

TAKE

(Previously titled: Crossing Paths)

by
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RE-LOCKED WHITE DRAFT

REVISIONS 1 & 2 INCORPORATED

NOTE TO READER: This screenplay alternates between two days -- one day in the present and one day in the past (seven years prior). To make the transitions between these two time periods as clear and unobtrusive as possible, each scene is labeled either (PAST) or (PRESENT).

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1 INT. PRISONER WAITING ROOM -EVENING (PRESENT) 1

Under titles, SAUL GREGOR, is a late-thirties man too empty and tired to hate himself anymore. He is sitting motionless on a hard chair.

He is alone in the center of the empty, sterile-white room. A single, slightly opaque window in the upper corner behind him is shut and blocked by a set of bars.

He is trim and clean in his pressed, pure-white T-shirt and prison-issue pants. His left eye is scarred and discolored. He appears nearly lifeless as his stare remains on his feet until after the final title when he looks up and straight out, completely riveted to his own thoughts.

2 INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HALL - MORNING (PAST) 2

JESSE NICHOLS, a scrawny, dirty-blonde-haired boy, sits in a large plastic chair.

Except for him and a few recycled Christmas decorations, the hall is completely vacant.

His feet dangle, unable to touch the floor. He ties one of his shoelaces to the chair leg. Cheetos powder surrounds his upper lip, and his right hand is stained with ink.

Bored, he makes repeating sounds with his mouth.

3 INT. CLASSROOM (PAST) 3

ANA NICHOLS is in her mid-thirties. Her hair is haphazardly tied up out of the way and her eyes are tired, but she is very much alive. She possesses the kind of determination and unprepared beauty that can intimidate anyone.

She sits at her son's table, quietly waiting. Her jacket covers the "Merry Maids" uniform, and her jeans are faded and worn -- nowhere near designer.

With the table between them, MRS. BACHANAS sits at her desk, equally quiet, waiting. These two clearly have a history, and mutual silence has become their safest tactic.

Mrs. Bachanas taps her freshly sharpened pencil on the stack of progress reports. She thumbs through them for a moment, licking her finger to separate the pages.

Ana looks at the clock, growing impatient with the teacher's silent messages. She taps her white Keds on the tile floor. She notices some of her son's doodles on the table.

All of the teacher's reports are headed with the name, "JESSE NICHOLS." Some of the comments are underlined: "SEEKS ATTENTION, IMMATURE, CAN'T FOCUS, EASILY DISTRACTED, DISRESPECTFUL, UNSTABLE." She's almost proud of this last one.

Cold, Ana slips her foot out of her shoe and places it on the warm tile floor. After a moment, she switches feet.

The PRINCIPAL finally enters, a bit flustered, but honestly apologetic, as she strategically chooses the table between them.

PRINCIPAL

Very sorry. A bit crazy this morning.

Both remain silent.

PRINCIPAL (CONT'D)

To the point then. Mrs. Nichols, we've decided to recommend Jesse for the special-ed program.

ANA

What?

PRINCIPAL

Harrison has a very effective program and they are, we feel, better equipped to deal with your son. Mrs. Bachanas has been very --

The principal tries to direct her attention to Mrs. Bachanas, but Ana still refuses to acknowledge the teacher.

ANA

Better equipped? He's a child.

MRS. BACHANAS

His maturity level is equivalent to a five-year-old, and the rest of the class cannot --

ANA

As is yours Mrs. Bachanas, but I'm still dealing with you.

Mrs. Bachanas is ready to implode, but the principal is determined to make headway this time.

PRINCIPAL

Ana.

ANA

(pleading)

I've seen those classes. Jesse doesn't belong in special-ed. You know that. Do you have any idea what that will do to him?

PRINCIPAL

Ana. We don't have the resources to make this work here. I know it's not a perfect fit, but it's all the district has left. He'll be able to understand instructions. He can succeed there.

4 INT. SCHOOL HALL (PAST)

4

JESSE still waits in the chair. He's getting more restless, tapping his shoe rhythmically against the metal chair leg.

He scoots to the very edge of the chair and leans over as far as possible, trying to see further down the hall. He slips, but catches himself before falling.

5 INT. CLASSROOM (PAST)

5

MRS. BACHANAS is staring at the PRINCIPAL as ANA reacts.

ANA

He needs a teacher willing to see him as an individual, with individual needs, individual ways of processing information. He understands, she knows that. He just gets distracted. He's bored. He's not interested in regurgitating facts; he wants to think for himself.

MRS. BACHANAS

He doesn't listen. He distracts himself and the entire class.

ANA
 (not sardonic this time)
 He does listen. He hears every word you say.

PRINCIPAL
 Nonetheless, Mrs. Nichols. This is our decision. Friday will be his last day here.

ANA
 I can't afford private school. You know that.

PRINCIPAL
 Then starting Monday, Jesse will have to attend the special-ed program at Harrison.

Ana is still not willing to accept it.

PRINCIPAL (CONT'D)
 I'm sorry, you no longer have a choice in the matter.

Ana looks at Mrs. Bachanas, who obviously didn't expect it to go this far. They all wait for a response.

ANA
 Jesse is my son. We will always have a choice.

Ana gets up to leave. The principal stands, trying to calm her.

ANA (CONT'D)
 Don't. Just don't.

6 INT. SCHOOL HALL (PAST)

6

JESSE plays with his shoe when the door opens and ANA storms out.

Jesse offers a goofy smile.

She takes him by the hand, but his shoelace is still attached. She gets frustrated.

ANA
 What are you -- ? Come on.

Jesse doesn't understand the rush.

JESSE

I'm trying.

Ana bends down and tries to yank the shoe free. It won't come loose. She gives up and pulls his foot out, leaving the shoe tied to the chair.

ANA

(defending him)

I know you are, honey.

As she pulls him down the hall, Jesse looks back to the shoe.

7 EXT. PLAYGROUND (PAST)

7

ANA leads JESSE behind her. They walk through the snow-patched blacktop and basketball courts.

With no jacket and a missing shoe, Jesse shivers. He is still confused by his mother's anger which starts to cool with the winter air, giving way now to desperation.

She pulls him closer to her, and they move toward the wood-paneled STATION WAGON, the only car in the visitor parking lot.

8 INT. MINI-STORAGE OFFICE - SAME MORNING (PAST)

8

The tiny office is stacked with invoices, ledgers, card files; nothing has changed here for a decade. A thin layer of dust lays across the entire space.

Once the drive-up bell rings and a car pulls around to the window, a slightly balding, but YOUNGER SAUL leans back in his chair and into frame. He is seen through a narrow doorway, the only separation between his job and the tiny attached apartment that is his home.

He wears a wrinkled pair of chinos and a frayed sweatshirt. He has finally yielded to a life that was never his own, and his apathy couldn't be more transparent.

He waits for his customer to approach the counter.

A calendar is turned to DECEMBER 19. The sign on the door reads, "WE WILL BE OPEN FOR CHRISTMAS."

As the CUSTOMER approaches the window, the phone rings and SAUL answers.

SAUL
 (into the phone)
 Lock-It-Up Mini Storage.

He motions to the customer to wait.

SAUL (CONT'D)
 That's right. No. I can't do that.

He thumbs through the card files.

SAUL (CONT'D)
 No sir. After thirty days, it must be
 cash.

He hangs up and turns to the window, but the customer has
 already signed in and driven to her storage unit.

He stands and puts on his jacket before stepping outside.
 As he turns, the "LOCK-IT-UP" patch can be seen on his
 sleeve.

9 EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - SEVEN YEARS LATER - MORNING (PRESENT)

An older, COMPACT CAR pushes through a dry, lifeless
 desert. Only ANA can be seen inside.

A dilapidated trailer bounces and sways behind, a few
 bags and boxes and a child's bike are tied carelessly to
 it.

The barren road stretches into forever, not a turn in
 sight. This is the only vehicle on the road.

ANA (V.O.)
 Mole.

JESSE (V.O.)
 What?

ANA (V.O.)
 You know, like a gopher.

10 INT. CAR (PRESENT)

10

ANA's eyes are fixed on the road. Her hair is different
 now, and her face reveals the years of unrelenting anger
 since we saw her last. The life has gone out of her.

Despite the imperceptible end to this road, she is
 determined to reach her destination.

She has packed a few items that fill the passenger seat. Her window is open and the air conditioning is adjusted to "HIGH."

She looks through her rear-view mirror, catching JESSE'S eyes, and they exchange a smile.

Still through the mirror, Jesse does Madlibs in the back seat, laying down and laughing to himself. He stomps his feet against the window as he writes in the answers.

ANA

Like a rat without hair. They're stuck underground.

JESSE

Adverb.

ANA

Resolutely.

JESSE

Mom!

ANA

Smelly-ly.

He laughs and fills in the word.

JESSE

Verb ending in "ING"

ANA

Finishing.

JESSE

Boring.

ANA

Head-butting?

He likes this one.

Ana smiles and shifts her focus back to the road.

The flat-roofed house is even more dated than the attached office. The stale odor that co-habitates this cluttered interior is nearly visible. There are maze-like stacks of unread newspapers, old, broken TV's, and various food items in places they don't belong.

It's the reason mini-storages were invented, but somehow, the thought hasn't crossed their minds.

SAUL is standing, eating a bowl of cereal and reading a book.

There are only two sitting surfaces that are clear of junk. BENJAMIN occupies one of them. In his late 70's, this frail curmudgeon reclines in a lazy-boy chair even more decrepit than he is.

He clicks through channels of bad signal. He coughs violently, grabs his chest and spits into a bowl beside him.

The drive-up bell is heard but Saul's head is still in his book.

The old man stomping his feet loudly.

BENJAMIN

Hear that? Get off your ass. That's your customer!

Saul looks at his father for a moment. He moves to the office without responding.

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)

Pathetic! What kind of --

Saul shuts the thin door to the house and the part of his life he prefers to ignore.

12 INT./EXT. OFFICE (PAST)

12

As he looks toward the window, SAUL is surprised to see CHUCK, a mid-twenties, tattoo-laden drugee. Even in this cold weather, Chuck is bent on exhibiting the macho art on his flesh canvas.

SAUL

Chuck. What's up, man?

CHUCK

Take a guess.

Saul comes outside.

SAUL

I need another week.

CHUCK

Skimmings are slim. Huh?

SAUL

It's not as easy as you think.

CHUCK

I can make it simple for you. If you
can't pay, then you won't play.

Saul is unmoved by his friend's street poetry. Chuck gets
into his muscle car.

CHUCK (CONT'D)

You have until tonight's game, Saul. Then
it's over.

SAUL

Over.

Chuck starts his car. Loud muffler, the whole package.

CHUCK

Use your imagination. Over.

He drives away. The office phone rings. Saul chooses to
ignore it.

The stomping sound starts up again.

BENJAMIN (O.S.)

Saul! The phone! What the hell's a matter
with you!

13 INT. JAIL CELL - SEVEN YEARS LATER - MORNING (PRESENT) 13

This is not the proverbial cement cell, but a sterile
white and stainless steel space. Take away the ominous
bars at one end, and it may even resemble a hospital
clean-room.

The OLDER SAUL sits atop his slab bed.

The television is off, unplugged. A Bible sits on the
only shelf.

As he waits, his eyes wander to the JANITOR mopping
outside his cell.

14 EXT. UPSCALE HOUSE - MORNING (PAST) 14

The station wagon is parked in the front. The "MERRY
MAIDS" decal is attached to the side, and the back is
full of cleaning equipment.

A vacuum is whining inside.

15 INT. UPSCALE HOUSE (PAST) 15

JESSE watches television in the living room, clearly out of place in these posh surroundings.

The YOUNGER ANA backs into the hallway, vacuum in hand; she notices Jesse's feet on the coffee table.

ANA

Jesse.

He has tuned out.

ANA (CONT'D)

Jesse!

JESSE

Sorry.

He turns off the television.

ANA

No. Jess. Your feet, honey.

JESSE

Oh yeah. Sorry.

He moves his feet and, once Ana starts into the next room, turns the television back on.

WENDY is an overweight, hard-working woman, no more than twenty-five years old. She joins ANA in the dining room, spraying the table down with cleaner.

WENDY

Let's hope they don't come home.

ANA

Thanks.

WENDY

I'm just saying.

16 INT. CAR - MORNING (PRESENT) 16

Still roaring through the desert, the OLDER ANA is fixated on the road ahead of her. She fans the top of her sticky shirt, trying to air out the perspiration.

Through the back window, JESSE watches the trailer as it sways back and forth.

He waits for his mom's boring answers.

ANA
Heavy.

JESSE
Noun.

ANA
Electricity.

JESSE
Color.

ANA
Black.

JESSE
Famous person.

A beat, while Ana slows down for an unexpected red light in the middle of nowhere. There is no cross traffic, no sign of life, just a deserted motel with a broken-down bus in front.

JESSE (CONT'D)
Mom, do we have to go again?

ANA
(letting go of the road)
Yes. We have to.

JESSE
Why?

She considers how best to answer this.

ANA
Remember when we used to go to the zoo together?

JESSE
We're going to the zoo?

ANA
Honey, listen. Remember those big gorillas? How they would play around and make faces at you through the glass? Make us laugh.

JESSE

That was fun.

ANA

But they always had to stay in their cage. Because people might forget. They might think: he's okay, he's a nice animal, he just wants to play. But if they let him out, horrible things would happen.

JESSE

Really?

Through the rear-view mirror Ana's eyes are full of unwavering hatred.

The light is green now, but Ana doesn't move.

ANA

This man is an animal, Jesse. I have to make sure that people don't forget that. He's a monster. We have to be there so no one forgets.

Silence.

JESSE

Okay.

Ana's eyes lift and she realizes Jesse is watching her through the mirror as well. She forces herself back, lets go of the brake and starts through the light.

ANA

(playfully)

Britney Spears.

Jesse doesn't follow.

ANA (CONT'D)

Famous person.

Jesse turns back to his Madlibs pad. This is more like it.

17

EXT. UPSCALE HOUSE - MORNING (PAST)

17

JESSE is packing his mother's supplies into the back of the station wagon. He swings back and forth on the tail gate, waiting for his mother.

ANA drags a vacuum through the snow. WENDY follows with more supplies.

JESSE

Are we done?

Exhausted, and clearly the only one phased by what brought them here together in the first place, Ana stares at him a moment before answering, admiring his oblivious innocence. She smiles warmly.

ANA

Yes, Jesse. We're all done.

18 INT. ANA'S HOUSE - THAT AFTERNOON (PAST)

18

Very modest, but clean -- only the necessities here. The rooms are small, yet open as each only holds a few furnishings. There is little that hangs on the walls.

JESSE is on the living room floor using his spirograph to make elaborate designs in his notebook. The lines continue to intersect and cross each other. His homework is pushed aside.

MARTY enters the room and sets his bag down on the wrought-iron banister as he puts his keys away. He watches Jesse for a moment. The stare reveals his patience, acceptance, and even love of Jesse's quirky nature.

Good-enough looking, early thirties, clean cut -- Marty is the solid and unassuming structure that keeps this family grounded.

Jesse looks up and grins. Marty can only smile back.

19 INT. CELL BLOCK AND CORRIDORS - AFTERNOON (PRESENT)

19

A MIDDLE-AGED GUARD leads SAUL down the length of the CELL BLOCK. Both are completely silent as they pass the other prisoners who are also noticeably quiet.

They come to a door. The guard unlocks it and they enter a sterile, wide corridor.

They turn a corner and go through another door and another corridor.

A third locked door opens to yet another corridor, this one with some additional GUARDS.

They pass a window that looks into a VISITING AREA where a crying WOMAN talks through the glass to her husband.

Saul notices her shaking hands, the ring on her finger.

The guard pushes Saul to the end of the hall, they turn the corner and are gone.

20

INT. KITCHEN - AFTERNOON (PAST)

20

ANA and MARTY are clearing the lunch dishes.

MARTY

I don't know if you're cut out for home school.

ANA

You don't think I'm smart enough.

Ana starts doing dishes while Marty finishes clearing the table.

MARTY

Here we go. That's not it and you know it.

ANA

Yes it is. You think it's beyond my skill set. I'm not equipped to handle it.

MARTY

That's not fair, Ana. I never said that. That's them talking. Don't take this out on me.

He has finished with the table and moves toward the sink. She grabs a rag and steps to the table to start wiping.

ANA

We can't put him in a special-ed program.

MARTY

Of course we can't.

ANA

It would kill him Marty. He'd never be the same.

She takes a cigarette out of the drawer.

MARTY

Can we talk about this tonight? I've got 34 seventh-graders expecting to see test scores by fifth period.

ANA

Certainly don't want to interrupt your students' education.

She grabs a coat and moves toward the back door.

Marty watches as the door and screen door shut behind her.

21

EXT. BACK PORCH (PAST)

21

ANA extinguishes her second cigarette when MARTY comes out.

ANA

You're late.

MARTY

I called in.

ANA

What about your seventh graders?

She takes out another cigarette, but he takes it away.

MARTY

I don't want to talk about them.

(beat)

Do you really want to do this?

ANA

We don't have a choice. I have to go part-time again. Nights.

MARTY

I can get my shift back at the resource center.

She looks at him for the first time. Without a coat, he's getting cold.

ANA

Why can't they just teach him?

MARTY

Because they're idiots. All teachers are idiots.

He wins the smallest of smiles here.

22

EXT. MINI-STORAGE - SAME AFTERNOON (PAST)

22

SAUL rides his rusted, topless golf cart down the long row of storage spaces.

He stops at a unit near the end, snaps the lock with his bolt cutters, and pushes up the door.

The unit is filled floor to ceiling with boxes, circa 1970 furniture, some exercise equipment.

He scans the area, checks his watch. He loads a small television, a leather jacket, and the only decent piece of exercise equipment into the back of the cart. After pulling down the door, he puts another lock on.

Saul drives to another unit and opens it. There are only a few items here, neatly stacked in the back -- another TV, a VCR, a few computers, an expensive office chair, some stereo equipment. He adds the new items to the stack before locking up.

Back to the first unit again, Saul waits in the cart. In a moment, the riff-raff begin to arrive: an old pick-up truck, a rusted camper, an El Camino towing a half-filled trailer.

They emerge from their cars; some of them warming their hands on paper coffee cups as they wait silently for Saul to cut through the lock again.

This time, he takes a Polaroid of the contents before backing away from the door.

The junk-buyers start to come alive. They edge their way to the door and start snooping around the unit with flashlights.

Saul has fastened the picture to his clipboard and is filling out a form.

SAUL

We're gonna start with fifty dollars.

CAMPER MAN

Fifty-five.

TRUCK WOMAN

Sixty.

CAMPER MAN

Seventy.

The OLDER man is visibly quiet. He's not interested in this lot.

23 EXT. MINI-STORAGE OFFICE (PAST) 23

SAUL is filling out some paper work for the TRUCK WOMAN, who signs. Her truck is already loaded.

As she pulls away, the OLDER MAN waits on the other side of the parking lot.

24 INT. STORAGE UNIT (PAST) 24

The door rolls up and SAUL and the OLDER MAN are standing outside, looking in. This is the unit with Saul's stash. No paper work this time.

OLDER MAN

That's it? Two-fifty.

SAUL

I need more than two-fifty.

OLDER MAN

I'm sure you do.

(beat)

Two-fifty.

Saul watches silently as the man packs up his trailer.

25 INT. PRISON MEETING ROOM - AFTERNOON (PRESENT) 25

STEVEN, a young, eager, dress-shirt-and-tie man, sits alone at the singular table in the center of the room. He is slightly nervous, but entirely too naive to understand how nervous he should be. He waits as the OLDER SAUL is escorted into the room by TWO GUARDS, male and female.

Once a recreation hall, the room is expansive. But it is ominously empty now, silent except for the slight hum of an oscillating fan in the corner.

Saul sits opposite Steven. They are both quiet.

The female guard exits, leaving the male guard standing in the corner.

They stare at each other until Steven must look away. He reaches into his briefcase and pulls out a thick book, setting it on the table.

SAUL
Is she coming?

STEVEN
I imagine so.

SAUL
They won't let me see her, when she comes.

STEVEN
There's a reason for that, Saul.

Steven notices the fan going in the corner. The air isn't quite reaching them. Saul is completely unaffected by the heat.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
Do you think she hates you?

SAUL
I can only imagine. Wouldn't you? If you were her. Wouldn't you?

STEVEN
Maybe, probably yes. But I'm not her. I didn't know you then.

SAUL
She never knew me. She never even spoke to me. She looked at me -- she just looked at me, and I looked at her.

26

INT. GROCERY STORE - FLASHBACK (PAST)

26

Hearing the rest of the conversation between Steven and Saul, we see the following action in the grocery store:

SAUL looks across the aisle to ANA -- twenty feet, a shopping cart, and a pie rack between them.

He has a wild look in his eyes.

She is frozen in terror, and she looks squarely into this stranger's eyes.

Saul tries to look away, but he can't avoid her stare for that instant. He understands that they are, as of this moment, forever connected.

STEVEN (V.O.)

Do you want her to hate you?

SAUL (V.O.)

I do. I pray to God she hates me.

STEVEN (V.O.)

Do you hate yourself, Saul?

27 BACK TO SCENE - PRISON (PRESENT) 27

SAUL looks directly to STEVEN, but doesn't answer.

He turns Steven's book around and opens it to a page, then slides it back.

Steven looks down to his open book. It is a Bible.

28 EXT. DESERT - SAME AFTERNOON (PRESENT) 28

The desert highway sears in the mid-day sun. Ana's compact car and trailer chug slowly up a long grade.

Two cars pass. A semi comes up close behind, then blares its horn before passing.

29 INT. CAR (PRESENT) 29

The OLDER ANA drives with her foot pressed to the floor.

She looks behind her at the trailer. JESSE also watches through the back window.

Another car approaches.

Ana tries dropping the gear; it's louder, but she is still fighting the weight of the trailer.

JESSE

Can we stop this time? Please can we stop?

Ana looks at the rest stop sign. She pulls toward the exit and the car passes her.

ANA

Absolutely.

30 EXT. REST STOP (PRESENT) 30

There is nothing but red sand, asphalt, and a cinder-block building.

They pull into a parking space and sit for a moment.

31 INT./EXT. CAR (PRESENT) 31

Through the windshield:

JESSE

Do I have to get out?

ANA

I'm not going to answer that.

JESSE

I think I want to stay here.

ANA watches him through the mirror, waiting. JESSE gets out and runs toward the cinder block bathroom, his plastic cowboy boots clicking on the cement.

Though it is years later, Jesse wears the same clothing he did the day Ana pulled him from school. He doesn't look a day older.

Through the side mirror, Ana watches him almost nostalgically, as his figure disappears.

Ana pulls herself out of this moment before opening her door and getting out.

She slides her foot out of her tennis shoe and places it on the scorching asphalt for a moment.

She leans against the car, stretches and waits.

A HELL'S ANGELS-LOOKING MAN walks out of the same bathroom, startling Ana. He then walks around the back of the building, gone from sight.

A thundering engine roar erupts. The motorcycle man comes around the side of the building on his HARLEY. She steps back as he speeds away.

She stares him down with disgust, and he looks back, confused by her anger.

Ana moves now to the phone booth where she lifts the receiver. She reaches into her pockets and comes up short.

With the door open, ANA searches for excess change in her purse. She moves a bottle of medication out of the way to reach the bottom. There, she finds a stash of ones and quarters, but, before heading back, she stares at the phone booth again.

She hears a sound in the back seat, but doesn't turn around.

ANA

Back already?

JESSE

Can you go now?

Ana starts the car and puts it in gear. She listens to the engine idle for a moment before letting off the brake.

ANA stuffs the cash and coin into the ash tray as she gets the car up to speed.

The car and trailer pull out onto the highway and begin the sluggish climb again.

32

EXT. STORAGE UNIT - AFTERNOON (PAST)

32

The OLDER MAN has finished packing up his trailer, and he and the YOUNGER SAUL are settling up with cash.

A compact Cadillac comes around the corner and stops. Saul, cash in hand, stares through the windshield, and the younger, nicely dressed BOSS gets out. He walks deliberately toward them.

The older man quickly loads the last item, gets in his El Camino and pulls away.

BOSS

Well this certainly explains a few things.

SAUL

It's only stuff that would have been auctioned.

BOSS

So you're not stealing from our customers really, just me.

SAUL

It's not that much. I can pay it back. All of it. I promise.

BOSS

Your word on that, right? There's no such thing as selective honesty, Saul.

They stare at each other for a moment.

BOSS (CONT'D)

I want you out by morning. I don't care where you go. But you're out before opening tomorrow morning or I report you.

They stare at each other more. Saul considers retaliation, but he can't find the energy.

He turns around and walks down the narrow driveway between the two lanes of garage doors. The boss stays put, watching.

33

EXT. TUBING FACTORY - SAME AFTERNOON (PAST)

33

The station wagon pulls into the half-empty lot.

At the front door, an OLD MAN exits. JESSE stops directly in front of him.

JESSE

Hi! How are you?

The man is slightly put off, but offers a half-smile.

OLD MAN

Hi. Good.

Ana offers the man a brief smile of understanding, but he doesn't respond. She pulls Jesse through the doors by his sleeve, but he slides his hand into his shirt. Ana is enjoying him for the moment. He wears one shoe and one slipper.

34

INT. FACTORY OFFICE (PAST)

34

ANA is trying to keep track of JESSE as she fills out her application. He is making a mess with the water cooler, on his fourth cup.

The older FEMALE ASSISTANT sorts through a thick stack of orders. Pictures of her grandkids cover her desk. Her kindness is refreshing.

ASSISTANT

She told you right. I've been here three years and they've been nothing but good to me.

ANA

That sounds nice.

Ana tries to focus on the application, but Jesse spills an entire cup of water on the magazines.

ANA (CONT'D)

Jesse. Get over here.

Jesse spills another paper cup.

ANA (CONT'D)

Jesse!

ASSISTANT

It's fine. Really, don't worry about it one bit.

ANA

I'm sorry.

ASSISTANT

My grandkids can tear this place apart in thirty seconds.

She opens up a file cabinet behind her and pulls out a toy police car. Jesse takes it immediately.

JESSE

Thank you. Mom, look at this.

MARK, a young male manager enters and notices Ana's partially-completed application. He picks it up and starts reading.

ANA

I was just --

JESSE

I think it glows in the dark.

MARK

Why don't you come to my office.

ANA

But I --

He puts the application in his shirt pocket.

MARK

I never read them anyway. Come on.

She looks back to see her son sprawled out on the floor, trying to push the car out from underneath the couch. He is whistling, mimicking the sound of a police siren.

35 INT./EXT. CAR - AFTERNOON (PRESENT)

35

Moving through the desert, the older ANA has rolled up the window and is trying to adjust the air conditioning when a large TRUCK approaches. She has veered slightly into the other lane and the truck driver blares his horn.

She looks to the road and turns back to her lane, avoiding the truck. She over-corrects and the trailer fishtails, pulling her off the shoulder and into the desert. The trailer swerves back and forth, kicking up dust everywhere.

She comes to a stop and gets out of her car.

She tries to calm herself by walking away from the car. When she looks back, she notices the trailer tire is flat.

ANA

No. No. No! I am not going to be stuck here in the middle of hell and miss this.

She takes a step away, then returns, opens the door and fishes through her glove compartment and purse before finding what she's looking for. She shuts the door again and opens the heart medication.

She looks up and sees JESSE staring out the back window at her. She pops a pill and tries to walk it off.

ANA (CONT'D)

(continuing, to herself,
quieter this time)

(MORE)

ANA (CONT'D)

What? What else can you possibly do to me?

36 EXT. MINI-STORAGE - AFTERNOON (PAST) 36

A car exits the facility as a patron signs in at the desk. The office is empty.

37 INT. SAUL'S HOUSE (PAST) 37

SAUL sits on a chair in the living room, waiting. He notices a medicine bottle on the floor, picks it up, and checks the contents. There are only a few pills left, and he places the bottle atop his father's newspaper, situating it to be seen.

A toilet flushes and his FATHER enters from the back.

BENJAMIN

What?

SAUL

Sit down will you?

BENJAMIN

What? Sit down?

SAUL

Just, I need to talk to you.

BENJAMIN

You need to work. You need to get off your ass and work.

Benjamin stomps his foot a few times to make his point.

SAUL

No. I don't need to work!

BENJAMIN

Who do you think you're talking to? I'm your father. Now shut up and get to work.

Benjamin starts back for the bedroom.

SAUL

And I'm your son. I'm your son dammit!

Saul throws on his light jacket and leaves through the front door. He shuts the door hard, but it doesn't latch. It swings partly open, and the winter air blows in.

Through the open door we see:

Saul gets into an old sedan and tries to start it. A few turns of the engine, but no start.

He gets out of the car and calmly shuts the door. He walks out of frame until suddenly erupting, coming back and smashing his hand through the driver's side window.

38 INT. PRISON HALL - AFTERNOON (PRESENT) 38

A GUARD carries food down the long corridor, rounds a corner and opens the door.

39 INT. PRISON MEETING ROOM (PRESENT) 39

This GUARD checks with the other GUARD before placing two identical meals in front of SAUL and STEVEN. Neither of them acknowledge him or the food.

Steven shuts his Bible and pushes it to the side, but grasping for authority, he leaves his hand on the book.

STEVEN

I would say you're misinterpreting.

SAUL

Am I?

STEVEN

I think that moment defined your future, not you. I think if your day were even slightly different, we wouldn't be sitting here together.

SAUL

What kind of God hinges an entire life on a single moment? What kind of God has that much hate?

Steven is taken aback by the paradox. He searches unsuccessfully for something profound.

STEVEN

God doesn't always explain himself Saul. We don't see things from his perspective.

Steven loosens his tie and collar.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

This isn't your entire life. You are more than this one act of your past. And there's more to you than this right here.

SAUL

If there's something more, then he's running out of time.

STEVEN

God's plan for you is --

SAUL

God's plan for me? You think God has a plan for me?

STEVEN

(carefully)

Yes. He has a plan for you and for me and for --

SAUL

For you and for me? You sit there in your white shirt and tie and tell me he has a plan for you and for me. How exactly does that work? How exactly does he decide who gets what plan, Steven? Did you get the one where your mother gets out of bed every morning and makes you breakfast before you go to a nice safe school? Did you get the plan where your dad comes home from his nine to five job and wants to play ball or help with your homework; or the one where someone feeds you dinner and puts you to bed? Let's see. How does that work if I get the plan with the white-picket fence and you get the plan with this, this five-star hotel.

(remembering more)

And that's the one where he strikes you down with near blindness in one eye so you can have this incessant pain every day of your life. That's the one where He sends you only one visitor, one visitor who happens to be a minister, determined to convince you that even the worst of God's creatures can find meaning in a life.

Sitting up now.

SAUL (CONT'D)

Don't tell me about God's plan. There is no plan. I was born alone and I'm going to die alone. OK? Everything in between is not God's plan. It's my choice. Don't tell me about God's plan.

Steven is truly unprepared for this. Until now, he's never heard more than two quiet sentences at a time from Saul. He considers a response for a long while.

STEVEN

I haven't always --
(stopping himself)
Since when do you blame God?

SAUL

(quiet again)
I don't blame God. That's the point; I don't think he has anything to do with it, or me.

STEVEN

Then where is all this loathing directed?

SAUL

Me alone. I deserve this. An eye for an eye, right.

STEVEN

You've been doing some reading?

SAUL

Time on my hands.

Now Saul notices the food in front of him: eggs, bacon, sausage. Steven is still lingering in Saul's assertion. Finally:

SAUL (CONT'D)

Did you know that only seven percent of death row inmates choose breakfast for their last meal?

STEVEN

No. I didn't know that.

The younger SAUL sits behind the driver.

43 INT. PRISON MEETING ROOM - AFTERNOON (PRESENT)

43

At the door, the ROOM GUARD hands the mostly empty food trays to another GUARD.

The SUPERVISING OFFICER enters, hands some paperwork to the room guard, and approaches the table. As the door behind him closes, the faint sound of someone whistling can be heard for a moment in the hall outside.

SUPERVISING OFFICER

I've got the paperwork for you to fill out. If you could just sign on the third page.

SAUL

(incredulous)

Sure.

The supervising officer starts to leave.

SUPERVISING OFFICER

You've got about an hour.

SAUL doesn't turn around. Instead, he glares at STEVEN, who answers for him.

STEVEN

Thank you.

The door shuts and Steven watches Saul.

Saul is still staring at the form and the pen in his hand.

44 INT. FACTORY - AFTERNOON (PAST)

44

MARK leads ANA and JESSE through the maze of the factory floor. Ana holds Jesse's hand. He tries to wiggle out, but she holds fast.

They walk past PIPE BENDERS, WELDERS, and LATHE OPERATORS. JESSE still carries his car and whistles the siren sound, but he is intrigued by the sights and sounds that surround him.

MARK

I have to tell you, we don't get many like you applying.

ANA

Like me?
 (to Jesse)
 Stop whistling.

MARK

You know, professional. People like you
 and I, we don't come around every day.

They are stopped for a moment in front of a conveyer belt that moves metal fittings. Ana notices the toy car moving past her. She grabs it off the conveyer. Jesse is whistling again.

ANA

Professional.

Mark starts walking again, scanning her application. Jesse tries to take back the car.

ANA (CONT'D)

(to Jesse)
 I said stop whistling. How old are you?
 Are you a two-year-old?

JESSE

(completely serious)
 Mom. Two-year-olds can't whistle.

She doesn't have a response, and she lets go of the car and her frustration for the moment.

45

INT. MARK'S OFFICE (PAST)

45

MARK sits behind his cheap desk. On it are a desk calendar, a family picture and a nameplate -- nothing else. ANA and JESSE sit on the chairs opposite the desk. Mark sits noticeably higher than them.

MARK

Team manager for your own luxury home
 cleaning service.

Jesse looks up for a moment; he's a bit confused as well. Ana catches Jesse's look, and they exchange a silent understanding.

ANA

Well, it's not my --
 (catching herself)
 You know how it is.

Sucking up is not a natural strategy for Ana, but she forces it down. They both wait a moment.

JESSE is growing impatient. He slides off the chair and plays with the police car.

MARK

Right.

The lights go off.

ANA

Jesse! What are you doing?

He is swinging the car around in the dark.

JESSE

What?

ANA

Turn the lights on.

JESSE

But it glows in the dark.

ANA

Jesse!

Mark turns on the lights.

MARK

I got it.

She pulls Jesse to her and points to the window directly behind Mark. It looks out into the factory. There is a chair right outside the window, far enough from the workers and their equipment but directly in Ana's eye-line.

ANA

See that chair out there?

JESSE

Can I show you the jaws of life?

She pulls the car from him.

ANA

See that chair out there. That's where you will sit until I come back out.

JESSE

Okay.

He runs toward the door.

ANA

Do not get off that chair.

He runs out, slamming the door behind him.

Ana exhales, then tries a smile toward Mark.

MARK

Got your hands full there.

She is determined she can do this.

ANA

I could really use a night shift...

46

INT. FACTORY (PAST)

46

We stay with JESSE as he continues to get distracted, but we see through the window as ANA and MARK continue their interview.

Jesse hangs off the chair, then stands atop it, reaching some metal fittings on the shelves next to him.

Ana's focus shifts between Mark and Jesse. She throws a disapproving look toward Jesse when Mark looks down to his calendar. She is clearly not getting the answer she needs and we see her requests getting more desperate.

Mark stands first and Ana takes the cue, leaving the office.

As Ana comes out, she approaches Jesse in complete frustration. He is lunging toward a stack of metal tubing, but she grabs him and pulls him down.

ANA

Give me those.

ANA takes the parts he has collected and tries to put them on the right shelves.

JESSE

Mom!

ANA

(getting angry, stammering
over some of her words)

When I say stay on the chair, I don't
mean climb on the chair.

(MORE)

ANA (CONT'D)

I don't mean touch the chair every once in a while. I'm just trying to meet with someone for five minutes.

JESSE

I was always touching the chair. I never let go.

She grabs his arm firmly and glares into his face.

ANA

(louder)

You know what I mean. You knew exactly what I meant.

She tightens her grip on his arm.

JESSE

Oww!

Jesse tries not to, but he gives way and starts to cry.

ANA

(absolutely incensed)

Why won't you ever listen!

She yanks him down from the chair and walks past a GROUP OF WOMEN who are sorting parts and trying not to watch.

JESSE

But mom.

Jesse's body is almost limp as she drags him behind her. Ana tries to gain her composure.

She stops, releases the pressure on his arm, and pleads just loud enough to be heard over the machinery.

ANA

You've got to listen. If we're going to make this work, I need your help. Can you do that?

Jesse listens earnestly and nods his head.

47

INT. PRISON MEETING ROOM - AFTERNOON (PRESENT)

47

The GUARD is now sitting in the back of the room, still next to the door.

SAUL stands at the partially open window, trying to get some air. He releases his grip from a bar across the window. STEVEN stands at the table, his Bible open.

STEVEN

I don't have all the answers Saul.

Saul takes a moment to come back to the conversation.

SAUL

And you speak of comfort.

STEVEN

I believe he's in control. He understands what I don't, and I find my comfort in that knowledge.

SAUL

You find comfort in uncertainty?

STEVEN

In a matter of speaking. I find a sense of peace in his control.

Steven sits down, flips some pages in his Bible and turns toward Saul at the window.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

(reading)

Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven --

SAUL

Tomorrow?

STEVEN

(ignoring him, more forceful)

Shall he not much more clothe you? O ye of little faith. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself.

SAUL

And the rest?

STEVEN

The rest.

Steven looks back to his Bible.

SAUL
 (reciting from memory)
 And sufficient unto the day is the evil
 thereof.

Saul comes back to the table. He sits down.

SAUL (CONT'D)
 If God is in control, why didn't he stop
 me?

Steven feels his Sunday School answers starting to fail.

STEVEN
 We can't know all the reasons. Only he
 sees the big picture, his omniscience is
 his alone and we --

SAUL
 Bullshit.

Steven is about to explain, but takes a breath instead as
 he wipes the perspiration from the back of his neck.

SAUL (CONT'D)
 You can't hide behind that. Why didn't he
 stop me?

STEVEN
 I don't know. No one--

SAUL
 Come on!

STEVEN
 (losing control)
 Why? You tell me!

SAUL
 Because he couldn't.

Steven's color is beginning to surface. He determines to
 stifle it, but then can't.

STEVEN
 Now *that's* bullshit.

Saul is surprised by Steven's passion. He sees the
 paperwork on the desk in front of him and pulls it
 forward.

He has no pen. A beat before Steven hands him one. Saul
 is about to start the paperwork, but stops.

SAUL

Let me ask you something.

Steven sighs, waiting for another hit.

SAUL (CONT'D)

What did you do last Saturday?

Steven is caught off guard. He struggles to recall.

STEVEN

Last Saturday.

SAUL

Yeah

He doesn't have the energy to give it a religious spin.

STEVEN

I -- I mowed the lawn. Went to my brother's house; had an argument with my sister-in-law and took my nephew swimming.

SAUL

Swimming?

STEVEN

Yeah. Just for an hour.

SAUL

Wow.

Saul toys with the pen in his hand for a moment, before going back to the form. Steven watches him.

48

INT. OPEN GARAGE- AFTERNOON (PAST)

48

SAUL is sitting across the table from TERREL, who remains standing. Saul cleans the cut on his hand with some first aid materials.

SAUL

Two thousand.

TERREL

Straight. All at once?

Terrel moves across the room to a paper towel dispenser that sits above a stack of tires. He pulls out a towel and hands it to Saul.

SAUL

Pretty much.

Terrel comes back to his computer.

TERREL

I don't know Saul. I'm not really into second tier loans. At the end of the day, I'm betting on your card skills, which sounds to me are not very performance-oriented at present.

SAUL

Yeah.

Both remain silent. Terrel sits on the edge of the desk. He looks over to the two couch potatoes.

SAUL (CONT'D)

So.

Saul starts to get up.

TERREL

Well, aren't you tenacious.

(beat)

I'll tell you what you can do. You can work for the money. Minimize my risk, avoid the double debt. It's a win-win.

Saul takes in the whole room with all the implications of such a commitment.

SAUL

I don't know.

TERREL

What's wrong with you? Take some ownership of your problem, some accountability. If I can be frank, you're work ethic is backassward.

SAUL

I don't think you understand. I don't have the time.

TERREL

Do me a favor. Don't think. It's not your strong suit. I wasn't suggesting a full-time position. Next week you can come in--

SAUL

There is no next week; there's no tomorrow. I have to have two thousand dollars tonight.

TERREL

Alright.

He looks over his less-than motivated employees as they glare into the television. Their faces and bodies are frozen while their fingers are moving at lightning speed on their game controllers.

TERREL (CONT'D)

One hour, one job, one payment -- when you're done of course. I know what you need, and I'm telling you this job will match your needs with my resources. It's called synergy, Saul.

Powerless, Saul leans back and sincerely considers it for the first time.

49

EXT. HIGHWAY - AFTERNOON (PRESENT)

49

ANA is squatting by the flat tire of the trailer. She is sweating, her hair matted against her forehead and neck. The spare tire and all but one of the lug nuts are lying on the road next to her.

On the tire is the last lug nut. She tries desperately to twist it off with the wrench, but when she pulls back, it is clearly stripped.

Just as she gives up and sits on the road, leaning against the trailer, the back door of the car opens slowly.

ANA

(without turning around)

Stay in the car, honey. Just stay in the car.

The door closes. She leans back again, exhales, then hits the back of her head against the door.

She takes a few deep breaths and closes her eyes. When she looks up, she sees JESSE, his face pressed up against the side window, making faces at her.

She sighs, lets a smile escape, and makes a half-hearted face back. Jesse couldn't be happier.

50 EXT. HIGHWAY - LATER (PRESENT) 50

ANA stands a few feet into the highway, next to her immobile car.

As a van passes by, she holds out her thumb. She is ignored. She looks behind her, through the open window on the other side; JESSE is peeing in the desert.

Later, a truck passes and Ana doesn't bother getting out of her car as she flashes a half-hearted thumb.

A hundred feet past her, she notices the truck's brake lights come on.

51 INT. MINI-MART - AFTERNOON (PAST) 51

SAUL comes out of the bathroom. He picks up two bags of jerky and a water.

He places the items on the counter, and grabs an air freshener for the car.

The ATTENDANT adds them up.

ATTENDANT

Lotto ticket?

Even Saul can't help but see the humor in it, and what he means to be a sigh comes out a discreet laugh.

SAUL

I don't think so.

52 INT. SEDAN (PAST) 52

SAUL sits in the parking lot. He stares out the window a moment before putting up the Christmas tree air freshener.

He eyes the file on the passenger seat. He leans his head back and waits for a beat.

53 EXT. PARKING LOT (PAST) 53

The new paint job on the 1976 BUICK is hardly enough to mask the type of work Saul has been solicited for.

It's the only car in the lot, and after a moment, it starts, then pulls out of the mini-mart and into the intersection.

54 INT. SEDAN (PAST)

54

As the sedan turns a corner, the file falls to the floor and a few papers spread. As SAUL continues driving with one hand, he leans down to pick them up.

Before he can finish, he looks up and sees the red light.

Slamming the brakes, the entire contents of the passenger seat fall on the floor. Additional items slide from under the seat.

A DRIVER crossing in front of him yells out the window.

Stopped, Saul looks down and sees the mess of papers, garbage, and the file. Something catches his attention.

The light has turned green, and the car behind him now honks.

His eyes remain fixed on the floor of the car.

A second honk.

He snaps out of it and immediately opens the door.

55 EXT. INTERSECTION (PAST)

55

SAUL walks deliberately toward the car behind him. The man in the car is unnerved and pulls out of the lane, peeling away before Saul reaches him.

Saul walks back to the passenger side of his car. He looks through the side window at the GUN, still on the floor.

56 INT. TRUCK - AFTERNOON (PRESENT)

56

The new truck holds a small camper shell over the bed. The cab is littered with junk.

The OLDER WOMAN drives dangerously fast. She is tired, living on the last cup of coffee and who knows what else. A recently extinguished cigarette smolders in the ashtray. She is already onto the next one.

ANA subtly fans the smoke away as she brushes some trash and papers around the floor with her feet.

DRIVER

You're serious.

ANA

Absolutely. I want him to rot in hell for what he did.

She adjusts the vent to blow the smoke away.

DRIVER

You've made this trek every year.

ANA

Yeah.

DRIVER

Why?

ANA

Because it's what I do.

DRIVER

Really.

ANA

It's my responsibility -- it's the most important thing I do.

DRIVER

So it's sort of like your calling?

Ana checks over her shoulder. Behind her is the open window into the camper shell. Jesse is sleeping on a makeshift bed behind it.

DRIVER (CONT'D)

I didn't mean anything by that. I'm just -
- wow.

ANA

People think justice comes packaged in a court room, in a sentencing. Justice is meted out slowly, continually, year after year.

The driver isn't quite sure how to respond. They approach a mileage sign.

DRIVER

Only 27 miles.

57 EXT. HIGHWAY (PRESENT) 57

The TRUCK passes a group of haggard billboards.

58 INT. TRUCK (PRESENT) 58

ANA stares out the window.

The DRIVER looks over to ask a question but stops herself when she notices the focused resolve in Ana's eyes.

The driver opens her window a bit and turns on some bluegrass music, not too loud.

59 EXT. HIGHWAY (PRESENT) 59

The truck pulls off the highway and into the garage parking lot.

60 INT. TRUCK (PRESENT) 60

As the truck bumps over the driveway, ANA comes out of her trance and starts to take in her surroundings.

61 INT./EXT. REPAIR GARAGE (PRESENT) 61

Two OLDER MECHANICS are in the office, but she approaches the YOUNG MECHANIC just inside the garage.

ANA

I'm about forty miles back.

YOUNG MECHANIC

So... so uh... what, what...

ANA

What? Just speak. What?

YOUNG MECHANIC

What, what weight is the trailer rated for? I mean, maybe, you think it's too heavy?

ANA

I don't know. Do I look like a mechanic?

She doesn't wait for a response and heads across the parking lot.

ANA (CONT'D)
 (without turning back)
 It just blew out. Can you fix a blow out?

As a TOW TRUCK exits the lot, ANA walks toward the pay phone.

She leans into the half-shell phone booth, picks up the receiver and dials "0."

ANA (CONT'D)
 Collect call please.

Through the glass reflection, she sees JESSE, playing on a pyramid of old tractor tires. He tries to push one off the top, but it won't budge. He climbs one more level and then peers down into the darkness of the rubber pyramid, his neck full-length into the opening.

In the booth, Ana is connected now. It rings three times, but she stops herself from letting it ring again. She slowly places the receiver back down.

JESSE (O.S.)
 Mom. Mom!

Jesse is stuck between two tires. Ana forces herself not to turn around.

62 INT. SEDAN - AFTERNOON (PAST) 62

SAUL's eyes are reading street signs as he drives slowly through the industrial district. He misses one and turns his head around to catch it.

63 EXT. STREETS (PAST) 63

The SEDAN turns the corner and moves toward a smaller street. It parks just outside a small, run-down office complex.

64 INT. SEDAN (PAST) 64

The car still running, SAUL goes through the file for a moment.

He uses his foot to push the pistol back under the seat before throwing the file on the floor and shutting off the engine.

He opens the glove compartment and pushes the trunk button.

Saul exits the car and moves behind the open trunk, blocking our view. We hear him digging around before shutting the trunk.

65 EXT. PARKING LOT/TUNNEL/ALLEY(PAST)

65

With a small duffle bag, SAUL walks through the parking lot and then through a pedestrian tunnel.

Saul then walks through the alley.

Across a small street, he spots a loading dock. His eyes scan the few cars, stopping at a Bronco.

66 EXT. LOADING DOCK (PAST)

66

The area is silent, nothing but the sound of a nearby overpass.

As SAUL approaches, two MINORITY WORKERS come out to stack a load. Saul pauses for a moment before continuing. The workers move inside, deep in the background now.

Making his way to the Bronco, Saul opens his duffle bag and pulls out a few tools.

He jams a slim jim down the window and starts fishing. This hardly comes naturally; he is awkward and overtly nervous.

He finally catches the lock, but checks the motel again before opening the door. Throwing his duffle onto the driver's seat, he kneels down on the gravel and starts searching for wires.

Getting more uneasy, he looks up to the loading dock then pulls out a color diagram.

He removes a set of pliers from the duffle, cuts two wires and strips them.

Almost bewildered when the engine turns over, he closes the door, and backs up slowly.

67 INT./EXT. BRONCO (PAST)

67

SAUL scans the loading dock again. Nothing -- the workers are still deep inside the warehouse. He backs the car out of the space.

Before he gets too far, the Bronco stops.

He sets the envelope atop the parking curb, finding a rock to hold it down.

The envelope reads: "TRL REPOSSESSION."

Back in the car now, he moves out of the parking lot.

68 EXT. STREET (PAST)

68

After pulling onto the street, SAUL stops at a red light. He watches the warehouse, and still there is no activity. He struggles to get the car into gear, looking down.

He hears the door handle clicking. By the time he looks up, the drivers-side window shatters and an INCENSED MAN is grabbing him, trying to pull him out.

INCENSED MAN

Get out!

Saul is still frozen, and the man reaches through the broken window, unlocking the door.

INCENSED MAN (CONT'D)

Get out! I sent the payment yesterday!
Now get out!

Saul accelerates, but the man gets in and pulls the steering wheel toward the curb. Both their feet are fighting for the brake.

INCENSED MAN (CONT'D)

Get out of my car!

They both struggle for control until the man pounds his elbow into Saul's face and gains control of the steering wheel.

The Bronco runs into a parking meter and the man forces open the opposite door, trying to shove Saul out of the car.

Saul tumbles out and the man forces the door into Saul's side. He throws the car into park and then grabs Saul, now lying on the asphalt.

INCENSED MAN (CONT'D)

You tell them to leave me alone. It's my damn car! You hear me? It's my car.

Saul starts to stand up and turn away, but the man grabs the back of his coat, pulls him around and throws his knuckles directly into Saul's eye.

Saul coils back in pain and falls back to the ground, writhing.

The man gets back in his car and tears away.

Saul lays on his back grasping at his eye. It oozes blood and fluid. A few WORKERS at the loading dock are across the lot. Through the glass, he remains alone on the asphalt.

69

INT. TRUCK STOP REPAIR GARAGE - AFTERNOON (PRESENT)

69

ANA sits in the tiny waiting area, watching through the half-open door into the garage as the YOUNGER MECHANIC, laying on his back, examines the undercarriage of her trailer. He is slow and deliberate, measuring his work as he goes.

The entire shop seems to be frozen in the 1960's, right down to the haircuts and music.

The rusted fan is loud enough to compete with the radio, but Ana is still sweating.

The TWO OLDER MEN are behind the counter, arguing about how to make their outdated computer work.

Ana looks at the clock on the wall, then back to the tedious efforts of the younger mechanic. She's getting more wound up.

She is back to her magazine for a moment, then checks out the window to the tire pyramid where Jesse had been playing. He isn't there now. She tries to go back to the magazine.

70

INT. PRISON MEETING ROOM - SAME AFTERNOON (PRESENT)

70

STEVEN stands at the window now, and SAUL sits at the table, the Bible closed.

Saul is watching the GUARD sitting in the corner. He is slouching in his chair, his legs sticking out. His sharp-toed boots are polished.

SAUL

Does the idea offend you?

STEVEN

As a minister, a great deal.

SAUL

As a person?

STEVEN

(tentative and frustrated)

I don't know. Where do you get this? If you really believe that he can't control us, what makes him divine? What makes him God?

SAUL

If he does control us, what kind of God is that? What's the point?

STEVEN rolls up his sleeves, the heat isn't any more tolerable at the window.

STEVEN

To help each other. Try that on for size. To live together humanely. To serve him.

SAUL

I control myself. He can't change the way things play out. Maybe he can nudge people to do something good for themselves. But I don't believe he's that involved.

Steven is becoming slightly befuddled as SAUL becomes more resolute.

STEVEN

An absentee God. What kind of assurance is that?

SAUL
Ultimately, you are at the mercy of other people.

Steven comes to the table now.

STEVEN
Like you.

SAUL
And their choices.

Steven remains silent.

SAUL (CONT'D)
You think God wanted that to happen to him?

Steven considers this for a moment.

SAUL (CONT'D)
To his mother? I own that choice.

Steven leans back, trying to stay poised.

SAUL (CONT'D)
And she has to live with the consequences.

STEVEN
As do you.

SAUL
Yes. That's right.

Steven pulls the Bible toward him, plays with the cover, but doesn't open it. His confidence is waning.

71

INT. DISCOUNT SHOE STORE - AFTERNOON (PAST)

71

The store is cold and bright. Just about every aisle has shoes strewn about the floor, and it appears there is not an employee over the age of sixteen.

ANA has picked out two pairs of inexpensive tennis shoes when JESSE emerges from the other side of the store.

JESSE
Mom. Mom. Uh mom, I think these would be really good in the snow.

He holds out a pair of wild-colored, plastic cowboy boots, a shameless ancillary product of some cable cartoon show.

ANA

Really?

JESSE

Way good.

ANA

We need to find something comfortable.

JESSE

Mom. They are really comfortable.

ANA

Have you tried them on?

Jesse thinks for a second, then suddenly plops down in the middle of the aisle. He throws off his one shoe and one slipper and fits the boots over his feet.

ANA (CONT'D)

Honey. We need to find shoes -- shoes you can wear every day.

He is drowning in them, but he is nowhere near giving up.

ANA (CONT'D)

Those are big enough for me.

JESSE

No way. I don't think so, mom.

Ana stares into his eyes for a moment before she gives in. She takes off her keds and slides on the boots. They're tight, but she's determined to prove her point.

She takes a few steps, then a pivot turn as if a runway model.

She finishes by flashing a look of victory to Jesse. She looks ridiculous.

JESSE (CONT'D)

Mom. You look really good in those. You should buy them too. But don't wear them to my school. Okay?

ANA

Okay.

JESSE
They're comfortable aren't they?

ANA
No. They hurt. Every step hurts like hell.

She is trying to pry them off now.

JESSE
(disapproving her language)
Mom!

ANA
Sorry. They're way too big for you. Let's find some cool tennis shoes.

She grabs a pair of everyday, boring footwear from a nearby shelf.

ANA (CONT'D)
Look at these.

Jesse leaves the boots there and runs off again in his socks.

ANA (CONT'D)
Jess!

She sits on the nearby stool, sighs to keep her cool and puts her own shoes back on. Still sitting, she scans the aisle for a tennis shoe with more flare.

A gum-chewing SALES GIRL approaches; she looks fourteen -- tops. Her smile couldn't be any more saccharine.

SALES GIRL
Can I help you?

The voice is frightfully gleeful; she's the whole pleasant package.

ANA
Yes. Are there any openings for second --

She pauses on the smile. Is this girl human? She tries to smile back, but how can she compete?

ANA (CONT'D)
I'm fine.

SALES GIRL
Well I'm right here --

ANA

Yes. I see that. But, fine. Really.

Jesse almost knocks over the girl when he rounds the corner again.

JESSE

Mom. I found the right size. Look.

He does a sample prance in front of her.

SALES GIRL

Cute!

Jesse is a bit unsure about this strange girl, but he'll take whatever help he can get.

JESSE

See.

ANA

(to the girl)

Thank you.

Surprisingly, the sales girl catches the hint and heads back to her friends at the front counter.

ANA (CONT'D)

That's great. Let's just see if there's anything else, and then we can make a choice together.

Jesse is dubious.

ANA (CONT'D)

Please. I think you'll really like what we find.

JESSE

Like what?

ANA

Like these.

She holds out a pair of velcro strap tennis shoes, hits one against her palm and the sole starts flashing lights.

JESSE

Whoa-ha.

72

EXT. DISCOUNT SHOE STORE (PAST)

72

The overzealous SALES GIRL holds open the door for them.

SALES GIRL

Thank you for your patronage!

ANA holds the bag of old shoes and her tongue; JESSE cannot contain his exuberance. He dances around in his sparkling new, plastic cowboy boots.

He steps directly into a soot-covered pile of snow against the sidewalk.

ANA

Jesse.

JESSE

I told you they're good in the snow.

ANA

Do you want to take the tags off at least.

Jesse stops mid-jig.

JESSE

No way.

He backs up, as if his mom would rip the tags off despite his plea.

JESSE (CONT'D)

I want them to stay new.

Ana is speechless. Somehow, he still manages to completely surprise her.

She tussles his hair and smiles at him.

ANA

Come on you crazy kook.

As they walk away on the sidewalk, she kicks his little butt from behind. He slips and falls off the curb and onto his knees.

JESSE

Mom!

ANA

Sorry. I was --
 (she tries not to laugh)
 I'm sorry. Are you okay?

She helps him up and they start off again. He's limping a bit as he tries to slip his heel back into the boot.

JESSE

Geez mom.

73 INT. PUBLIC BATHROOM - SAME AFTERNOON (PAST) 73

The no-frills bathroom is shared between the attached offices. It's well overdue for an update and a cleaning.

SAUL is running cold water over his eye. He tries to blot it softly with the cloth towel that's attached to the dispenser. He pulls back in pain then tries barely touching the towel to his eye.

Once it is clean, he catches a glimpse of himself in the scratched mirror. He is drawn in and holds on his own gaze.

74 EXT. TUNNEL/PARKING LOT (PAST) 74

SAUL lumbers into the tunnel and stops for a moment, holding a matted tissue against his bruised eye.

75 EXT. STRIP MALL - AFTERNOON (PAST) 75

ANA and JESSE are walking away from the discount shoe store and toward their old, wood-paneled station wagon when she notices a well-dressed woman help her two children into their SUV -- not flashy or gaudy, just unreachable.

JESSE

Mom! Come on.

He's pulling her toward the station wagon, purely content with his fancy boots.

76 EXT. STREETS (PAST) 76

As ANA's WAGON pulls out of the parking lot and turns, JESSE plays with the windows.

They follow the street a few blocks and move into the industrial district. They stop at a light directly in front of the office complex where SAUL's BUICK is parked.

Just as the light changes, we move to Saul's parked car and stay with him as Ana's car continues past the complex and turns the corner.

77 INT. BUICK - AFTERNOON (PAST)

77

SAUL is sitting in the car quietly, the wet tissue held against his injured eye.

Out of nowhere, the rear side of his car is hit, jerking him against the side window. When he turns around, the BRONCO has backed up and crashes into him again.

In one movement, he grabs the gun from under the passenger seat and gets out of the car.

The Bronco starts toward him a third time, but Saul stands directly in front of the windshield, gun aimed squarely at the INCENSED MAN inside.

The man stops immediately, and seeing the determination on Saul's face, backs out of the parking lot as fast as possible, driving over the curb.

With his gun still aimed, Saul follows, keeping in front of the man's windshield.

Once the Bronco backs into the street, the man throws the car into drive and takes off.

Saul keeps his gun raised even as the man turns out of sight.

Another car approaches the office complex and Saul hides the gun in a coat pocket.

He turns 360 degrees. No one there, but he is stifled, confined in the middle of this vastly open parking lot.

He pauses on the now crumpled side of the Buick.

78 EXT. TRUCK STOP - AFTERNOON (PRESENT)

78

ANA stands outside the garage, close to the tire pyramid.

She turns completely around; the entire area is void of people.

She sits on the bottom row of the pyramid and stares at the endless stretch of road leading anywhere in either direction.

79 INT. GARAGE BATHROOM (PRESENT) 79

ANA opens the door slowly and scans the empty bathroom. It is filthy and run-down, but she enters and washes her face in the stained sink. She pauses on her reflection in the mirror.

80 EXT. GARAGE (PRESENT) 80

As ANA comes around the corner, she catches one of the OLDER MECHANICS in an altercation with the YOUNGER MECHANIC.

OLDER MECHANIC

Hurry up then!

The younger mechanic turns away. The older mechanic grabs the boy's shoulder, turns him back and slaps him across the eye and cheek.

OLDER MECHANIC (CONT'D)

Don't you roll your eyes at me.

The younger mechanic looks down, placing his hand over his cheek and eye, squinting. Ana quickly moves to the waiting room without being seen.

81 EXT. WAL-MART - AFTERNOON (PAST) 81

The younger ANA exits the main doors, application in hand. She passes JESSE, telling him something we don't hear.

She takes a few more steps toward the car before she has to turn back and help Jesse jump from a small tree he has climbed.

ANA

One. Two.

JESSE

(in a bad Spanish accent)

Tres.

She pulls him behind her, gently this time, and he tries to keep up.

82

INT. LAUNDRY MAT - AFTERNOON (PAST)

82

The coin-op is aged and well-worn. The once bright, colored appliances are dingy and faded. The tile floor is mismatched, cracked.

There's only one other patron on the opposite end of their row; a small and aging man. He works a crossword while he waits for the dry cycle.

ANA and WENDY are sorting through cleaning rags, uniform shirts, and some of their personal laundry.

WENDY

Have you tried Sam's?

ANA

I'm not going back there.

WENDY

It's not that bad, Ana.

JESSE (O.S.)

(yelling from the other side
of the room)

How do you spell "mirror?"

ANA

You've never worked there.

(yelling back)

Two "R"s, honey.

Wendy stops pulling items from the dryer.

WENDY

You haven't told him yet?

She is still focused on the whites.

ANA

No.

JESSE (O.S.)

How do you spell "faces?"

ANA

With a "C" Jesse. I know you know that one.

WENDY

Ana.

Everyone wants something from her and she's had enough.

ANA

(suddenly aggressive)

What? What should I do? You have an easy answer? There is no easy answer. He won't understand. "What did I do wrong? Why can't I be with all my friends? Why do I have to read the same books I read three years ago?" I won't do that to him. It makes me sick to my stomach just to imagine him lost in the middle of all that chaos.

WENDY

You can't just --

ANA

I know. I'll find something.

They are both back to sorting now. A beat passes.

ANA (CONT'D)

He really wants to wear those boots to school.

JESSE (O.S.)

Mom. It's not working!

Wendy has moved to the washer. She loads in the change.

ANA

(to herself)

I can't do this.

WENDY

What?

JESSE (O.S.)

Mom!

ANA

What? I'm coming.

JESSE is kneeling on the ground, trying to do his homework on the vinyl pad of a fixed chair. He keeps punching through the paper with his pencil.

Ana is standing behind him, watching silently as Jesse continues to try. She loves him completely, as is, quirks included.

JESSE
 (yelling again)
 Mom!

ANA
 (calmly)
 Yes, honey.

Jesse is startled when he turns to see her right there.
 He turns back to his paper.

JESSE
 This isn't working very well.

83 INT. BUICK - SAME LATE AFTERNOON (PAST) 83

SAUL's vision is somewhat blurred in the one eye, but he looks out the window.

He is parked directly in front of a LUCKY SAM'S. He stares down the possibility for a while.

He gets out and walks across the parking lot and into the bar.

84 INT. LUCKY SAM'S (PAST) 84

The REGULARS are scattered about the room, mostly men. The female bartender reads a book.

SAUL enters slowly and moves his way toward a table in the corner. He sits down and tries to focus on his breathing.

His eye is uncovered, but still fresh.

FEMALE BARTENDER
 You alright?

A beat.

SAUL
 Fine.

He's not quite sure why she is still waiting, but he never looks at her.

SAUL (CONT'D)
 I'll have a scotch. And a water please.

She leaves him alone and he carefully touches his eye, testing the pain. Still sensitive.

The drink is delivered; he stares at it for a while.

He drinks a bit of water.

85 INT. GARAGE - LATE AFTERNOON (PRESENT)

85

The OLDER ANA enters the garage, she scans the area for Jesse as the YOUNG MECHANIC is just finishing up, cleaning his hands.

YOUNG MECHANIC

Uh. Yeah. Looks like...well...

She waits for him to finish.

YOUNG MECHANIC (CONT'D)

Your trailer. It's done. There was uh... little damage behind the axle also. I can, I can bring it out front for you.

ANA

(more patient this time)

Okay.

A beat before she gestures toward the garage.

ANA (CONT'D)

That your father?

YOUNG MECHANIC

No. My uncle.

ANA

I just thought --

YOUNG MECHANIC

My father was worse.

Ana is somewhat lost in thought. As the mechanic leaves, he reveals the partially open door into the waiting room. Ana is startled to see JESSE, laying across the row of the plastic chairs, reading an auto parts catalogue.

86 INT. PRISON - SAME LATE AFTERNOON (PRESENT)

86

Sitting across the table from each other, SAUL and STEVEN are silent. Steven wipes the perspiration from his neck.

The GUARD by the door talks quietly into a phone. He hangs up, looks curiously at the silent pair, then he's back to his solitaire game on a small ledge against the wall.

Steven rolls his sleeves up one more turn as he talks.

STEVEN

Let's say for the sake of argument --

SAUL

I thought your job was to offer peace.

STEVEN

You don't want peace.

SAUL

(vulnerably honest here)

I want peace. I don't think it's possible.

(pause)

For the sake of argument.

Steven has to relocate his thought. His mind is opening.

STEVEN

For the sake of argument, let's say you do, to some degree, control your own destiny. Do you really believe that God is unavailable in that world?

Saul sincerely considers the supposition. He glances over to the solitaire-playing guard.

SAUL

Yes.

STEVEN

(getting angry now)

Why? Why are you so determined to resist goodness in your life?

SAUL

My life. What life?

STEVEN

You can't have it both ways. You can't be a victim, claim to want peace and --

SAUL

I am not a victim. I have never been a victim.

STEVEN

I know that. But you can't want peace, be powerless to achieve it, and be the sole owner of your actions. For God's sake, Saul, for your sake, if you're going to claim all the power, then do something with it.

Saul is silent.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

If you want peace, then allow yourself to believe for just a moment that even though no one in this world gives a shit about whether you live or die, someone loves you.

SAUL

(incredulous)

God.

STEVEN

Yes. God. And for that alone your life has value.

Saul is listening, but not convinced.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

You said you wanted peace. Why are you so adamant that it's not possible?

SAUL

I don't think it should be.

Steven finally finds his way in.

STEVEN

(almost a question)

Because you don't deserve it.

Saul doesn't answer. Steven leans forward, inches from Saul's face. His response is a near whisper.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

If God doesn't want to bother with you, then why is this heart so heavy? Where do you think guilt comes from?

For the first time, Saul doesn't have an answer; not in his words, not in his eyes. He is genuinely confused. The most glaring reality of his life, this undeniable feeling of guilt, has been a proof for his faithless heart all along.

87

EXT. LUCKY SAM'S CARD CLUB - LATE AFTERNOON (PAST)

87

ANA and JESSE are getting out of the station wagon when MARTY walks toward them.

Ana covers her "Merry Maids" uniform with a sweater from the back of the car. Jesse runs up to Marty.

MARTY

Hey buddy, what's going on?

Jesse grabs both legs and squeezes as hard as he can.

MARTY (CONT'D)

Whoa-ha. You are seriously strong.

Marty feigns weakness and starts to stagger.

JESSE

Dad! You've gotta see my new boots.

He looks down and notices the one shoe, one slipper combination.

MARTY

Where are they?

Jesse dives into the car and barrels into the back, shuffling through things.

MARTY (CONT'D)

(to Ana)

Are you sure about this?

ANA

What choice do we have?

MARTY

We can find something else.

Jesse bursts out of the car with his boots over his hands and arms.

JESSE

Aren't they cool?

MARTY

I've never seen anything quite like them.

Ana can't help but smile a bit.

JESSE

I'm saving them for school tomorrow. Do you think they'll glow in the dark?

MARTY

I don't see how they couldn't.

Ana goes back to pulling her things out of the car.

MARTY (CONT'D)

Jess. Will you do me a favor? I need a hot chocolate. Will you go in there and get us one to share?

Marty hands him a couple of quarters and Jesse takes the boots off his hands.

JESSE

Mom. Hold these. I'll be right back.

Jesse skips off. He jumps over a dirty snow patch on the sidewalk, but lands directly in another.

MARTY

You don't have to get something today. We can look for a couple of weeks.

ANA

Couple of weeks? Have you looked at our bank balance?

MARTY

Is it that bad?

ANA

It's that bad. Unless Merry Maids has a severance package.

Marty looks at the card club behind her.

MARTY

Maybe just until you find something else.

ANA

Marty.

(quietly)

I don't know the first thing about home school.

Marty steps back to the car and leans against the hood. He blows warm air into his hands.

MARTY

I didn't know the first thing about geography. But they didn't need a science teacher so what do you do?

ANA

I don't know.

MARTY

You stay one chapter ahead. I've been one chapter ahead for three years, and they still haven't figured me out.

He pulls her toward him, taking both her hands.

MARTY (CONT'D)

You can do this.

Her eyes reveal the lingering doubt, but having Marty makes it entirely bearable.

Three clearly inebriated MALE CUSTOMERS come out of the card club, laughing and hitting each other.

Ana goes back to the car and shuts the door. She looks at the club entry. It seems like a step backwards, but she can do this.

MARTY (CONT'D)

We'll be back in forty-five minutes.

ANA

Right.

Ana steps through the doors and Jesse comes running back with a can of root beer. He's trying to drink it as he runs.

MARTY

What do you got there?

JESSE

(apologetic)

Oh.

MARTY

So. You want to help me grade some tests at the school?

JESSE

I hate grading tests. Can we do the monkey bars?

MARTY

Monkey bars? I don't think so Jess.

88 EXT. SCHOOL YARD (PAST)

88

JESSE hangs upside down from the monkey bars, trying to twist his body around to grab the next rung.

A small group of OLDER KIDS plays dodge ball deep in the background. Their yelling can barely be heard.

MARTY sits on the edge of the go-round, his jacket zipped to the top and his hands frigid. He grades a stack of tests as he interacts with Jesse.

JESSE

Do you want the rest of my root beer?

He glances to the can next to him, sand around the top.

MARTY

I'm good. Thanks though.

JESSE

You don't like root beer, do you?

MARTY

I like it with pizza.

Jesse sticks a not-so-graceful landing off the bars. He runs over and takes a sip.

Marty ignores the tests for a moment, intrigued by the simplicity of Jesse's happiness.

Jesse puts the drink down, runs half way back toward the bars, stops, comes back for another sip, and then returns.

Marty laughs to himself, and as he observes Jesse's next set of tricks, he takes the final swig from the sand covered root beer can.

89 INT. LUCKY SAM'S (PAST)

89

The dim expanse is garnished with a layer of cigarette smoke and indirect lighting, making it difficult to see the over-worn carpeting and soiled paint.

A few PATRONS are scattered about the open tables. They clutch their chips or coins in one hand, and their alcohol in the other. Every few minutes a weak expression of excitement is grunted by the slot-players on the opposite side of the room.

A FEMALE waitress carries a tray of drinks to the side tables. We follow her as she drops off a few orders.

She passes SAUL, who is still staring at his scotch.

Her last stop is at her boss SAM'S table where, on his third glass, he is counting receipts.

Across the table from SAM sits ANA. She has been watching the waitress make her rounds while failing her attempt to appear excited.

SAM

You want anything?

ANA

No. No, thank you.

SAM

Missed us did you?

ANA

Horribly.

They both understand what's going on here.

SAM

I've got a six to two shift where you would fit well. It's a tougher crowd, and I need tougher people.

ANA

Monday through Friday?

SAM

Wednesday through Sunday.

A foul smelling, LOUD-TALKER comes out of nowhere. He smacks Sam on the back.

LOUD-TALKER

Did you hear what you paid me today?

SAM

No. Would you like to tell me?

LOUD-TALKER

Two hundred buddy! Two freaking hundred!

The beady-eyed man notices Ana now.

LOUD-TALKER (CONT'D)

Now this is what we need more of around here Sam. Don't let this one go.

SAM

She's back for another round. My niece thinks she's ready for the tables now -- for the likes of you.

The man is distracted by the sounds of a new game, and he stumbles off.

Sam turns back and notices Ana's disgust.

SAM (CONT'D)

(to Ana)

Hey. It is what it is, sweetheart. You of anyone should know that.

ANA

Right. It's just been a while.

SAM

That's right. Which means Darla's gotta train you again. Which means if we do this, I need a six-month commitment.

Ana wasn't expecting this.

SAM (CONT'D)

Minimum.

90

EXT. LUCKY SAM'S (PAST)

90

ANA exits and walks down the sidewalk by herself. She tries not to think about the ramifications, but she cannot escape the overwhelming certainty that she is unprepared for this.

The sun is dropping now, and she starts to shiver.

As she passes a few shops in the strip mall, the STATION WAGON pulls up, driving along beside her.

She doesn't notice as MARTY manually cranks the window down.

MARTY

It's warmer in here.

She finds only a slight comfort in the familiar voice, then looks to the back window where JESSE is smearing his silly faces into the glass. This pulls her out of herself long enough to laugh a bit as they open a door for her.

Before getting in, she stops herself.

ANA

I've still got some errands to run before dinner.

JESSE

Mom. Come on!

MARTY

I've got another dozen tests to finish.

ANA

I can drop you off. Jesse and I will come back.

JESSE

Mom, No. I want to go home.

Marty puts the car in park and grabs his hat.

MARTY

You take the car. I can walk back.

JESSE

(in a demanding robot voice)
I want to go with dad.

Jesse starts to get out of the car.

MARTY

I can take him.

ANA

No no.

(to Jesse)

Dad needs to finish his work before dinner. Stay in the car.

JESSE

Mom!

ANA

Jesse. Put your seat belt back on.

By now they have switched.

MARTY
See you in a bit.

ANA
Alright.

Marty stops her suddenly, leaning into the window.

MARTY
Are you okay?

She knows what he means.

ANA
It's fine. It'll be fine.

The station wagon pulls away and Marty watches as they turn the corner.

91 EXT. WAFFLE HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON (PRESENT) 91

The endless gray scale of desert landscape is interrupted by the single-structure of a dilapidated "WAFFLE HOUSE." A few letters in the faded yellow sign are still lit.

An 18-WHEELER cruises by. Ana's little car and trailer are parked to the side of a crowded lot. It's as if all the cars that were never on the highway have been waiting here all along.

An AGING MAN moves toward the door.

92 INT. WAFFLE HOUSE (PRESENT) 92

The room is cramped with booths, tables and a counter, every one of them taken. Ceiling fans are circulating full speed above, and the sounds of griddles and all-day breakfast are heard over the quiet conversations that scatter about the room. Everything is run-down, faded, but functional.

The AGING MAN enters, squints to find a seat and heads for the corner.

He stops at ANA who sits at a window booth.

AGING MAN
Do you mind?

ANA

Yes. I do.

The man heads for a booth in the back.

Ana is half-way through her meal, and through the window, JESSE is seen playing with the sugar packets. He doesn't have any food in front of him.

JESSE

I'm not hungry.

ANA

You have to eat something. At least eat my fries.

Jesse looks up at his mother, confused. She holds a moment before allowing a distant, wistful smile.

ANA (CONT'D)

I mean fries.

Jesse smiles, ignores the fries and goes back to playing.

JESSE

Sick, mom!

Ana scans the room.

She starts with a middle-aged WOMAN who sits at the end of the bar. Both her hands are wrapped around her coffee mug, and she is clearly alone, sandwiched between the other customers.

She notices a COUPLE at a nearby booth. They are quiet as they wait for their food. It is obvious that their silence carries weight. He reaches across the table and takes her hand.

The WAITRESS who passes by goes back to get an order and shares a few words with the new BUS BOY who is wiping down the napkin dispensers. She smiles at him, but he is still uncertain and nervous as he tries to avoid getting in the way.

Ana notices a young TEENAGER walking toward the rest-rooms. Her hooded sweatshirt covers much of her face and hands. She stops at a cigarette vending machine, checking it for change. She is clearly a runaway.

Ana's eyes then move back to the aging man who gives up his seat to a middle-aged woman and moves to an empty stool at the bar.

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

Mom?

As the man sits down, the pay phone on the back wall is revealed. Her eyes focus on the vacant phone.

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

Mom?

Ana turns, and Jesse is talking with his mouth against the window. Ana enjoys him for a moment before responding.

ANA

We have to go, honey.

The CUSTOMER in the next booth watches curiously as Ana speaks. From across the restaurant Ana is seen alone, looking through the window; no Jesse.

93 EXT. BAR - LATE AFTERNOON (PAST)

93

SAUL walks out slowly. The light makes him squint. He's been inside for too long.

His light coat is half-zipped as he moves across the parking lot.

There is an empty layer across his stare as he walks toward the BUICK. He is defeated now.

94 INT. PRISON - LATE AFTERNOON (PRESENT)

94

GUARD #1 opens a door and SAUL and STEVEN walk through. The guard escorts them through a series of more locked doors and secure halls. They are both silent as they walk. Once they reach the last door, the guard waits for them.

Steven opens his bible and reads.

STEVEN

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies, : thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me."

Saul doesn't respond, and the guard picks up a wall-phone and speaks.

GUARD
2461 returning.

The keypad next to the door blinks green and the guard enters a code. The door buzzes and unlocks.

Saul grabs the guard's arm, startling him.

SAUL
Hold on.

The guard measures his trust.

SAUL (CONT'D)
Just a minute.

The guard waits for Steven's consent, then steps back and gives them a moment.

SAUL (CONT'D)
(to Steven)
What's the point?

Steven is uncertain.

SAUL (CONT'D)
I mean here. Now. What's the point. You want me to do something. There's nothing left to do. That's the whole idea here.

STEVEN
The whole idea?

SAUL
Take away my freedom, my life.

Steven is disappointed.

STEVEN
Do you really think they can take away your freedom? I thought you were in control.

Saul waits for more. The phone rings and the guard steps back and picks up the receiver.

GUARD
(into the phone)
Coming now.

Steven offers Saul his hand. Saul is confused. He starts to reach out for it, but the guard pulls his hands behind his back to cuff him.

Steven smiles slightly at Saul. For a moment they are both oblivious to the cuffs and the immediate environment. For a moment, they are equal.

The guard takes Saul, and Steven watches through the glass of the closing door as they walk down the corridor.

95 EXT. WAFFLE HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON (PRESENT) 95

ANA and JESSE walk toward the car and trailer. Jesse runs ahead of her.

Ana focuses on the long stretch of road ahead as she approaches the driver's side door. She reaches out to open it.

96 INT. BUICK - LATE AFTERNOON (PAST) 96

Coming from LUCKY SAM'S, SAUL opens the car door and sits down. He doesn't bother putting the key in the ignition. He simply stares out the window, not focusing on anything.

Past him, through the passenger window, a large grocery store is visible.

97 EXT. GROCERY STORE PARKING LOT (PAST) 97

From above, Saul's partially crushed BUICK is seen in the middle of the near-empty lot.

Ana's STATION WAGON enters the lot from the other side and pulls to the front of the grocery store.

98 INT. STATION WAGON (PAST) 98

ANA shuts off the ignition and gets her things together.

JESSE reads a library copy of a comic strip collection.

Ana gets out and starts walking away -- no Jesse. She comes back to the car.

ANA
Jesse. Hey, let's go.

Jesse remains unaware.

ANA (CONT'D)

Come on.

He realizes for the first time they have stopped and looks at her.

JESSE

Hi.

ANA

Hi.

JESSE

Can I stay here?

ANA

Jesse --

JESSE

I promise I'll stay in the car. I just want to read. Please.

She looks at the store, examining the windows and visibility. She considers it for a moment.

ANA

No. I can't see you from inside. Come on.

JESSE

Please!

ANA

Right now.

99

INT. BUICK (PAST)

99

SAUL is still in the same frozen position, staring at the chasm of his future through the windshield.

A distant car alarm goes off and pulls Saul from his trance. He looks around the parking lot, wondering how long he's been there.

When he leans back, we see through the passenger window, and ANA is leaving her car with JESSE reluctantly following.

She pulls a cart from the long row. Jesse hops on for a ride.

100 EXT. GROCERY STORE (PAST) 100

ANA notices JESSE carrying his boots, but still wearing the shoe-slipper combo.

ANA

Jesse. The boots go on your feet.

JESSE

I'm saving them. For school.
(as if she's stupid)
Remember?

She enjoys his impulsiveness for a moment before they pass through the automatic doors.

101 INT. BUICK (PAST) 101

Saul pulls the last piece of jerky from his bag. He scans the area until his eyes pause on the grocery store.

102 INT. GROCERY STORE (PAST) 102

Some of the florescent lights flicker. The metal adjustable shelving is old and worn.

There are few employees, and even fewer patrons. Despite some visible marketing attempts to lure customers back, it appears as if the latest superstore has left this place eerily quiet and lonely.

The Christmas music is slightly audible.

ANA and JESSE are moving through the cereal aisle. There is already a gallon of milk, bread, and a jar of peanut butter in the cart -- all generic brands.

Jesse climbs atop the cart, trying to reach the most colorful box on the upper shelf.

ANA

I don't think so. Let's try one of these.

She sorts through the generic, healthier cereals.

JESSE

But mom, there's a toy in every box.

ANA

We're not shopping for toys, honey.

JESSE
(to himself)

I am.

She takes the cereal from his arms and puts it back.

JESSE (CONT'D)

Mom.

She adds her selection to the cart.

JESSE (CONT'D)

Boring. Yuck.

They head toward the next aisle.

In the ENTRY of the store, SAUL comes through the sliding doors. Others entering and exiting are bundled for the cold, but even with his light coat, he is unphased.

He scans the interior for a moment before picking up a red plastic carry-basket and moving into the first aisle he sees.

He walks slowly, passing a YOUNGER COUPLE. They stare at his eye, the cut on his hand, his disheveled hair and clothing. There is no place to hide the glaringly harsh day he's had. He looks back at the couple, realizing what he must look like.

As he rounds the corner, he catches a reflection of himself in the chrome siding of the large refrigerators.

He stops, steps in, and examines his eye. He licks his finger and wipes away a bit of dried blood on his upper cheek.

An EMPLOYEE comes through the double doors in the back with a handcart full of products. Saul quickly moves on, passing the aisle where Ana and Jesse have stopped.

In the STATIONERY SUPPLY AISLE, Ana is choosing a deck of playing cards. She examines the prices.

Jesse is down the aisle with a stack of folders on the ground. He is picking all the green ones out and stacking them to the side.

Ana puts her playing cards in the basket and moves toward Jesse.

ANA
How are we doing?

JESSE

Four.

Ana passes him and is now looking through the discount books.

ANA

Did you get a binder and spirals?

JESSE

Three spirals.

ANA

And get a package of pens and pencils.

Jesse grabs a box of name-brand pens. Ana switches it out as Jesse moves on.

Saul adds a bag of chips to his basket where there is already a bottle of water.

He moves to the PHARMACY COUNTER and waits for an employee.

No one in sight, he starts scanning the area.

His eyes move to the in-store banking counter where a barely-twenty, SKINNY MAN is sitting behind the counter chewing gum and reading a book.

Saul sees the line of check stands. Only TWO CHECKERS, one of which is helping a customer; the other, waiting.

PHARMACIST (O.S.)

Can I help you?

Slightly startled, Saul turns to the PHARMACIST.

In the FRONT OF THE STORE, Ana and Jesse stop beside the bathroom door.

ANA

Right here.

JESSE hands his new boots to his mother before climbing off the cart.

JESSE

You watch them. Okay?

ANA

They'll be right here.

She parks her cart between the discount sunglass display and the pie rack -- still very close to the bathroom door.

Jesse runs into the bathroom.

In a moment, Ana notices the service desk across the aisle. A TIRED WOMAN waits there, no customers.

At the PHARMACY COUNTER, Saul is handed a bottle of medicine with instructions.

PHARMACIST

Make sure he takes it with a meal.

SAUL

Yeah. Thank you.

Saul moves slowly to the next aisle.

On the OPPOSITE END OF THE STORE, Ana has moved to the service desk and is receiving an application form from the tired woman.

ANA

Thank you.

She starts filling it out, glancing toward the bathroom door across the aisle.

Saul passes another aisle, at the CENTER OF THE STORE now. He stops just across from the bathroom.

Ana is still at the SERVICE DESK.

ANA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. Do you have another pen?

The woman doesn't hear her.

ANA (CONT'D)

Excuse me.

Her eyes look to the bathroom door across the aisle again.

Saul crosses the aisle and approaches the BANKING COUNTER. He removes his wallet from his back pocket as he gets closer.

The BANK CLERK looks up from his book, obviously annoyed by the distraction.

Saul fishes through his wallet, his medication and receipt still in hand.

SAUL

Hold on.

He looks through his other pockets now. He puts the medicine bottle down on the counter.

He reaches into his jacket pocket and his hand stops. He pauses there, discovering a possibility as he continues to stare down the impatient clerk.

A long beat.

Then, in an instant, he pulls out the pistol and points it directly at the clerk's face, his hands shaking.

SAUL (CONT'D)

I need two thousand dollars.

The clerk is frozen. Saul grabs his shirt and pulls him into the counter, pushing the pistol directly into his throat.

SAUL (CONT'D)

I need two thousand dollars right now.

Almost unconsciously, the clerk backs away.

SAUL (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

He continues backing away.

A woman sees the gun and drops her bag of groceries; the sound of the shot is stifled into almost immediate silence.

From behind the clerk, the blood begins to soak from his lower abdomen through his white shirt.

Saul looks at the gun in his hand.

Ana turns instantly toward Saul and the motion becomes choppy and lyrical all at the same time.

103

INT. PRISON HALLWAY (PRESENT)

103

TWO GUARDS frisk SAUL as he holds his handcuffed hands straight out.

They are speaking, but none of their words can be heard as SAUL stares past them and struggles with the scene in his mind. The sound of the bullet starts his mind racing even faster.

104 INT. GROCERY STORE (PAST) 104

The following action moves fast-motion in reverse, with slight variation from the first time:

SAUL's approach to the banking desk, his wait for the prescription, his passing the couple in the aisle, his entrance into the store, his sitting in the car.

Close-ups of SAUL's hands and face as he is being frisked in PRISON are scattered throughout the fast motion sequence.

105 INT. CAR (PRESENT) 105

As ANA drives through the desert, the echo of the gunshot pulls her mind into the grocery store.

106 INT. GROCERY STORE (PAST) 106

Again, the action moves fast-motion in reverse, with variation:

Ana leaving Jesse in the bathroom, Jesse's counting folders, Ana's shopping for cards, their shopping for cereal, their entrance into the store, Jesse wanting to stay in the car.

Close-ups of ANA in the CAR -- her hand on the wheel and her face in the rearview mirror -- are scattered throughout the fast-motion sequence.

Sound begins to fade in quickly again. The Christmas Musak is back, a few patrons scream, and the scene jitters back into its real-time immediacy.

Saul regains his composure, tightens his grip and turns around, waving his gun. His eyes wild now. The few customers and employees move away from the area. Ana steps toward the bathroom, but Saul is standing only a few feet from the door.

SAUL
(yelling to everyone)
Just stay there. Just stay.

The employees and customers stop. Ana takes another few steps, but stops as Saul's gun points in the general direction of the bathroom.

Saul turns back to the clerk who now clutches his bleeding side.

The clerk cautiously opens the till and pulls out hundreds and fifties. He does all this with one hand, the other still holding his wound.

He drops a stack of bills, then waits for Saul's response.

SAUL (CONT'D)
Come on.

The clerk bends down to pick up the bills. Saul checks the area and sees the customers and employees still.

Ana is frozen in terror, her eyes fixated on the bathroom door.

Saul notices one CUSTOMER holding an open cell phone down by his leg.

SAUL (CONT'D)
Drop that on the floor.

The customer immediately obeys, and Saul turns back to the clerk. He counts more hundreds now.

Saul grabs the cash and stuffs it into his pocket as the clerk counts the next thousand. His hand is not enough to stop the blood. His pain increases and he moves slowly.

SAUL (CONT'D)
Hurry up.

Ana is still watching when, behind Saul, the bathroom door starts to open. Jesse comes out, completely unaware. Ana forces herself not to call out.

Jesse is confused by the still and silent customers. The Christmas music is still playing. Jesse's eyes search for his mother.

The bank clerk is almost done with the next thousand when Saul turns around, seeing Jesse now.

ANA

Jesse!

Jesse connects with his mother's eyes, still confused. He moves quickly toward her, but he's held back.

Ana screams.

Saul has grabbed the back of Jesse's jacket and pulls him toward the banking counter.

Jesse looks at Saul, then back to his mother.

Ana runs toward them and Saul moves the gun away from the clerk and toward her. Ana stops immediately.

Their eyes lock now for the first time -- for a long time -- twenty feet, a shopping cart, and a pie rack between them.

When she finally comes off his eyes, she scans the area around him: his bottle of medicine on the counter, the stack of cash next to it. Her eyes move to Saul's cut hand, then up to the sleeve of his jacket where the "Lock-It-Up Mini-Storage" logo is printed. She pauses on his other arm; it is shaking, uncertain how to hold the weapon that faces her. She looks back to his face now, the bruising surrounding his pained, slightly-squinted eye. The other eye is more open, glazed, tired and wild all at the same time. Those eyes dissolve into:

107 INT. CAR (PRESENT) 107

ANA's eyes as they ignore the road in front of her and are lost in the past.

108 INT. GROCERY STORE (PAST) 108

SAUL tries to look away, but he can't avoid ANA's stare for that perpetual instant. He understands that they are, as of this moment, forever connected.

He notices the ring on the fourth finger of her left hand. His eyes then move to the job application she's dropped. He scans her cart: generic brand items, the deck of cards, the poker book, the stack of school supplies. He sees the "Merry Maids" blouse beneath her jacket.

He pauses on Jesse's new plastic boots. His eyes finally rest on Ana's eyes which transform into:

109 INT. PRISON HALLWAY (PRESENT) 109

SAUL's eyes. They reveal a mind that is inextricably tangled between past and present. He can't escape her desperate stare even now.

110 INT. GROCERY STORE (PAST) 110

ANA is coming apart, sobbing uncontrollably.

The CLERK has finished the second thousand and waits. He struggles to stand.

JESSE's confusion has become true fright.

JESSE

Mom?

Ana sees the fear in Jesse's eyes and tries to pull herself together.

JESSE (CONT'D)

Mom!

SAUL snaps out of the trance, turns away, and stuffs the second stack of cash into his pocket. He continues to hold Jesse by the back of his coat.

ANA

It's alright honey. It's okay.

Saul looks to Ana and then to the other frightened PATRONS. He, like everyone else, is uncertain of what comes next.

He pulls Jesse into him closer.

Ana cries out.

Saul lowers his gun, keeping it out of Jesse's eye-line.

SAUL

I'm leaving now. I want everyone to stay right here. If you do that, then...

He's stalling, not quite sure of himself.

SAUL (CONT'D)

...then I'll drop him off somewhere safe.

ANA

No! God no. Please.

SAUL

(to everyone, more stern this time)

I mean it. Just stay here. If no one calls the police -- he'll be okay.

Ana runs toward Jesse.

Saul places the gun against Jesse's side.

SAUL (CONT'D)

Just wait for ten minutes. Alright? Ten minutes.

Ana falls to her knees.

Saul isn't sure how to respond. He can't think straight. He backs away toward the door, pulling Jesse with him.

JESSE

Mom!

ANA

No. Please no. Take me. God no. Please stop.

Saul turns around and breaks into a run. He bursts out of the doors, dragging Jesse behind.

111 EXT. GROCERY STORE - EVENING (PAST)

111

It is dusk and the parking lot lights are just starting to flicker on. The area is void of pedestrians. Only one car is searching for a parking space in the opposite corner of the lot.

SAUL runs through the parking lot. He hides the pistol under his coat with one hand and carries JESSE with the other.

Jesse is crying, screaming.

JESSE

Mom! Mom!

As he squirms and kicks, Jesse's slipper comes off in the center of the parking lot.

Saul tucks the gun in his pocket and uses his hand to cover the boy's mouth.

112 INT. GROCERY STORE (PAST) 112

ANA is collapsed on the floor. A FEMALE PATRON tries to comfort her.

The BANK CLERK leans against the counter, nearly unconscious. Another EMPLOYEE wraps his wound with various rags, all soaked in blood.

People are silently waiting, watching Ana, still stunned.

113 EXT. PARKING LOT (PAST) 113

SAUL is trying to push JESSE into the back seat.

JESSE

Mom!

SAUL

Stop screaming. You'll be fine.

Unable to calm him, Saul covers Jesse's mouth again and carries him around the back of the car where he opens the trunk.

Jesse is squirming hard and Saul is barely able to keep hold of him.

SAUL (CONT'D)

(desperate)

Quiet. Just be quiet.

Saul places Jesse in the trunk carefully. He notices Jesse's bare foot. He shuts the trunk, muffling the screams.

He pauses for a moment, trying to slow his racing breaths before getting behind the wheel.

A MALE CUSTOMER watches from behind the store window as Saul gets in the car.

114 INT. GROCERY STORE (PAST) 114

ANA still sits in the middle of the aisle, a wreck. The FEMALE PATRON has moved back a bit, giving her space.

The SERVICE DESK EMPLOYEE picks up the phone and dials.

MALE CUSTOMER
 (to the service desk
 employee)
 What are you doing?

Ana's head spins around to see what the woman is doing.

ANA
 No.

Infused with sudden energy, she gets up and runs to the desk. She yanks the phone from the woman.

ANA (CONT'D)
 You heard him. Don't call. Please, not
 yet. Please.

The others are unsure how to respond to the request.

She turns to the bank clerk. He is laying on the counter now and more people assist him.

ANA (CONT'D)
 Can you wait?
 (beat)
 Will you please wait?

The bank clerk looks at the employee who helps him, then back at Ana.

He nods his head and lays back.

Ana drops the phone.

The patrons are still, waiting. Their silence is almost reverent. The overhead Christmas Musak seems to be the only indication that time is advancing. The wait is long and painful.

115 EXT. STREET (PAST) 115

The BUICK makes its way through traffic, passing other cars. It moves toward a freeway on-ramp.

116 INT. BUICK (PAST) 116

Muffled screams from the trunk are heard and SAUL is getting more nervous. He looks to the pistol on the passenger seat as he pulls onto the freeway.

117 INT. GROCERY STORE (PAST)

117

The FEMALE PATRON approaches ANA again, cautiously.

FEMALE PATRON
You should call. Don't wait. You should
call right now.

ANA
I don't know. What if he --

FEMALE PATRON
We need to call the police.

Ana's terror turns to anger. She speaks at first to the woman, then to all the people who are still staring at her.

ANA
This is my son. My choice. He's my son!
My son.

The CUSTOMER and TWO EMPLOYEES that are helping the BANK CLERK are getting more frantic.

The other patrons remain motionless, still unsure how to react:

An OLDER COUPLE watches from across the store.

A BLUE COLLAR MAN waits just inside the entrance.

A PREGNANT WOMAN holds her basket and stares.

Another long beat as we wait with them.

118 INT. BUICK (PAST)

118

SAUL speeds past cars in the fast lane. His hands tremble.

Jesse's muffled screams puncture through the thin vinyl seat and pierce their way into Saul's head. He tries to ignore the sound, but it is inescapable.

JESSE (O.S.)
Mom! Mom!

He turns around and yells to the empty back seat.

SAUL

Shut up! Just shut up for a minute.
Please.

He looks to the freeway overpass that he is on now, then back to the seat again.

SAUL (CONT'D)

I'll drop you off at the park. You can call your mom from there.

Saul turns back to the freeway and there is a line of stopped cars directly in front of him.

He swerves and slams on the brakes. He misses the line of cars by inches, then barrels through the slow lane and across the median.

Before he can orient himself, he sees the oncoming traffic.

An SUV tries to brake, but hits the front fender and forces the BUICK into the next lane of traffic where a huge DUMP TRUCK comes full speed and slams the car in the opposite direction, sending it turning and off the edge of the overpass.

SAUL tumbles through the car as it turns and falls toward the ground below.

119 INT. GROCERY STORE (PAST)

119

ANA, still sitting in the aisle, looks up immediately, as if feeling the crash through her entire body.

Her eyes open wide, terrified by the possibilities.

The TWO EMPLOYEES and CUSTOMER that help the BANK CLERK let go of the pressure on his side now. He's gone now.

In the background, another EMPLOYEE picks up a phone.

We hear only Ana's breathing and cry over the following silent scene.

120 EXT. OVERPASS (PAST)

120

The BUICK barrels to the street below and crumples into the middle of a small intersection below the overpass.

There are no cars or pedestrians nearby when the car lands on its side, slides across the intersection and then falls onto its wheels.

The mangled car is completely still and silent.

Finally, the half-crushed passenger door slowly opens and SAUL pushes himself out. He falls onto the ground, then pulls himself up. His head is bleeding, but he hobbles away from the car.

About ten yards from the car now, he remembers, and turns around, looking at the closed trunk.

Distant sirens are heard approaching. Saul looks around him, then back to the trunk. The sirens are closing in.

He turns away again, and we follow with his broken run across the intersection, past a building and into the park at the other side of the block.

There he disappears into the evening shadows as the police and ambulance arrive in the distance behind him.

121 EXT. ASCUS PENITENTIARY - EVENING (PRESENT) 121

The COMPACT CAR AND TRAILER are parked in the lot.

122 INT. CAR (PRESENT) 122

ANA sits still in the driver's seat. She is looking straight out the window.

After a pause, she cranes her neck around, scans the parking lot and looks at each car. She is clearly disappointed.

Finally she looks into the rearview mirror and sees JESSE waiting, just as still, just as unsure.

ANA

I'll be right back.

JESSE

I know.

It's finally started to cool off, and she rolls down the windows halfway.

123 EXT. PARKING AREA (PRESENT) 123

ANA takes a few steps away from the car. She stops, then after a moment, turns around to look at JESSE. She smiles slightly -- nervously, then turns around and proceeds toward the building.

It's a long walk from the car to the doors, but she makes it there without turning around again.

124 INT. SECURITY CHECK (PRESENT) 124

ANA removes her purse, takes off her shoes, and puts them through the x-ray machine.

GUARD #2 watches his monitor, then her.

GUARD #2

Go ahead.

She walks through and retrieves her items. She's comfortable with this drill.

GUARD #2 (CONT'D)

You'll need to sign in at the --

ANA

Got it.

She tries to put on her tennis shoes as she walks to the desk across the room. A FEMALE GUARD is waiting there.

ANA (CONT'D)

May I use the phone first?

The female guard motions to the pay phone at the side of the room.

125 INT. PAY PHONE (PRESENT) 125

ANA waits as the phone rings. She is determined to connect this time. On the fourth ring the line is picked up, but nothing is said.

ANA

(into phone)

I'm going to do this alone, aren't I?

VOICE

I'm sorry.

ANA

How could you not be here?

VOICE

I don't want to be there. I don't need to see it.

Long pause.

ANA

But I packed all of his things for you.

VOICE

Why would you do that?

A pause as she considers hanging up.

ANA

I can't just throw it all away.

VOICE

What about tomorrow, Ana?

ANA

What?

VOICE

What happens then?

No answer.

VOICE (CONT'D)

Ana, I'm hanging up now. You do this. You need to do this. I'm hanging up now.

Ana holds the phone in silence. She's been waiting years for this moment, yet somehow she is unprepared; terrified by the uncertainty of what comes next.

126

INT. PRISONER WAITING ROOM (PRESENT)

126

SAUL is sitting on a hard chair, alone in the center of the room. This time we see his legs are shackled to the bolted chair.

His eyes look straight forward. He is completely riveted to his own thoughts.

A single, slightly opaque window in the upper corner behind him is open, but blocked by a set of bars.

127 INT. VISITOR WAITING AREA (PRESENT) 127

ANA is alone in the small, windowless room. She sits in a padded chair. There is a small table in front of her where she has set her purse.

She waits with her head down and her eyes closed. She pushes the skin on her forehead as if she has a headache.

128 INT. PRISONER WAITING ROOM (PRESENT) 128

SAUL hasn't moved, his eyes still focused.

GUARD (O.S.)
You need something?

129 INT. VISITOR WAITING AREA (PRESENT) 129

GUARD #3 is waiting for her response.

ANA
Yes.

A pause, then without hesitation and discovering her need as she speaks it.

ANA (CONT'D)
I want to see him.

GUARD #3
Excuse me?

ANA
I want to speak with the prisoner.

GUARD #3
I'm sorry Miss Nichols, I don't think that's possible.

Ana stands and takes a step toward the guard.

ANA
It's entirely possible. Get me your supervisor.

GUARD #3
I don't think --

ANA
Mr. --

She looks at the nameplate on his uniform.

ANA (CONT'D)

Norton. Call your supervisor.

The guard considers it before exiting the room. Ana sits down again. She glances at the clock on the wall.

130

INT. VISITOR WAITING AREA - LATER (PRESENT)

130

ANA is standing when the SUPERVISING OFFICER enters the room and shuts the door behind him.

ANA

Are you in charge of the proceedings today?

SUPERVISING OFFICER

I suppose so. I understand you want to see the prisoner.

ANA

No.

SUPERVISING OFFICER

No?

ANA

I want to speak with him directly.

SUPERVISING OFFICER

That's not a good idea.

ANA

I'm not interested in your opinion. I just want to -- I need to talk to him.

The officer is trying to gauge her stability.

SUPERVISING OFFICER

I understand what he did to you, to your son, must be very difficult. But I can't allow --

ANA

You do not understand. You have no idea. I pray every night that he will suffer the same pain that I endure. I wake up every morning with his face in my head and all I can see is him. He has dominated every part of my life and I have never even spoken to him.

A long beat as they look at each other.

ANA (CONT'D)

Is it illegal for me to speak to him?

SUPERVISING OFFICER

No. It is not illegal.

131 INT. PRISONER WAITING ROOM (PRESENT) 131

SAUL stands and waits as the GUARD unlocks his legs from the chair.

132 INT. PRISON HALLWAY (PRESENT) 132

GUARD #3 pats down ANA as the SUPERVISING OFFICER stands back. As he continues the invasive procedure, she is nearly oblivious, lost in thought.

The supervisor nods and the guard opens the door.

133 INT. SECURE ROOM (PRESENT) 133

This room is smaller, simpler, and more stark than where Saul and Steven met.

SAUL's feet are secured to the table, which is bolted to the floor. His hands are chained to his waist. His eyes are down.

ANA is just inside the door when it closes, and GUARD #3 and SUPERVISING OFFICER stay in the hall, watching through the glass.

SAUL hears the door close and looks up. Their eyes connect.

134 INT. GROCERY STORE - FLASHBACK (PAST) 134

ANA (O.S.)

Jesse!

The sound of her scream echoes as ANA's eyes lock on SAUL and he is caught by her desperate stare. They are both frozen in this moment of uncertainty.

135

BACK TO PRESENT - SECURE ROOM (PRESENT)

135

ANA steps back against the wall, her eyes still fixated on SAUL.

He is equally unprepared for this surreal exchange. He wants to move back, but he is tethered to the table. He looks back into her eyes.

They remain silent, both trying to understand how they have cheated circumstance and forced a moment that should never have been.

Ana almost speaks, but it doesn't come out. Saul looks down again.

After more silence, he looks back up to her. She is still drilling into his eyes.

She has so much to say, but none of it makes sense now.

ANA

I'm not sure why I'm here.

He responds immediately, no hesitation.

SAUL

I'm sorry.

She wants to be incredulous.

SAUL (CONT'D)

(with undeniable sincerity)

I'm so sorry.

She is unsure how to respond, and doesn't for some time.

ANA

You have no idea what you have done to my life.

SAUL

I've tried to imagine. A hundred times
I've tried to imagine. Who you are. What
that day was like before --

He notices her left hand is without a ring now. The skin there is a bit lighter.

SAUL (CONT'D)

I've put together your entire life out of
that one moment.

His dialogue continues as we FLASH TO:

136 INT. GROCERY STORE (PAST) 136

SAUL notices the ring on the fourth finger of ANA's left hand. His eyes move to the job application she's dropped. He scans her cart: generic brand items, the deck of cards, the poker book, the stack of school supplies. He sees the "Merry Maids" blouse beneath her jacket. He pauses on Jesse's new plastic boots.

SAUL (O.S.)

And I've played it over so many times in my head that I know you. But you're right. I have no real idea who you are or what I've taken from you.

We discover here that all the scenes of Ana's day leading up to the grocery store (pulling Jesse from school, cleaning, meeting with Marty, looking for work) are all Saul's imagination as he tried to understand who Ana and Jesse really were.

137 INT. SECURE ROOM (PRESENT) 137

Ana sees the pain behind Saul's eyes, and despite her efforts to discredit it, his complete honesty forces her attention.

A long pause.

SAUL

I never expected to see you again.

Completely unaware of where it comes from, she cuts him off.

ANA

I forgive you.

She covers her mouth as soon as she hears the words.

Saul is utterly confounded.

She is discovering this as she speaks.

ANA (CONT'D)

I have to forgive you.

Another long pause as she remains with her back against the wall, still across the room.

SAUL

I don't deserve your forgiveness.

ANA

I don't think that has anything to do with it.

They both wait.

ANA (CONT'D)

I've tried for so long *not* to give you a face -- trying to deny your humanity.

Ana looks closely at Saul's discolored eye.

As she continues to speak, we see a similar FLASHBACK from Ana's perspective.

138 INT. GROCERY STORE (PAST)

138

She scans the area around Saul: his bottle of medicine on the counter, the stack of cash next to it. Her eyes move to Saul's cut hand, then up to the sleeve of his jacket where the "Lock-It-Up" logo is printed. She pauses on his other arm; it is shaking, uncertain how to hold the weapon that faces her. She looks back to his bruised, slightly-squinted eye.

ANA (O.S.)

But the details keep forcing their way into my memory and then my imagination. In the past eight hours, I've put your whole life together. I'm sure it's all wrong, but I don't think that matters.

We discover likewise, that all of Saul's scenes in the past (getting fired from the mini-storage, arguing with his father, repossessing the car) have been Ana's reluctant imagination struggling to create a picture of Saul's day leading up to their fateful meeting.

139 INT. SECURE ROOM (PRESENT)

139

Saul is completely unprepared for this.

SAUL

What do you want me to say?

She responds by shaking her head. They are silent for a few moments.

Saul is sweating now. He wipes his forehead, then eyes his wet hand, feeling the moisture with his thumb.

Ana cries. She tries to push through it, but she has never been more confused, more upside-down.

She knocks on the door behind her and immediately GUARD #3 and SUPERVISING OFFICER are there to escort her out.

In one quick moment, she looks back to him and their eyes lock one last time before the door shuts and she is gone.

Saul lowers his head. A great tension is released. It is as if he is no longer cuffed to the table. For the first time he is truly free.

He sobs.

140 INT. PRISON HALLWAY (PRESENT) 140

ANA walks down the long, sterile hallway, flanked by the GUARD #3 and SUPERVISING OFFICER. She tries to maintain composure.

141 INT. SECURE ROOM (PRESENT) 141

A GUARD enters the room. He approaches SAUL and unlocks the first restraint.

142 INT. EXECUTION ROOM (PRESENT) 142

Another GUARD prepares the arm restraint on a secure chair.

He is the only one in the room. A large viewing window is seen behind him. The room behind the glass is also empty.

143 INT. PRISON HALLWAY (PRESENT) 143

ANA is escorted by GUARD #3 and SUPERVISING OFFICER as they continue down the hallway. She has regained composure.

144 INT. SECURE ROOM (PRESENT) 144

The GUARD unlatches the leg restraint at the base of the table. SAUL is almost unaware of what's happening.

- 145 INT. EXECUTION ROOM (PRESENT) 145
This GUARD prepares the leg restraints on the chair.
- 146 INT. PRISON HALLWAY (PRESENT) 146
ANA leaves GUARD #3 and SUPERVISING OFFICER and goes through a door; the hall continues. She is alone now.
- 147 INT. SECURE ROOM (PRESENT) 147
The GUARD escorts SAUL through the door, and they exit the room.
- 148 INT. VIEWING ROOM (PRESENT) 148
ANA is standing in the doorway. There are rows of empty chairs in front of her, and beyond that, the large glass window that looks into the execution room.
The two guards have left her there alone.
- 149 INT. PRISON HALLWAY (PRESENT) 149
The GUARD and SAUL come to the end of the hallway where they meet another GUARD. They open a door where they meet...
- 150 INT. EXECUTION ROOM (PRESENT) 150
...a third GUARD. All three take SAUL to the chair. There is absolutely no resistance and a complete, almost reverent silence.
They strap him down, arms first, then feet. Saul watches their work almost in a trance. He avoids looking toward the glass.
Through the glass we see the last preparations made.
Finally, the guards step back and Saul looks through the window for the first time.
The chairs are all empty and the door in the back is just closing. Ana has left, and there is no one to watch.

SAUL looks straight ahead into the vacant viewing room as the GUARDS make final preparations.

151 INT. ADJACENT ROOM (PRESENT) 151

A DOCTOR is loading the lethal poison into the cylinders.

152 EXT. PARKING LOT (PRESENT) 152

ANA walks to the car and gets in. She sits down without looking into the back seat.

153 INT. CAR (PRESENT) 153

She stares out the windshield toward the prison for a long while.

The car is silent, and finally Ana looks up to the rearview mirror.

The back seat is empty. She turns around, there is no Jesse.

A great sense of uncertainty and relief falls across her face.

She looks back to the prison. Then to the mirror again. The back seat is still empty. She stares into her own eyes.

The reflection pulls her into another scene.

154 EXT. INTERSECTION (PAST) 154

Steam from the scraping metal rises from below the Buick.

Traffic on the overpass above can be heard in a steady hum.

SAUL staggers away from the mangled car when after a few steps he turns around and looks back toward the trunk. He rushes back and tries to force it open.

Distant sirens are heard approaching. He goes back to retrieve the keys from inside and then tries the trunk again. It's jammed. The sirens are closing in. Saul looks around before trying one final time.

He turns away and his strained run takes him across the intersection, past a few buildings and into the park at the other side of the block. This time we stay with the trunk in the foreground and watch Saul as he runs away from the car.

The car is still and silent until, as if a last gasp of air, it erupts with pounding sounds and muffled cries from inside the trunk. The sounds become fainter and fainter until they are barely perceptible.

Saul disappears into the evening shadows as the POLICE CARS and AMBULANCE arrive.

The POLICE and EMT's search the passenger interior of the car. They walk around the car casually for a few, drawn out moments, trying to ascertain the details of the crash and location of the victims.

Although we see the complete action, we hear only their muffled conversation along with the faint and struggling breath of Jesse as if we are in the trunk with him.

One OFFICER hangs back at the squad car and picks up a call on the radio.

His face goes ashen. He drops the radio, grabs a crow bar from his trunk, and yells to the other officers and EMT's as he runs toward the Buick.

The pandemonium is still muffled. The breathing is almost out now.

They all frantically work together to pry open the trunk.

Once it opens, they stare for half a beat at Jesse inside, although we don't see him.

The EMT's arrive with oxygen and equipment. Still everything is heard from inside the trunk.

An EMT leans into the trunk and without seeing the action, we can discern he is giving mouth to mouth. After a few moments, he pulls in an oxygen mask.

Another POLICE CAR arrives and ANA gets out quickly. A third EMT runs toward her and stops her from getting any closer as they continue to try to revive the boy.

ANA

Jesse!

They hold her back, and all she can see is the car.

With Ana, we see the mangled body of the car, the blinking tail light and the Christmas tree air freshener hanging on the rearview mirror.

They remove the oxygen mask from the trunk and another EMT leans in. He pushes his hands into the open trunk -- it is clear he has resorted to CPR.

ANA (CONT'D)

Jesse! Jesse! I'm here, honey!

Still hearing from inside the trunk, there is one last gasp for air. The EMT works faster.

Finally the EMT removes his hands from the trunk and they all step back.

The EMT turns around and looks at his associates who are still holding back Ana. His look is clear.

We cannot hear her words or any other sound, but we clearly see her yell: "No. Jesse. No."

All three men have moved away from the car. The EMT holding Ana can no longer restrain her, and she runs to the trunk.

From a distance we see her approach and look in. She reaches one hand in and then quickly retracts it. Her body folds to the ground behind the car and she leans against the back bumper. Her heart has drained and there is nothing left.

From above, we see Ana on the ground, and Jesse's lifeless body in the trunk for the first time. His shirt is torn, his face lightly bruised and his bare foot exposed to the cold air.

155

INT. EXECUTION ROOM (PRESENT)

155

The scene transforms into the reflection of SAUL's face as he looks through the glass into the viewing room. Still empty.

He is perfectly still, waiting as the DOCTOR pushes a needle into his arm.

The doctor then attaches the small tube to another line.

156 INT./EXT. CAR (PRESENT) 156

ANA sits alone in her car, her mind in another place.

Finally, she comes out of it and starts the car. Without looking behind her, she backs up until, without a sound, the car jerks backward.

The wheels of the trailer have gone over the edge of the cement and caught onto a group of large rocks.

She accelerates, but the trailer is unable to clear the rocks.

She shifts from drive to reverse a few times -- still stuck.

157 INT. EXECUTION ROOM (PRESENT) 157

The DOCTOR stands by his station. One GUARD stands close by, ANOTHER by the door. All their eyes are on SAUL.

He is completely quiet, at peace. He looks at the doctor, then down to the tube in his arm.

Saul turns his right foot slightly until catching the edge of the chair. He quietly wedges his shoe off and lets it fall to the floor.

He looks up to the empty waiting room one more time, exhales calmly, then leans his head back.

The doctor pushes the first poison into the tube and we follow it as it moves to Saul's arm.

The doctor starts the second injection.

158 EXT. CAR (PRESENT) 158

ANA stands at the hitch, eyeing the rock that holds her trailer there. The engine is running.

The socket on the hitch has slid above the ball, and only a small pin holds the two together. She stares at that pin for a while.

159 INT. EXECUTION ROOM (PRESENT) 159

The DOCTOR pushes the final poison and SAUL remains calm.

