

TRANSFERENCE

Written by

Andy Garland

INT. THE SHACK - DAY

Darkness. Stillness. A few slivers of light knife their way through half-broken blinds.

THE DOOR OPENS, letting the glare of the midday sun come pouring in past the silhouette of

HAILEY, mid-30's. Everything she wears is faded and tired from the road, from her mud-caked boots to her patchwork duster.

She flicks the light switch beside the door. Nothing.

HAILEY

There a generator?

MARKHAM (O.C.)

Out back. You said "Off The Grid,"
din'tcha?

As she advances into the house, more light falls onto her face; her short-cropped hair riding the line between blonde and silver, her eyes dancing across every detail of the room, the lone toothpick dancing between her teeth.

She steps closer to examine a SCORCH MARK on the floor, notes three others on the nearby wall.

HAILEY

Previous owner?

MARKHAM (O.C.)

Dead.

HAILEY

Natural causes?

MARKHAM (O.C.)

Two in the chest tends to cause
death pretty naturally.

That's not just a scorch mark. Hailey runs her finger along the blackened stretch of wood, comes back with particles of deep rust red.

HAILEY

(to herself)
No kidding.

EXT. THE SHACK - MOMENTS LATER

MARKHAM, 50's, as round as he is tall with thick-rimmed sunglasses and a poorly-kept goatee, paces on the rickety front porch of the shack. The thought of even entering the dead man's home seems to have put him on edge.

MARKHAM

Y'don't have to worry, though.
Brought out a priest to go over the
place. Says the old owner's moved
on, won't be bothering you.

Hailey emerges, shielding her eyes against the glare of the sun as they adjust back to the summer light.

HAILEY

Well, that's what I'm looking for.

MARKHAM

Whazzat?

Hailey scans the horizon; dusty scrubland as far as she can see, with only a lone dirt road leading up to the shack.

HAILEY

Someplace where I won't be
bothered. Let's see the shop.

INT. THE SHOP - MOMENTS LATER

Markham hauls the garage door open, revealing a machine shop in disarray. Tools lay scattered on the cement floor, the lone light panel above hangs limply from a single wire, and rats scurry out of sight at the sudden presence of light.

On the far wall, OBSCENE, CHILDISH GRAFFITI that reads: "YOU FUCKED US OVER!"

HAILEY

Charming.

MARKHAM

Got a bit of a problem with Wild
Ones out here. Some of them broke
in last month, had a bit of a pity
party.

He idly nudges some empty beer cans out of the way with his foot.

HAILEY

Neighbors usually so friendly?

MARKHAM

Nearest real neighbors are Joe and Harrison to the east. Miles away. Won't give you any trouble.

HAILEY

I'll keep that in mind.

She picks one of the rusted wrenches off the table.

MARKHAM

You, ah, you got any help?

HAILEY

No. Just me.

MARKHAM

Cause, I'm thinking... if you're looking at a place like this, definitely handy to have some extra hands. My son runs a garage in town, he can rent out--

HAILEY

How much?

MARKHAM

For the help?

HAILEY

For the place.

Markham stammers, fiddles with a cracked smartphone as he pulls up the listing.

MARKHAM

It's listed at forty-five.

HAILEY

I'll give you thirty.

MARKHAM

Well, that's--

HAILEY

Cash.

His eyes bug a little bit bigger. She isn't joking, is she?

EXT. THE SHACK, DRIVEWAY - MOMENTS LATER

A heavy SACK OF COINS CLANKS onto the hood of Markham's truck. Opening the bag, he gazes inside, licks his lips.

HAILEY

You can count it if you want to.

MARKHAM

No, no, I'm... that's quite
alright.

He quickly wrenches open the passenger door, pulls out
paperwork and a jangling set of keys.

MARKHAM (CONT'D)

If I could just get your signatures
here and--

Hailey produces another coin from the folds of her jacket.
It's dull bronze, thick, stamped with someone's preening
royal profile.

HAILEY

How about just the keys?

MARKHAM

Well, there's gotta be a name on
the deed--

She presses the coin into his palm.

HAILEY

Does there?

MARKHAM

What should I put?

HAILEY

Anything you like.

The keys change hands. Markham takes the sheaf of paperwork
with him back into the truck.

HAILEY (CONT'D)

I'll call you if whatever, alright?

MARKHAM

Sure, sure! Number's on the card,
always on, anytime you need--

HAILEY

(firmly)
Drive safe, Markham.

He burbles out a goodnight before shutting the truck door and
starting it up. A few moments later, the truck SOARS OFF down
the country road, leaving a trail of dust in its wake.

Hailey turns back to the lone shack, which looks even smaller compared to the vast empty landscape around it. A lone windmill on the rooftop CREAKS in the evening breeze.

HAILEY (CONT'D)

Alright then.

MONTAGE -- SETTLING IN

-- As night falls, Hailey gives the generator cord a few good pulls before it COUGHS to life, filling the inside of the shack with a rich orange glow from the naked light bulbs.

-- A BLACK DUFFEL BAG is shoved out of sight under the bed as Hailey turns her attention to her suitcase. Opening it up reveals a mess of HASTILY-PACKED CLOTHES.

-- Carefully tucking a JET-BLACK PISTOL into her waistband, Hailey walks out of the shack, firing up the truck with the fob on her keychain.

EXT. BACK COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

Hailey's truck GRUNTS as it changes gears and soars down an open country road. In the distance, a pack of FOUR WILD ONES are throwing back cheap whiskey and DANCING AROUND A BONFIRE.

I/E. HAILEY'S TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Hailey flips idly through the radio stations as she drives, keeping her eyes firmly fixed on the fenceposts lining the side of the road.

RADIO DJ (V.O.)

--and that's exactly what happened in Chicago and that's what's happening here: habitable zones shrinking fast as you can blink. Folks, I don't want to scare you, but when officials come out talking about "acceptable levels of radiation..."

A flick of the wrist. The station changes again until something quiet and country comes on.

On the fencepost, a FLASH OF RED catches in the glare of the headlights.

The truck GRINDS to a halt.

EXT. BACK COUNTRY ROAD - CONTINUOUS

After a cautious glance around, Hailey steps out of the truck, one hand on the pistol. There's whooping in the distance from around the bonfire.

She approaches the lone fencepost, sagging from rot and snarled in barbed wire, with a RED RIBBON hanging loosely from it. Hailey unties the ribbon, stuffs it into her pockets.

Stepping over the lowest snarl of barbed wire, Hailey starts quietly counting her steps as she ventures out into the barren field. Six. Seven. Eight. Nine. Ten.

A mound of earth, slightly raised. She bends down, scrapes the dirt away, revealing a BURIED METAL CASE the size of a shoebox.

For the first time since we've seen her, Hailey SMILES. The rest of the dirt is quickly scraped away as she pulls the case up, shoves it into a waiting backpack.

I/E. HAILEY'S TRUCK - PARKED/MOVING - MOMENTS LATER

Hailey gets back in the truck, shuts the door, lets the backpack rest on the passengers seat. She reaches for the keys in the ignition--

SMASH! Her driver's side mirror is SHEARED CLEAN OFF by a BASEBALL BAT. She jumps, fumbles for the gun--

CRASH! The driver's window SHATTERS as the bat caves it in, showering Hailey with broken glass. A rough hand reaches in, opens the door, seizes Hailey and THROWS HER OUT ONTO THE ROAD--

It's one of the WILD ONES from the bonfire, all mismatched tattoos, runaway punk haircut, gaunt from the drugs and scarred from constant exposure to an unmerciful sun. She levels the bat at Hailey.

WILD ONE

Money?

HAILEY

(breathing heavily)
Ain't got any.

WILD ONE #2

Hey Shaps!

Another Wild One has already begun rooting around inside the truck, his eyes falling on the backpack.

WILD ONE #2 (CONT'D)
Somethin' here!

Hailey's eyes go wide, she tries to make a move--

WHUFF! The Wild One drives the bat into her side, sending the wind rocketing out of her.

WILD ONE
Hold still, now.

She turns back to the second Wild One, who's already rifling through the pockets.

WILD ONE (CONT'D)
Whasshe got there?

WILD ONE #2
(rifling through)
Nadda lotta. Some scrip.

WILD ONE
Give here.

WILD ONE #2
(re: the case)
Whassis, y'think?

He tries to open it. No dice.

WILD ONE
Maybe needs a key.
(to Hailey)
You got a key?

POW! Her head SNAPS BACK VIOLENTLY as Hailey plants a slug between her eyes.

The second Wild One immediately TAKES OFF RUNNING, leaping over the barbed wire fence and charging back towards the bonfire.

WILD ONE #2
(top of his lungs)
Help!

Steadying herself, Hailey lines up her shot.

POW!

The running figure JERKS and FALLS, kicking up a puff of dust. He doesn't move.

Slowly, Hailey makes her way over to the downed Wild One near her truck. Her eyes stare up into space, vacant.

She can't have been more than twenty.

Hailey wrenches the full backpack from her dead hands. She's about to get back into the truck when

A MOAN OF PAIN

Drifts across the empty plains, coming from the fire.

EXT. THE FIELD - MOMENTS LATER

Approaching the bonfire, Hailey scans for any other signs of life. The remaining Wild Ones have already scattered into the night.

The moan comes again.

Brushing past filthy mattresses, a severed metal arm and a rusty chainsaw, Hailey approaches

THE FIRE PIT

Where SOMETHING IN THE FIRE struggles to move: a charred HEAD AND TORSO, burnt black and slowly melting, circuitry laid bare. Built, not born.

ROBOT
(garbled)
It... it hurts...

The robot's eyes fixate on Hailey's gun.

ROBOT (CONT'D)
...please.

Nodding, Hailey raises the pistol--

CUT TO BLACK.

JACOB (V.O.)
Mom?

HAILEY (V.O.)
Yeah?

JACOB (V.O.)
What's it like out there?

INT. THE SHACK - LATER

The emptied box lies open on the kitchen table. Propped up against the side of it is a single smartphone, from which JACOB's voice emanates. It's a soft, boyish voice, can't be more than nine years old.

HAILEY

Dry. Dustbowl armpit of the west
kinda place, really. But it's
quiet. House'll need a little work,
but I think you'll like it.

Sitting at the table, Hailey picks flecks of glass out of her forearm using tools from a tiny first-aid kit. A lone gas lantern lights the kitchen and there's a half-drained glass of whiskey in front of her.

JACOB (O.C.)

(through the phone)
Any kids my age?

HAILEY

Not so far.

JACOB (O.C.)

Older kids?

HAILEY

Don't think they're the kind you'd
like playing with.

JACOB (O.C.)

Oh.
Mom?

HAILEY

Yeah?

JACOB (O.C.)

It sounds kinda boring.

HAILEY

You giving me attitude, mister?

The last piece of glass CLINKS onto a chipped plate. Hailey gives her arm a spray of disinfectant before wrapping it in gauze.

JACOB (O.C.)

I just... don't know what I'm going
to do out there.

HAILEY
(rolling her eyes)
Saw a little town on my way in
here. Thinking I'll drive in
tomorrow, see what they've got.

JACOB (O.C.)
Will I get to drive?

HAILEY
(chuckling)
Getting a little ahead of yourself
there, aren't you?

JACOB (O.C.)
...I guess.

Cinching the bandage tight, Hailey snips it from the roll and checks over her handiwork.

HAILEY
Alright. Bedtime.

JACOB (O.C.)
(sighing)
I'm not even tired.

HAILEY
Well, I've been up for two days
straight, so I'm getting some shut
eye.

Taking the phone with her, Hailey finishes the last of the whiskey and slumps over onto the nearby mattress.

JACOB (O.C.)
Mom?

HAILEY
Yeah?

JACOB (O.C.)
Are you okay?

HAILEY
I will be. Think I'll feel a lot
better when you're here.

JACOB (O.C.)
I miss you.

HAILEY
Miss you too. Now get some rest,
okay? Love you.

Ending the call, she turns the lamp down, checks that the pistol is carefully placed under the pillow and curls up to sleep with the smartphone still clutched in her hand.

Everything is finally, perfectly, silent and still.

EXT. THE SHOP - THE NEXT DAY

Hailey hauls the last rusted plate of sheet metal out of the shop, adding it to the pile of scrap in the back of her truck before hopping in and firing up the engine.

EXT. THE TOWN - DAY

Cruising past abandoned warehouses, dusty intersections and sparse storefronts, Hailey turns down the side street of this two-street town. The signs of life are few, save for

-- A LONE CHILD in a TATTERED JERSEY, ping-pong a soccer ball against the wall of a dilapidated TOWN LIBRARY, stops his game to watch Hailey drive past,

-- A TINY CHURCH, practically abandoned. The message on the marquee out front doesn't appear to have been changed in ages: "TRANSFERENCE IS A SIN AGAINST GOD!"

-- A pair of PATROLLING MILITIA, a man and a woman baking in their bulletproof vests, idly walking the main drag with their shotguns on full display,

-- A DOCTOR'S CLINIC, with lineups already out the door. Many townsfolk linger outside, sullen and empty-eyed. Their skin flakes and peels in the sun, rose-red, parched as the desert.

INT. JARRET'S JUNKSHOP - DAY

The bell door JANGLES as Hailey steps in. Every surface is covered with broken appliances, engine parts, jumbled piles of nuts and bolts. No sign of anyone who actually works here. In one corner lies an empty dog bed.

HAILEY

Hello?

JARRET (O.C.)

Just a sec!

A CLATTER from behind the counter. From the back room, JARRET, late 20's, emerges; oil-slicked hands, worn overalls, lit cigarette between his lips, lazy eye lolling to one side.

Whenever he moves, a series of CLICKS and HISSES seems to follow.

JARRET (CONT'D)
Help ya with something?

HAILEY
You buying?

JARRET
Just like the sign says.

HAILEY
I got a truckful of scrap if you're keen to look.

JARRET
Yeah. Yeah, maybe...

He gives Hailey an appraising glance over with his good eye.

HAILEY
There a problem?

JARRET
Stranger comes round looking to offload a truckful, just like that?

HAILEY
I didn't scrape it from someone else, if that's what you're asking.

JARRET
Never seen you 'round either.

He hobbles around the side of the counter, revealing a METAL PROSTHETIC where his right leg used to be. Judging by the craftsmanship, he made it himself from the contents of his own shop.

HAILEY
You know everyone in this town?

JARRET
(nodding)
Not that many left.

HAILEY
(sighing)
Look, I'm not selling you any trouble. Just clearing out my garage, thought I'd get a good price here.

(MORE)

HAILEY (CONT'D)
 If that's not good enough I can
 just take it down the road...

JARRET
 (cutting her off)
 Alright, okay, let's... let's not
 fly off here. Let's just see what
 you've got.

EXT. JARRET'S JUNKSHOP - MOMENTS LATER

The last of the scrap comes TUMBLING off the back of Hailey's truck as Jarret hauls it out, immediately picking over the best parts with an assaying eye.

HAILEY
 Well?

JARRET
 Mmm, not bad, not bad...

HAILEY
 Not gonna make me load that truck
 up again, are you?

Jarret chuckles, shakes his head.

HAILEY (CONT'D)
 How much?

JARRET
 Five. Maybe six.

HAILEY
 How about seven? Store credit?

JARRET
 (waving her away)
 Done done. Go pick out whatever you
 like, I'll be... yeah.

He dives back into the heap, twitching fingers sifting through the mess of half-rusted tools for usable pieces. Hailey ducks back

INSIDE THE SHOP

Where she walks among the crowded shelves, eyes dancing across dozens of pieces of bric-a-brac until they settle on a dented, broken orb of metal and wiring, roughly the size and shape of a football. She picks it up, tests the weight...

A WHIMPER FROM BEHIND...

Hailey turns to see a small figure slinking out of the shadows, leaving a series of TINY METALLIC CLICKS as it moves away. Cautiously, Hailey rounds the corner of the shelves to see

A SMALL DOG-LIKE ROBOT

Curled up in the dog bed. Its back legs are hissing and whirring as one of them struggles to keep working.

It gives her a baleful look through LED-lit eyes, utters a weak ELECTRONIC GROWL--

JARRET (CONT'D)

Hey now. Enough of that.

The dog immediately goes quiet as Jarret hobbles back in, peeling off a pair of gloves.

JARRET (CONT'D)

Sorry. She gets a little touchy.

HAILEY

Had her long?

JARRET

Been in the family almost thirty years now. Probably due for a refresh, aint'cha Nicky?

Nicky gives a faint, slightly warped BARK in response. Jarret turns his gaze to the scrap in Hailey's hands.

JARRET (CONT'D)

So! What'd ya find?

EXT. BACK COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Hailey's truck burns down the back roads, with nary another soul in sight.

In the far distance, a farmers field is marred with the rotting remains of a CRASHED PASSENGER PLANE.

JACOB (V.O.)

How was it?

HAILEY (V.O.)

Quiet. Not a lot there, but I think the library's still open.

JACOB (V.O.)

You think they have actual books?

HAILEY (V.O.)
I dunno. Wouldn't get my hopes up.

INT. THE SHACK - DUSK

The kitchen table is COVERED IN TOOLS as Hailey goes to work on the spherical object she picked up from the junk shop. Her smartphone remains propped up beside her, Jacob's voice coming from the speakerphone.

HAILEY
Still... worth taking a look once you're here.

JACOB (O.C.)
What about other kids my age?

HAILEY
I saw one. Didn't look like he had anyone to play with.

JACOB (O.C.)
Do you think he'll like me?

HAILEY
Can't think of a reason why he wouldn't.

The final bolt is screwed into place. A few button presses later and the lights on the outside of the sphere spark to life.

HAILEY (CONT'D)
Jacob?

JACOB (O.C.)
Yeah?

HAILEY
I'm gonna have to put you on hold for a second, okay babe?

JACOB (O.C.)
Okay...

Muting the call, Hailey wipes off her oily hands, flips open the top of the sphere and extends out a small tangle of connector cables. She connects it to her smartphone, taps a few buttons...

The screen blinks twice. A progress bar appears, fills a few times in rapid succession while the lights on the sphere dance excitedly. At last, a small CHIME signals the task is complete.

She disconnects her phone, pockets it, turns back to the sphere.

HAILEY

Jacob?

Immediately, the small LED screen on the front of the sphere flickers with a litany of symbols, sifting through the programming until JACOB'S VOICE EMERGES.

JACOB

Mom?

HAILEY

(beaming)

Surprise.

The visual receptors light up, focus on Hailey.

JACOB

What happened to your hair?

Hailey chuckles, runs her fingers through her shortened locks.

HAILEY

Just... thought it was time for a change, y'know? Can you see alright?

JACOB

So far. I... I can't feel my legs or anything--

HAILEY

I'm working on that. Just thought we could start with something simple.

JACOB

What happened to the rest of me?

HAILEY

Traffic accident. Real bad. Some lunatic just came out of nowhere--

JACOB

I don't... I don't remember that.

HAILEY

I know, babe. You were in so much pain. That's just not something I wanted you to think about, so I took it out. Okay?

JACOB

...okay.

HAILEY

You wanna see our new house?

Picking up Jacob, she gives him a quick tour of the shack.

JACOB

Wow.

HAILEY

That a good wow or a bad wow?

JACOB

It's... a wow.

EXT. THE SHACK - DUSK

Hailey steps out onto the front porch, letting Jacob take in the vast expanse around them.

JACOB

Holy...

HAILEY

Thought you'd like this. No traffic, no smog, no noise.

JACOB

It's so empty...

HAILEY

Nobody for miles out here. Much safer for us.

JACOB

You're sure?

HAILEY

I'm sure.
Just you and me.

She lets her gaze wander the horizon.

JACOB

Who are those people?

HAILEY

What?

She squints against the sunset. In the far distance, all facing the house... FIVE FIGURES, spread across the field.

They don't move a muscle. They only watch.

HAILEY (CONT'D)

Shit.

JACOB

What's the matter?

HAILEY

Can you see what they're carrying?

JACOB

I... it's hard to make out--

HAILEY

Jacob.

Jacob's processors WHIRR as his receptors NARROW to pinpricks.

JACOB

There's two with knives... one's got a hammer, and one--

KRACK-OW! A rifle shot RINGS OUT, and Hailey jerks aside instinctively as a windowpane SHATTERS. She hits the porch hard, hugging Jacob close.

JACOB (CONT'D)

Mom!

HAILEY

I'm okay!

TWO MORE SHOTS sail past, STRIKING the shack with metallic CRUNCHES. Hailey scrambles inside and slams the door shut as the other figures in the field start sprinting towards her.

INT. THE SHACK - CONTINUOUS

As Hailey shoves a chair in front of the door to brace it, a fourth rifle shot RIPS THROUGH THE METAL PANELLING. A wince, a stifled YELP of pain. Falling back, she presses her hand to her shoulder, feels the warmth of blood.

JACOB

Did they get you?

HAILEY
Just a little.

Racing to the table where Jacob rests, she plugs her smartphone back into him.

HAILEY (CONT'D)
Baby, I need you to listen to me--

WILD ONE #3 (O.C.)
(from outside)
Got a lot to answer for, lady!

HAILEY
If they get into the house, I want you to call for help. Can you do that?

WILD ONE #3 (O.C.)
Why don't you come outside? We can make real nice-nice.

HAILEY
Jacob?

JACOB
(stammering)
Okay...

Movement by the entrance; Hailey's eyes clock THREE PAIRS OF FEET moving past the cracks in the bottom of the door.

WILD ONE #3 (O.C.)
You got ten seconds!

Hailey reaches under the bed for the BLACK DUFFEL BAG.

HAILEY
Good.
Now turn off your audio for a minute.

EXT. THE SHACK - CONTINUOUS

A heavy SLEDGEHAMMER SLAMS against the metal wall panelling outside the shack once, twice, thrice...

WILD ONE #3
Come out, come ouuuuut!

He looks back to the other Wild Ones; a gang of men and women, tatted up, eyes wide with drugs, sunburnt and malnourished. The rifleman and a fifth Wild One hang back by the nearby truck, searching it.

WILD ONE #3 (CONT'D)
 We're only gonna play with ya a little! Like how you did with Shaps and Golightly last night!

Another heavy SLAM!

WILD ONE #3 (CONT'D)
 But if you don't wanna, well, we can always come in--

A final SLAM against the wall... and something DOES come out.

A small CYLINDRICAL OBJECT the size of a hockey puck spins out under the door, coming to rest as the feet of the sledge-wielding Wild One.

WILD ONE #3 (CONT'D)
 (staring dumbly)
 Oh.

THE FLASH BANG EXPLODES, and their whole world becomes white noise. Through the static--

HAILEY kicks through the door, planting TWO SLUGS in the first Wild One before DUCKING under the BLINDLY SWUNG SLEDGEHAMMER and loosing a shot INTO HIS BACK. As he collapses--

HAILEY
 (pained)
 FUCK!

Hailey twists away from the knife before it digs further into her ribs. The stunned Wild One, bloody carving knife in hand, makes another CLUMSY LUNGE at her, but she quickly whips around and slips behind him--

--just as a RIFLE SHOT SHEARS INTO HIS CHEST. Lugging along his slackening frame as a human shield, Hailey advances on the truck, emptying the rest of the clip into the last two Wild Ones.

Click. Click. Click.

She lowers the gun, then drops it to the Earth along with the dead Wild One she was carrying. Five corpses litter her front yard.

INT. THE SHACK - MOMENTS LATER

Hailey steps back into the doorway. Jacob lights up at the sight of her.

HAILEY
You okay, babe?

Silence.

HAILEY (CONT'D)
Jacob?

JACOB
Sorry! I had my audio off like you
said and I--

HAILEY
It's okay.

JACOB
Are you hurt?

HAILEY
(smirking)
Ah, not too bad--

WHAM! The sledge-toting Wild One TACKLES HER OUT OF NOWHERE, bringing her to earth just outside the door, out of sight.

JACOB
Mom!

HEAVY PUNCHES can be heard, MUFFLED YELPS OF PAIN. A KNIFE skitters across the front porch as Hailey makes a leap for it, only to be dragged out of view again. Jacob sits on the table, utterly helpless, unable to look away.

JACOB (CONT'D)
Mom!

Over the sound of the WILD ONE SCREAMING--

SMASH TO BLACK.

INT. THE SHACK - NIGHT

A single, blackened eye cracks open, winces at the harsh glare of the ceiling lamp. Hailey, face still bloodied, is lying in her own bed. She tries to speak.

GUERETTE (O.C.)
She's up.

GUERETTE, 40's, square jaw almost as sharp as her crew cut, hovers over Hailey. Her old army tattoos have long faded under the heavy glare of the sun. She'll kick your ass if you look at her the wrong way.

GUERETTE (CONT'D)

One second. Let's give you a little kick.

Rifling through her pack, Guerette pulls out a THIN GREEN PATCH and slaps it onto Hailey's arm. It takes a second before the drugs hit her system and push the words out of her mouth.

HAILEY

Where's... where's Jacob?

FRANCO (O.C.)

Jacob, eh?

Sitting at the table is FRANCO, 50's, ranch-hand muscle stuffed into a kevlar duster, thick mustache perched under a nose reddened from sun and moonshine. His shotgun leans against the table, always within arms reach.

These are the two militia patrolling the town that she passed by earlier.

FRANCO (CONT'D)

Well, if he was one of your five friends laid out on your front lawn, he hasn't gone far. Meatwagon won't get here for another hour.

HAILEY

He's my son.

FRANCO

The one that called us? Afraid you're all we found.

Slowly, Hailey sits herself up, takes in the scene. The door hangs open, and the pale light of the porch falls over the bodies that the militia still haven't had time to drag off to the side.

The sledge-wielding Wild One is the closest, knife still buried in his chest.

FRANCO (CONT'D)

Think he might've taken off running?

HAILEY
(a painful chuckle)
No.
You're using him as a hat stand.

Franco glances back to the table, lifts his wide-brimmed hat from where it lies as Jacob's lights slowly flicker back on.

FRANCO
Well shit... we got a shy one.

JACOB
(meekly)
I got scared.

HAILEY
It's okay, babe.

FRANCO
Officer Franco Lefaye. With the County.
(he rotates Jacob around)
And that's my partner, Guerette.

JACOB
Hi.

GUERETTE
(smirk)
Cute kid.

FRANCO
Yer mom's very lucky to have you, Jacob.
(he rises)
My partner's going to ask you a few questions about what happened, gotta keep things official. You think you could do that?

JACOB
Okay.

FRANCO
Atta boy.
(to Hailey)
How you feel about some fresh air?

EXT. THE SHACK - NIGHT

Hailey steps out into the cold night air, wrapping herself in a blanket. Franco strikes a match and lights himself a smoke.

HAILEY

Cops don't wear uniforms around here?

FRANCO

(chuckling)

We're barely law enforcement as it is. Guerette and I signed on to help out the sheriff after his deputies died. Easy money. Then the sheriff got caught out in a storm four years back and, well, chain of command's a hell of a thing.

HAILEY

Lucky you.

FRANCO

So I may not have all the fancy training and the deductive skills of an actual cop, but I gotta say: you don't look much like a John Smith.

HAILEY

Should I?

FRANCO

I checked the records when the call came in. This place had a new owner as of yesterday, but--

HAILEY

(sighing)

Christ.

FRANCO

You bought this place through Markham, didn't you?

She nods. Franco puffs on his smoke.

FRANCO (CONT'D)

Yeah. He's a bit of a turd.

He offers her a smoke.

HAILEY

I quit.

FRANCO

Good for you.
So, John... you from the city?

HAILEY
Pretty obvious?

FRANCO
Accent's a giveaway.
That, and the bag of toys you
brought with you.

She shoots him a look. He shakes his head.

FRANCO (CONT'D)
Don't worry, it's all still there.
Everyone's got a right to protect
themselves, don't they?
Of course, if you're out here
aiming to raise hell, well...
(glances at the bodies)
I'd say there's a few more
vacancies for that position now,
but I'm hoping they stay that way.

HAILEY
I'm just looking for a little
quiet.

FRANCO
Oh, we got loads of that.

He steps off the porch, around the bodies.

FRANCO (CONT'D)
So... Pack of Wild Ones we'd been
having trouble with for months
decide tonight's the night to make
someone's life hell. They come
here, you stand your ground and
we've got five less assholes
holding up ration trucks.
Sounds to me like it's case closed.

HAILEY
(a smirk)
Makes your job sound easy.

FRANCO
Out here? Nah.
It's never easy.
But it is simple.

Guerette emerges from the house, pack slung over her
shoulder, closing the door behind her.

FRANCO (CONT'D)
How'd our star witness do?

GUERETTE

Hundred percent.

(to Hailey)

You should probably get some rest,
let the patch do its thing.

Bending down, she seizes one of the corpses by the wrists and starts dragging it over beside the militia-issued Humvee.

FRANCO

We'll get these boys ready for the doc and hang out awhile in case there's more trouble. And, uh, hope this doesn't give you a bad impression or anything. We're actually friendly, more often than not.

Off Hailey's smile--

INT. THE SHACK - MOMENTS LATER

The door BANGS SHUT behind her as a weary Hailey staggers in, collapsing into bed. She's about to pass out when she catches sight of

THE BLACK DUFFEL BAG, which lies half-emerged from the bed, top unzipped. Curiosity piqued, Hailey edges closer, reaches in...

...and starts pulling out ROLLS OF THICK COINS. One. Two. Three. Four.

She stops, digs deeper. We don't see what else is in the bag.

HAILEY

Jacob? Did you see that woman take anything out of this bag? Any money?

JACOB

Yeah. She said it was evidence.

HAILEY

(fuck)
Right.

JACOB

Did she do something wrong?

Hailey looks to the door, weighing her options.

HAILEY

We'll see.

EXT. BACK COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Heat rises in shimmering waves off the cracked blacktop.

Stubby reptile legs kick at the sky in futility as a TURTLE tries to right itself.

TEEN #1 (O.C.)

Shiiiiit. Look at it go.

Two SUNKEN-EYED, EMACIATED TEENS, 17, crouch over the helpless animal. The bags of bottles and cans they'd been collecting lie discarded beside them.

TEEN #1 (CONT'D)

Lets eat'im.

TEEN #2

You can eat these?

TEEN #1

Crack'em open and we'll find out.

He scoops the turtle up, pulls a pocket knife, turns the reptile around to find the best place to dig the blade in.

TEEN #1 (CONT'D)

Maybe find a rock to break it open?

TEEN #2

Someone's coming.

He looks up; a pair of DARK, SLEEK SEDANS are cruising down the dusty road, headed straight for them.

The turtle wriggles and kicks, but the teen keeps a firm grip on it.

The lead sedan slows to a halt a few feet from the teens. They can't see anyone through the tinted windows.

TEEN #2 (CONT'D)

(nervous)

Are we on someone's property?

TEEN #1

Fuck if I know.

The passenger door of the first sedan opens, and out steps

WILLIS, mid-30's, clad in polished boots and a crisp, thousand-dollar blazer. Everything about him, from his perfectly sculpted hair to his unblemished skin paints him as someone decidedly out of place in this wasteland.

And he doesn't blink. Ever.

WILLIS
Whatcha got there?

The two teens exchange nervous glances as Willis steps forward.

WILLIS (CONT'D)
You know those are practically extinct?

TEEN #2
Uhh...

TEEN #1
Yeah, we were just gonna take care of it.

WILLIS
I'm sure you were.

His eyes quickly dart over the KNIFE in Teen #1's hand, as well as the PISTOL tucked into Teen #2's waistband.

TEEN #1
You, uh, you lost or something?

WILLIS
No. I'm exactly where I need to be.
You two live around here?

TEEN #1
Harwick County.

TEEN #2
(quickly)
They know we're out here.

WILLIS
And you're, what, almost eighteen?
How come you didn't transfer?

The teens exchange looks. What's this guy's deal?

TEEN #1
Dad said it wasn't natural.

WILLIS
You don't really believe that, do
you?

TEEN #2
Some of our friends tried last
year, it didn't work and they went--

WILLIS
Crazy?

Teen #2 nods.

WILLIS (CONT'D)
You know why that happened to them?

TEEN #1
Dad said God was punishing them.

Willis steps closer. The Teens instinctively shrink back.

WILLIS
Adult brain's too used to walking
around in it's own flesh and blood.
Can't figure out the change to
metal. Full-on rejects it, breaks
down.
(a grin)
That's why you gotta get em young.

As Willis reaches into the folds of his jacket, both Teens
IMMEDIATELY TENSE. Teen #2 reaches for his PISTOL.

WILLIS (CONT'D)
Hold on, now.

From the cars, FOUR HUNTER ROBOTS RAPIDLY EMERGE: six feet
tall, with angular, inhuman faces and bodies built like the
destroyers they are.

Every gun they have is trained on the two hapless teens.

TEEN #2
(whimpering)
Oh shit. Shit shit shit!

WILLIS
Easy. They're harmless. Unless I
don't want them to be.

He withdraws a PHOTOGRAPH from his coat pocket, shows it to
the teens; it's a woman with long dark hair, snapped from a
security camera, pistol raised at an unseen victim.

It's HAILEY.

WILLIS (CONT'D)
Have you seen her?

Both teens take a look, shake their heads mutely.

WILLIS (CONT'D)
You sure?

Willis studies their reaction intently, until--

WILLIS (CONT'D)
Well, that's a shame. You two have
a nice day.

The Hunter Robots lower their weapons. The trembling teens sigh in relief as Willis turns to head back to his car.

He only gets halfway there when he stops.

WILLIS (CONT'D)
One more thing.

I/E. WILLIS' CAR - PARKED / MOVING - MOMENTS LATER

Willis shuts the passenger door, smiles down at the turtle now resting in his lap.

WILLIS
How many more to go?

HUNTER #1
Nineteen more counties.

WILLIS
(sighing)
Of course there is.

The car glides on.

I/E. HAILEY'S TRUCK - MOVING - DAY

The long, unending country road flows underneath.

Jacob sits on the dash, visual receptors wide, taking in the journey.

Hailey chews a toothpick in the driver's seat, one eye on Jacob and one on the road. Her wounds have already started to heal, bruises fading to pale smudges on her skin.

EXT. THE TOWN - DAY

Hailey steps out of her truck with Jacob under her arm. As they walk, they pass by the old library again, where the kid is still kicking his soccer ball against the wall...

...except the kid isn't even a kid anymore. Instead, a SLENDER FIVE FOOT TALL ROBOT has taken his place, still wearing his tattered old jersey out of habit.

INT. JARRET'S JUNKSHOP - DAY

A TINY ENGINE and a pair of TREADS are dropped down on the counter. Jarret, who's at work repairing Nicky's broken hind leg, looks up to see Hailey already counting out the coins.

HAILEY

Can I borrow your bench?

EXT. THE TOWN, MARKET - DAY

With Jacob rolling along beside her on his new treads, Hailey weaves through the farmers market. All the produce on offer is stunted and twisted, barely looks edible.

TOWNSFOLK

Drop's here!

Any sluggishness brought on by the heat suddenly evaporates as the townsfolk surge towards the entrance of the market, where a SUPPLY TRUCK rolls in.

From the back, SOLDIERS start chucking out RELIEF SUPPLIES to the waiting crowds. They tear into them eagerly, spilling their contents: bottled water, nutrient pills, strips of green patches, anti-rad medication.

INT. THE ROADHOUSE BAR - DAY

A FRESHLY-POURED PINT OF BEER plunks down beside Guerette, who sits nursing a nearly-empty glass at the bar.

GUERETTE

That for me?

A pair of green patches also fall beside the pint as Hailey takes a seat beside her.

HAILEY

Those too. Realized you probably
burned through your supply bringing
me back around.

GUERETTE

Just part of the job.
You realize I can't accept these.

HAILEY

Officially.

GUERETTE

(a wry grin)
Officially.

Guerette nudges her emptied glass aside, starts on the fresh one. On the floor beside them, Jacobs receptors glitter as he takes in the bars denizens, the flickering advertisements on the walls, the enticing hues of the slot machines.

GUERETTE (CONT'D)

So... how you like our little scrap
of nowhere?

HAILEY

Got its charms.

GUERETTE

Lucked out, getting here when you
did. Any later and you'd be waiting
another two weeks for a supply
drop.

HAILEY

Any other tips I should know? Since
I'm--

GUERETTE

Not from around here?

Hailey nods. Guerette drinks deep.

GUERETTE (CONT'D)

Ration your water, the more the
better. That's the first thing we
run low on in the summer.
Also, it's storm season, so you'd
best learn how to seal up your
place or you'll be pissing blood
for weeks.

(a sip)

What'd you do? Back in the Big
Smoke?

HAILEY

Bit of this, bit of that. Mechanic,
lately.

GUERETTE

No, I mean what'd you do to have to
come all the way out here?

Hailey looks away.

HAILEY

Jacob, why don't you go have a look
around? Let the grownups talk?

JACOB

Okay.

HAILEY

But not too far.

Jacob wheels off.

GUERETTE

That much scrip in your big bag of
tricks, you'd think you knocked
over a bank.

HAILEY

And how much of that did you help
yourself to while I was out?

GUERETTE

Throwing around accusations like
that ain't a great way to make
friends. Just so you know.

(a small grin)

Besides, it's not like I left you
with nothing.

Rolling across the sticky bar floor, Jacob weaves his way
past a pair of drunks until the nearby television ad catches
his eyes:

TV COMMERCIAL (V.O.)

(somber, sober voice)

...overpopulation, widespread
famine, global warming and so much
more.

On the screen, scenes of DEVASTATION: blighted crops, food
riots, melting icebergs--

TV COMMERCIAL (V.O.)

With habitable zones disappearing
across the globe, raising a child
in this world isn't just
irresponsible... it's cruel.

Scenes of SUFFERING: Starving street orphans staring into the camera with saucer eyes. A lone child wanders shoeless through an urban war zone.

TV COMMERCIAL (V.O.)

Do the right thing: For your
children, and for our future.

The young orphan now lies on an OPERATING TABLE, glassy-eyed, dead to the world, attended by doctors as WIRES are run out of his skull... and into that of a waiting ROBOT BODY.

TV COMMERCIAL (V.O.)

Compensation plans are still
available. For a digital imprint as
unique as you are, don't wait. Ask
your doctor today about
Transference.

Scenes of a TV-pretty mother and father, arms outstretched, racing to meet the embrace of their ANDROID SON. As the scene fades to logo--

TV COMMERCIAL (V.O.)

This message brought to you by the
American Provisional Government.

GUERETTE (V.O.)

(overlap)

--the way I see it, someone rolls
in with that much in loose change,
stands to reason that they don't
want people digging any deeper.

Back at the bar, Hailey is downing her own beer at a sprint.

HAILEY

So what? You just took a "No
Questions Asked" fee back there?

GUERETTE

That's about right, sure.
I'd feel bad, but I think I need it
more than you do.

HAILEY

You're really doing the badge
proud, you know that?

GUERETTE

(a shrug)

Didn't take any oaths. Just stepped up when the last guy croaked. I'm not good at my job, "John." I don't look too close and I don't give two damns about what you did to get that money. So how about we leave things at that before you get me curious?

Draining the dregs of her beer, Guerette hoists her shotgun and heads for the door.

GUERETTE (CONT'D)

Thanks for the beer.

As she leaves, she passed by Jacob, who has rolled over to an unattended slot machine covered in HEARTS AND RABBITS. A soothing, jazz and cigarettes voice pours from the machine's speakers.

SLOT MACHINE (V.O.)

Hey sexy. You wanna play?

JACOB

I... ah... I can't reach.

SLOT MACHINE (V.O.)

Oh, that's fine. All you need to play is a wireless connection. You have one of those, don't you?

JACOB

(Uneasy)

Yeah...

SLOT MACHINE (V.O.)

(purring)

You feeling lucky?

Jacob's receptors blink, then switch to a lighter shade of green. The slot machine's screen immediately flickers as the connection is made and Jacob's info floods in.

A HARSH BUZZ

SLOT MACHINE

Sorry Jacob.

This game is for adults only--

HAILEY

Jacob!

Jacob quickly turns and whirrs away.

JACOB (O.C.)
I don't really like it in here...

HAILEY (O.C.)
Me neither. Let's go.

His information stays on the screen a second longer before blinking out, offering the briefest glimpse at a portrait of a YOUNG, SANDY-HAIRED BOY, almost ten.

INT. THE SHACK - DAY

Hailey's bruises have all but faded now as she screws a new door into place; reinforced, solid and sturdy. Almost all the junk has been cleared from the shack, replaced with secondhand furniture that almost makes it look livable.

EXT. THE TOWN, MARKET - DAY

Another supply drop. Franco watches the crowd rip into the bundles from the truck like starved scavengers.

Within the crowd, he spots Hailey carrying her own drop back out. They exchange warm smiles and nods.

EXT. GUERETTE'S HOME - NIGHT

A squat farmhouse, nestled among the dead trees. Lining the path to the house are three OVERGROWN GRAVES marked by scrap wood crosses.

Guerette hands over a heavy stack of the money she stole from Hailey to the TOWN DOCTOR, 60's, a withered husk of a man with bandages covering most of his hands and arms. He steps inside--

INT. GUERETTE'S HOME - MOMENTS LATER

--where GUERETTE'S MOTHER, 80's, sits in her wheelchair facing the window, mouth open whispering to someone who isn't there, tubes racing in and out of her arms. In her hands...

A PHOTOGRAPH of GUERETTE, alongside her mother and THREE OTHER CHILDREN (all adopted.)

Cracking open his bag of pills and inoculations, the Doctor goes to work while Guerette watches from the doorway.

She only catches a brief glimpse from her mother.
Recognition, maybe?

EXT. FARMERS FIELDS - DAY

Hailey's truck cruises past a field of corn. Drones hover over the crops, spraying them with a dozen pesticides.

EXT. FARMSTEAD HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Hailey, wearing a GAS MASK, steps out of her truck in front of the farmhouse; there's nearly a DOZEN other robots milling about, hauling sacks of produce, working on tractors or sweeping the front porch.

Sitting in a rocking chair wheezing through his own mask is BENNET, 60's, as gnarled and hardbitten as the plants he grows. Splotches of red earth line his overalls, under his fingernails, in what's left of his hair.

BENNET

You lost?

HAILEY

You Bennet?

BENNET

(standing)

What can I do ya for?

HAILEY

Got your name from a junker in town. Said you had an accident recently.

Bennet's face immediately falls.

BENNET

You're not family, are you?

HAILEY

No sir. Just a vulture.

INT. FARMSTEAD GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Bennet rolls up the garage door, revealing a BULKY MASS covered by a BLUE TARP.

HAILEY

You mind?

BENNET

I know he won't.

Stepping closer, she pulls back the tarp, revealing one of the STURDY FARM ROBOTS; its head and right arm have been BRUTALLY MANGLED.

BENNET (CONT'D)

Got caught in a thresher. By the time we pulled him out, well--

HAILEY

He have anyone?

BENNET

Sent word to his family back in the city. Nobody's showed, nobody wrote back.

HAILEY

How much?

Bennet balks, fumbles for the right words.

BENNET

You're not gonna... not gonna do anything unseemly with the--

HAILEY

No. Not at all.
Just got someone who needs it more.

INT. THE SHOP - DAY

The mangled body of the Farm Robot lies on the workbench. Hailey's already working on removing the head as Jacob watches.

HAILEY

I know it's nothing fancy and there's a little wear and tear, but... well, I just thought it'd be nice to have you sitting at the table with me at dinner and--

JACOB

No, I like it.

HAILEY

You do?

JACOB

Maybe with a new arm.

HAILEY

Yeah, I'll see what the junkers
scrape up. Might be awhile before
we get one in good condition, but--

SHHRRK! The shredded robot's head POPS OFF and hits the
floor. Jacob backs up instinctively.

A brief moment of silence. Hailey scoops down to pick it up.

HAILEY (CONT'D)

Sorry about that.

JACOB

It's okay...

Jacob wheels closer to the severed head, its one remaining
receptor hanging limply from the broken socket.

JACOB (CONT'D)

Do you think he's still in there?

HAILEY

No, babe. There's no way he'd still
be intact. It's just a body now.

Picking up the severed robot head, she gazes inside at the
torn circuitry and melted boards, then adds the head to the
pile of scrap.

HAILEY (CONT'D)

Come on. We're going to be late.

EXT. BACK COUNTRY ROAD - DUSK

Hailey's truck rumbles down the highway towards the
glimmering lights of town. In the distance, ugly storm clouds
bruise the sky.

EXT. FRANCO'S MOBILE - NIGHT

Closing the hood of his barbecue to keep the clumps of meat
grilling longer, Franco wipes his sauce-stained hands onto
his grubby apron and crosses the yard in front of his
weatherworn double-wide to greet Hailey's approaching truck.

BETH (V.O.)

Well, it's just so nice to have new
people here.

INT. FRANCO'S MOBILE - LATER

In their cramped and cluttered kitchen, BETH, 50's, a fading southern belle with a face marred by melanoma and eyes that could carve glass offers the plate of pork to Franco.

BETH

Not that we don't get our fair
share of transients, but they're
mostly just looking for a seasons
work or to cause trouble.

Franco adds a generous portion to his plate then passes the meat over to Hailey.

HAILEY

Have you lived here long?

BETH

Only my whole life. Used to be so
green in the summer... I've got
pictures somewhere--

PETER (O.C.)

(sighing)

Mom... come on.

PETER, an angular and slim robot, slouches in his chair beside his mother, an empty plate in front of him.

PETER (CONT'D)

She tries to show everyone, you can
barely make anything out anymore--

HAILEY

I'd love to see them.

Beth smiles. Peter gives a small digital grumble. Propped on a milk crate in the seat beside Hailey, Jacob swivels about, receptors picking up the mixed reactions. There's a brief moment of silence...

HAILEY (CONT'D)

Well this is just... delicious.

FRANCO

(beaming)

Like it? Been perfecting that
recipe for years. Could write it
down for you if you want.

PETER

What's it taste like?

A moment. Franco glares at his son.

FRANCO
You know what it tastes like. I
made this for you all the time.

PETER
Remind me.

They've been down this road before. Franco obliges.

FRANCO
Got a little brown sugar in there.
Dried chilies. Powdered garlic.
Allspice. Leaves that little bit of
heat at the back of your mouth.

Peter's frame seems to visibly relax at the memory. Franco
turns his attention back to his plate.

PETER
And the pork?

Another withering look from Franco.

BETH (V.O.)
Sorry about Peter there.

CUT TO:

INT. FRANCO'S MOBILE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Beth hands another soapy dish to Hailey to dry. Out through
the kitchen window, Franco and Peter split wood for a fire.

BETH
Most of the time he's fine. You
just caught him on the wrong night.

HAILEY
How long has it been?

BETH
Twenty years last week. Had the
whole place decked out in streamers
and balloons to celebrate.
He just stayed out in the field all
day.

SHNK! Peter splits a log with unerring precision.

BETH (CONT'D)

Franco and I were thinking about giving him a little nudge out of the nest. Sending him to the city, where there's more... more for him to do, I guess. More people like him.

Hailey stays silent, watching Jacob rolling around in the front yard, doing circles around the fire pit as Franco piles the kindling.

BETH (CONT'D)

Do you think he might find things a little better there? In the city?

HAILEY

Honestly?
Nothing good ever comes out of that place.

BETH

(chuckling)

Except you and Jacob, of course.

Hailey's eyes remain fixed on her son.

INT. THE ROADHOUSE BAR - NIGHT

On a grimy flat-screen, a pair of ROBOTS tear each other to pieces in a TELEVISED PIT FIGHT. The commentators go ballistic as arms and legs are torn asunder. The loser lets off an agonized SCREAM. The crowd eats it all up.

TRUCK DRIVER (O.C.)

You mind changing that?

The channels change until the WEATHER REPORTS come on; ominous smears of color across a map of the Midwest, with warnings painted across the bottom of the screen.

BARTENDER

Jesus... think that'll hit us?

A drunk SLEEPS at his table, while the BARTENDER and a TRUCK DRIVER watch the screen from their place at the bar.

TRUCK DRIVER

Thinking so.

BARTENDER

Looks like a real skin-peeler.

Behind them, the bar's front door opens and closes SILENTLY.

TRUCK DRIVER
Makes me real fucking glad I'm
headed north.
(slapping money down)
Same as before. I gotta piss.

The bartender starts pouring a fresh beer as the truck driver ambles off to the bathroom. When he sets the beer back down

WILLIS HAS APPEARED AT THE BAR

BARTENDER
Ah... hello.

Willis grins.

WILLIS
Howdy.

BARTENDER
Getcha anything?

WILLIS
A beer, please.

The bartender obliges. Willis' eyes flit around the bar, taking it all in before settling back on the television.

WILLIS (CONT'D)
Bad weather coming.

BARTENDER
Looking that way.

Willis motions to the bartender's scarred hands.

WILLIS
You get caught out in the last one?

BARTENDER
Ah, didn't get things sealed up
properly at home.

WILLIS
Tough break.

BARTENDER
Brother got it worse.

WILLIS
Looks painful.

The bartender pours himself a shot.

BARTENDER

Ah, well... that's what the hooch
is for.

WILLIS

Amen to that.

The bartender shoots his back. Willis hasn't touched his
drink yet. He rifles through his coat pockets.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

You know, a funny thing happened
the other day--

BARTENDER

Oh yeah?

WILLIS

Picking up my ration drop, and
wouldn't you know it...

He slides a pack of ANTI-RAD MEDS across the bar.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

They gave me one too many.

BARTENDER

Lucky you.

WILLIS

You're right. I am lucky.
You look like you could use these.

The bartender hesitates.

BARTENDER

These are worth a lot more'n a
beer.

WILLIS

They sure are.

BARTENDER

Alright. What's your price?

WILLIS

Five minutes.

BARTENDER

(uneasy)
Five minutes of what?

Willis points to the security camera affixed to the ceiling above the bar.

WILLIS

I'd like five minutes to go over your security footage from a few days back. That's all.

The bartender chuckles.

BARTENDER

Ahhhh shit.
This ain't my day.

WILLIS

It could be.

BARTENDER

Nah, it ain't.
Those cameras haven't worked in over a year.

WILLIS

(sighing)
Well, there might be another option-
-

TRUCK DRIVER

Jeeezus! Look at this shiteater.

The Truck Driver lumbers back. Willis swivels to face him.

TRUCK DRIVER (CONT'D)

Musta taken you a fuckton of wrong turns to wind up here, hey pretty-boy?

WILLIS

I'm just having a conversation with-
-

BARTENDER

Ease off, Sal. He's alright.

TRUCK DRIVER

Alright? He ain't alright.

WILLIS

All due respect, friend, you don't know me.

TRUCK DRIVER

Ain't my friend. And I know plenty like you.

(MORE)

TRUCK DRIVER (CONT'D)
 (to the bartender)
 D'you know what those city-slicker
 fucks do to each other? Do ya?

BARTENDER
 (taking back his beer)
 Why don't you call it a night, Sal?

WILLIS
 Yeah Sal. Let's just take a second
 here--

TRUCK DRIVER
 They fuckin' buy people, man. Make
 em do things nobody in their right
 mind would do.

Willis is up from his barstool, voice shifting to a
 comforting tone.

WILLIS
 Look, there's... there's a lot of
 misinformation out there. A lot of
 things that just aren't true.

TRUCK DRIVER
 Why'nt you tell that to my little
 brother, asshole?

WILLIS
 What happened to him?

TRUCK DRIVER
 It's not his fault. It's not. He
 just...
 He didn't know what he was doing,
 the debts, and these fuckers...
 they got him down a uranium mine
 for the next hundred years. They
 don't even let him up to... to...

WILLIS
 I hear you, friend. I do.
 I've lost someone too.

TRUCK DRIVER
 I just... How can they not even let
 him up to see the sun once in
 awhile?

Willis sighs.

WILLIS

Well, because of your generations idiot mistakes, we probably won't even be able to see the sun in thirty years. So really, your dumb little brother's not missing out on much. Now, please, let me finish what I came here for so I can get out of this shithole. Alright?

The truck driver's jaw goes slack. Willis turns back to the bartender.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

Listen, there was a slot machine that may have--

WHAM! The Truck Driver BASHES Willis' head against the countertop. The stranger from the city CRUMPLES to the floor.

BARTENDER

Sal!

TRUCK DRIVER

(sputtering anger)

You can't just-- nobody gets to say that about my--

SHHHKIT! A high pitched electric hum fills the air and the Truck Driver stops talking... a LANCE OF SUPERHEATED AIR SHIMMERS for a second before a PERFECT BURN HOLE the size of a quarter appears on his throat.

The bartender turns back to see Willis rising, half his torn cheek revealing his mechanical insides. A THIN SILVER PISTOL in his hand hums a lethal note.

WILLIS

Sorry. You were saying?

He marches forward, shooting the Truck Driver AGAIN AND AGAIN. The burly man COLLAPSES against the jukebox, torso BLACKENED WITH BURN MARKS, his flannel vest catching fire.

If Willis breathed, he'd be heaving heavily as the adrenaline of the kill rushed to his brain. All he gets instead is a small, satisfied smile.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

(turning)

Now then--

BOOM! The bartender's shotgun goes off, flecking Willis' face with pellets and DROPPING him to the floor. He pulls a table down and crawls behind it as the bartender marches out, unloading shell after shell, tearing up the floor.

BARTENDER
(shouting)
Merl!

The sleeping drunk, who's now very much wide awake, cowers terrified in the corner.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
Get help!

The bartender's eyes are off Willis, only for a second. It's long enough for him to lean out from behind cover to line up a shot right into the bartender's right leg. He squeezes the trigger, holds it--

The bartender SCREAMS as his leg is BURNED CLEAN THROUGH, severing his foot. He topples down in agony as Merl the drunk takes off sprinting for the door.

One more shot, carefully aimed by Willis, CARVES OUT the back of the fleeing man's head like a melon. He collapses inches from the door, the crater in his head still smoking as his hair catches fire.

Silence and stillness, save for the drone of the television. Willis picks a few shotgun pellets out of his forehead as he steps over the bartender, FINISHING HIM OFF with a quick pull of the trigger. He stalks over to

THE BANK OF SLOT MACHINES

And sits himself down in front of the one with the sultry voice.

SLOT MACHINE (V.O.)
Hey sexy. You wanna play?

WILLIS
Hello gorgeous.

His eyes FLICKER A DEEP RED as he connects wirelessly.

WILLIS (CONT'D)
Let's talk, you and me.

The screen suddenly changes, revealing footage from the machine's point of view. Hours worth of video passes by in seconds as Willis scrubs through, until at last--

--he freezes it on an image of HAILEY seated at the bar beside Guerette.

EXT. FRANCO'S MOBILE - NIGHT

A BLACK GUITAR CASE SNAPS OPEN, revealing a BEAUTIFUL ACOUSTIC GUITAR. It's only as it's brought out into the light of the campfire that its BURNT EDGES become clear to see...

HAILEY

Holy shit.

Sitting around the fire pit in the front yard, Hailey watches as Franco gently extracts the instrument from the case.

FRANCO

Out on patrol about five years back, came across this tour bus on the side of the road. Wild Ones worked it over good, bodies everywhere. Probably made off with a ton of drugs.

HAILEY

Probably.

FRANCO

Bus is on fire, I'm in there looking for survivors and of course there ain't any... but there is this.

He strums a few chords. While it's in tune and well-kept, there's something undeniably off about the tone.

HAILEY

I can't remember the last time I saw one of these up close.

FRANCO

You play?

HAILEY

(shaking her head)
Not with these.

She holds up her right hand, waggles a few of the fingers. The SCARS on them are readily apparent in the firelight, tracing down her arms, leading the way to the old TRACK MARKS.

HAILEY (CONT'D)
Nerves are dead. These three
fingers can't feel a thing.

FRANCO
Part of the job?

HAILEY
(shrugging)
I wasn't the smartest kid..

She pulls another toothpick from her pocket, pops it between
her teeth.

HAILEY (CONT'D)
Funny thing? Out of all that shit,
smokes were the hardest to give up.

BETH (V.O.)
Franco?

Beth leans out the door of the trailer.

BETH
I'm going to bed. And if you start
singing again, I'm locking you out.

FRANCO
Love you too.

BETH
(shouting)
Peter! Don't wander too far!

PETER (O.C.)
(far off)
We won't, mom!

Beth smirks, shuts the door behind her. After a moment--

FRANCO
I was kinda the same way. Not
smart. Think it was after they
started using words in the news
like "Irreversible" and Unlivable
in fifty years", I just... Well, I
think we all went a little loud and
a little quiet. Each had ourselves
our own personal reckoning.

HAILEY
How'd that go for you?

Franco strums a few more chords, plucks the strings, builds a melody.

FRANCO

Rolled up to a diner fixing to rob the place. Beth poured me a coffee and said I looked like shit. We had Peter a year later.

HAILEY

Romantic.

FRANCO

Ain't it just? We got a lot of bad blood from our friends, you know, "How could you bring a child into this world?"

At the time, though? It all seemed pretty alright.

(Puffs on his cigarette)

Jacob's dad still alive?

Hailey looks out to the edge of the property, where Jacob trails after Peter, who is sweeping a flashlight across the earth near the fence.

HAILEY

Couldn't say.

FRANCO

Lost touch?

HAILEY

Nah. Just never was in the habit of asking their names.

EXT. FRANCO'S FIELD - CONTINUOUS

The flashlight beam alights on a COW'S SKULL.

JACOB

Cool!

PETER

Right?

Jacob wheels in closer.

PETER (CONT'D)

This was the last one for a couple miles.

JACOB
Did she have a name?

PETER
Probably not. Think they just
called her "Cow."

JACOB
Did you eat any of her?

Peter doesn't answer.

JACOB (CONT'D)
Mom says the meat they grow these
days doesn't even come close. If
you had some, you'd be, like... the
luckiest--

PETER
I don't know if I did.

Jacob rotates to look up at Peter.

PETER (CONT'D)
My old man had me refreshed a few
years back. Whenever you do that
there's always a chance you lose
more than just a few months and
I... lost food. All of it.

JACOB
Why'd he do that to you?

PETER
I dunno. Maybe I did something bad?
(a chuckle)
I probably beat the shit out of
him.

There's a RUMBLE nearby... but it isn't the approaching
storm. Seconds later, Peter and Jacob are both BATHED IN
HEADLIGHTS as Guerette's Humvee roars past, turning onto
Franco's drive.

PETER (CONT'D)
Dad!

Over at

THE FIRE PIT

Franco has already leapt out of his chair and has one hand on
his holster until he sees who's driving up to him.

The Humvee GRINDS TO A HALT as Guerette hops out... fully armed and armored.

If her expression could get any darker, it does the second she clocks Hailey's presence.

GUERETTE
(to Franco)
Your radio's off.

FRANCO
It's charging inside. What's the ruckus?

He takes in Guerette's battle-ready attire.

FRANCO (CONT'D)
What happened?

INT. THE ROADHOUSE BAR - NIGHT

The bodies are still strewn around the roadhouse in a ghastly tableau, which is now bathed in the Humvee's bright REDS and BLUES. Franco and Guerette step gingerly through the crime scene, firearms raised.

FRANCO
Jesus. Merl.

He looks away from the remains of Merl's head by the door.

GUERETTE
Booze is still here. Register's fine.

FRANCO
Shit. Not our usual guys, then.

GUERETTE
Could still be here.

Franco looks back to Hailey, who's bringing up the rear. Her eyes are fixed on the burnt out remains of Merl's skull.

FRANCO
We're gonna sweep the place. Keep everyone out, alright?

Hailey nods. Behind her, at the entrance, a small gaggle of curious townsfolk are starting to congregate. As Franco and Guerette move to check the back rooms of the bar, Hailey steps over Merl's body to close the door--

SLOT MACHINE (O.C.)

Hey sexy.

Hailey throws a glance to the slot machine in the corner.

SLOT MACHINE (CONT'D)

You like what you see, Hailey?

Hailey FREEZES.

SLOT MACHINE (CONT'D)

I could show you more, if you like.

I can go all night long.

But I don't have to.

A PHONE NUMBER FLASHES ON THE SCREEN.

SLOT MACHINE (CONT'D)

I just really want to hear your voice.

The number disappears, replaced by a WINKY FACE.

SLOT MACHINE (CONT'D)

See you soon.

BZT! The screen flashes the BRIEFEST IMAGE of WILLIS' GRINNING FACE before the machine's screen cracks and dissolves into a final, fatal black.

Hailey stands at the doorway, utterly paralyzed.

OUTSIDE, in her truck, Jacob's receptors take in the scene from the dashboard...

INT. THE SHACK - NIGHT

Hailey pulls the BLACK DUFFEL BAG out from under the bed.

HAILEY

Jacob?

In the corner, Jacob clicks in acknowledgement.

HAILEY (CONT'D)

Time for bed.

JACOB

Mom, I...

HAILEY

Bed. Now.

Jacob obediently clicks off. Hailey makes sure his receptors have dimmed before zipping open the bag and rooting around past STACKS OF COINS, a jet black DISASSEMBLED ASSAULT RIFLE, fistfuls of bullets...

...and a small SILVER CLIP roughly the size of her palm. She pockets it, along with a smaller BURNER PHONE.

EXT. THE SHACK - MOMENTS LATER

Affixing the silver clip to the bottom of the burner phone, Hailey punches the number from the slot machine, taking a deep breath to steady herself before the final digit is dialed.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The top is popped from a SILVER SPRAY CAN marked up and down with indecipherable symbols. Standing in front of the cracked bathroom mirror, Willis presses the flesh of his torn cheek together and SPRAYS THE WOUND LIBERALLY, binding it together.

DINGDING! His smartphone begins ringing on the counter beside him. His eyes glint briefly as he established the connection and keeps working on mending his face.

WILLIS
(sweetly)
Hailey.

HAILEY (V.O.)
You're not going to be able to trace this. Just so you know.

WILLIS
I'd be amazed if you ever got that sloppy. Jacob, on the other hand, should not play with gambling machines connected to the web.

INTERCUT - THE MOTEL ROOM / OUTSIDE THE SHACK

Hailey paces down her driveway... in the distance, lightning dances among the building thunderheads.

WILLIS
Almost had me fooled, you know that? When they brought me his body it just about broke my heart.

HAILEY

I'm sure it did. How're you liking our little neck of the woods out here? Miss home yet?

He flicks the bathroom light off and walks through the dingy motel room, garnished only with a single faded watercolor. Picking at a small salad, he offers a leaf to the TURTLE which now sits in a small shoebox.

WILLIS

It's got a bit more life than I was expecting. That said, I think the small-town charm lasted all of five minutes.

HAILEY

Well, I bet you're just dying to get back to "civilization," so I'm going to save you some time: You're never going to take my son back there. Ever again.

WILLIS

(clucking disapprovingly)
Hailey, you know how terrible it'd look if I came home empty handed.

HAILEY

Not my problem.

WILLIS

And he's not really your son anymore, is he? I think we were very clear on that point.

Hailey stops pacing.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

Besides, where else are you going to go? You've been leading us south for months... keep going that way, all you're going to find is radiation and dust.

Hailey stares at the massive storm clouds on the horizon; the churning, almost malevolent mass of air and electricity.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

Now I'm real sorry about the scene at the bar. I am.

HAILEY

Did all that just to get my attention?

WILLIS

Actually no. I just lost my temper. Hadn't killed anyone with a pulse in ages. But it worked, didn't it?

He sighs, slumping down on the bed.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

Look, Hailey, I'm tired of this, so why don't we split the difference? I can say we never found you. I get Jacob, you get to keep your stash, live out the rest of your little life. Nobody else has to die.

Silence.

HAILEY

Okay.

WILLIS

Okay?

HAILEY

There's an address. You got a pen?

Willis scrambles to grab one from the bedside table.

HAILEY (CONT'D)

You ready for this?

WILLIS

Yes, abso--

A TERRIBLE ELECTRIC SHRIEK PIERCES HIS MIND, sending him WRITHING IN PAIN to the floor.

Hailey PRESSES THE BUTTON on the SILVER CLIP again, feeding more torturous noise through the receiver. Through the horrible static, Willis' SCREAMS cut through in ragged clips before the Silver Clip OVERLOADS and FRIES THE BURNER PHONE.

Hailey drops the sizzling device to the dirt, watching as the lights on it die.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Wracked with pain, Willis struggles to stand, then collapses back on the floor. The horrible electric signal continues to LOOP in his ears, overloading his processors.

There's a heavy KNOCK on the door.

VOICE

Willis?

WILLIS

(in agony)

Help... me...

The door EXPLODES IN SPLINTERS as the four Hunter Robots come storming in. Two immediately race to Willis' side.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

S...spiked. Through the phone...

I... I can't--

HUNTER #1

He's burning out. Get the coolant!

Metal hands RIP OPEN Willis' shirt, dig under the skin until they find the right button to push, releasing a PLUME OF SMOKE into the air as WILLIS' CHEST CAVITY SLOWLY OPENS LIKE CUPBOARD DOORS...

INT. THE SHACK - NIGHT

Hailey slowly closes the door behind her, careful not to make a sound. The room is dark... save for JACOB'S GLOWING RECEPTORS in the corner.

HAILEY

You're supposed to be asleep.

She lights the lamp. Jacob rolls out of the corner. She picks him up and sits with him on the kitchen table.

JACOB

The thing at the bar--

HAILEY

Jacob--

JACOB

Was that about us?

Hailey reaches for the whiskey bottle... empty.

HAILEY

I think so.

Silence.

JACOB

What are we going to do?

HAILEY

Keep moving. Like we do.

She picks a few pieces of gravel out from Jacob's treads.

HAILEY (CONT'D)

But we're going to need to get you
into that new body first.

JACOB

It still needs a lot of work.

HAILEY

I know.

JACOB

I don't really need it, I'm fine
how I am...

HAILEY

You're not going to outrun anyone
on those treads, babe. Gotta grow
up sometime.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Willis COMES BACK ONLINE, his eyes focusing on the lazily
spinning ceiling fan above him.

He doesn't waste a second. His voice is immediately all-
business.

WILLIS

How long?

HUNTER #1

Couple hours. Nearly cooked your
processors out.

Willis sits up, notices he's shirtless... and his chest is
HANGING OPEN, revealing a maze of whirring machinery and
sturdy circuit boards all bleached with COOLANT. Upon seeing
him rise, the other Hunters immediately leap to their feet.

HUNTER #1 (CONT'D)
 Man, you should really be resting--

WILLIS
 Did I fucking ask you?

Willis' eyes briefly shift color, like they did back at the bar. The Hunters receptors DO THE SAME.

HUNTER #1
 No. No, I'm sorry...

Taking hold of his open ribcage, Willis FORCES his chest shut again.

WILLIS
 Get me a map of this shit town.
 First light, we start going door to door.

He gives it the briefest of sprays to help re-seal the flesh over his wounds before standing.

WILLIS (CONT'D)
 Let's burn the bitch out.

INT. THE STATION - DAY

Headlines flit across the screen of a BEAT-UP COMPUTER, matching the tempo of a CLICKING MOUSE.

CLICK. "Transferred population now eclipses natural-born humans."

CLICK. "Radiation spreading across Washington, shrinking Habitable Zone."

CLICK. "Crime spree halted outside Tulsa."

At her desk, Guerette takes a deep slug of coffee and keeps on clicking. Faded recruiting posters for the police line the walls of the old station. She occupies one desk out of a dozen that now lie abandoned.

A SHADOW PASSES by the nearby window. Guerette's eyes flick upwards... it's only Jarret the junker, affixing a heavy plastic sheet to the outside of the station.

GUERETTE
 You almost done out there?

JARRET
 What?

He motions to his headphones blaring music. Guerette waves him in. A moment later, Jarret stomps in through the front door.

GUERETTE
How much longer?

JARRET
Just about done. Shouldn't have anything to worry about when the storm hits.

GUERETTE
You got time to do my house too?

JARRET
Sorry. Got a call from the new lady down the way. Sounded urgent.

GUERETTE
Yeah? What about?

JARRET
Something to do with her son Jacob, I guess. Didn't get the details.

Guerette looks back at the computer screen, on the last news report; it's a GRAINY CAMERA SNAPSHOT of a woman and a robot fleeing the scene of a violent robbery. The features aren't clear, but the shape of her face distinctly resembles Hailey's.

GUERETTE
Best get going, then.

As Jarret packs up and departs, Guerette punches a few numbers into her phone. Two rings.

FRANCO (O.C.)
(through the phone)
You know I'm off today.

GUERETTE
Then you've got plenty of time to look at what I'm about to send your way.

FRANCO (O.C.)
And what's that?

Files begin flooding across Guerette's screen as she bundles a pack of photos and the news report to email to Franco.

GUERETTE

Autopsy reports, like you asked for. And something else I think you might find interesting.

FRANCO (O.C.)

I was really hoping to get some yard work done--

GUERETTE

Please. That yard's been dead for years. I think "John" is holding out on us.

FRANCO (O.C.)

Who isn't?

GUERETTE

Just read the damn report, will you?

FRANCO (O.C.)

Yeah, yeah...

The call ends. Guerette turns her attention back to the files on her desktop when the station phone abruptly RINGS AGAIN. She snaps up the receiver without blinking.

GUERETTE

What'd you forget?

WILLIS (O.C.)

Can I speak to the senior officer?

GUERETTE

He's off today.

WILLIS (O.C.)

Where can I find him?

GUERETTE

You hard of hearing? He's off today.

She snaps a pen from a nearby jar.

GUERETTE (CONT'D)

You got a message you wanna leave?

WILLIS (O.C.)

No. That's alright.

The call drops. Guerette shakes her head and throws the phone back on the hook.

GUERETTE
Fuckin' weirdo.

INT. THE SHOP - DAY

Through the scratched lens of a magnifying glass, Jarret squints at the connecting wires protruding through the neck of the battered farm robot.

JARRET
Yeah, that's what I thought.

He sets the glass aside.

JARRET (CONT'D)
Not gonna be a simple plug and play
type deal with this one.

Behind him, Hailey rifles through a basket of tools, looking for the right one.

HAILEY
Why not?

JARRET
Older model. Reliable, mass-
produced, you know, easy to find
the parts. But you can't just take
your son's cerebral unit and slap
him in like toast in a toaster.

He throws a glance down to Jacob, who's looking up at him expectantly.

JARRET (CONT'D)
You're more like a, like a
croissant.

JACOB
What's a croissant?

JARRET
(sighing)
Never you mind.

Jarret's dog Nicky pads up behind Jacob, starts sniffing him.

HAILEY
Can you make it work?

JARRET

I mean, I can order you a fresh cerebral unit. Probably get here in a couple weeks.

HAILEY

What about with what you've got in your shop right now?

JARRET

Shit... it won't be pretty.

HAILEY

Yes or no?

Jarret looks back at the mangled robot.

JARRET

Probably could, yeah. I'll bring everything I need around on Monday for ya. Won't be cheap--

He's about to leave when Hailey steps in front of him.

HAILEY

Now.

JARRET

S'cuse me?

HAILEY

How much for you to start now?

JARRET

Lady, I don't know if you noticed, but there ain't a way in hell that storm's missing us.

HAILEY

I'll give you twenty.

JARRET

Soon as it's blown past, I'll come right here from the bunker.

HAILEY

Twenty-five.

JARRET

If I'm out here in that storm, that's years off my life. At minimum.

HAILEY

Aren't we all gonna be gone soon
anyway?

Jarret bites his lip.

JARRET

Make it thirty. And you're paying
for my anti-rads when this is over.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE SHACK - DAY

Jarret's junker van ROARS AWAY down the drive. Hailey watches
him go, then turns and notes that there's another vehicle
parked beside her house.

Franco's Humvee.

INT. THE SHACK - MOMENTS LATER

Coffee DRIBBLES into a carafe. Franco glares at the falling
drops, as if egging them to fall faster.

FRANCO

You pick this out yourself?

Hailey lets the door shut behind her.

HAILEY

Came with the place.

FRANCO

Slowest fucking coffee maker I've
ever seen in my life. What're you
supposed to do when you've got
company?

HAILEY

Wasn't planning on having much out
here.

FRANCO

(shrugging)
Guess that's part of the charm.

HAILEY

So... you just came here for some
shitty coffee?

FRANCO

Nah... came to see you. I'm in need of an educated guess.

He points to a folder sitting on Hailey's table. Approaching, she flips it open.

FRANCO (CONT'D)

Had the good doctor rush the autopsies.

Photographs of the brutal burns from the Roadhouse massacre spill out.

FRANCO (CONT'D)

Said he used to see all kinds of marks like these back when he used to work in the city. These little numbers just... superheat the air. Like putting out a million cigarettes on someones skin all at once.

Franco walks over to Hailey's bed, lets his foot tap on the BLACK DUFFEL BAG underneath.

FRANCO (CONT'D)

And seeing as you're also similarly... cosmopolitan, I thought I'd come round for a consult.

HAILEY

Still don't hear a question.

FRANCO

Alright. Here goes. What kind of monster am I dealing with here? Hypothetically? Cause I got a feeling you know more than you're letting on. And I ain't the only one.

A long moment. Hailey doesn't flinch.

HAILEY

Officer, I don't really know what you're angling at--

FRANCO

You know, John, it's been almost a month since you've been here and I still never bothered to get your real name.

(MORE)

FRANCO (CONT'D)
 Kinda makes me a shit lawman,
 doesn't it? I got nothing to do all
 day, just reading reports,
 patrolling, regular bullshit.

He seizes the carafe, pours himself a steaming cup of coffee.

FRANCO (CONT'D)
 And there was one report that
 jumped out at Guerette. About a
 woman and a robot ripping off a
 couple bookies just north of here.
 Big score, made off like bandits,
 then they vanished. Only had to
 kill three people to get it.

His eyes watch for any hint of guilt playing across her face.
 She matches his stare.

FRANCO (CONT'D)
 You know what they said her name
 was?

HAILEY
 Two.

FRANCO
 Sorry?

HAILEY
 There was only two. The third guy
 lived. I only grazed him.

FRANCO
 (smirking)
 On purpose?

HAILEY
 Better believe it.

Franco takes a long sip.

FRANCO
 He doesn't know, does he?

Off Hailey's unflinching expression--

FLASHBACK - THE GETAWAY

Heavy metal feet pound against the pavement as A TALL, BATTLE-
 SCARRED ROBOT sprints down the street, mere steps behind a
 long-haired Hailey, carrying the BLACK DUFFEL BAG.

HAILEY (V.O.)
We only needed enough to cover our
tracks.

Behind them, security guards charge out of the bookie's office, their shouts to the fleeing perps drowned out by the shrill siren of the alarm going off inside. They raise their weapons--

HAILEY (V.O.)
I didn't aim to kill anyone.

The robot SWIVELS and lets loose a burst of burst of bullets from his ASSAULT RIFLE just as the guards OPEN FIRE. All three go down in bloody, smoking heaps.

HAILEY (V.O.)
But Jacob was still... dealing with
some impulses.

Hailey stops short, races back to the fallen robot, sparking and smoldering, repeating her son's name over and over again as she fumbles through her pockets to produce HER SMARTPHONE and A CABLE.

HAILEY
It's gonna be okay, baby. It's
gonna be okay.

JACOB
Fuck, I... Mom, I can't feel my...

The droid's receptors blink off as Hailey connects her phone to the back of Jacob's metal skull. As data floods onto her device, A TRUCK IDENTICAL TO THE ONE SHE NOW DRIVES pulls around the corner.

Taking up her son's assault rifle, Hailey races over to the truck, weapon raised, SHOUTING at the driver to get out. He obliges, but makes the mistake of reaching for his pistol--

BLAM! A single shot from the assault rifle turns his elbow into SPLINTERS AND MIST. Kicking the gun away, Hailey races back to Jacob to disconnect the phone, leaps in the truck and FLOORS IT--

FLASHBACK - THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE

Tying THE RED RIBBON around a fencepost, Hailey counts her ten steps out into the empty field, where she starts digging a hole to bury her SMARTPHONE, which lies inside the METAL CASE.

HAILEY (V.O.)
 Laid low for a couple months.
 Bummed around the state. Slept
 rough. And when I figured it was
 safe--

FLASHBACK - HAILEY'S FIRST "CALL"

Sitting at the shack's kitchen table, Hailey (now with
 shortened hair) opens the metal case, takes out the
 smartphone--

HAILEY (V.O.)
 I brought him back.

FRANCO (V.O.)
 How much of him?

Hailey's fingers fly over the touchscreen, punching in
 numbers...

Rolling Jacob back to AN EARLIER VERSION.

HAILEY (V.O.)
 He thinks he's nine again.

Her work finished, Hailey takes a deep breath, initiates the
 program.

HAILEY
 Jacob?

JACOB
 Hey mom!

HAILEY
 (tearing up)
 Hey baby... it's good to hear your
 voice...

FLASHBACK ENDS:

INT. THE SHACK - DAY

The coffee pot lies drained on the counter. The last dregs
 lie cooled in cups between Franco and Hailey. A third cup now
 doubles as an ashtray for Franco's cigarettes.

HAILEY
 I just need to make sure he's in a
 proper body again.
 (MORE)

HAILEY (CONT'D)

In case something happens to me.
Then we're moving on.

FRANCO

Hell of a tale to be telling to a
lawman.

HAILEY

You're not exactly lily-white.

FRANCO

No ma'am. Not in the slightest.
So what happened back at the bar
there... that have something to do
with you?

HAILEY

(quietly)
Seems like.

FRANCO

(sighing)
All that for a little money. Jesus.

Hailey almost cuts in to correct him... but doesn't.

FRANCO (CONT'D)

So... care to elaborate as to who
or what I'm dealing with here?

HAILEY

You heard about Skinwalkers?

FRANCO

Stories. Retro-freaks with cash to
burn.

HAILEY

One's been after us since we left
the city. Goes by "Willis."

FRANCO

And this Willis passes for human?

HAILEY

Doesn't give a damn about anyone,
flesh or metal. But he looks like
you and me until you open him up.

FRANCO

Jesus... and you stole all that
money from him?

Franco's phone rings. He glances down at the Caller ID.

FRANCO (CONT'D)
 This ain't finished.
 (he answers)
 Hey hon.

BETH (O.C.)
 (through the phone)
 Hey sweetheart. You working late?

FRANCO
 Well, I was aiming to be back soon,
 but--

BETH (O.C.)
 Just wanted to know if you'd be
 making it for dinner tonight.

INTERCUT - THE SHACK / FRANCO'S KITCHEN

Franco stops. Something's off.

FRANCO
 Well, I guess that depends on what
 we're having.

Beth, phone cradled against her shoulder, cracks open a cupboard, revealing rows of prepackages meals from the supply drop.

BETH
 Oh, nothing special. Thinking a
 little tofu and veg stir fry.
 Peanut sauce.

The officer may as well have just been punched in the gut.
 His lip quivers.

FRANCO
 Are you sure?

BETH
 'Fraid so. Only thing we've got
 left.

FRANCO
 That... that's sounds delicious.

BETH
 Don't it just?
 But if you've got a lot to do,
 reckon we might have to start
 without you.

FRANCO
Are you sure you can't wait?

BETH
(chuckling)
You know how I get when I'm hungry,
dear.

FRANCO
Yeah. Yeah, I do.

BETH
Alright then. You take care out
there. I love you.

FRANCO
(fighting through)
Love you too, Beth.

She hangs up.

INT. THE SHACK - CONTINUOUS

Hailey rises. Franco's never looked this shaken before.

HAILEY
What is it?

FRANCO
Peanut sauce. That's what she said
we're having. I'm deathly allergic.
We both are.

INT. FRANCO'S MOBILE, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Beth continues to root around through the drawers.

BETH
I'm sure I've got tea in here
somewhere, just a second.

WILLIS (O.C.)
No rush.

Behind her, Willis props his legs up on a second chair, leans
back.

WILLIS (CONT'D)
So you've never seen this woman?

On the kitchen table, grainy photos of HAILEY, mid-robbery,
pistol out and threatening the clerks at the bookies.

BETH

Not that I can recall, no. What'd she do, exactly?

WILLIS

She's a thief.

BETH

Like a bank robber?

WILLIS

Oh no. Worse than that. She stole someone that works for me. Do you watch a lot of television?

BETH

Sure don't.

WILLIS

Well, I work for an entertainment company, and we specialize in very physical, crowd-pleasing kind of shows.

BETH

Violent?

WILLIS

Absolutely. Before New York sank we were at Madison Square Gardens five nights a week.

BETH

And you said she stole someone--

WILLIS

She sold him to us when she was very young. And we took care of him, and he was very, very good. One of our best. And then she decided to renege on the terms of sale. We take those terms very seriously.

(a beat)

Will your husband be long, Beth?

BETH

You know you could just go down to the station, try him there.

WILLIS

Oh, we've already been. Place is all sealed up.

BETH

Storm season. Picked the worst time
to come round here.

WILLIS

I sure did.

Beth glances out through the window... the four HUNTERS
linger near the pair of sedans they came in. They don't lift
a finger to help Peter, who's hauling in a JUG OF WATER from
the shed.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

You're not going to the shelter?

BETH

Hate shelters. Can't stand feeling
like I'm boxed in. We'll ride it
out here just fine.

WILLIS

I guess that's the one appeal.
All this space.
Where I come from, a home like
this? Twenty people. Minimum.

BETH

Goodness. Don't know why anyone
would want to live that way.

The door creaks open as Peter comes in, jug in hand.

BETH (CONT'D)

Can you stash those in the closet,
love?

Peter gives a nod, stalks past Willis, down the hall. He's
about to open the hall closet when--

BETH (CONT'D)

Oh, no dear. That one's full. Try
the bedroom closet for now.

Peter obliges, heading into the messy

BEDROOM

Where he sets the jug down in the open closet...

...right beside a SHOTGUN.

Back in the

KITCHEN

Willis drums his fingers across the tabletop.

WILLIS

I don't think anyone really wants to live that way. Crammed in tight, stacked fifty stories high, all the clanking and rusting. You wouldn't believe how much I have to pay to look like this. It's just how it has to be. Because of you.

He picks up Hailey's picture, regards it closely.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

You all made the decisions before I was even born. More oil. More nukes. Fuck the world. All this is just the consequence. And you know, I always thought that was the cruelest joke.

BETH

What's that?

WILLIS

Transference. Only works on developing minds. Kids. Nothing else. The one thing that's going to save humanity, and you can't have any of it.

Peter is in the hallway, shotgun at the ready. Beth slides open another drawer... hidden among the dusty boxes of tea is a slim DERRINGER.

BETH

(cold)
Pretty cruel.

WILLIS

You know I don't miss anything, right?

He taps one of his eyes. It gives off a hollow CLINK.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

Saw it all over your face. You know where she is. And you're going to tell me.

BETH

(nervous)
What kind of tea will you have?

WILLIS
Surprise me.

Beth reaches into the tea drawer--

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. FRANCO'S MOBILE - CONTINUOUS

The four Hunters are abruptly jolted from their idyll when the sharp report of a PISTOL and the BOOM of a shotgun rumble from inside the trailer. Drawing their weapons, they edge close, getting ready to burst through the door...

And then they stand down.

Moments later, Willis walks out. Unfazed. Uninjured. The other Hunters move inside to search the place.

Up above on top of the mobile home, the weathervane CREAKS as another gust of wind sends it SPINNING.

EXT. THE SHACK - DAY

Franco stands on the porch, staring out at the billowing clouds bearing down on them from across the plains. Inescapable.

The sand is already starting to stick to the moistened lines on his face where the tears have run their course.

Hailey steps out behind him, gun in hand.

HAILEY
I'm ready.

Franco looks back to her, sees Jacob lingering at the doorway.

FRANCO
Nah. You ain't.

HAILEY
They're only twenty minutes away--

FRANCO
(abruptly)
And I don't reckon Beth'd want me getting killed just yet, so here's how it's gonna be. You're gonna get your boy and your things.
(MORE)

FRANCO (CONT'D)

You're gonna drive into town, get the junker to fix Jacob up proper. And then you're gone, and I don't ever want to see you again. That clear?

HAILEY

Clear.

He stands, seizes his radio.

FRANCO

Guerette, come in.

After a moment, the radio squawks back.

GUERETTE (V.O.)

Guerette here. Over.

FRANCO

Meet me at the junkers in thirty. Fully loaded.

GUERETTE (V.O.)

This about the perps from the Roadhouse?

INT. FRANCO'S MOBILE, BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Franco's voice CRACKLES over the radio receiver in his bedroom.

FRANCO (V.O.)

Bet your ass. We got something to see to with Miss John and Jacob first, though.

A Hunter robot, searching through Franco's bedroom, takes notice.

INT. THE SHELTER - DAY

Guerette sighs, clicks her radio.

GUERETTE

Ten-four. Over and out.

Under the dingy lights of the cramped STORM SHELTER, she rest a hand on her mother's shoulder.

GUERETTE (CONT'D)

Got something that needs doing, ma.

Her mother's eyes wander until they lock onto her.

GUERETTE (CONT'D)
So if I'm not back, just... just
sit tight, alright?

Giving her mother's hands a squeeze, Guerette marches towards the door of the shelter, where townsfolk are still filing in with whatever supplies they can carry. Outside, a hellish wind tears through the street.

GUERETTE (CONT'D)
(gritting her teeth)
Yeah. Alright.

Pulling a scarf up close around her face to protect her skin, she marches out into the storm.

EXT. COUNTRY BACK ROADS - DAY

Franco's Humvee and Hailey's truck roar down the roads. In the distance, a smear of inky black smoke snakes skyward.

Franco's home.

INT. FRANCO'S HUMVEE - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

Watching the smoke rise from his trailer in the far distance, Franco reaches up and plucks the faded photograph tucked into his sun visor:

FRANCO, BETH and a YOUNG PETER, picnicking amidst VERDANT GREEN TREES and GRASSY FIELDS.

A shred of a smile crosses his face. He tucks the photograph into his jacket pocket.

EXT. THE TOWN, MARKET - DAY

Townsfolk SCRAMBLE to grab the last of their things before racing down the street, filing into the STORM SHELTER's metal maw. Overhead, lighting FLARES across a swirling sky.

EXT. JARRET'S JUNKSHOP - CONTINUOUS

Franco's Humvee and Hailey's truck pull up in front of the junkshop. They instinctively duck to shield their eyes against the blinding sands carried by the winds.

INT. JARRET'S JUNKSHOP - MOMENTS LATER

Jarret looks up as the doors BURST OPEN: Hailey carries Jacob while Franco hauls the shredded farm robot.

JARRET

I said I was coming back to yours!

HAILEY

Change of plans.

INT. JARRET'S JUNKSHOP, WORKSPACE - MOMENTS LATER

The farm robot THUDS DOWN on the slab. Hailey places Jacob down beside it while Jarret fishes around in the nearby piles for suitable parts.

JACOB

What's going on?

HAILEY

This nice man here is going to get you all fixed up. Bet you miss having feet, don't you?

JACOB

Yeah, but--

HAILEY

And afterwards, you know what I'm going to let you do? We're going to get out on the highway and I'm letting you drive. How's that sound?

From the front entrance, the door BANGS open again as Guerette marches in, loaded for war with a HEAVY AK47 in hand. Outside, the wind HOWLS.

GUERETTE

S'fucking murder out there! You wanna tell me why we aren't at the shelter?

Franco quickly swoops in to take her aside.

FRANCO

The perps we're looking for hit my house.

GUERETTE

Wait, what?

FRANCO

We're gonna make sure Jacob and his mom get outta town alright, and then we're gonna get these assholes sorted, and I don't mean in a due process kind of way.

GUERETTE

No, hang on. How do you know they hit your--

The pain on his face says it all. Guerette's words die on her lips until she catches sight of Hailey.

GUERETTE (CONT'D)

What in the hell have you brought down on us?

WILLIS (V.O.)

(sing-song)

Haiiileeeeyyy!

Everyone in the shop falls silent.

EXT. THE SHACK - CONTINUOUS

Out among the razor winds, Willis and his four Hunters walk down the street, armed and ready. Willis' voice THUNDERS like it's coming from a megaphone.

WILLIS

(booming)

Haiiileeeeyyy! Can Jacob come out to play?

INT. JARRET'S JUNKSHOP - CONTINUOUS

Guerette OVERTURNS a rack of parts and shoves the heavy frame against the shop's door while Franco loads a REVOLVER.

WILLIS (V.O.)

This little family vacation's been nice, I'm sure, but we really miss having Jacob around.

EXT. JARRET'S JUNKSHOP - CONTINUOUS

Willis and the Hunters close in on the junkshop. Through the sand-crusted windows, flashes of movement inside as Guerette and Franco work to barricade the entrances.

WILLIS

What, are you building a fort in there? Oh, that's cute. That really is.

(to the Hunters)

Weapons free. No witnesses.

HUNTER #1

But... there could be other people in there--

WILLIS

(eyes flashing)

I didn't bring you along for your opinions, kid.

The receptors on all the Hunters FLASH RED as Willis asserts his control.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

Now go get my boy back.

BOOM! One of the Hunters looses a SHOTGUN BLAST at the nearest window, SHATTERING IT--

INT. JARRET'S JUNKSHOP, WORKSPACE - CONTINUOUS

Jarret instinctively FLINCHES at the sound of breaking glass.

JARRET

Is someone shooting up my goddamn shop?!

HAILEY

Just keep working!

Jarret flips down his welding mask and starts soldering the new arm into place as the gunfire INTENSIFIES--

EXT. JARRET'S JUNKSHOP - CONTINUOUS

Franco and Guerette lay down a swathe of fire, sending Willis and the Hunters diving for cover. Car windows DISSOLVE into shards of glass. One of the Hunters is caught out in the open, jerking wildly as Guerette riddles him with holes.

WILLIS

Oh, come on!

The silver pistol flies into Willis' hand as he draws a bead--

INT. JARRET'S JUNKSHOP - CONTINUOUS

Guerette SCREAMS as a chunk of her shoulder TURNS TO ASH. She drops back from the window.

GUERETTE
Motherfucker!

FRANCO
Guerette!

GUERETTE
I'm alright!

Reaching down to her bandolier with her uninjured arm, she unclips one of her grenades, pulls the pin with her teeth and sends it flying back outside. Moments later, a muted BOOM puts a small smile back on her face.

Sand billows in through the broken windows, but the scene is eerily quiet aside from the unending wind and the quickly-closing RUMBLE OF THUNDER. On Guerette's belt, a GEIGER COUNTER starts clicking nervously.

GUERETTE (CONT'D)
How many?

Franco pops his head up for a quick look.

FRANCO
I see one down. No eyes on the rest.

Guerette ejects the spent clip from her rifle, slaps in a fresh one.

GUERETTE
If we don't make it to shelter,
we're gonna get cooked. Where do
you think they--

RATATATAT! Automatic fire beats a murderous tempo against BOTH SIDES of the junkshop's storefront. Franco and Guerette hit the deck as the bullets punch through, whizzing overhead and shattering anything they touch.

FRANCO
Back! Back!

Crawling across broken glass and scrap, Franco and Guerette make for the counter and the shop's heavy service door at the back. As they do--

THE FRONT DOOR EXPLODES INWARDS as a Hunter marches in.

GUERETTE

Move!

The Hunter's targeting lasers line up a shot at Franco's temple--

And then JERKS VIOLENTLY TO THE SIDE as Nicky TACKLES him with a METALLIC SNARL. Vicious teeth go to work immediately on the cords connecting the Hunter's head to the rest of it's armored body.

FRANCO

Holy shit--

GUERETTE

Inside!

It's a mad dash to the back of the shop. Meanwhile, the Hunter twitches and shudders as Nicky's fangs sever a power cable deep inside. Nicky looks up, SNARLS--

--and then PART OF HER FACE SUPERHEATS AND BURNS AWAY as Willis strides in, deadly rays lancing into the dog again and again until she finally falls silent.

He looks up to the back of the shop just as the heavy metal door SLIDES SHUT.

Willis smirks, adjusts the settings on his pistol until it emits a HIGH PITCHED WHINE.

INT. JARRET'S JUNKSHOP, WORKSPACE - CONTINUOUS

Guerette slams a HEAVY BAR down in front of the door, securing it tightly.

FRANCO

Jarret! How close are we?

WHRRRR! The power drill in Jarret's hands fastens another bolt into place around the farm robot's neck. A new head, blocky and somewhat rusted, is nearly in place.

JARRET

Almost... almost ready!

He connects the wires from the back of the robot's head to Jacob's.

JACOB

Who is that outside, mom?

HAILEY
Just a bad man, babe. That's all.

SNAP! Hailey fits the last piece of the JET BLACK ASSAULT RIFLE into place, stands to join Franco.

FRANCO
Make it fast.

GUERETTE
Where's the backdoor?

All eyes sweep the room... there's no obvious way out aside from the way they came in.

JARRET
I...

GUERETTE
Are you fucking serious?

JARRET
It's behind that!

He points to a PILE OF JUNK occupying almost a quarter of the room.

GUERETTE
No. No way.

The Geiger Counter on her belt continues to TICK RAPIDLY.

JARRET
People kept on breaking in! I had to--

GUERETTE
Fucks sakes! That's it!

She turns her AK on HAILEY.

FRANCO
Woah woah woah!

Franco immediately trains his revolver on Guerette.

FRANCO (CONT'D)
Not now, Guerette.

GUERETTE
Get your kid. You're putting an end to this.

HAILEY
I don't think you realize who
these people are--

FRANCO
Put your goddamn gun down
that is a goddamn order--

GUERETTE
I'm not dying because they picked a
fight with the wrong crowd, and if
we don't get back to that bunker we
are all fucking dead--

HAILEY
One second--

GUERETTE
No, I'm not--

HAILEY
(pointing)
Quiet!

She's pointing to the nearby walls inside the machine shop.
Everyone falls silent. Over the roaring wind...

THE SOUND OF METAL FEET DIGGING INTO THE WALLS OUTSIDE.

Guerette backs up against the door, panicked eyes scanning
the windows lining the ceiling of the workspace. There's no
way they can cover them all.

FRANCO
(taking aim)
Wait for it...

The TICKING of the GEIGER COUNTER ABRUPTLY STOPS--

CLANG! Everyone jumps and turns... the metal bar holding the
door shut has fallen... seared in two. Where the bar once
was, a SMOLDERING HOLE has been carved. But the beam didn't
stop there...

Guerette looks down at the SMOKING CAVITY where half of her
abdomen used to be.

GUERETTE
Ah fuck...

She falls right as

THE WINDOWS SHATTER AS TWO HUNTERS BURST IN

WILLIS THROWS THE DOOR OPEN

AND FRANCO AND HAILEY RAISE THEIR WEAPONS

The thunder of gunfire BOOMS inside the cavernous space as Franco HOSES a Hunter with bullets, SHREDDING ITS SKULL...

Jarret catches a beam from Willis' gun, falling with a SMOKING BURN clean through his chest. As Willis aims again...

Hailey UNLOADS on Willis, driving him back. Bullets tear into his perfect skin, and one catches him right in the eye, turning it into a SPARKING CRATER...

As Franco turns on the next Hunter, it LEAPS ONTO HIM, BATTERING AWAY with metal fists.

HUNTER #1
(through the punches)
I'm sorry! I'm sorry!

There's a SICKENING SNAP. The Hunter leaps back, hands covered in blood, turns--

-- Only to be BLOWN AWAY by a point-blank burst from Hailey. She kneels beside Franco, but he's already long gone.

HAILEY
Jacob?

She stands, turning back to the table where her son lies, steps forward--

RIGHT INTO THE BEAM FROM WILLIS' GUN.

The warehouse is perfectly quiet save for the SIZZLING OF FLESH. Hailey doesn't take her eyes off her boy as she COLLAPSES, a perfect burn gouged across her ribs.

Willis staggers forward, a ghastly sight; half of his face has been shredded away by automatic fire, revealing the polished sheen underneath.

WILLIS
That's right.
Much better.

He scoops up Jacob's unmoving form, RIPS the tracks off of his tiny body, casting them aside.

WILLIS (CONT'D)
There's our little champion. Did you miss me? Did she even let you remember me?

Jacob doesn't respond. Willis turns and strides back towards the entrance.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

That's alright. We're going to have
a long talk on the way back...

INT. JARRET'S JUNKSHOP - CONTINUOUS

Willis continues past the shattered remains of Jarret's shop,
Nicky's still-sparking corpse.

WILLIS

You wouldn't believe the life
you've lived. Crowds cheer your
name when you put someone down in
the ring. Did you know that?

As Willis walks out into the storm, a SHADOW FALLS over the
workshop entrance behind him.

EXT. JARRET'S JUNKSHOP - CONTINUOUS

The wind whips at what's left of Willis' elegant coat as he
carries Willis like a child clutched to his chest. As he gets
close enough, he sees the blast from the grenade set his own
cars ABLAZE.

WILLIS

Guess we'll have to find another,
then. You know, you're awful quiet--

He turns back to the shop--

THE FARM ROBOT IS STANDING IN FRONT OF HIM, fists clenched in
full-throttle rage. The connector cables dangle limply from
the back of his head.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

(catching on)

No--

Jacob CHARGES Willis just as Willis goes for his pistol.
There's a FLASH OF SILVER, but Jacob TWISTS out of the way
just before the blast can melt him where he stands. Closing
fast, he seizes Willis' wrist

AND SNAPS IT IN HALF

Sparks fly. Willis' YOWL OF PAIN is cut short as Jacob
continues his unrelenting assault, metal fists flying fast.
Willis parries what he can with his good hand, trying to find
an opening to strike back--

WILLIS (CONT'D)

Just wait! Please! You don't know--

WRENCHING OFF A CAR DOOR, Jacob HURLS IT at Willis. The door clips him across the shoulder, dropping the droid to the dirt. In the blink of an eye, Jacob is on top of him, landing punch after punch--

WILLIS (CONT'D)

Jacob!

Jacob stops, fist hovering an inch above Willis' temple. There's almost no skin left on the battered robot, and everything below is dented and scarred.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

Don't you remember me? I... I took care of you!

JACOB

Liar!

WILLIS

(spitting venom)

I kept you alive! I trained you, for years. Years! How old you do you think you are?

Jacob doesn't respond. The fist still hovers, poised to strike.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

You're almost twenty! Did you know that?

JACOB

I'm not.

WILLIS

I can show you. We've got records, we've got video. Your mother sold you to us when you were nine and I... I spent almost a goddamn decade building you up. Making you you.

Jacob's gaze drifts to the old metal sphere beside Willis; his old body. Lifeless.

FLASHBACK - JACOB THE DESTROYER

A dingy machine shop, weapons and tools lining the walls. Jacob's earlier form, battle-scarred and built to last, sits down at a bench to have his latest damage assessed and patched up. His torso is covered in GLADIATORIAL WAR PAINT.

WILLIS (V.O.)

And she just... slides in one day,
wants to take that all back.

The technician attending to Jacob speaks MOS through her welder's mask. Jacob looks at her quizzically... he recognizes that voice.

Hailey takes her mask off, smiles.

WILLIS (V.O.)

Half your life. Like it never
happened.

BACK TO:

EXT. JARRET'S JUNKSHOP - CONTINUOUS

JACOB

She'd... she'd never do that to me.

WILLIS

She did, Jake. She did. She was
young and stupid, she needed a fix
and she couldn't take care of you.
But I could. Always have. Always
will.

Jacob picks up his old body, cradles it in his hands.

JACOB

You killed people.

WILLIS

Almost a mercy, really. They're
gonna wake up one day and not even
be able to breathe the air. But you
and I... we're gonna make it.
That's why we've gotta stick
together.

Jacob clenches his old form tight, struggling to process everything he's hearing.

JACOB

I... I don't--

WILLIS

It's a lot, I know. But this... all
this, it's something we can fix.
And I want to.

Willis props himself up on his shoulders, offers a smile
through his mangled teeth.

WILLIS (CONT'D)

Hell, after today, I'm pretty much
the only family you've got left.

It's the last word that does it. Left.

It's over in an eyeblink.

Jacob raises the metal sphere high and CAVES WILLIS' HEAD IN.

SMASH TO BLACK.

INT. JARRET'S JUNKSHOP, WORKSPACE - MOMENTS LATER

Hailey struggles to stay conscious as the world grows hazier
by the second around her. Her fingers grasp blindly across
the floor in pain until they find

JACOB'S HAND

JACOB

I'm here, mom.

Fighting to focus, Hailey's gaze falls on her son. The
radiation sickness is already draining her strength, but she
still manages to form the words.

HAILEY

(shuddering)

Jacob...
You got taller.

JACOB

I'm going to lift you. Okay?

HAILEY

Okay.

He scoops her up as if she were made of air. She immediately
tries to bite back a SCREAM OF PAIN, only half-succeeds. He
rests her on the cleared workbench.

JACOB

I'm gonna go get help.

HAILEY
Everyone's in the shelter, babe.
They're not gonna open up.

JACOB
But if I--

HAILEY
Jake. There's something you need.

She points over to Jarret's body.

HAILEY (CONT'D)
Pockets.

Jacob quickly rifles through Jarret's pockets until he comes back with the keys to the JUNK VAN.

HAILEY (CONT'D)
There we go.

JACOB
Mom, I can make them open up, I can
get the doctor to--

HAILEY
Jake. Love. Listen. Accelerator's
on the right. Brake's on the left.
Always keep an eye on the fuel
cells, make sure they don't cook.
Hands at ten and two. Like a clock.
You got that?

JACOB
...I got it.

HAILEY
Let's hear it back.

JACOB
Accelerator's on the right. Brake's
on the left. Fuel cell's can cook
so I gotta keep an eye on them.
My hands at...

Hailey smiles.

EXT. JARRET'S JUNKSHOP - DUSK

Out among the debris-strewn battlefield, the storm continues on unabated.

EXT. THE TOWN - DAY

THE HEAVY METAL DOORS of the shelter GROAN OPEN as the Townsfolk emerge, stumbling and blinking like newborns under a CLEAR BLUE SKY.

It doesn't take them long to see the carnage a block away; the ruined cars, the bodies.

INT. JARRET'S JUNKSHOP, WORKSPACE - CONTINUOUS

Hearing commotion from the front of the shop as the townsfolk survey the damage, Jacob finally lets go of his mother's hand, resting it on her chest.

She doesn't move. She never will again.

Rising, he slings the duffel bag over his shoulder, picks up his mother and walks out.

EXT. JARRET'S JUNKSHOP - MOMENTS LATER

Brushing past the townsfolk without a word, Jacob unlocks Jarret's van, carefully seats his mother in the passenger seat.

I/E. JARRET'S VAN - PARKED / MOVING - MOMENTS LATER

He rests his metal hands on the wheel, at ten and two, clenches them tightly.

The engine turns over and ROARS TO LIFE after the second try.

Slowly, jerkily, Jacob guides the van out of the alley, onto the road...

... and out of town.

EXT. BACK COUNTRY ROAD - DUSK

The van roars away from town, headed south. Faded government roadsides along the way warn of LETHAL RADIATION LEVELS.

EXT. BACK COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

Under a sky FILLED WITH STARS, Jacob stares up in awe.

EXT. BACK COUNTRY ROAD - DAWN

A FRESHLY-FILLED GRAVE now lies by the side of the road, marked by a small wooden cross adorned with THE RED RIBBON. Jacob gets back in the van and drives on.

EXT. SERVICE STATION - DAY

A deserted service station. Jacob picks over the interior for supplies before emerging laden with spare parts. As he dumps them into the back of the van, he turns back to see the wall of the services station.

It's covered with a FADED POSTER for an ANDROID DEATH MATCH.

There, front and center, is his old form.

EXT. THE WASTELAND - DAY

We're far beyond anything resembling civilization now. The roads are barely distinguishable and van struggles to keep going. Finally, it stops.

Jacob gets out, scanning the horizon, until he sees it;

A small collection of SCRAP HUTS, huddled together in the dry hills nearby... but far from abandoned.

Another pair of robots linger at the edge of the fence, watching Jacob.

One of them waves.

Jacob waves back.

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END.