want to make amends.

Julie can see that he's sincere.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Whatever you decide, I want you to keep the car and the money.
(looks her in the eye)
Just don't ever say you didn't have a choice.

Julie nods her head as Paul walks off.

EXT. SOUTH PASADENA HOUSE -- THAT AFTERNOON

Paul sits in his car. He removes a 3X5 PHOTOGRAPH from his wallet, and turns it over. WE DON'T SEE who's in the picture. Paul retrieves a pen.

INSERT BACK OF PHOTO:

After his own handwritten name, "PAUL THOMAS," he adds a SECOND NAME, "JULIE McCALL."

EMILY'S SIDE YARD

Paul exits his car and approaches Emily's Great Dane who BARKS LOUDLY from behind the gate. Paul ignores both "BEWARE OF DOG" signs.

PAUL

Hey boy. How are you doing?

He barks louder. Paul continues to approach undaunted, then just OPENS THE GATE and enters the backyard. Duke backs up a few feet and then STANDS HIS GROUND BARKING FEROCIOUSLY.

PAUL (CONT'D)

If you're going to bite me, now would be a good time.

Paul sits down on the ground Indian style. He removes a package of RAW MEAT, rips it open and holds it up toward Duke.

PAUL (CONT'D)
(kissing noises)
Come on. Let's do this thing.

Duke sits down on his haunches gritting his teeth and growling. But he's losing his resolve.

INT. EMILY'S HOUSE -- LATER

SFX: RINGING PHONE

Emily crosses into the kitchen with groceries and a stack of MAIL. She drops everything on the counter and GRABS THE PHONE.

EMILY
Hello... This is Emily.
(listening)
Yes, I do letterpress wedding invitations -- but I'm unable to accept any orders right now.
(listening)
Dealing with a health issue, actually.
(listening)
Yeah, big bummer. Good luck.

Emily hangs up the phone disappointedly. She crosses to the backdoor and opens it.

EMILY (CONT'D)
Duke! I'm home.

EXT. EMILY'S HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Emily exits into the backyard.

EMILY
Duke?

She looks over to see Paul sitting down PETTING DUKE.

EMILY (CONT'D)
What are you doing here?
(realizing)
And how did you get in my yard?!

Paul stands up, as Duke crosses over to Emily.

PAUL
Turns out he's all bark and no bite.

EMILY
(petting Duke)
I paid good money for the bite. Did
you drug my dog?

PAUL
That would be cheating. Right, Duke?

Duke crosses back over to Paul. Emily looks like she's been
left at the altar.

EMILY
He normally hates men.

Duke nuzzles into Paul.

PAUL
He could turn on me at any moment
really... I'm out of steak.

EMILY
(pissed)
You fed Duke meat?

Paul nods "yes" sheepishly.

EMILY (CONT'D)
He eats tofu dry food. And steamed
broccoli.

Paul looks incredulous.

EMILY (CONT'D)
Duke is a vegetarian!

Duke licks Paul's face again.

PAUL
Was.

Emily looks like she could scream.

EMILY
Do you people ever call ahead?

PAUL
(dryly)
No. People tend to hide things.

Emily isn't charmed.

PAUL (CONT'D)
I just need to ask you a few questions.

EMILY
Look, I've got things to do...

PAUL

I can wait.

Emily gives him a look like she's not surprised.

EXT. SOUTH PASADENA STREET -- LATER

Emily, Paul and Duke walk along the street. Duke is walking Emily, not the other way around.

EMILY

I hate my dog-- I mean, this part.
The walking.

(off his look)

And the feeding. And picking up the
huge poops.

Duke PULLS AHEAD. Emily rips the leash back.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Duke! Dammit!

(exerting herself)

Cut it out!

Emily puts her hand to her chest, trying to CATCH HER BREATH.

PAUL

You okay?

EMILY

I'm fine. It's just when he pulls...

PAUL

I could take him for you.

Emily scoffs, then hands Paul the reins. They start again.

The minute Duke pulls, Paul SNAPS THE LEASH BACK two times making a distinct METAL SNAPPING SOUND between the leash and the collar. Paul then CHOKES UP on him.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Heel!

Duke allows Paul to come alongside of him evenly. The minute he starts forward Paul again SNAPS THE LEASH TWICE.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Heel!

Duke falls into place immediately.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Good boy.

EMILY

He won't stay that way.

Emily watches as Duke stays in lock step with Paul. He lets the leash hang loosely and Duke remains even with him.

EMILY (CONT'D)

(in disbelief)

He was already trained. I just forgot how to... do that. I mean the work was already done, by a professional.

PAUL

Of course.

Paul hands Emily the leash. Duke stays perfectly in step with her. Emily smiles despite herself. She looks over at Paul, who tries not to smirk.

INT. EMILY'S KITCHEN -- LATER

Paul sits at the counter with a glass of water. Emily removes a FROZEN DISH from the freezer that is CHOCK FULL OF FROZEN DISHES in all different types of cookware. Paul sees they are all earmarked vegetarian names like "TOFU ENCHILADAS" and "NAVY BEAN CHILI" etc.

PAUL

You like to cook I take it.

EMILY

(matter of fact)

No. I don't. I can't remember the last time I cooked.

Emily pops the dish in the oven, sets the temperature.

EMILY (CONT'D)

My friends' way of looking out for me. Ring the sick girl's bell and run, kind of deal...

(realizing how she sounds)

People just get uncomfortable, it's understandable.

Emily now realizes that Paul is uncomfortable.

She crosses over to her PILE OF MAIL and starts sorting through it, putting all the bills aside.

PAUL

If this is a bad time, I could come back tomorrow.

EMILY

I'd really rather not wait. Unless you have someone at home?

Paul understands what's being asked.

PAUL
No. Just me.

EMILY
(still sorting)
You know what would make me happy?

Paul shakes his head no.

EMILY (CONT'D)
If I could just let the mail pile up
for once. Be one of those people
without a care in the world.
(finishing up)
Or a tax collector in her kitchen.

Paul removes EMILY'S FILE from his satchel and looks it over.

PAUL
Your credit report showed a recent
Wells Fargo re-fi?

EMILY
Yes, refinanced this place to pay my
past due medical bills.

PAUL
Anything left over?

EMILY
Couple grand.
(sarcastic)
For gas this month.

PAUL
Do you receive income from any source
that the government isn't currently
aware of?

EMILY
Lately I've been diving for coins in
local wishing wells...

Paul barely registers her attempt at humor.

EMILY (CONT'D)
Dimes mostly. The occasional quarter.

Paul ignores her and continues to scan her file.

PAUL
What happened in October of 2003?
Emily looks as though she's seen a ghost.

EMILY
Excuse me?

Paul registers the effect the question has on her.

PAUL

You had sixty-day lates on every piece of credit due after October of 2003. Since your credit was spotless before that time, most likely you experienced an acute crisis...

Emily is fighting back emotion.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Death in the family, job loss, etc. Ringing any bells?

Emily shakes her head no. She looks almost relieved that's all Paul knows.

EMILY

I run my own letterpress business. May have been a... busy time.

PAUL

(letting it go)
I see...

Paul goes back to his file.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Your cardiologist, Dr. Hu, informed me you suffer from congenital heart failure. You're currently status two. Sick enough to be on the National UNOS Waiting List but not sick enough to be admitted to the hospital and put on status one. Basically if you ran into problems or your heart started to fail quickly, you'd be in trouble if a donor can't be located.

Emily hates that this man has so much access to her life.

EMILY

I'm also blood type "O" negative. The most rare to transplant.
(challenging)
Did he tell you that, too?

PAUL

Yes. He also said you're not sure you deserve a heart seeing how your life is "unremarkable" in every way.

Emily looks betrayed. Paul realizes.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Sorry. I don't know why I said that.

Paul stands there quietly going through her file.

EMILY
Did you go through any kind of
sensitivity training when you joined
the IRS, Mr. Thomas?

PAUL
(feeling like shit)
No... not really.

They stand there in silence. Paul closes the file.

PAUL (CONT'D)
I think I have what I need.

EMILY
(expecting the worst)
I see...

PAUL
I'm going to freeze your account
"uncollectible until further notice."
Should buy you at least six months,
penalty-free.

EMILY
(surprised)
Seriously?

PAUL
If anyone from the IRS tries to hassle
you, just call me at this number.

Paul hands Emily an IRS BUSINESS CARD with his cell number.

EMILY
Like my own little get-out-of-jail-
free card.
(off his look, sincere)
...Thank you.

Paul barely nods his head in response as he packs up.

EXT. EMILY'S FRONT DOOR -- MOMENTS LATER

Emily shows Paul out.

EMILY
Why do I get the feeling you're doing
me a very big favor?

PAUL
After you get your heart, can I count
on you to pay your taxes again?

EMILY

If I get a heart, I have every intention of paying. I promise.

PAUL

I believe you.

Emily can see that Paul is being sincere.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I've got to catch a plane home.
(turning to go)
Take care.

EMILY

(taking a chance)
Where's home, Paul?

PAUL

North of San Francisco, along the coast.

EMILY

You live alone I take it.
(off his nod)
Do you have any brothers or sisters?

PAUL

(stiffly)
One brother. Jack. Good egg.

Emily can see that Paul is a guarded, profoundly sad person.

EMILY

That's it, huh? That's the whole Paul Thomas story.

PAUL

"Unremarkable" would be an upgrade, I can assure you.

Emily smiles in recognition as Paul heads for his car.

INT. PASADENA POLICE STATION -- MIDNIGHT

A DETECTIVE, 40's, glances at Paul's COMMISSION ID and then slides it back across the desk as if he's unswayed.

DETECTIVE

I don't know you, and I certainly don't know anything about a request like this coming from the IRS.

PAUL

Can we just call it professional cooperation?

DETECTIVE

I can't just run a name for you, Mr. Thomas. You'd need a court order--

PAUL

Look... I'm not in the habit of granting people extensions. I just need to know if this woman's lying. Said she was carjacked October, 2003. Messed her head up -- got behind on some bills... I just don't want to be a sucker for a pretty face, you know?

DETECTIVE

Shit, I hear ya. Aren't we all?
(sizing him up, beat)
What's the name?

PAUL

Emily Posa.

The detective types in the name. From the look on his face he doesn't like what he's found.

DETECTIVE

(pained look)
Give her the extension.

PAUL

What is it...

DETECTIVE

(summarizing file)
October 16th, 11 p.m. Says here she left a restaurant over on Raymond, cut through the alley. Came across some vagrant asshole, and offered him her leftover dinner.

PAUL

And--

DETECTIVE

He thanked her by raping her.

Off Paul's ashen face.

INT. MOTEL OFFICE -- EARLY MORNING

Larry irritated, glances up from his TV.

LARRY

I got it.

(saying it back)

You want me to keep your room as you left it. No one in or out.

PAUL
Right. Except you. Which is where
the favor comes in.

LARRY
What favor?

PAUL
Need you to sign for a delivery. And
put it in my room when it gets here.

LARRY
(glancing at his TV)
No problem. That it?

PAUL
Almost. Do you know where to get
live shrimp?

LARRY
Downtown, but... I'm a busy man.

Paul looks over the counter at a PORNO FREEZE FRAMED.

LARRY (CONT'D)
What? You don't like porno? Who
doesn't like porno?

PAUL
How's five hundred cash?

LARRY
Less busy.

INT. AIRPLANE CABIN -- MORNING

Paul's head bobs up and down in exhaustion. He tries to get
comfortable amidst the perky morning people.

MONTAGE:

EXT. PAUL'S BEACH HOUSE -- DAY (ESTABLISHING)

It's overcast. The drapes are pulled back. We push in to
find Paul in the...

FAMILY ROOM

He pulls the sheets off his furniture. Then polishes it.

BATHROOM

Paul scrubs the toilet. The shower. The tile floor.

HALLWAY

Paul, on a ladder, changes a LIGHT BULB. He checks it.

FAMILY ROOM

He mops the hardwood floor, the JELLYFISH looming behind him.

BEDROOM

Paul puts clean sheets on the bed.

KITCHEN

He plugs in the EMPTY REFRIGERATOR and makes sure it's working.

OUTSIDE

Paul oils the teak wood furniture. Then sweeps the deck as the SUN IS SETTING.

END MONTAGE:

EXT. SOCIAL SERVICES BUILDING -- LATE AFTERNOON

Paul parked in his car, watches as a WOMAN, 45, in business attire, locks up the place with a co-worker. She checks her watch as she gets into an old four door sedan.

She drives out and Paul follows her at a distance.

INT. SANDWICH CAFE -- LATER THAT NIGHT

Paul sits with a BLACK COFFEE. He watches the SAME WOMAN, now dressed as a waitress, take a CASH TIP off a table and add it to a WAD OF CASH. She crosses over with more coffee.

HOLLY

(sees his cup's full)

Not a fan of the coffee?

PAUL

Realized I didn't need the caffeine.

HOLLY

Must be nice. I'm on a permanent drip.

PAUL

Tough job, huh?

HOLLY

No. Just number two for the day.

PAUL

Got it. Hang in there, Holly.

She looks a little surprised that Paul knew her name.

HOLLY

Can I get you something else?

PAUL

No thanks. Just the check.

HOLLY

No charge.

Paul nods his head at her kindness. She crosses off. Paul leaves a TEN DOLLAR TIP and exits.

INT. BOXING RING -- EARLY MORNING

Paul, with no headgear, moves in the ring with RICO, 24, Latino, FEATHERWEIGHT BOXER. Paul is much taller, but Rico is shredded, tattooed and clearly a seasoned professional.

Rico JABS TWICE lighting fast. Paul puts up his guard.

RICO

Been a few weeks. Your eye healed up nice.

PAUL

You want to talk or box?

RICO

Both.

Rico lays down a flurry of RIB PUNCHES. Paul takes them in stride. Doesn't box back, just continues to guard and move.

RICO (CONT'D)

I want to know why you like to get hit so much, Cabrón?

Paul ignores him. Rico jabs a combination.

RICO (CONT'D)

Maybe I can help. I read and shit.

Paul grins and moves. Rico jabs.

RICO (CONT'D)

I think you think you deserve to get your ass kicked.

Paul is distracted and Rico's next head punch CONNECTS. Paul is pissed and a little unnerved.

RICO (CONT'D)

Called emotional intelligence. E.Q., bro. Read about that shit.

PAUL

You look small, Rico. Soft.

Rico's mood changes instantly.

PAUL (CONT'D)
(feigning accent)
Like a pinche maricón who watches
too much Oprah.

With that Rico unloads on Paul. It is punishing and fierce.

INT. BANK -- LATER

Paul is in a SECURE AREA. His face is BRUISED AND BATTERED. Paul takes a PROPERTY DEED and a wad of cash from a safety deposit box and puts it in his satchel.

INT. BANK LOBBY AREA -- MOMENTS LATER

A male BANK MANAGER, 45, walks Paul out.

PAUL
You can close my account now.

BANK MANAGER
I hope it wasn't a service issue?

PAUL
I just don't need a bank anymore.

The manager nods his head politely.

EXT. BEACH HOUSE DECK -- DUSK

Paul TYPES A LETTER on an old Corona manual typewriter. He sips ANOTHER ENSURE as ORANGES AND REDS REFLECT off the sliding glass doors. WE SEE what Paul has his back to...

THE SETTING SUN

It is majestic. Paul CLOSES HIS EYES as if he's basking in it but never once turns to look at it.

INSERT TYPEWRITER:

Paul types the words "My grandfather always said this place
heals the soul..."

INT. EMILY'S HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Emily sits at the kitchen table. She's OPENING HER BILLS. Trying to figure out how to pay them with her check register open. She looks around the room profoundly sad.

She crosses to the counter to get a DRINK OF WATER. She comes across PAUL'S BUSINESS CARD. She picks it up and smiles. She weighs the implications of calling him, then chooses not to.

INT. SOCIAL SERVICES -- THE NEXT DAY

Paul sits across from a CASEWORKER, the waitress from the sandwich cafe, named Holly. He's in his brown suit and sporting still HEALING BRUISES.

HOLLY

I don't understand. You're not here to investigate anyone?

PAUL

No. I just need a name.

HOLLY

There are rules... Abuse victims have to be protected.

PAUL

You don't live at the home address you have listed for your kid's schooling...

Holly is stunned.

PAUL (CONT'D)

It's actually your mother's address in Los Gatos, right?

HOLLY

Do I know you--

PAUL

You also get paid under the table at the sandwich cafe you work at three nights a week.

Holly looks at Paul as if she's remembering him now.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I know you need to make ends meet as a single parent, but in my line of work we call that fraud.

HOLLY

(panicked)

Look, I can't lose that job--

PAUL

One name. Someone who might not survive the month -- maybe the week. Someone who deserves a fresh start--

HOLLY

...Glenda.

(emotional)

Glenda Harris.

INT. MOTEL OFFICE -- LATE AFTERNOON

A uniformed DELIVERY GUY approaches Larry. A PORNO plays quietly on his TV again.

DELIVERY GUY
Delivery for Paul Thomas.

The delivery guys points to the spot on his clipboard.

DELIVERY GUY (CONT'D)
Where do you want me to put it?
Shit's heavy.

LARRY
How big?

DELIVERY GUY
(distracted by the TV)
Almost as big as that chick's tits.

LARRY
Nice ones, huh? You a big porno fan?

DELIVERY GUY
(incredibly awkward)
Yeah, sure.

EXT. OAKLAND RESIDENTIAL STREET -- NIGHT

Paul is parked in a U-HAUL in front of a run down section of VICTORIAN ERA ROW HOUSES. He is watching a YELLOW HOUSE.

EXT. YELLOW HOUSE -- LATER

A BLACK MAN, LEN, mid 40's, hard and angry, exits the front door. He stumbles down to his rundown PICKUP TRUCK drinking from a BEER CAN. A BOY, 8, looks out the window, fearfully watching the proceedings and clutching a stuffed animal dog.

A black woman GLENDA HARRIS, 40-ish, opens the door. She's dressed in a blouse and pants but looks worn thin.

GLENDA
You can't drive like that, Len!

LEN
Get back in the motherfuckin' house!

Len fires the HALF-FULL BEER CAN at Glenda. She doesn't flinch as it hits the house beside her.

A weary Glenda shuts the door. Paul watches Len drive off.

EXT. FRONT DOOR -- MOMENTS LATER

Paul is at the front door. He shows Glenda his COMMISSION.

GLEENDA

I pay my taxes. All of them.

PAUL

I know. This is more of a general inquiry, Glenda.

A GIRL, 10, joins her mother at the door.

GLEENDA

About what?

PAUL

Your life.

Glenda looks Paul over. She allows Paul in.

INSIDE HOUSE:

Paul watches Glenda lock THREE DEADBOLTS.

INT. FAMILY ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Glenda and her two kids sit on the couch. Her son holds his STUFFED ANIMAL DOG like a security blanket. Paul has a glass of water. Cheese and crackers and a SPREADING KNIFE are out.

BOY

What happened to your face?

PAUL

Featherweight champion named Rico Miralés.

BOY

Is that your truck outside?

PAUL

Yes. You saw me out there, huh?

The boy nods yes. Glenda looks inquisitively at Paul.

GIRL

(to Paul)

Want to see me dance?

GLEENDA

Lets just let Mr. Thomas talk, honey.

PAUL

I would love to see you dance.

She jumps up and dances. There's a tune in her head. A fun upbeat one.

PAUL (CONT'D)
That's a beautiful dance. I like
the way you keep the beat.

GIRL
Thank you.

GLENDA
Sit down, baby. Please.

The girl obeys her mother.

BOY
What's inside your truck?

PAUL
Nothing. Yet.

BOY
Can I have it?

GLENDA
No, honey.

PAUL
It's a rental. But you and your mom
can take it for a drive later.

BOY
(re: stuffed dog)
Can Sammy come, too?

PAUL
Sure.

The boy looks excitedly at Glenda.

GLENDA
Mr. Thomas, I'm still not
understanding why you're here.

PAUL
I want to give you my house.

GIRL
We have a house.

Paul looks at Glenda.

PAUL
(to Glenda)
But this one you'll own.

Glenda doesn't appreciate Paul's sense of humor.

GLEND
Kids. Go to your room.

BOY
But--

GLEND
Now! Go now! I'm not going to say
it again!

The kids look at their mother, knowing something is
drastically wrong. They run upstairs.

GLEND (CONT'D)
I don't know what kind of game you're
playing -- now either explain what
the hell the government wants with
me or get out of my house!

PAUL
Do you have a drug or alcohol problem?

GLEND
No. I do not.

PAUL
I believe you.

GLEND
(righteous indignation)
I don't care what you believe--

PAUL
And I know that you're a good mother.

GLEND
Who do you think you are--

Paul reaches in his jacket pocket. Glenda instinctively
grasps the SPREADING KNIFE off the table, and backs away.
Positioning herself between Paul and her kids upstairs.

Paul removes a PLAIN WHITE ENVELOPE.

PAUL
Holly at the shelter told me Len
broke two of your ribs last year.

Glenda is stoic.

GLEND
(lowering the knife)
Holly sent you?

PAUL

She thinks it's a matter of time
before he kills you. Possibly your
kids. They aren't his?

Glenda looks ready to break at the mention of her kids being
harmed, knowing it's true.

GLEND A

I'm widowed...

(realizing)

He could come back any time -- If
Len finds you here--

PAUL

I can handle myself. Right now, I
just need you to look this over...

Paul REMOVES SEVERAL TYPED PAGES from the envelope and
smoothes them out on the table.

GLEND A

What is it?

PAUL

Your new life.

MONTAGE:

EXT. HIGHWAY -- LATER

Glenda and her kids sit across the bench seat of Paul's U-
HAUL TRUCK. Glenda clutches the wheel, apprehensively, as
the kids sing along to the radio.

PAUL (V.O.)

You're headed a couple hours north,
up the coast. Little town, good
people...

INT. BEACH HOUSE -- LATER

Glenda unlocks the door and leads the kids inside. She starts
turning on lights and looking around.

PAUL (V.O.)

It's old furniture. Solid Danish wood.
Buy once, my grandfather always said.

Glenda runs her hand across the dining room table. Paul
left it spotless. The kids run around discovering the house.

INT. DAUGHTER'S BEDROOM -- LATER

Glenda tucks her daughter into bed.

PAUL (V.O.)
There's three bedrooms. Hopefully
that's enough.

INT. KITCHEN -- THE NEXT DAY

Glenda in pajamas crosses to the refrigerator.

PAUL (V.O.)
I'm not sure what you like to eat.

Glenda opens the door to find it STOCKED FULL OF FOOD.

PAUL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
So I bought a little of everything.

Glenda removes some eggs.

INT. BEACH HOUSE -- LATER

PAUL (V.O.)
Please be on the lookout for a
delivery tomorrow...

SFX: DOORBELL

Glenda and the kids cross to the door. Glenda opens the door.
A CHOCOLATE LAB PUPPY is handed to them by a DELIVERY MAN.

PAUL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
You may only make a return if someone
is deathly allergic.

The kids smother the dog with kisses. Glenda sees a brass
bone-shaped ID TAG with the name "SAMMY" and their new address.

PAUL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Somehow, I don't see it happening.

EXT. BEACH HOUSE DECK -- TWILIGHT

PAUL (V.O.)
Whatever you do, don't miss the best
part of the day...

Glenda, teary-eyed, sits at the table READING THE END OF
PAUL'S LETTER. Both of her kids are wrapped up in blankets
on a lounge chair with the puppy. The SUN IS JUST SETTING.

A beautiful array of ORANGES AND REDS ACROSS THE HORIZON.

PAUL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
My grandfather said this place can
heal the soul. I hope that proves
true for you...

Glenda looks at THE CORRESPONDING WORDS in the letter...

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

When you sign your name on the dotted line, you'll own the house outright...

Glenda SIGNS THE DEED, seals the envelope, and starts to joyfully sob.

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

Been in my family for several generations. I hope that it stays in yours for many more. I only ask that you never mention how you got the house or try to contact me for any reason. Please honor my wishes... And of course, live life abundantly. Regards, Paul.

END MONTAGE:

INT. MOTEL ROOM -- DAY

Larry dumps a LIVE SHRIMP from a plastic bag into Paul's LIT AQUARIUM on the desk. The Jellyfish hovers.

Larry sits on the bed enthralled as the JELLYFISH eventually reaches out and STINGS THE SHRIMP with it's long tentacles and draws it into the center of it's translucent body.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- LATER THAT NIGHT

Paul sits in his brown suit with George Mamone, the same man who we met coaching basketball earlier. George is in the middle of a DIALYSIS PROCEDURE with a NURSE attending.

GEORGE

Our annual fundraiser brought in enough money to start a college scholarship for several of the boys...

PAUL

That's great. How about your own kids?

GEORGE

My youngest, Adam, wants to quit little league. Took the tee away this year.

Paul laughs politely. The nurse crosses out of the room.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

I need you to know, I'm going to pay what I owe. All of it.

PAUL

I know, George. First things first.

George looks at Paul, there's something he needs to say.

GEORGE

Paul...

(emotional)

Why me?

PAUL

Just doing my job.

George smiles, but he clearly is not.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Because you're a good man. Even
when you think no one's watching.

(off his surprise)

I know, so don't bother being humble
about it.

George is deeply moved by this.

INT. PAYPHONE BOOTH -- DAY

Paul is reluctant to make a call. He finally picks up the
phone and dials. It rings.

EMILY

Hello?

Paul doesn't speak.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Is anyone there?

(sing song)

Hello... Hello...

Paul enjoys the sound of her voice.

EMILY (CONT'D)

I'm hanging up now.

She hangs up. Paul looks upset with himself for calling.

INT. HOSPITAL OFFICE -- SEVERAL DAYS LATER

DR. GATSINARIS, 35, LAB COAT, sits across from Paul in his
now wrinkled suit with a hole in it. Paul looks PASTY AND
UNSHAVEN as if he's been through something traumatic.

DR. GATSINARIS

The hospital administration asked me
to sit down with you... to talk.

PAUL
George is doing great, right?

DR. GATSINARIS
Yes. The welfare of all of our patients is important. You weren't honest with us, Mr. Thomas.

Paul doesn't respond, he just stares at him.

DR. GATSINARIS (CONT'D)
Regarding your past. We've done some additional research and I need to ask you about your previous work--

PAUL
(flash of anger)
Doesn't concern you.

DR. GATSINARIS
Our general counsel believes it does, from a liability standpoint. Your arrangement with George was highly unorthodox, and we took great care to scrutinize his case. There are safeguards -- you blatantly manipulated them. I have to report this--

PAUL
Do you want me to become a liability?

Dr. Gatsinaris takes a long, hard, concerned look at Paul. He clearly does not. Paul stands up to leave.

PAUL (CONT'D)
I have a plane to catch.

DR. GATSINARIS
Why is George Mamone under the impression your name is Paul?

PAUL
It's my middle name.

The doctor looks down at his file, searching for a middle name.

PAUL (CONT'D)
You won't find it in there, Doc.
Just for friends.
(leaving)
Like George.

EXT. EMILY'S FRONT YARD -- CONTINUOUS

Emily walks up the path with Duke, returning from a walk. Emily waves to her neighbor with the roses.

EMILY
They look great.

NEIGHBOR LADY
Coffee grinds. Who knew?

Emily smiles and heads for the front door. After a couple of steps she STUMBLES then FAINTS DEAD AWAY. Her neighbor rushes over immediately.

NEIGHBOR LADY (CONT'D)
Emily! Oh my God! Emily!

INT. L-TRAIN -- LATER

Paul, looking piqued, retrieves a PEN from his satchel and then removes the small 3X5 PHOTOGRAPH from his wallet.

INSERT: Paul adds the name "GEORGE MAMONE" to the back. It becomes the FOURTH ENTRY after "PAUL THOMAS," "JULIE McCALL" and "GLENDA HARRIS."

Paul tucks the photo away.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
Next stop Chicago O'Hare.

EXT. FRESNO APARTMENT BUILDING -- THAT NIGHT

Paul watches from across the street, as Ezra, the blind beef salesman, exits a CITY BUS and extends his CANE. Right behind him TWO HOODLUMS get off the bus ribbing one another.

The first hoodlum runs up behind Ezra and PULLS HIS PANTS DOWN FORCEFULLY. Ezra cries out and quickly TRIPS FACE FORWARD. The two hoodlums laugh and run off.

PAUL
(crossing the street)
Hold on there! I'm coming!

Paul arrives and helps Ezra to his feet.

PAUL (CONT'D)
I got ya -- pull up your pants.

EZRA
Thank you.

Ezra pulls up his pants as Paul holds him steady.

PAUL
Do you know what happened?

Ezra looks at Paul as if he has eyes.

EZRA
I believe I was pantsed.

PAUL
(feeling stupid)
Yeah...

EZRA
Do I know you?

PAUL
(covering)
I don't think so.

Paul walks Ezra toward his apartment building entrance.

PAUL (CONT'D)
You're just outside your building.
Keypad to your left.

EZRA
I know your voice.

But Paul is gone.

EXT. FRESNO CITY STREET -- LATER THAT NIGHT

Paul walks along the nearly empty street. He looks upset with himself. Lost in his own thoughts.

EXT. INTERSECTION -- LATER

Paul approaches the corner with his head down. He steps off the curb and almost gets hit by a car.

SFX: HORN BLARES

Paul steps back and then turns right down a side street. He walks with his head down to find the street DEAD ENDS. He looks up to find himself standing in front of an OLD CHURCH.

Paul realizes he's COMPLETELY ALONE. He starts up the steps and then STOPS SHORT, unable to bring himself to enter the church. He ends up sitting on a bench outside. He drops his head in his hands.

PAUL
(angry at God)
You don't know every hair on my
head... You don't even know my name...

SFX: CELL PHONE RINGS

Paul retrieves his CELL PHONE and answers it. He doesn't SAY A WORD, he just listens.

EMILY (O.S.)

Paul?

Paul remains quiet.

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

Are you there?

PAUL

(in disbelief)

Emily...

(almost happy)

Is that you?

EMILY (O.S.)

Yes. Sorry to call so late.

Paul smiles to himself.

PAUL

...That's okay.

EMILY (O.S.)

Were you sleeping?

INTERCUT:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Emily lies in bed. Heart monitor on.

PAUL (O.S.)

(concerned)

Did the IRS contact you?

EMILY

No. I just... I was having trouble breathing after I took Duke for a walk. An ambulance had to bring me to the hospital.

PAUL

Are you okay?

EMILY

Yeah. I guess I fainted. They're running some tests...

(feeling foolish)

I should probably let you go...

Paul's not sure how to respond.

EMILY (CONT'D)

I don't know what I'm doing -- It's just that I had your card with me...

Paul knows he shouldn't get emotionally involved. He takes the phone and HOLDS IT OUT IN FRONT OF HIM.

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

Paul? Are you still there?

Paul CLOSES HIS EYES conflicted.

EMILY (CONT'D)

(starting to cry)

I just needed to talk to someone...

Do you ever get that feeling?

Upon hearing this, Paul's face changes, he brings the phone to his lips MAKING THE DECISION TO CARE.

PAUL

What's your favorite color, Emily?

EMILY

(tiny laugh of relief)

Pink. And chocolate brown -- Which I know is cheating, but they're only my favorite together.

They're both quiet. Not knowing what to say next.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Where are you?

PAUL

Fresno.

EMILY

Why?

PAUL

Investigating a case.

EMILY

How's he or she sleeping?

PAUL

(laughs, remembering)

Well. Ezra sleeps well.

Paul STANDS UP from the bench. When he does he experiences a SHOOTING PAIN in his side.

EMILY

Do you ever think about dying, Paul?

Paul puts his hand to his side grimacing.

PAUL

(exhales, pained)

Every now and again. Are you scared?

EMILY

Yeah. My face is blue-ish. It's not exactly a good sign.

PAUL

You're going to be fine. I promise.

EMILY

Maybe... God knows the number of my days.

PAUL

You believe that?

EMILY

Since I was a little girl.

(beat)

What about you?

Paul looks up at the old church, the irony not lost on him that the question comes at this particular moment in time.

PAUL

Going it alone these days.

EMILY

How's that working out for you?

PAUL

I'll let you know.

INT. PAUL'S RENTAL CAR -- LATER

Paul drives down a barren Interstate 5 talking on his cell.

PAUL

(into phone)

You need to rest, Emily.

EMILY

(groggy)

I like talking to you.

PAUL

Why don't you try and fall asleep.
And once you do, I'll just hang up.

EMILY

...Okay.

Emily drifts off. Paul drives, and listens to the sound of her breathing peacefully.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- WEE HOURS OF THE NIGHT

Emily is ASLEEP in bed hooked up to monitors. The PHONE HANDSET is lying on her pillow near her face.

PAUL ENTERS the room. He crosses toward her, HANGING UP his cell. He'd been listening to her sleep the whole drive down.

Paul HANGS UP the hospital phone. He pulls up the blanket around Emily. He reaches out to TOUCH HER FACE and then doesn't allow himself to.

PAUL

(low, almost to himself)
I lied to you... I think about dying every day. Usually in the morning, after I've seen their faces. Lately, I've been dreaming about the way they came to rest upon the ground. Whether or not a person can find peace after something like that.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD -- DAY

A GROUP OF PEOPLE wearing suits stand in a circle on the side of a GRAVEL ROAD, observing a MOMENT OF SILENCE.

On the ground in front of them lies a SEVERED AND CHARRED HUMAN LEG with fragments of dark fabric seared into the flesh.

INT. HOSPITAL -- MORNING

Emily, hooked to her IV tube on wheels, is touching Paul's SLEEPING FACE in a chair. But it's not peaceful, he's having ANOTHER NIGHTMARE.

EMILY

Hey...

Paul OPENS HIS EYES with a start.

EMILY (CONT'D)

You were having a nightmare.

Paul looks around the room orientating himself.

EMILY (CONT'D)

(incredulous)

You drove all the way down here last night, from Fresno?

PAUL

Yes...

EMILY

I can't believe you did that...

Paul notices that Emily's face is very pale with a BLUE HUE to it. Still beautiful but not exactly the picture of health.

EMILY (CONT'D)
(knowing what he sees)
Damaged goods...

PAUL
Aren't we all.

Emily looks sweetly at Paul.

EMILY
You came all the way down here just to see me... didn't you?

PAUL
Looks that way.

Emily is completely blown away.

EMILY
Thank you...

Paul looks uncomfortable with her gratitude. They're saved by an Asian cardiologist, DR. HU, 44, who appears in the doorway and clears his throat.

DR. HU
How's our patient?

EMILY
Better.

Dr. Hu crosses to Paul and shakes his hand.

DR. HU
Paul, right? From the IRS?

PAUL
That's right. Good to see you again.
(to Emily)
I'll let you two talk.

EMILY
No, stay... Please.

Paul is affected by the request.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Paul sits in the chair as Dr. Hu speaks pointedly to Emily.

DR. HU
We've upped you to Status 1B. So we're now actively looking for a suitable donor heart.

EMILY

Getting worse actually helps me?

DR. HU

Yes. To a point. You fainted because your heart is too weak to pump enough blood to your brain. Which is now enlarged and shutting down.

EMILY

How long?

DR. HU

Entirely up to your heart. Could be six weeks, a month...

EMILY

(making light of it)
Day after yesterday.

DR. HU

Sadly, yes.

Emily looks wiped out by the stark reality of it all. Paul looks at her supportively.

DR. HU (CONT'D)

(feeling for her)

Blaise Pascal once said, "The heart has reasons that reason cannot know."

EMILY

He was talking about love, right?

Dr. Hu looks at both of them.

DR. HU

Yes, but I'd like to think that it applies here, too.

Paul and Emily purposely avoid looking at one another.

DR. HU (CONT'D)

The inotrope drug I have you on, should stabilize your blood pressure within twenty four hours.

EMILY

Then what?

DR. HU

We wait.

EMILY

Can I do that at home?

DR. HU
Once you're stable, yes. But you'll
need round-the-clock care. And from
now on, you get this...

Dr. Hu produces a RED PAGER and hands it to Emily.

DR. HU (CONT'D)
For when your number comes up.

INT. EMILY'S ROOM -- LATER

Emily talks on her CELL PHONE. Paul sits waiting.

EMILY
(into phone)
Pam, nothing's definite.
(listening)
Well, I thought if I stayed with you
I wouldn't have to pay for a nurse.
(disappointed)
Yeah, we can talk later.

Emily hangs up the phone, puts on a smile.

PAUL
I've got to go back up to Fresno.
Close out my case. Can I get you
anything before I go?

Emily shakes her head no. Then remembers something.

EMILY
Oh, shit. Duke hasn't eaten -- I
need to call my neighbor, Sandy...

Emily grabs her cell phone.

PAUL
How about I take Duke with me?

EMILY
I can't ask you to do that.

PAUL
He'd be keeping me company.

EMILY
(touched)
Are you sure?

Paul nods his head yes.

EXT. FRESNO STREET -- LATER THAT DAY

Paul stands WITH DUKE ON A LEASH by the curb. He's watching something across the street.

APARTMENT BUILDING

One flight up through a window, Paul watches Ezra give a GIRL, 11, a PIANO LESSON. The girl plays passably as Ezra nods his head appreciatively.

A WOMAN approaches the entrance below and BUZZES the apartment. The girl hops off the bench, and crosses to the window.

GIRL
(calling down)
I'll be right down, Mom!

WOMAN
Okay. Give Ezra his check, honey!

The Girl runs back to Ezra and hands him a CHECK from her bag. She crosses to the door to leave but then runs back and gives Ezra a kiss on the cheek before she exits. Paul watches as Ezra touches his face, affected.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO FREEWAY -- DUSK -- ESTABLISHING

Paul's rental car heading into SAN FRANCISCO.

INSIDE CAR:

Paul looks at the skyline ahead. PAN OVER to see DUKE SITTING HUMAN LIKE in the front seat appreciating the view as well.

INT. LAW OFFICE -- THAT NIGHT

Paul sits with his ATTORNEY, we'll remember his as, Mitch, the guy playing tennis with the hot blonde. His office is very male, lots of steel and glass. Duke sits on his hind quarters at attention next to Paul.

MITCH
Mr. Thomas have we met before?

PAUL
We've spoken several times by phone of course.

MITCH
No, I know that...
(realizing)
Were you at the Tennis Club a few weeks ago?

PAUL

Yes. Did you prepare the paperwork as I requested? I forwarded you detailed instructions.

MITCH

(alarmed)

What were you doing there?

PAUL

I like to know who I'm getting into business with.

Mitch takes this in.

PAUL (CONT'D)

If it's all in order, I can just be on my way.

The attorney rests his hand on a MANILA ENVELOPE. The label reads: "HARRISON, LEEDS & STEIN, ATTORNEYS AT LAW"

ATTORNEY

Mr. Thomas, the medical directive is designed for accidental loss of life, due to unforeseen--

PAUL

I paid you a lot of money to do a simple job. Dot the I's, cross the T's, keep your mouth shut.

ATTORNEY

I'm sorry. I can't in good conscience--

PAUL

Look at me.

(he does)

Attorney. Client. Privilege.

The attorney looks gravely conflicted.

ATTORNEY

I'm aware of my oath, but I can't be complicit in helping you kill yourself.

PAUL

(from memory)

Three hundred-seventy thousand dollars gross income last year. You live at 426 Filmore Street and have a net worth of over three million dollars. You have two sons, ages 6 and 9. You also have a wife who has no idea you've been fucking around on her for years--

ATTORNEY

Where do you get off--

PAUL

You also own a big overcompensating boat named "Fun Dip" that you dock down in the marina. I used to love the little vanilla sticks myself.

(off his growing anger)

They split the boat right down the middle here in California, right?

ATTORNEY

What do you want?

PAUL

What I paid for. The medical directive and your confidence.

After a moment of contemplation, the attorney slides the MANILA ENVELOPE over to Paul. Paul checks the contents.

EXT. I.R.S. BUILDING -- LATER THAT NIGHT

Paul approaches the doors of the same austere cement and glass building with an understated ETCHED SEAL denoting the "Internal Revenue Service." He heads for the security desk.

INSIDE:

Paul flashes his badge and signs in.

SECURITY GUARD

Looks like we're both on the graveyard shift tonight.

PAUL

Pretty much.

INT. OFFICE CUBICLE -- LATER

ON SCREEN:

Paul scrolls through a file. Phrases like "ACCOUNT CURRENT," "PAID IN FULL" and "NO INQUIRIES PENDING."

WITH PAUL

He crosses out the LAST NAME ON THE LIST in front of him. The LETTERHEAD at the top of this list denotes the "U.C. San Francisco Hospital."

Paul rubs his face exhausted and out of options. He stands up and crosses over to the SHREDDER and puts THE LIST OF NAMES in it.

SFX: SHREDDING SOUND

OFFICE DOWN THE HALL

A suited MAN steps out of his office with a DRINK IN HIS HAND.

MAN

Who the shit are you?

Paul looks stunned. He recovers as the man approaches.

PAUL

(extending his hand)

Paul Thomas. I'm in town for the security conference.

MAN

Oh...

The man shakes hands with Paul, a little tipsy.

MAN (CONT'D)

First I've heard of it...

Paul reacts to his breath.

PAUL

Having a little something to drink?

MAN

Yeah. You got a problem with that, Paul?

PAUL

No, not at all.

(recovering)

Could use a drink myself.

The man's mood brightens.

MAN

Well, step in my office. Where did you say you're in town from?

Paul starts to step inside, and then hesitates.

PAUL

Shit, I almost forgot. Got my dog in the car.

MAN

Your dog?

PAUL

Yeah. I gotta take off. Be careful driving home, alright?

The man nods, confused, as Paul exits.

INT. PAUL'S RENTAL CAR -- LATER THAT NIGHT

Paul drives down INTERSTATE 5 with Duke laying next to him asleep. Paul looks up at the HIGHWAY SIGN ahead.

ANGLE ON SIGN: 312 miles to Los Angeles

EXT. MOTEL ROOM - JUST BEFORE SUNRISE

Paul lets Duke out of the car and crosses towards his room door. He's holding a clear bag with TWO LIVE SHRIMP. Larry approaches smoking.

LARRY

What the hell is that, buddy?

PAUL

Shrimp. Or shrimps.

LARRY

(points at Duke)

I mean that thing.

PAUL

It's a dog. Just for the day. And I'm beat, so--

LARRY

Don't give two shits. We have a dog policy. Little dogs only. Poodles and shitzus. It's in the contract, English and Spanish for all to see.

Paul just stands there staring at Larry while he smokes.

LARRY (CONT'D)

(exhales)

Besides, that my friend is not a dog. It's a horse.

PAUL

Oh. Good.

Paul opens the door and lets Duke in.

LARRY

Hey, buddy! You deaf!

PAUL

Caballo.

LARRY

What?

PAUL
(pronouncing clearly)
Ca-ba-llo.
(shutting the door)
Spanish for horse.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- THE NEXT DAY

Emily PACKS her things in a bag. Her sister PAM, 36, pretty with makeup but no Emily, watches her with a hint of disdain.

PAM
I've arranged everything with the full-time nurse. And she comes highly--

EMILY
Great. Fine.

PAM
And Dan and I want to help pay for it, okay?
(loaded)
Given your situation... monetarily.

EMILY
(wounded)
I had to shut down my business.
Doctor's orders.

PAM
I know, Em.
(nodding her head)
And I want you to know if it wasn't for the boys, and how busy-- Just you staying with us, would be--

EMILY
I get it.

Emily just looks at Pam, neither wanting to go there.

PAM
(can't help herself)
It's just really uncomfortable for Dan, given the misunderstanding last year.

EMILY
It wasn't a misunderstanding.

PAM
I don't really want to get into this.

EMILY
Then don't. But calling it that, is like calling me a liar.

Pam tries to swallow her contempt.

EMILY (CONT'D)

We used to trust one another.

PAM

Yeah, well... Things change.

Emily looks at her sister with pity, wishing she had the capacity to empathize in the slightest. It's only then that she realizes Paul is STANDING IN THE DOORWAY.

EMILY

Paul... Hi.

PAUL

How are you feeling?

EMILY

Good, really good. Paul, this is my sister, Pam. Pam this is my... friend, Paul.

PAM

Hello.

Paul shakes her hand.

PAUL

Hi, Pam.

PAM

How do you two know each other?

Paul looks at Emily who looks mortified at the thought of saying Paul is her IRS agent.

EMILY

We met... Paul, actually--

PAUL

I massage her.

Emily looks as surprised as Pam does.

PAM

Oh, I see. Here at the hospital?

PAUL

And at home.

Pam looks at Paul then at Emily. Trying to assess how close these two are. Emily just smiles, slightly embarrassed but loving that Pam is thrown.

PAM

Well, we should get going if we're going to meet the nurse at your house by four. And I have to pick up Andy and his friend at soccer by five -- course the 110's gonna be hellish.

EMILY

Pam. I can just take a cab.

Pam looks at Paul politely then back to Emily.

PAM

You're not going to take a cab.

Before Emily can speak.

PAUL

Why don't I drive you home?

PAM

Oh...

Pam tries to hide being pleased by the offer, which is not lost on Emily.

PAUL

I have Duke in my car.

PAM

I thought you were getting rid of that stupid dog--

EMILY

I haven't decided if--

PAM

(to Paul, mocking)
She can't even walk the thing.

Emily just stands there feeling foolish in front of Paul.

PAUL

Great Dane's are renowned for their temperament and intelligence.

PAM

Yeah, well. We told her to get a pug. Like ours.

Pam fake smiles for Emily's benefit.

PAUL

Then she'd just have a dog that isn't renowned for anything.

Pam is speechless. She looks to Emily to say something and gets nothing but a polite smile. Pam stomps out.

INT. PAUL'S CAR -- LATER THAT DAY

Paul drives. Emily sits shotgun. Duke sits in the backseat.

EMILY

I can't remember the last time that's happened.

PAUL

What?

EMILY

Someone got the last word in with her.

They drive in silence for a beat.

PAUL

She's not just jealous of you because you're beautiful, Emily...

Emily is affected by his candor.

PAUL (CONT'D)

(sincere)

All you can hope for is that she feels good about herself some day.

INT. EMILY'S BEDROOM -- LATER THAT AFTERNOON

Emily is resting but awake. Paul puts down a TEA TRAY. She notices the little CUTEY CUT sandwich wedges.

EMILY

Did the nurse get here yet?

PAUL

Who do you think cut up that sandwich into little triangles?

Emily smiles politely but she's got something on her mind.

EMILY

I know I'm the bird with the broken wing. But who are you?

PAUL

I'm your friend, Paul.

EMILY

I'm serious. You're in my house. You're in my life. And I hardly know anything about you.

Paul looks at Emily, realizing he can't dodge this one.

PAUL

What do you want to know?

EMILY

(thinks it over)

Have you ever been married?

PAUL

No.

EMILY

How long have you worked for the government?

PAUL

...Since I graduated college. In one way or the other.

EMILY

Which college?

PAUL

(reluctantly)

Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

EMILY

You went to M.I.T.?

(off his nod)

I see...

PAUL

And you're wondering how I ended up collecting taxes for a living?

EMILY

No...

(off his look)

Yes.

PAUL

(showing emotion)

I wasn't always just... this.

EMILY

What were you before--

PAUL

(cutting her off firmly)

You should rest. How about I give you a call tomorrow or come by...

EMILY

And if I have more questions?
Tomorrow...

PAUL
(line in the sand)
Not really part of the deal.

EMILY
What the hell does that mean?

Emily looks for him to strengthen his case. He doesn't.
Emily takes this in, and then with strong conviction...

EMILY (CONT'D)
You don't want a friend, Paul. You
want a bird.

PAUL
Emily...

EMILY
Just go. Leave.

Paul is TRULY STUNNED by her resolve. He eventually nods
his head and then lets himself out.

INT. MOTEL OFFICE -- LATER

Paul enters and approaches Larry at the desk.

PAUL
Give me a key that works.

LARRY
Dog gone?

PAUL
Yeah.

LARRY
What about the other pet?

Paul looks at Larry annoyed.

LARRY (CONT'D)
The one you never thanked me for
feeding.

PAUL
...Thanks. But that one stays.

Larry produces a NEW KEYCARD. Paul reaches for it.

LARRY
I find you strange.
(finally hands it over)
Odd man.

PAUL
And you're Norman fuckin' Rockwell.

INT. EMILY'S BEDROOM -- LATER THAT NIGHT

Emily lies in bed. She's unable to sleep.

INT. PAUL'S MOTEL ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Paul lies on the floor looking as if he's about to cry. He stops and starts in fits but no tears will come.

INT. EMILY'S KITCHEN -- THE NEXT MORNING

Emily is just finishing eating breakfast with her matronly nurse KATE, 50's. They don't have anything to talk about.

EMILY

How was it?

KATE

Okay, I guess. I don't like the eggs you buy.

Emily doesn't know how to respond. She crosses to the sink to put her dishes in. When she looks out the window she sees SOMEBODY OUTSIDE.

EXT. EMILY'S BACKYARD -- MOMENTS LATER

Emily exits to find Paul PULLING HUGE WEEDS out of a large bed of SEVERELY NEGLECTED AND DYING ROSE BUSHES. He's in his SUIT PANTS and dress shirt with the SLEEVES ROLLED UP. Duke is supervising.

EMILY

What do you think you're doing?

PAUL

These are weeds, right?

EMILY

I was going to get to that... some day.

PAUL

I took the day off work. I thought I could help out around here. And maybe apologize...

Emily takes this in. She softens.

EMILY

You're wearing suit pants. To weed.

PAUL

(realizes how it looks)
I don't have any other clothes with me.

EMILY
You want some coffee?

PAUL
No, I'm good--

Emily sees an Ensure drink next to Paul.

EMILY
You travel with the old people juice?
(off his smirk)
You were drinking that when we met.

PAUL
It's loaded with nutrients and
essential vitamins working in tandem
to keep my body running at peak
performance. Nine out of ten doctors
of octogenarians recommend Ensure
for their patients.

Emily has to laugh. Paul's surprised to have achieved this.

PAUL (CONT'D)
How's your nurse, Kate?

EMILY
Doesn't like my eggs.

Paul laughs.

EMILY (CONT'D)
And she slept in this morning.

PAUL
You're now caring for your caregiver.

EMILY
So far, yes.

EXT. DETACHED BACKYARD GARAGE -- THAT AFTERNOON

Paul stands there as Emily removes a KEY ABOVE A LANTERN and
UNLOCKS barn-style craftsman GARAGE DOORS.

Paul looks around Emily's workspace. Assorted paper, cabinets
full of type and cans of ink line the walls.

PAUL
Quite a home office.

Emily pulls a canvas top off an OLD LETTERPRESS MACHINE. It
has formidable iron construction with a huge flywheel and
gears on it. Despite it's sheer mass, it's in a word...

PAUL (CONT'D)
Beautiful. How old is it?

EMILY

1895. Chandler & Price. Weighing
in just shy of twelve hundred pounds.
It's how I put out my line of
letterpress cards. Some custom
stationary, wedding invitations...

Paul motions to an even LARGER COVERED MACHINE.

PAUL

What's behind door number two?

Paul takes the COVER OFF of an even LARGER LETTERPRESS that
is almost double the size of the first, it's awe inspiring.

EMILY

I call it The Beast.

PAUL

Seems appropriate.

EMILY

Makes the best impression I've ever
seen. But it pooped out on me about
five years ago. I can't find anybody
who knows how to work on it.

PAUL

Sort of a dying art, right?

EMILY

I've been doing my part to change
all of that.

Emily plugs in the motor that drives the flywheel on the
smaller machine.

EMILY (CONT'D)

At least I was until I had to shut
down the business.

PAUL

Can I print something?

EMILY

(devilish smile)
You can try.

INT. GARAGE -- LATER

The letterpress piston arms are pumping, the flywheel turning
and the plate mechanism opening and closing. Emily stands
behind Paul who is NERVOUSLY HOLDING a sheet of paper.

EMILY

Now.

The arm comes up smashing the PLATE against what's called the PLATEN.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Or now.

Paul starts to put the paper on the platen but it starts to close back down too fast. Paul aborts.

PAUL

Does it have to go so fast?

EMILY

Yes. Single speed motor.

PAUL

I don't like that.

EMILY

You get used to it. Just time it and go...

Paul musters his courage and when the platen opens again he tries again to PLACE THE PAPER. It goes in crooked.

PAUL

No! No! Damn it!

Paul reaches into the press chasing the paper as Emily PULLS HIM BACK BY THE SHIRT just in time to SAVE HIS FINGERS FROM BEING SMASHED.

EMILY

Paul! You never chase!

PAUL

But it ate my card.

Emily rolls her eyes and steps up. She times it, then expertly feeds the paper into the platen, making the impression. She hands the NEWLY MINTED CARD to Paul.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Wow...

EMILY

(printing another)

True pressmen hate that we modern girls want a deep impression.

(and another)

For a hundred years they tried their damndest just to "kiss it" so it didn't leave an indentation in the paper.

Paul runs his finger across the grooves of the impression. Emily prints one more card and SHUTS OFF the motor.

PAUL
I like the grooves. Feels--

EMILY
Richer.

PAUL
Yeah...

INSERT CARD:

"KISS ME YOU FOOL" is the inscription below a MAN WEARING A DUNCE CAP with a GIRL IN PIGTAILS looking at him adoringly.

PAUL (CONT'D)
You're very talented.

Emily looks up at Paul, and LINGERS THERE giving him the opportunity to take a hint from the card.

EMILY
You think so?

PAUL
I do.

Paul looks at Emily, then forces himself to pull away.

PAUL (CONT'D)
It's getting late. Do you want me
to take Duke for a walk before I go?

Emily retrieves the cover for the press.

EMILY
(masking disappointment)
That would be great.

INT. BACKYARD -- TWILIGHT

Emily is sitting outside on her back porch. Paul comes around back with Duke, they're horsing around.

EMILY
I've never seen him this happy...

Paul can sense Emily's hurt by this.

EMILY (CONT'D)
I don't think we've ever really
properly bonded. I mean he's known
you for a week...

PAUL
Why did you get Duke?

Emily looks affected by the question. Paul realizes he already knows why.

EMILY
Because of October 16th, 2003.

Paul tries to act natural, unaware.

PAUL
...Do you want to talk about it?

EMILY
No. I just didn't want to lie about it.

Paul nods his head as if he understands that perfectly.

PAUL
Can we try something?

INT. BACKYARD -- MOMENTS LATER

CLOSE ON Emily who is kneeling down NOSE TO NOSE with Duke seated opposite of her. They stare at each other for awhile.

EMILY
(nose to nose)
Now what?

PAUL
Now repeat after me... In the beginning I treated you like just a guard dog.

EMILY
In the beginning I treated you like just a guard dog.

PAUL
I'm sorry for that, it wasn't fair.

EMILY
I'm sorry for that, it wasn't fair.

PAUL
It was also selfish of me to make you a vegetarian, Duke.

EMILY
(pained)
It was selfish of me to make you a vege-- this is ridiculous.

PAUL
(forging ahead)
But I need you to trust me now. I have real feelings for you that go beyond mere security.

EMILY

But I need you to trust me now. I have real feelings for you that go beyond mere security. Even if you didn't eat Paul -- a total stranger -- when you had the chance.

PAUL

Good one. Very clever.

(off her look)

Duke, I love you like family. And I can't live without you.

EMILY

Duke, I love you like family. And I can't live without you.

Emily turns to look at Paul as if to say "Now what?" just as Duke LICKS OVER HER WHOLE FACE with his enormous tongue.

PAUL

You're forgiven.

Emily gets teary-eyed hugging Duke as he continues to give her a tongue bath.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I think my work here is done. Get some rest, okay.

EMILY

I will.

PAUL

If you need anything at all tomorrow, just call me. I've got a case downtown but I'm reachable.

Paul starts to leave.

EMILY

I'm starting to feel like you're my guardian angel.

PAUL

That would mean God and I were on speaking terms.

Emily ponders the implication.

EMILY

We all fall short, Paul.

PAUL

(exiting)

Some of us more than others.

Emily watches as Paul exits through the side yard.

MONTAGE:

EXT. BACK ALLEY BEHIND EMILY'S HOUSE -- LATER THAT NIGHT

Paul parks his car behind Emily's house. He hops the fence and REMOVES THE KEY from it's hiding place over the lantern.

INT. GARAGE -- MOMENTS LATER

Paul removes the cover off the larger letterpress known as The Beast. He starts to run his fingers and his mind over the moving parts.

INT. GARAGE -- LATER

Paul removes the large piston arm. The Beast is half taken apart. He continues to remove parts like he has a pretty good idea of the mechanics of it all.

INT. GARAGE -- LATER

The letterpress now lies in NEAT PILES around the frame. Paul wipes down various pieces of the PISTON ARM ASSEMBLY. He's down to his t-shirt, covered in grease and very much in his element. He appears to have located the problem.

INT. GARAGE -- LATER

Paul consults a diagram he's drawn. It's freehand but amazingly PRECISE and DETAILED. He expertly DROPS PIECES BACK INTO PLACE on the main frame.

INT. GARAGE -- LATER

Paul finds a can of PINK PAINT in Emily's garage.

EXT. GARAGE -- LATER

Paul closes the doors to the garage, puts the key back in its place. Dawn is approaching.

END MONTAGE:

INT. MOTEL SHOWER -- EARLY MORNING

Paul SCRUBS GREASE and flecks of pink paint off of himself.

INT. MOTEL BATHROOM -- LATER

Paul stands in front of a foggy mirror in his towel brushing his teeth. Paul spits in the sink, then wipes the steam off the mirror REVEALING HIS REFLECTION.

PAUL
 (to mirror)
 Ken Anderson, John Kelso, Miguel
 Nicita, Jason Jones, Allison Olsen,
 Neil Brandt, Steve Chen.
 (beat)
 Stick to the plan. You don't deserve
 to love her.

INT. CLINIC OFFICE -- LATER THAT DAY

A HUGE SYRINGE plunges into the HIP OF A MALE TORSO on an
 examining table.

DOCTOR
 How's the pain?

PAUL (O.S.)
 (pained)
 Fine.

WIDEN TO REVEAL it's Paul's buttock exposed.

DOCTOR
 I've never had anyone refuse the
 local before.

PAUL
 It's not really giving unless it
 hurts a little, right, doc?

He PULLS BACK ON THE SYRINGE filling it with RED LIQUID.

DOCTOR
 Can I ask why you stipulated a child?

PAUL
 Running out of time. Seemed like a
 safe bet.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT -- LATER

Paul pulls up to his room. He gets out of the car and walks
 toward the door like he just had a BAG OF CEMENT SHOT IN HIS
 ASS. He's carrying a GALLON OF VINEGAR.

LARRY
 What the hell happened to you?

Paul turns to find Larry sweeping up the place.

PAUL
 Fell off the monkey bars.

Paul unlocks his door.

LARRY
How much longer you staying in my
hotel?

PAUL
Motel.

LARRY
Huh?

PAUL
Two stories, shitty rooms, drive up
to your vibrating bed. We call that
a motel.
(off his annoyance)
I was hoping to die here, actually.

LARRY
Miss you long time already.

Paul nods appreciatively, then disappears into his room.

INT. MOTEL ROOM -- LATER THAT AFTERNOON

Paul is ASLEEP draped across the bed with his clothes still
on. The JELLYFISH swims in the aquarium on top of the desk.

SFX: CELL PHONE RING

Paul fumbles for his phone and answers.

PAUL
(wiped out)
Hello...

EMILY
Hey, it's Emily. Were you sleeping?

PAUL
(still groggy)
Uh huh...

EMILY
Good. Now you're rested. I was
wondering if you could pick something
up for me...

PAUL
(off guard)
...Okay.

EMILY
(playfully)
You did say, "If you need anything
at all, just call me..."

PAUL
(realizing)
No, I know... Just give me a sec,
I'm still waking up here.

Emily laughs.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Where am I going exactly?

EMILY
Macy's on Lake Street. Be under my
name in the women's department. But
it won't be ready 'til six.

PAUL
Got it.

EMILY
Then maybe you could bring it right
over -- after. You know, and say
"hello" -- around seven.

PAUL
I'll be there.

EMILY
Okay, great. Bye.

Paul hangs up the phone not sure what's going on.

INT. EMILY'S KITCHEN -- CONTINUOUS

Emily puts down the phone.

EMILY
How'd I do?

REVEAL Kate the nurse looking on.

KATE
You couldn't have been more needy.

EMILY
Can you drive me to the Farmers
Market?
(seeing she's confused)
For tonight?

KATE
Oh... I guess. They don't deliver?

EMILY
No...
(gritted teeth)
They don't.

EXT. FARMERS MARKET -- LATER

Emily walks along the stands of FRESH PRODUCE. She comes across EGGPLANT, handling them with care. She pays for them with a joyful smile and moves on.

INT. MOTEL -- THAT AFTERNOON

Paul stands by the desk in only his underwear, silhouetted in shadow. The desk lamp is the only light on in the room. Paul has his CELL PHONE TO HIS EAR.

SFX: CELL PHONE RINGING

Paul removes the 3X5 PHOTOGRAPH from his wallet and turns it over on the desk while he waits...

...Hello? EZRA (O.S.)

Ezra? PAUL

...yes. EZRA (O.S.)

It's Paul. Thomas. We spoke a few weeks back. PAUL

INTERCUT AS NEEDED:

INT. EZRA'S LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Ezra sits up on the couch and takes a deep breath.

How did you get this number? EZRA
(into phone)

I have all your numbers. PAUL

It was you that helped me to my door that day. EZRA

Yes. I'm sorry I ran away. I'm also sorry for the way I spoke to you on the phone the first time. PAUL
(heartfelt)

Been having trouble rectifying the anti-Semite with the Good Samaritan. EZRA

Paul lets out a small laugh.

PAUL
I just needed to know you were a
decent man... kind, slow to anger,
that kind of thing.

Paul picks up a PEN of the desk.

EZRA
Why, Paul?

PAUL
Because I'm going to give you a gift.

Paul adds the name "EZRA TURNER," which becomes the SIXTH
NAME after Paul Thomas, Julie McCall, Glenda Harris, George
Mamone and Nicholas Adams, on the BACK OF THE PHOTOGRAPH.

EZRA
I don't need anything...

PAUL
Do good things with them anyway...
Okay, Ezra?

EZRA
Wait a second-- Paul?

Paul HANGS UP the phone. He tucks the photograph back in
his wallet.

INT./EXT. MOTEL ROOM -- LATER

Larry KNOCKS LOUDLY on Paul's door. He's holding his SUIT
AND SHIRT in a plastic dry cleaner bag.

LARRY
Hundred bucks doesn't buy you all
day, sailor.

Paul opens the door halfway.

PAUL
(grabbing it)
Just give it to me--

Larry sees what we don't, Paul's NAKED CHEST exposed.

LARRY
(stunned)
What the hell did you do to yourself--

Paul lifts the plastic and INSPECTS THE SHIRT.

PAUL
Had my tits done.
(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

(off shirt)

Still dirty. I thought you said it was a good place.

LARRY

Never can trust a Chinaman.

PAUL

(knowing)

I thought you were Korean.

Before Larry can respond, Paul shuts the door.

INT. MACY'S LADY'S DEPARTMENT -- NIGHT

Paul stands at the counter with a PLEASANT WOMAN in her 30's. His suit and shirt are STILL SOILED.

PAUL

I'm supposed to pick something up here for Emily Posa.

WOMAN

You must be Paul. Right this way.

Paul follows after her, she has a devilish grin.

PAUL

What am I picking up, exactly?

EXT. EMILY'S FRONT DOOR -- LATER THAT NIGHT

Paul waits at the door. He's wearing a brand new PINSTRIPED GREY SUIT, a VIBRANT PURPLE TIE, a new shirt and shoes.

Nurse Kate opens the door. Paul looks surprised to see her.

KATE

(matter of fact)

Well, aren't you just the cock of the walk.

Kate brushes past him before he can respond. He turns around to discover EMILY LOOKING STUNNING in a floral sun dress.

PAUL

(taking her in)

Hi...

EMILY

They said you put up quite a fight.

PAUL

They wouldn't give me back my suit.

EMILY

I asked them to burn it.

Paul doesn't know what to say. He's conflicted about it. Emily takes in Paul's new look. She looks into Paul's eyes, smiling...

EMILY (CONT'D)

That tie brings out your eyes. You have beautiful eyes, Paul...

Paul can't accept the compliment. He looks down at her dress for a beat.

PAUL

You look amazing...

Emily smiles sweetly.

PAUL (CONT'D)

(can't let it go)

But... that suit--

EMILY

(gently)

Is your past...

Paul is affected by her words.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Tonight, I just want you to be with me. In the present. Can you do that?

Paul's face reveals he's not quite sure.

EXT. EMILY'S BACKYARD -- LATER

CLOSE ON a very romantic CANDLELIGHT DINNER for two.

Paul is looking a little stiff feeling the weight of Emily staring at him. He uses a knife and fork to cut into TWO BALANCE BARS on his otherwise EMPTY PLATE. Emily has a modest portion of EGGPLANT PARMESAN. She takes a sip of wine.

EMILY

Are you allergic to eggplant?

Paul shakes his head no, then takes a bite of his balance bar and chews.

EMILY (CONT'D)

It's vegetarian...

PAUL

I'm just on this weird diet. And...

(fumbling through)

I don't get to eat much, you know?

They sit in silence for awhile. Emily is stewing.

PAUL (CONT'D)
It smells delicious though.

Emily GRABS HIS PLATE and flings the Balance Bars off of it. She dishes up some eggplant, some salad, and puts it back down in front of him.

EMILY
I haven't cooked in years, so...

Paul watches DUKE SCARF DOWN HIS BALANCE BARS. He then takes a long, hard look at his new plate of food.

EMILY (CONT'D)
(emotional)
Please... eat...

Paul, knowing he has no graceful way out of this... takes a bite. He SAVORS IT as if it's the best thing he's eaten in years.

EMILY (CONT'D)
(vulnerable)
You don't have to go all audible...

PAUL
Excuse me--

EMILY
I know when I'm being mocked--

PAUL
You are ruining the symphony of succulent flavors that my mouth is currently experiencing.

Emily looks at Paul. He plays it straight.

Emily laughs despite herself. It grows infectious, Paul can't help but join her, surprising the both of them. When Emily catches her breath, they end up TAKING EACH OTHER IN. Paul is the first to finally look away, but it's a struggle.

INT. BATHROOM -- LATER

Paul BURSTS INTO THE ROOM, shuts the door, crosses to the toilet and promptly VOMITS.

A few moments pass. He waits there not knowing if it's over.

EMILY (O.S.)
Paul? Are you okay?

PAUL
Just freshening up.

Paul fights it, but then THROWS UP AGAIN.

EMILY (O.S.)

There's a toothbrush under the sink.

Paul looks up weakly.

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

I take it you don't date much.

EXT. BACKYARD -- LATER

Emily is tossing the ball to DUKE. Paul appears. She ignores him obviously hurt and confused.

PAUL

My stomach just isn't used to rich food.

EMILY

Are you sick?

(getting emotional)

Is something wrong with you?

PAUL

No, Emily. I'm healthy.
(straight in the eye)

I swear...

EMILY

(relieved)

Okay...

Paul realizes how concerned she was.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Did you find the toothbrush?

Emily crosses over to him.

PAUL

Yes... I also gargled.

Emily is now standing almost NOSE TO NOSE with Paul. He looks nervous, like the worst thing on Earth would be for her to smell something unpleasant right now.

EMILY

You're thorough.

Paul is taken by her. He doesn't want to be. He won't allow himself to be.

PAUL

I have a surprise for you.

EXT. EMILY'S GARAGE -- LATER

Paul escorts a BLINDFOLDED Emily to the garage. He retrieves the key from over the lamp and unlocks the doors.

EMILY
What are we doing?

Paul leads her over to The Beast and UNCOVERS IT.

PAUL
Okay, take a look.

Emily removes her blindfold and sees that the HANDLE IS NOW PASTEL PINK and the Beast looks polished and cleaned.

EMILY
What did you do?
(going over it)
And when...

PAUL
Give it a whirl.

EMILY
(not believing)
Cleaning it and fixing it are two--

Paul turns the SWITCH to the on position and the MASSIVE FLYWHEEL and PISTON ARMS start to do revolutions.

EMILY (CONT'D)
(truly awestruck)
How did you ever... do this?

Emily grasps the PINK HANDLE and gives it a crank which initiates the PRINTING ACTION. She checks the platen and looks over the whole machine working smoothly.

EMILY (CONT'D)
It never ran like this. The Beast
is back!

Paul tries to mask his pride.

EXT. EMILY'S HOUSE -- LATER THAT NIGHT

SFX: LIGHT RAIN COMING DOWN

Paul exits the house and walks down the front path with Duke. He seems to almost have a SPRING IN HIS STEP until he notices a MAN PARKED IN A RENTAL CAR across the street.

Paul turns down the sidewalk just as the CAR DOOR OPENS and the man comes up on Paul from behind.

MAN (O.S.)

You want to start talking or should
I go knock on Emily's door myself?

Paul turns to acknowledge the voice he knows all too well,
his brother Jack. Duke STANDS AT ATTENTION SNARLING.

PAUL

You shouldn't be here, Jack.

JACK

That makes two of us.

PAUL

Go home.

JACK

Got a weird call from an agent in the
San Francisco office wanting to know
where the security conference was.

Paul continues to walk when Jack GRABS HIM BY THE COLLAR AND
RIPS HIM BACK AROUND.

JACK (CONT'D)

How fucked am I, exactly?

PAUL

Alright! Okay!

Duke snarls as Paul LOOKS OVER at Emily's house concerned.

PAUL (CONT'D)

(to Duke)

It's okay, boy.

JACK

They keep a full history of every
inquiry a revenue officer makes.
Every name! Every keystroke!

PAUL

Walk with me. Please.

JACK

You can't play with peoples' lives!

Paul walks ahead and Jack follows behind him to a point far
enough away from Emily's house.

JACK (CONT'D)

What are you doing here?!

PAUL

There's a coffee shop a block from
here. I can meet you there at 7
a.m. Explain everything.

JACK

I can't trust you. Not anymore...

Paul looks his brother directly in the eye.

PAUL

You owe me. And you know it.

Jack acknowledges this, but it's not enough anymore.

PAUL (CONT'D)

She's sick. She needs me.

JACK

She doesn't even know who you are.

PAUL

(stung)

I can't leave her... even if I wanted to.

Jack can see that Paul's telling the truth.

JACK

Give it to me.

After a moment Paul knows exactly what Jack wants. He reaches in his back pocket and HANDS OVER HIS IRS COMMISSION.

JACK (CONT'D)

(checks it)

Where are you staying?

(off his confusion)

What hotel?

PAUL

Tonight? I'm not. Checked out.

(having to lie)

I'm staying here... with Emily.

JACK

You're sleeping with this woman?

PAUL

(lying)

Yes.

JACK

Give me your keys. I'll be parked right out here. On your bumper.

Paul looks at Jack, hesitating.

JACK (CONT'D)

Or we can go inside and talk now. With Emily.

Paul HANDS HIS KEYS OVER. Jack doubles back toward his car.

JACK (CONT'D)
(over his shoulder)
Don't make me come knock on the door.

Paul is rattled. He continues taking Duke for his walk.

INT. EMILY'S FAMILY ROOM -- LATER

Paul is looking out the window KEEPING TABS ON HIS BROTHER.
Emily enters with a glass of water.

EMILY
Here you go...

Paul crosses back to the couch.

PAUL
(preoccupied)
Thanks.

EMILY
You okay?

PAUL
Yeah...

EMILY
What is it?

PAUL
(feigning embarrassment)
I just realized how late it is. I was going to catch a red-eye home tonight. I checked out of my hotel and everything.

EMILY
Stay here. I've got room.

PAUL
I could call around. Try to find a place...

EMILY
No. Absolutely not. You're staying. We'll put Kate's ass on the couch.

PAUL
Are you sure?

EXT. EMILY'S BATHROOM -- LATER THAT NIGHT

Emily, in pajamas, FIXES HER HAIR in the mirror. She's nervous and fidgety about it.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

SFX: RAIN OUTSIDE THE WINDOW.

Paul stands IN THE DARK looking out through the blinds, KEEPING TABS on his brother. Paul has pants on but NO SHIRT.

PAUL'S POV: JACK SITS IN HIS CAR WITH THE SEAT BACK RUBBING HIS EYES.

SFX: KNOCK AT PAUL'S DOOR

PAUL

Just a sec.

Paul steps away from the window and LOOKS FOR HIS SHIRT, seeing it across the room on the dresser. He makes a dash for it.

EMILY (O.S.)

Paul?

Emily ENTERS as Paul PULLS HIS SHIRT OVER HIS HEAD. She SEES A FLASH of the older "M" SHAPED SCAR across his chest and a new semicircle of ONE INCH STITCHED INCISIONS below his ribs.

EMILY (CONT'D)

My God...

Paul pulls his shirt down and turns to face her.

PAUL

(angry)

I said wait.

EMILY

I'm sorry... I wasn't thinking.

Emily stands there confused. Paul sits down on the bed and doesn't make eye contact.

EMILY (CONT'D)

I just wanted to say, that I was glad you're staying... It means a lot to me. I feel safe...

Paul nods his head but can't bring himself to look up.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Do you want me to leave?

PAUL

No...

Emily sits down next to Paul on the bed.

EMILY

Do you want to talk about it?

Emily puts her hand on his shoulder very tentatively.

PAUL

I'd only be lying... I've been lying to people for the better part of three years now.

Emily doesn't understand, but she goes gently.

EMILY

Maybe we could start with something easy.

(off his look)

How did you fix my letterpress?

PAUL

I spent most of my childhood taking things apart and putting them back together...

(emotional)

I always wanted to be an engineer.

EMILY

What kind?

PAUL

The kind that flew people to the moon.

Emily leans in, very unsure of herself, and starts to GENTLY KISS Paul's neck. He allows her to.

EMILY

What stopped you?

PAUL

God had other plans.

Emily looks into Paul's eyes. She starts to REMOVE his t-shirt slowly. He flinches at first. WE HEAR A FAINT HEART BEAT.

EMILY

I want to know you.

Paul allows her to remove his shirt. She slowly TRACES HER FINGER OVER THE "M" SHAPED SCAR on his chest.

PAUL

I don't even know myself anymore...

EMILY

Do you know how you feel about me?

Emily places her hand on Paul's heart. WE HEAR HIS HEART BEATING FASTER.

PAUL

Yes...

Paul relents and KISSES HER PASSIONATELY. After a while, they fall back onto the bed. It's intense yet incredibly gentle.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I never meant for this to happen...

EMILY

I know...

They kiss one another hungrily. It's cathartic as if each one is letting down a wall that was years in the making.

Paul sensuously unbuttons her blouse and kisses her breasts and stomach. Emily groans with pleasure. Emily loosens Paul's pants. They continue to kiss, until...

Paul ends up partly on top of Emily. Making sure not to put his full weight on her...

PAUL

Am I hurting you?

EMILY

That's not possible.

Emily PULLS PAUL DOWN INTO HER taking control.

Paul's FACE REVEALS the impact of her actions. Neither one of them really moving, just experiencing the feeling of this kind of intimacy. They kiss slowly, tenderly, until...

EMILY (CONT'D)

I don't ever want you to leave...

Paul, AFFECTED BY HER WORDS, pauses and takes a long loving look at her.

PAUL

I wish I could promise you that...

Emily nods her head somehow understanding. They end up lying next to one another. Paul REACHES OUT AND TAKES EMILY'S HAND reassuring her that he still wants to be close to her...

INT. GUEST BEDROOM -- LATER THAT NIGHT

The room is almost totally dark. Paul has his arm around Emily SPOONING HER from behind under the covers.

SFX: STEADY RAIN outside the window.

EMILY

October 16th 2003.

PAUL

Yes...

EMILY

My life stopped... Ended in a way.

Paul nods his head for her to continue.

EMILY (CONT'D)

And then I met you... I haven't kissed
anyone in three years...

(beat)

Since I was raped, Paul.

Paul doesn't need anymore information.

PAUL

I'm so sorry.

Paul lays there quietly. He strokes Emily's hair. She fights
back tears, sniffing quietly.

EMILY

Can't top that one, I bet...

Paul wells up unbeknownst to Emily.

PAUL

No...

EMILY

...You could try.

PAUL

Okay... I haven't kissed anyone in
four years.

Emily lets out a tiny laugh.

PAUL (CONT'D)

It's true.

Emily looks over her shoulder at Paul, now seeing it's true.

EMILY

Why?

PAUL

It's late... how about if tomorrow, I
tell you the whole Paul Thomas story.

Emily looks Paul in the eye lovingly.

EMILY

You promise?

PAUL

Yes.

Paul REGARDS HER as if he's trying to MEMORIZE HER FACE.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Good-night, Emily.

EMILY

Good-night, Paul.

Emily settles in and Paul goes back to holding her tightly.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM -- LATER THAT NIGHT

Paul slowly climbs out of bed. He crosses to the window and looks out through the blinds.

PAUL'S POV: JACK IS NOW ASLEEP IN HIS CAR

Paul finds his pants on the floor. He puts them on quietly. Paul takes one last look at Emily on his way out.

EXT. BACKYARD FENCE -- MOMENTS LATER

Paul hops the fence into the alley.

EXT. CITY STREET -- LATER

Paul walks along the road, getting SOAKED BY THE RAIN.

EXT. PAY PHONE -- LATER

Paul waits inside. A TAXI pulls up and FLASHES THE BRIGHTS. Paul exits the booth and gets in the cab.

INT. MOTEL ROOM -- LATER

Paul sits NAKED at the desk illuminated by the desk lamp. He uses a pen to ADD the name "EMILY POSA" to the back of his 3X5 PHOTOGRAPH. It becomes the SEVENTH NAME after Paul Thomas, Julie McCall, Glenda Harris, George Mamone, Nicholas Adams and Ezra Turner.

Paul thoughtfully tucks the photograph back in his wallet and then picks up the ROOM TELEPHONE off the desk.

INT. MOTEL BATHROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

We are tight on PAUL'S FACE talking into the handset. The water laps at his neck.

911 OPERATOR (V.O.)

911 Emergency.

PAUL
I need to report a suicide.

911 OPERATOR (V.O.)
I have you at 412 Fair Oaks Avenue
in Pasadena.

PAUL
Yeah, room twelve.

911 OPERATOR (V.O.)
Who's the victim?

PAUL
I am...

Paul reaches out of frame and hangs up the phone. Paul SITS UP and CLOSES HIS EYES as if steeling himself for something.

He reaches over and PUTS HIS ENTIRE RIGHT ARM into the AQUARIUM WITH THE JELLYFISH that is now ALONGSIDE THE TUB.

CLOSE ON PAUL: His right arm, shoulder and face CONTORT AND SEIZE UP as if SILENTLY ELECTROCUTED.

He SLUMPS BACK against the back of the tub as the EXCRUCIATING PAIN reverberates through his body in waves. He is dying a slow torturous death...

EXT. BLUE SKY -- DAY (FLASHBACK)

We follow the SPACE SHUTTLE CONCORD as it DESCENDS into the EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE.

CHEN (O.S.)
Control's been stable through the
rolls that we've done so far, Houston.
We have good trims--

BRANDT (O.S.)
(interrupting)
Houston. Flight MMAC.

INT. NASA MISSION CONTROL -- CONTINUOUS

We pull back from the ENORMOUS SCREEN to find a room full of NASA ENGINEERS and PERSONNEL working and watching the SHUTTLE'S RE-ENTRY happen in real time. Center of the room is the bearded FLIGHT DIRECTOR, 52, behind him is PAUL STANDING IN FRONT OF A COMPUTER among a row of colleagues.

FLIGHT DIRECTOR
(into headset)
Go ahead, MMAC.

BRANDT (O.S.)

I've just lost four separate temperature transducers on the rear of the vehicle, hydraulic return temperatures. Two of them on system 1 and one each in systems 2 and 3.

WE SEE Paul PICK UP HIS PHONE and begin referencing his computer in CRISIS CONTROL MODE.

MISSION CONTROL

(into headset)

Four hydraulic return temps?

BRANDT (O.S.)

To the rear outboard elevons. All four of them are located in the rear wing, in front of the elevon actuators. And there is no commonality.

MISSION CONTROL

No commonality?

CHEN (O.S.)

I'm now showing abnormal heat signatures throughout tail section!

Paul looks up horrified at the SHUTTLE ON THE SCREEN. His face drains of color as he RUSHES to another computer...

BRANDT (O.S.)

We've also lost the nose gear down talkback and the right main gear talkback-- I have every indication of fire!

(jumbled, panicked)

Initiating protocol-- X@S%&#--

GASPS OF HORROR throughout the room.

MISSION CONTROL (O.S.)

Shuttle Concord, Houston, comm check.

(beat)

I repeat, Shuttle Concord, Houston, comm check!

ON SCREEN:

SHUTTLE CONCORD CATCHES ON FIRE and begins to BREAKUP QUICKLY.

INT. NASA MISSION CREW OFFICE -- DAY (FLASHBACK)

Paul stands in an EMPTY ROOM with SEVEN DESKS. Each one cluttered with personal effects: bobble head dolls, popsicle-stick art, brain twister games, etc. and a PERSONAL NAMEPLATE. WE SEE the names, "Ken Anderson, John Kelso, Miguel Nicita, Jason Jones, Allison Olsen, Neil Brandt and Steve Chen."

Paul picks up a PHOTOGRAPH OF A FAMILY off the desk of "Allison Olsen."

INSERT PHOTO: ALLISON AND HER FAMILY AT SEA WORLD

Paul begins to SOB LOUDLY, overwhelmed by the EMPTINESS and the realization these people will never return to this room.

Paul sees and then REMOVES A PHOTOGRAPH from Allison's bulletin board.

INSERT PHOTO: NASA STS-131 MISSION CREW PHOTOGRAPH OF SEVEN ASTRONAUTS IN FLIGHT SUITS

Paul decides to TUCK THE 3X5 PHOTOGRAPH in his WALLET.

He takes one last look around, turns out the lights and exits.

EXT. MEMORIAL GROUNDS -- DAY (FLASHBACK)

SEVEN FLOWER ARRANGEMENTS are spaced across a stage. The SPEAKER at the podium is mid-reflection. The CROWD numbers in the hundreds. Paul in his BROWN SUIT sits among them.

SPEAKER

(mid eulogy)

Each of these seven men and women were unique and they were also the same... They were mother, father, daughter, son, husband, wife, astronaut and hero... Let their noble and worthy lives be an inspiration to us all...

Paul's GUILT IS PALPABLE as he looks upon the SEVEN FAMILIES GRIEVING. Husbands, children, and grandparents: some stoic, some weeping openly but all of them equally devastated.

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

God rest their souls and let their sacrifice never be forgotten.

INT. INVESTIGATION PANEL ROOM -- DAY (FLASHBACK)

An INVESTIGATION PANEL of twelve distinguished looking people sit elevated above a solitary man, Paul, testifying before them in his BROWN SUIT. It's a CLOSED DOOR SESSION. They are listening to TAPE RECORDED PLAYBACK:

BRANDT

(on tape)

Houston. Flight MMAC.

MISSION CONTROL

(on tape)

Go ahead, MMAC.

BRANDT

(on tape)

Re-entry sequence initiated. We
continue steady through the rolls--

PAUL

(into microphone)

Excuse me... Please. Stop.

The man seated in the center position within the panel, the
COMMISSIONER, 60, signals it's okay. The playback stops.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Thank you. I know the next seven
minutes by heart... and I'm here to
accept responsibility for them--

COMMISSIONER

Mr. Thomas. This is not a private
execution before a public one.

PAUL

I wish it was. Public.

COMMISSIONER

Our findings indicate that
responsibility lies equally with
over a dozen managers. Spanning
design through re-entry--

PAUL

(interrupting)

As lead engineer on the failed rear
wing system--

COMMISSIONER

Excuse me I wasn't--

PAUL

(interrupting again)

I am solely to blame for the fire
that led to the breakup of Space
Shuttle Concord upon re-entry--

COMMISSIONER

Mr. Thomas. We asked you here today
only to give your testimony--

PAUL

(not listening)

No one is more responsible for the
deaths of these seven astronauts
than I am.

Several of the panelists start GRUMBLING AMONGST THEMSELVES
while the rest look on in stunned silence.

COMMISSIONER

I'm not going to ask you again Mr.
Thomas--

PAUL

I'd like to submit into the record my
admission of guilt and my resignation.

Paul removes PAPERS from his leather satchel and presents them.

PAUL (CONT'D)

(point of tears)

I'm truly sorry...

Paul stands up and exits amidst protests.

END FLASHBACKS:

INT. PAUL'S MOTEL ROOM -- LATER

SFX: BANGING ON THE DOOR

PARAMEDIC (O.S.)

Comin' in!

Two paramedics BARGE into the room with equipment. The same men we met earlier in the movie, the black paramedic and his partner. The black paramedic sees the WRITING ON THE CLOSED BATHROOM DOOR scrawled in BIG BLACK MAGIC MARKER...

BLACK PARAMEDIC

(reading the door)

"DEAD GUY IN HERE. DO NOT TOUCH THE
POISONOUS BOX JELLYFISH."

An ARROW is drawn down the door pointing to...

A sheet of TYPE WRITTEN INSTRUCTIONS taped to the door. The black paramedic rips them off the door.

INSERT:

"1. Use vinegar for removal 2. Take legal documents to Cedars Sinai 3. Harvest eyes and heart as directed"

He ENTERS THE BATHROOM with his partner in tow...

BLACK PARAMEDIC (CONT'D)

(stunned)

Oh my God.

INSIDE BATHROOM

Paul lies in the BATHTUB FULL OF ICE WATER stiff as a board. His DEATH STARE looks like Munch's *The Scream*. HIS ARM IS BENT ON AN ANGLE hanging over the bathtub with the BOX JELLYFISH'S TENTACLES WRAPPED AROUND IT.

In addition to the scars we've seen there is an eight-inch SURGICAL WOUND STAPLED SHUT just above his groin.

BLACK PARAMEDIC (CONT'D)
(off instructions)
Says we have to take him to Cedar's
and have them harvest his eyes and
heart.

The black paramedic retrieves a MANILLA ENVELOPE off the floor marked "LEGAL DOCUMENTS FOR HOSPITAL ATTORNEYS." WE RECOGNIZE it as the envelope that Paul forced the Attorney to relinquish.

PARTNER
(freaked out)
How the hell are we supposed to get
him out?!

The black paramedic sees the GALLON OF VINEGAR and a pair of HEAVY DUTY RUBBER GLOVES beside the tub.

Off Paul's distorted face...

BLACK PARAMEDIC (O.S.)
Very carefully.

INT. EMILY'S GUEST BEDROOM -- MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

SFX: BEEPING

Emily awakens and turns on the light to discover her RED PAGER FLASHING AND BEEPING. She then realizes she's ALONE in bed.

FADE TO BLACK:

CHYRON READS: 31 DAYS LATER

FADE IN:

INT. EXAMINING ROOM -- DAY

Emily sits with her cardiologist, DR. Hu. He listens to EMILY'S BACK with a stethoscope.

DR. HU
All your tests indicate your body is
accepting the donor heart beautifully.
I think we can start to scale back
your anti-rejection drugs...

EMILY
Hard to enjoy. Under the
circumstances...

DR. HU
I'm so sorry about... Tim.

Emily nods her head emotionally.

DR. HU (CONT'D)

I've been waiting for the right time to tell you this. His brother, the real Paul, is here in town...

(off Emily's look)

I've held him at bay to give you time to recover. But he's looking for answers.

EMILY

I don't really have any of those.

DR. HU

He's been investigating the last year of Tim's life. He left this address...

(handing her a note)

Asked that you come by today. He has a family back in Florida he needs to get home to.

Emily nods her head, but she's tortured by the thought.

EXT./INT. MOTEL ROOM -- LATER

Emily knocks on the door to room "12."

JACK (O.S.)

Come in.

Emily enters the room to find it littered with documents, a computer, fast food cartons, stack of Balance Bar Boxes, etc. Emily is TAKEN ABACK when the UNSHAVEN Jack makes eye contact with her.

EMILY

My God. You look so much like Paul.

JACK/REAL PAUL

(gently)

I am Paul...

EMILY

I'm sorry. I knew that. I've had a month to get it straight. Your brother also told me your name was Jack--

JACK

Tim wasn't lying about that. He's called me "Jack" since we were kids. Short for "Crackerjack," 'cause I always wanted to be a crackerjack fighter pilot. And Tim always promised to build me the fastest plane on Earth...

Emily smiles.

JACK (CONT'D)

I settled for piloting a Ford Taurus around Orlando collecting people's overdue taxes.

Emily looks around the room. A collage of PICTURES, NOTES and COMPUTER PRINTOUTS are sprawled across the wall.

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

Tim stole my IRS I.D. to get closer to you, Emily. To all of you.

Everything relates to the SEVEN DIFFERENT PEOPLE we saw Tim affect throughout the movie.

Emily crosses to the OPEN BATHROOM DOOR. She looks inside then pulls the door toward her so she can see what Tim wrote.

INSERT DOOR:

"DEAD GUY IN HERE. DO NOT TOUCH THE POISONOUS BOX JELLYFISH."

JACK (CONT'D)

The Australian Box Jellyfish carries a neuro-toxin that is incredibly painful and extremely lethal. Multiple stings can arrest a grown man's heart in under six minutes.

EMILY

He wanted to suffer.

JACK

(nodding his head)

Tim went scuba diving at the Great Barrier Reef years ago. I guess it must have planted a seed.

EMILY

(tearing up)

What would make someone do something like this...

JACK

Tim was the lead engineer for the rear wing system on the Space Shuttle Concord. His design failed, and he felt that he needed to make amends...

Emily crosses over to a SMALL 3x5 PHOTOGRAPH pinned to the wall. She REMOVES IT to take a closer look.

JACK (CONT'D)
 (emotional)
 How can a man atone for seven dead
 astronauts?

INSERT PHOTO: THE NASA STS-131 MISSION CREW PHOTOGRAPH OF
 THE SEVEN ASTRONAUTS IN FLIGHT GEAR

Emily is reminded of something.

EMILY
 With a pound of flesh... Seven pounds,
 actually.

Jack looks at Emily, affected by her words. He TURNS THE
 PHOTOGRAPH OVER IN EMILY'S HAND revealing SEVEN NAMES in Tim's
 handwriting. It's of course THE SAME PHOTOGRAPH Tim carried
 with him in his wallet the whole time.

INSERT BACK OF THE PHOTO:

Paul Thomas, Julie McCall, Glenda Harris, George Mamone,
 Nicholas Adams, Ezra Turner and Emily Posa.

EMILY (CONT'D)
 (realizing)
 You were the first?

JACK
 Lung cancer. Two packs a day. I
 needed a double lobe transplant.
 One came from my nearest living
 relative...
 (emotional)
 Tim. Even though he was depressed
 and apparently suicidal...

EMILY
 I bet you didn't have to ask.

Jack shakes his head no.

JACK
 He stayed with us for a month last
 year after the procedure. Said it
 made him feel useful for the first
 time since the accident.

Jack looks at the wall and the faces of the SEVEN PEOPLE Tim
 helped.

JACK (CONT'D)
 If I'd have known-- Any of this--
 I swear to God...

Emily instinctively hugs Jack. They embrace until Jack nods
 his head thanking Emily.

Emily looks at the LIST OF NAMES on the BACK OF THE PHOTO.

EMILY

Can you tell me about them? The people
that Tim chose...

FLASH: of a very pregnant Julie with friends happily trying
on maternity clothes

FLASH: of Glenda, her kids and the puppy playing in the surf

FLASH: of George showing his family his KIDNEY TRANSPLANT
SCAR during dinner while his wife protests.

FLASH: of a smiling LITTLE BOY riding his bike down the street
with NEW HAIR SPROUTING from his head.

BACK TO SCENE:

Emily's eyes are welling up with tears.

JACK

Apparently Tim never met Nicholas.
He just made an anonymous bone marrow
donation, the only stipulation that
it be a child.

Emily looks down at the LIST AGAIN.

EMILY

Ezra's from Fresno, right?

JACK

Yes, he's blind. Tim wanted him to
have his eyes for a double corneal
transplant.

EMILY

(dawning on her)
Oh my God...

Emily looks over the wall. Searching for answers.

EMILY (CONT'D)

How did he do it?

JACK

From what I've been able to piece
together, the old fashioned way. He
bribed people. People who had access
to the databases that contained the
names of people waiting for specific
organs. Using Tim's age, weight,
and blood type, the bribed person
would generate a short list of names
that Tim was a suitable match for.

Emily follows along in disbelief.

JACK (CONT'D)

Then he accessed the IRS database in San Francisco so that he could cross reference the list of names in the hopes of finding a keeper--

EMILY

Keeper?

JACK

Someone who desperately needed an organ to live and owed the IRS money. Which, as you know, is an easy thing to have happen given the cost of healthcare.

(off her recognition)

Once he found a keeper, Tim had the perfect cover to go and find out what kind of person they were. To see if--

EMILY

If they were worthy...

Jack nods his head yes as Emily registers the implication.

JACK

Other than his body, Tim had money and a house to give. He found Julie and Glenda for those -- along the way, I guess.

Emily looks overwhelmed by it all. She puts her hand over her heart as if she's trying to catch her breath.

JACK (CONT'D)

You okay?

She nods her head yes and takes a deep breath. She LOOKS AT THE LIST AGAIN seeing her OWN NAME.

EMILY

How about Emily here?

JACK

She needed a heart... and apparently to be loved.

Emily smiles at his kindness. She wipes tears from her eyes.

JACK (CONT'D)

Tim was brilliant... Even in death.

(off her recognition)

I can see that you loved him.

EMILY

Always will...

Jack nods his head appreciating her even more.

EXT. FRESNO STREET -- DAY (IN THE FUTURE)

Emily briskly walks Duke down the sidewalk of a tree-lined city street. Her cheeks are ruddy, her hair is styled a little differently, and she looks healthy, happy and rested.

Her walk is EFFORTLESS for the first time, a new lease on life and she relishes it.

Duke stays in perfect lock step with her as they pass by people and buildings.

Emily looks down at an ADDRESS written on a note. She comes upon the steps leading up to an older brick MIDDLE SCHOOL.

She and Duke take the stairs ascending them confidently without pause.

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL MUSIC ROOM -- LATER

Emily stands quietly in the back of the large room with Duke sitting by her side. Around the room BOYS and GIRLS sit with sheets of music on stands PLAYING INSTRUMENTS. MOVING AMONG them, in almost a BLUR OF EXCITEMENT, is a MAN with his back to Emily.

He points and pats, claps and encourages and talks with his hands, thrilled with the FLEDGLING ATTEMPT AT MUSIC happening all around him.

SFX: SCHOOL BELL RINGS

At that moment the man TURNS AROUND, it's Ezra. He looks in disbelief at the CLOCK.

EZRA

(with joy)

Tomorrow we make music! All over again!

The KIDS begin to pack up, SOME moving quickly toward the door but most of them ad lib versions of, "Good-bye, Mr. Turner" and other well wishes as they file out...

EZRA (CONT'D)

(noticing Emily)

Please don't run kids... You know how that makes me feel...

Ezra watches as Emily approaches from the back of the room. The last of the kids reaching the exits.

Emily comes to stand before him and doesn't say a word.
Ezra puts out his hand to greet Duke...

Emily just looks DEEPLY INTO EZRA'S EYES. Ezra notices this
and turns his full attention to her.

EZRA (CONT'D)

Hello...

Emily smiles, but she continues to be mesmerized by his eyes.
She purses her lips to speak, but she's overcome with emotion
at the very sight of him...

Ezra doesn't quite understand but he's patient with her...

Emily eventually musters the words...

EMILY

I just needed to see them again...

They look deeply into one another's eyes. Ezra nods his
head and smiles, as if he's now completely aware of the nature
of her visit...

EZRA

You must be Emily...

Emily's eyes well up with tears, as we...

FADE OUT:

THE END