

THE KILLING FLOOR

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"No man is rich enough to buy back his past."

-Oscar Wilde

EXT. A DENSE PINE FOREST - DAWN

Soaring with A PAIR OF TURKEY VULTURES high above the thick green canopy.

As they crest a snow-capped mountaintop, the forest ends abruptly, exposing a fifty-yard wide clearing, carved out of the harsh terrain, that extends as far as the eye can see in both directions, giving the appearance of AN INVERSE GREAT WALL OF CHINA. This is the Montana/Canada border.

The vultures dive lower and keep pace as they track a HERD OF STAMPEDING CATTLE along the seemingly endless forest trench.

EXT. IDYLIC MOUNTAINTOP PASTURE - DAWN

Peaceful. Serene. Desolate. STRAY BONES AND HIDES are scattered about the rocky clearing.

Suddenly, the stampeding herd crests the craggy ridge and thunders past. On their heels, TWO WEATHER-BEATEN COWBOYS ON HORSEBACK struggle to restore order amidst the dusty chaos.

INT. DARK BUNKER - DAWN

Reinforced with railroad ties and scraps of wood, this underground shelter is hardly more than a giant hole in the earth. Sounds of GRUNTING and MOANING permeate the dank silence.

In a dark corner of the bunker, shafts of light play off the HEAVILY-TATTOOED BACK of a GREEN-HAIRED PUNK as he thrusts and grunts atop his TRASHY GIRLFRIEND. Meth gear, cigarette butts and discarded Red Bull cans litter the muddy floor around them.

The "ceiling" above begins to SHAKE VIOLENTLY, raining bits of stone and soil down onto the lovemaking couple. Still thrusting hard, the punk cranes his neck toward the racket.

PUNK

Oh fuck.

Pulling on a pair of briefs, he leaps to his feet and crosses to the other side of the bunker where a crudely-constructed PVC PIPE PERISCOPE extends down from the darkness above.

TRASHY GIRLFRIEND

What the fuck, Jimmy?!

PUNK

Shut up!

The punk rotates the periscope while peering through the viewfinder.

EXT. IDYLLIC MOUNTAINTOP PASTURE - CONTINUOUS

A sun-bleached cow's skull lifts slightly from the ground and rotates toward-

THE STAMPEDING HERD, which is just beginning to settle and calm under the watchful eye of the two cowboys.

DOWN BELOW-

The punk's face is still pressed to the viewfinder.

PUNK

What the fuck?! Shit. Shit!

He scrambles through the darkened bunker, slinging A RIFLE over his bare shoulder, then tucking a 9mm PISTOL into the waistband of his briefs.

TRASHY GIRLFRIEND

Jimmy, what the fuck?!

The punk looks panicked as he fumbles with a muddy tarp.

PUNK

I said shut the fuck up!

He pulls back the tarp to reveal a FULLY CAMOUFLAGED 4-WHEEL ATV. When he starts the engine, the headlights illuminate A PAIR OF WOODEN PLANKS that rise up at an angle into the dark abyss above. He revs the engine.

PUNK (CONT'D)

Stay down here and keep your
fucking mouth shut no matter what
happens. You hear me?

She rolls her eyes. He guns the engine and rockets up the makeshift ramp toward-

ABOVE-

A six-foot square patch of ground bursts open with the force of the ATV. Once the ATV surfaces, the trap door slams closed again, restoring order to the terrain.

The sight and sounds of the punk on the ATV startles the herd once again, setting the stampede back in motion.

The cowboys rear up on their horses as the punk takes aim with his rifle.

CRACK-

A shot rings out, echoing off the distant mountains. The bullet rips through the first cowboy's shoulder, spinning him off his saddle. He hits the ground at an awkward angle.

The punk now trains his sights on the 2nd cowboy. He fires, but misses, dropping a stampeding cow. The cowboy begins to push the frenzied herd away from the clearing. The punk fires another shot, but again, he misses the 2nd cowboy, killing another cow in the process.

PUNK (CONT'D)

Fuck!

Frustrated, the punk JAMS THE THROTTLE ON THE ATV and rockets toward the 2nd cowboy, his EYES FILLED WITH RAGE. The gap is closing rapidly when-

POP! POP!-

The injured cowboy on the ground fires his pistol, shredding one of the front tires on the ATV. The front end digs into the ground under its own weight. THE PUNK GOES FLYING over the handlebars as the ATV tumbles end over end.

Now scraped up, with a fresh gash in his face, the punk struggles to get back to his feet. The 2nd cowboy has pushed the herd even further away.

A GUTTURAL ROAR escaping through his clenched teeth, the punk pulls the pistol from his waistband and stalks toward the injured cowboy.

Standing over the injured cowboy, a twisted look of satisfaction on his face, the punk pumps two quick rounds into the cowboy's forehead. But before the echo of the 2nd shot reports back from the distant mountains-

CRACK-BOOM!

A RIFLE BLAST ripples across the pasture. The punk is hit right between the eyes and drops into a lifeless heap.

IN THE DISTANCE-

The 2nd Cowboy lowers his rifle, a look of calm concern on his face. He slides the rifle back into a saddle holster as-

TRASHY GIRLFRIEND

Noooo! Jimmy!!! Oh god, Jimmy!!!

The girl has emerged from the bunker and is now scrambling across the pasture toward the dead punk. She collapses by his side. Blood spills from his wound as she pulls and tugs at his lifeless body.

TRASHY GIRLFRIEND (CONT'D)
Jimmy!! Nooooo! Noooo!!!

In shock, she looks around. First at the dead cowboy, then at the 2nd Cowboy who, still mounted on his horse, watches her from a short distance away, deciding what to do next.

TRASHY GIRLFRIEND (CONT'D)
Hey!... You!...
(a fire building)
You motherfucker! You're fucking
dead, you motherfucker!!! You're
fucking-

She bursts into tears, her face streaked with blood.

The cowboy takes one final look, then turns and pushes the herd over the ridge, his Stetson hat blowing from his head and settling in the tall grass as he recedes from view. A SILK TAG on the inside of the hat reads: *"Made Especially for Clarence Lamb."*

INT. ELK FOOT CITY HALL / TAX ASSESSOR'S OFFICE - MORNING

COREY MEAGHER, 28 and ruggedly handsome, sits very straight in a wooden chair, his COWBOY HAT in his lap and a far off look in his eyes. He is staring out the window at-

THE FRONT LAWN-

A YOUNG MOTHER, about Corey's age, laughs and plays with her YOUNG SON in the grass.

THE TAX CLERK, a kindly middle-aged woman, reenters the office carrying an unwieldy stack of documents.

TAX CLERK
My apologies, Mr. Meagher. I swear
it's impossible to find anything I
need ever since we switched over to
computers. I thought they were
supposed to make our lives
easier...

Corey pulls his thoughts back into the room.

COREY

(a polite chuckle)

Don't own one myself, ma'am.

TAX CLERK

Now, as I was saying before, there's been a huge influx of wealth into the area ever since the airport expansion was completed down in Kalispell. Some folks around here say that was the beginning of the end for Elk Foot. And this is precisely what has put you and your... I'm so sorry... You said you share the home with your-

COREY

-With my grandfather. That's okay.

TAX CLERK

That's right... well, that's what's put you and your grandfather in this, um, predicament. Now, unfortunately, property taxes are based on property values and, well, what happens when rich folks from New York and California decide they want a second home in Elk Foot, Montana? Well, the property values go up. That's what happens. Up and up and up until people like you and your grandfather, and, frankly, most of us, can't afford to live and work here anymore.

COREY

So they just keep raising our taxes until we can't afford it any more and then they come take our home away from us?

TAX CLERK

Well, roughly speaking, I suppose that's, um, right. Yes. If you're unable to pay your taxes, the state will be forced to foreclose on your property.

COREY

Forced? So what are we supposed to do?

TAX CLERK

Have you considered selling? Maybe take an apartment here in town? Downsize, as they say?

COREY

That's not an option.

TAX CLERK

(uncomfortable)

Okay, well, let's see. You already mentioned that your parents had passed, bless their souls, and you're not married?

COREY

No. Separated.

TAX CLERK

There's no shame in that... Do you have any other family that might be able to help out with expenses? Any siblings?

COREY

I have a brother.

TAX CLERK

(hopeful)

Well, there you go. You see? Does your brother live in the area?

COREY

Not sure, ma'am. He might be living down in Kalispell. Then again, he might be dead.

TAX CLERK

(uncomfortable again)

Okay... Well are there any other relatives? Cousins? An aunt perhaps?

COREY

I had two uncles. One of them died of asbestos out of that mine down in Libby. The other one hanged himself in our family's hunting shack a few winters back.

Now thoroughly uncomfortable, she rifles through some of the other papers.

TAX CLERK

I'm sorry to hear that. I see here that you have a military background?

COREY

Yes, ma'am. I served with the corps in Iraq.

She scans down the page a bit.

TAX CLERK

And you were injured?

COREY

Yes, ma'am. I was.

TAX CLERK

Well, what about the military payouts? The disability benefits?

Corey goes silent. Then-

COREY

I'm afraid I don't get those, ma'am. Dishonorable discharge.

Now they're both silent. Corey looks her in the eye.

COREY (CONT'D)

I deserted my squad.

TAX CLERK

I see.

They sit in silence for a moment, then-

COREY

Well, I'm already late for work...

Corey rises from his chair, holding his hat against his chest.

COREY (CONT'D)

So how long do we got?

The tax clerk is moved. She'd like to help.

TAX CLERK

Well, Mr. Meagher, it appears you're currently thirty-six thousand dollars in arrears and the new tax cycle will post at the end of the month, bringing that total up to right in the neighborhood of fifty-thousand dollars. If you can't pay down at least the current balance in the next three weeks, I'm afraid the foreclosure process will begin shortly after that.

COREY

Okay. Thanks for your time, ma'am.

Corey sets his hat.

TAX CLERK

I wish there was more I could do to help.

Corey looks at her, gives her a nod, then exits.

EXT. ELK FOOT CITY HALL - DAY

Corey walks across the parking lot with a PRONOUNCED LIMP. He looks over at the lawn where he saw the young mother and child playing earlier. They're no longer there. He climbs into his WEATHERED OLD PICKUP TRUCK.

I/E. COREY'S TRUCK / MAIN STREET - DAY

Corey drives his truck down the main thoroughfare of the quaint township. Coming to a stop at a hanging traffic light, his attention is drawn to the corner where AN OLDER MAN has a DOG ON A LEASH. The dog begins to BARK AND GROWL. Corey is transfixed.

The light turns green and Corey eases forward. Now, however, the view ahead is slightly askew. PLUMES OF SMOKE rise up around him. SHADOWY FIGURES lope past.

Corey slowly turns his head toward the passenger seat where A SOLDIER IN FULL FATIGUES AND HELMET faces forward as the truck lurches slowly along. After a moment, the soldier turns to look at Corey. ONE LENS of his wire spectacles has been shattered to bits.

Corey pushes the cigarette lighter in and waits for it to pop out. One hand on the wheel, he presses the RED-HOT METAL to his forearm as a faint groan escapes his gritted teeth.

When Corey looks back to the passenger seat, THE SOLDIER IS GONE. The street has also returned to normal. He shakes out A COUPLE ASPIRIN and chokes them down as he continues ahead.

INT. CRISWELL MEATWORKS / MANAGER'S OFFICE - DAY

A BESPECTACLED USDA INSPECTOR sits in the small, wood-paneled outer office staring into space. Directly behind him, A LARGE DIAGRAM details the cuts of beef on the profile of a cow. A SECRETARY types at an outdated computer.

The door to the inner office opens. THE 2ND COWBOY, from earlier, steps out into the waiting room. His name is CLARENCE LAMB and his jagged features are still easily recognizable without his cowboy hat. The Inspector looks up and the two men regard each other for a moment before-

PLANT MANAGER

Here you are, Mr. Lamb. You go on and take this chit down the hall to accounts payable and they'll cut you a check for them cows.

THE PLANT MANAGER, a ruddy-faced man of 60, has emerged from the inner office. He hands Lamb the chit.

CLARENCE

Pleasure doing business with you.

Lamb exits. The sound of his boots recedes down the corridor.

The Plant Manager looks at the Inspector, then at the secretary.

PLANT MANAGER

(full volume)

Ms. Doris, is this the new USDA Inspector?

SECRETARY

(while typing)

His name is Phil.

PLANT MANAGER

Well, alright then. Sorry to keep you waiting, Phil. Welcome to Criswell Meatworks. Can Ms. Doris get you a cup of coffee?

PHIL

I'm fine thanks. I'd really like to get started.

PLANT MANAGER

Well, you're the boss. Let me show you around the insides.

PHIL

Thank you.

The two men exit.

EXT. CRISWELL MEATWORKS - DAY

Corey's pickup pulls into the already-full employee lot. As he limps toward the building, he looks up at a sign board that reads "CRISWELL MEATWORKS - DAYS WITHOUT A LOST TIME ACCIDENT: 273."

INT. CRISWELL MEATWORKS / LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Corey removes his timecard from the rack and is about to stick it in the clock when he notices that it has already been stamped. He looks around the empty locker room before returning the card to the rack.

INT. CRISWELL MEATWORKS / KILL FLOOR - DAY

Corey, now dressed in a white jumpsuit and apron, enters the kill floor of the small, rural slaughterhouse. ALEX PETTIGREW, 25 and a bit squirrely, is already on the floor disemboweling a hanging carcass. Corey holds a look as the guts spill out into a large metal bin.

ALEX

(without looking back)

You just gonna stand there staring at my ass all day, bro?

Corey doesn't respond. He pulls his goggles on, picks up a very large, VERY SHARP KNIFE and nods to LUPE, a saintly looking older woman who sits atop an elevated platform overlooking the knocker cage, a cow already in position.

Lupe pulls down the FACEMASK on her helmet, whispers a prayer, then presses a BOLT GUN to the cow's head and pulls the trigger. The stunned animal slides down the chute where Corey wraps a chain around its ankle and HOISTS IT INTO THE AIR.

Then, with the very large knife, Corey severs the cow's jugular. BLOOD ERUPTS FROM THE NECK like a geyser.

ALEX (CONT'D)
(now facing Corey)
She's a squirter.

Corey silently wipes a bit of blood from his face.

ALEX (CONT'D)
I did you a solid, bro. Ain't you
gonna say thank you?

COREY
(without looking back)
Don't ever do that again.

Alex is taken aback. He flips his goggles up.

ALEX
I punch you in. I cover for your
sorry, can't get to work on time
ass and this is how you thank me?
Fuck you, bro! Fuck you! I'll let
your sorry ass get fired next time.
Is that what you want?

Corey turns, the very large knife still dripping blood. He
stares holes through Alex. This is interrupted by-

PLANT MANAGER
...We better put our goggles on
now.

The Plant Manager has entered the kill floor followed by the
USDA Inspector.

PLANT MANAGER (CONT'D)
And this right here is our kill
floor. We make every attempt to
make each kill as quick and
painless as possible.

Corey and Alex end their face-off and go back to work.

PLANT MANAGER (CONT'D)
You'll notice we take the waste
materials, your hooves and snouts
and so forth, and we run them
through this grinder so they can be
rendered down and used for cattle
feed, fertilizer... what have you.
No waste water! No air pollution!
What do you say, Phil?

PHIL

Everything seems to be in order.
Thank you. I think I can handle
myself from here.

PLANT MANAGER

Well, alright then. This lot's
about to clear. There's a hot-side
break room just through there. It's
got vending machines and a table
that you're welcome to use. You
need anything else, c'mon back up
to the office and ask me or Ms.
Doris. Don't bother asking these
two anything. They're better with a
knife than with a conversation if
you know what I mean.

The Inspector stares at the Plant Manager awkwardly.

PLANT MANAGER (CONT'D)

Well, alright then.

The Plant Manager exits as the Inspector makes a note on his
clipboard.

TIME PASSES THEN-

ALEX stands on a small ladder using a reciprocating saw to
slice straight down the center of a skinned carcass. Corey
separates offal on a moving conveyer belt. The BREAK BELL
sounds and the conveyer stops. Alex breezes past Corey.

COREY

Hey.

Alex stops and turns.

ALEX

What?

COREY

Let me buy you a coffee.

ALEX

You sorry?

COREY

Let me buy you a coffee.

INT. CRISWELL MEATWORKS / BREAK ROOM - DAY

Corey and Alex stand side by side in front of an old COFFEE VENDING MACHINE, both facing forward. Alex smokes a cigarette while drinking coffee from a styrofoam cup. Corey has a styrofoam cup of coffee in each hand. He sips from one as the other cools. They are both BLOOD SOAKED AND SILENT. Time passes. THE BELL sounds again.

INT. CRISWELL MEATWORKS / KILL FLOOR - DAY

Back on the kill floor, Alex pulls on his gloves as Corey places EARBUD HEADPHONES in his ears. Corey gives a nod to Lupe, who turns and gives a nod to ANOTHER MAN down the line. This man presses a LARGE RED BUTTON on the wall.

The groan of A WARNING SIREN pulses as A LARGE ROLLING DOOR raises, emitting a single-file line of cattle into the curved corral that leads to the knocker cage.

Each cow wears A VERY FAMILIAR BRAND. This is THE HERD FROM THE OPENING SEQUENCE. Alex howls like a wolf.

ALEX

Woot Wooooot! New lot comin' down!
Let's get our motherfuckin' kill
on, people! C'mon! First victim!

Corey hits play on his iPod. A BEETHOVEN SYMPHONY drowns out the sounds of Alex and the distressed herd and SETS THE BALLET IN MOTION...

A COW enters the knocker cage. Lupe prays, flips her facemask down, then-

Stun. Slide. Hang. Slice. Bleed. Die. Skin. Gut. Separate. Repeat.

Stun. Slide. Hang. Slice. Bleed. Die. Skin. Gut. Separate. Repeat.

As the gruesome ballet plays out, the tiled floor becomes A SEA OF BLOOD around their feet.

The USDA Inspector works his way down the line, eventually taking up a position near Corey as he pushes a freshly skinned carcass down the hanging track to Alex, who buries a blade in the abdomen, spilling the guts.

THE FINAL COW enters the knocker cage. It's MORE AGITATED than the others. It KICKS and THRASHES in the cage as Lupe says her prayer.

Lupe is careful to align the bolt gun properly, but she has trouble picking her moment due to the beast's WILD FLAILING.

Finally... THWACK! The cow goes limp. Lupe opens the cage and the stunned cow slides down the chute to Corey. He wraps the chain around the cow's back hooves and hoists the animal into the air. But as he begins to draw his blade across the cow's the throat, THE COW SPRINGS TO LIFE!

Its throat partially sliced, it begins to writhe and fight, the weight of its 1500 pound body stressing the chain.

Before anyone can react, THE COW TOPPLES TO THE FLOOR, blood shooting from its throat. Upon getting its footing, IT CHARGES THE INSPECTOR, throwing him violently against the wall with the force of a mid-size sedan. He collapses in a heap on the floor.

The angry beast NOW TURNS ON COREY. Its nostrils flared, it charges forward, slipping and sliding on the bloody floor. Corey, too, can't get his footing as he struggles to get out of the way. He trips and falls. His ear buds fall out, exposing him to the AUDITORY HORRORS that a half-killed animal is capable of producing.

Corey avoids the angry creature, but finds himself trapped as the cow circles back and CHARGES HIM AGAIN.

Just as he is about to suffer the same fate as the Inspector, Corey sees Alex dive toward the charging animal with his knife in hand. He swings the blade at the cow's hind legs, severing its Achilles tendons, and dropping it to the floor. It slides to a stop with enough momentum left to push Corey against the wall.

Alex immediately straddles the cow and begins to plunge his knife into the creature's rib cage... Over and over again.

Corey, covered head to toe in blood and viscera, can't look away. Alex looks maniacal as he continues to slash and stab.

INT. CRISWELL MEATWORKS / KILL FLOOR - LATER

TWO PARAMEDICS wheel the Inspector out on a stretcher as Corey and Alex clean up some of the mess.

ALEX

(to Corey)

You see how I dropped that bitch?
Clean slice right through the
Achilles. Then I scrambled her
insides good.

(MORE)

ALEX (CONT'D)
 She had her eye on you, bro. She
 knew what you was up to. Kill or be
 killed, right bro?

Alex KICKS the cow's lifeless carcass to emphasize each word.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 Kill. Or. Be. Killed.
 (to the dead cow)
 Fuck you, bitch! You're fuckin dead
 now! You lose, bitch!

COREY
 Hey! Enough!

Corey still looks troubled by the whole event. The Plant
 Manager enters the kill floor.

PLANT MANAGER
 (somber)
 I'm gonna follow the ambulance over
 to General and keep an eye on Phil
 til his wife can drive up from
 Bozeman and be by his side. Why
 don't you two go ahead and finish
 processing what's on the floor and
 then shut her down for me? We can
 get a fresh start in the morning.

He gives Lupe a salute and a wave.

PLANT MANAGER (CONT'D)
 (speaking loudly)
 Hola Lupe! No more today,
 comprende? Go home now. Su Casa.
 Gracias!

Lupe climbs down from her platform and exits. The Manager
 continues his rounds as he makes his way toward the exit.

PLANT MANAGER (CONT'D)
 (O.S. - calling out)
 Shuttin' her down everybody! Go
 home and be with your families!

Corey goes back to work, sorting through the offal on the
 conveyer before it goes into the paunch wash. As A STOMACH
 goes by, he notices something odd about THE SHAPE. He hits
 the KILL SWITCH, stopping the conveyer.

COREY
 Hey. Alex. Take a look at this.
 This thing look right to you?

Alex sets down his saw and joins Corey at the offal conveyer.

ALEX

Looks like she ate her lunch with that shit still in the fuckin' lunch box.

Corey digs through more unsorted viscera and removes another stomach. He drops it next to the 1st one. It has the SAME BRICK-SHAPED OUTLINE.

ALEX (CONT'D)

That shit's crazy, bro. You think it's cancer or some shit?

COREY

No. Ain't cancer.

With the tip of his blade, Corey delicately slices open the stomach membrane and pushes it aside. He reaches inside the stomach and removes A TIGHTLY-WRAPPED BRICK OF BROWNISH-WHITE POWDER, still covered in blood and bile.

ALEX

Oh... shit.

COREY

Looks like drugs. Cocaine maybe.

ALEX

That ain't blow, dude. That's straight up smack right there.

COREY

Smack?

ALEX

Yeah. Heroin, bro.

COREY

You sure?

ALEX

Shit, bro. I live on The Rez. You think I don't know what a brick of smack looks like? I ain't seen that shit around for a minute though. All the damn junkies on The Rez are into meth now. I wouldn't even know where to score this shit no more.

COREY

Well now you know.

Corey tosses the brick to Alex, then slices open the 2nd stomach. It also contains a brick of heroin. Alex has already set his brick down and started digging in the entrails in search of more.

ALEX

How many head came in on that lot?

COREY

Had to be thirty, forty head.

Alex holds up ANOTHER SQUARE STOMACH.

ALEX

Looks like they were all packin'.

FADE TO:

A LITTLE LATER-

A WEIGHING SCALE is piled high with bloody, bile-covered bricks of heroin. Corey balances the last one on top.

COREY

That's the last one.
(reading the scale)
Forty-eight point eight nine.

ALEX

Oh shit! That's like-

Alex is too excited for words. He paces and punches at the air.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Bro! That's like...
That's gotta be worth like a half-
mill on the street, bro. I ain't
shittin' you.

COREY

I'm gonna call Sheriff Kinnie.

ALEX

What?! The fuck you are, bro. We
just struck gold here. This is fuck-
you money right here. That's what
this is. Fuck-you money.

COREY

No. This is illegal narcotics.
Ain't no money til you sell it and
we ain't gonna sell it. We're gonna
do what's right.

ALEX

What's right? You know what's
right? Not spending the rest of our
lives slittin' throats in this shit
hole. You think you're ever gonna
get out of here without a miracle?
Well, guess what? Here's your
motherfuckin' miracle! Right here!

COREY

I'm no drug dealer.

ALEX

Neither am I, bro. We're not going
into fucking business. It's one and
done. A one-time deal that's gonna
solve all your fucking problems.
You tellin' me you can't use some
extra money right now? You tellin'
me you like comin' to this fucking
place every day of your goddamn
life? Goin' home with the stink of
death on you? You tellin' me you
can picture yourself on the fuckin'
kill floor when you're fifty, still
workin' for that pension you'll be
dead before you ever fuckin'
collect on? We gotta do-

Alex stops abruptly at THE SOUND OF A DISTANT DOOR CLOSING.

ALEX (CONT'D)

You hear that?

Alex crosses to the other side of the kill floor for a look.
He sees the Plant Manager making his way through the corrals.
They make eye contact.

PLANT MANAGER

(calling out)

Alex, that you boy? I was driving
home and saw Corey's pickup still
parked in the lot. What's going on?

Alex is frozen. He looks at Corey... helpless.

ALEX

We were just, uh, finishing up
with, uh, cleaning the, uh...

Alex looks back to Corey again. The Plant Manager is steps away from the kill floor. Corey very reluctantly pushes the bricks of heroin into a large metal bin, then slides the bin under a viscera cart, out of view, just as-

PLANT MANAGER

There you are, Corey. Now, why are you fellas here so darn late?

COREY

That old girl spilled a lot of blood around the place, Mr. Evans. We was just seeing to it. That's all. How's that inspector doin' anyways?

PLANT MANAGER

I see. Well, doctors say he'll be back at it tomorrow. No skull fractures. No broken bones. He'll have a nice shiner alright. His wife made it up from Bozeman. She was pretty shook up. That's for sure. Damn shame something like that happening on his first day. Can't never tell, I suppose.

COREY

Alright, well we better finish up here. Been a long day, sir.

PLANT MANAGER

You can finish up in the morning. I'll lock her up myself. Thanks for managing things for a spell.

Corey eyes the bin where the drugs are stashed.

COREY

Yes sir.

INT. CRISWELL MEATWORKS / LOCKER ROOM

Corey punches out at the time clock while Alex zips out of his jumpsuit.

ALEX

Good choice, bro. We can get that shit out the door tomorrow.

COREY

I didn't make any choice. I just bought myself a little thinking time. That's all.

ALEX

That's cool, bro. A little thinking time's what you need. I hope you think about all the fine cars and fine women that money's gonna buy us.

Corey gives Alex a look, then sets his hat and exits.

I/E. COREY'S TRUCK / RURAL ROAD - NIGHT

Corey drives his pickup through the wooded darkness. It's clear he's giving everything some good thought.

As he rounds a bend, his headlights play off of the evergreen forest that borders the winding road.

Then, as Corey steers into the turn, his headlights illuminate THE TRASHY GIRLFRIEND from the opening sequence. She walks slowly along the side of the road like a zombie, CAKED IN DRIED BLOOD. She doesn't acknowledge Corey's passing truck as the light washes over her.

Corey holds a look until the truck passes and the girl returns to darkness. He rubs his eyes wearily, then pushes the cigarette lighter into its chamber.

EXT. LIZ'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Corey is parked at the side of the road, across the street. He watches the house from the darkened cab of his pickup.

Through the kitchen window, a young boy, HUNTER, is seated at the table. His mother, LIZ, 27 and classically pretty, enters. She sets a plate of food in front of Hunter, then kisses the top of his head.

Corey starts his truck and pulls away.

EXT. COREY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Set against the forest at the end of a long unpaved driveway, Corey's modest home is completely dark except for a porch light. Corey's truck pulls down the driveway, trailing a cloud of dust.

INSIDE THE TRUCK-

Corey cuts the engine as the dust cloud settles around his truck. He stares at the house, deep in thought, then-

BOOM!

A SHOTGUN BLAST. Corey's windshield spiderwebs. Corey ducks for cover inside the cab.

BOOM!

ANOTHER SHOT rips through the passenger door.

Corey opens the door and rolls out of the truck, onto the ground. He crawls across the ground toward a nearby woodpile.

Behind the woodpile and breathing hard, he sees A FIGURE move across the darkness.

COREY

Shit.

Corey crawls from behind the woodpile and makes his way around the back of the house. Keeping close to the house, he moves around to the opposite side. Peering around the corner, he can see the SHADOWY FIGURE of a man, A DOUBLE-BARRELED SHOTGUN hanging at his side.

Sneaking up behind the man, Corey grabs hold of the barrel. A struggle ensues. The man begins to HOWL and SPIT and GROAN as Corey overpowers him.

COREY (CONT'D)

Let go, Pop. C'mon. It's me.

Corey is careful not to injure HIS GRANDFATHER as he disarms the old man.

COREY (CONT'D)

C'mon look at me, Pop. It's me.

GRANDPA stares at him with a wild, confused look in his eyes.

COREY (CONT'D)

It's alright, Pop. I ain't gonna hurt you. Let's just go back inside now. Okay? I'll fix you some supper. C'mon.

Corey takes Grandpa by the arm and begins to lead him back to the house when he notices A FLICKERING LIGHT coming from inside.

COREY (CONT'D)

Shit...

INT. COREY'S HOUSE / KITCHEN - NIGHT

THE COUNTER IS ON FIRE and the flames have already begun to spread up the wall, filling the kitchen with smoke. Corey digs a fire extinguisher out of a cluttered closet and begins to fight the flames.

FADE TO:

INT. COREY'S HOUSE / LIVING ROOM - LATER

Grandpa sits inches from the TV, smoking a cigarette and watching a war documentary. Corey is seated at the dining table with two mugs of coffee in front of him.

SHERIFF KINNIE, a slender, kind-faced older man, enters through the front door as A SMALL FIRE TRUCK recedes from view behind him. Corey hands him a mug of coffee.

SHERIFF KINNIE

Oh. Thank you kindly.

The Sheriff takes a seat.

SHERIFF KINNIE (CONT'D)

Bill says you did a good job puttin' out that fire. It's a good thing you called it in though. I've seen these things reignite hours later. Better safe than sorry. That's what I always say.

COREY

Thanks for your help, Sheriff.

The Sheriff takes a sip of coffee.

SHERIFF KINNIE

Mmm. That's a good cup of Joe.
(another long sip)
So, what are you figuring started that fire anyways?

Corey is watching Grandpa, who continues to smoke. The sleeves of his robe are peppered with cigarette burns.

COREY

I was frying up a couple venison steaks for me and Grandpa to have for supper. Grease must have caught fire. It spread fast.

SHERIFF KINNIE

Uh huh. Uh huh. Boy, I'll tell you what... I haven't had a nice piece of venison for quite some time now.

Corey stands.

COREY

Let me get you a couple steaks from the cellar. I got a buck and three doe last season. We've got plenty of meat to last us.

SHERIFF KINNIE

That's mighty kind.

EXT. COREY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Corey meets Sheriff Kinnie by his SUV and hands him the WRAPPED VENISON STEAKS.

COREY

Just put them in the fridge to thaw out when you get home.

SHERIFF KINNIE

Boy, that's mighty kind of you, Corey. How are things over at the meatworks these days? Marty treating you okay?

COREY

I can't complain.

SHERIFF KINNIE

Boy, I do miss my cowboyin' days. Shame the work dried up. Law enforcement just hasn't provided me with the same excitement.

COREY

That's probably for the best.

SHERIFF KINNIE

Well, I reckon you're right on that one. Alright, I'll leave you to it.

The Sheriff climbs into his SUV.

SHERIFF KINNIE (CONT'D)

Bill says you got no structural damage, but it'll smell unpleasant in there til you got time to fix it back to normal.

COREY

Can't smell no worse than the slaughterhouse. Thank you, Sheriff.

SHERIFF KINNIE

Any time.

Corey watches Sheriff Kinnie drive away.

INT. COREY'S HOUSE / LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Corey watches Grandpa eat a microwave dinner. Grandpa sets his fork down and looks at Corey.

COREY

That it? You done?

Grandpa just stares at him.

COREY (CONT'D)

Alright, good. I'm sorry you got your supper so late. Bed time?

INT. COREY'S HOUSE / GRANDPA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Corey tucks Grandpa into bed. As he leaves the room, he hangs a string of metal pots and pans over the doorknob.

COREY

Night, Pop.

EXT. COREY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Corey adds a hasp and lock to the outside of the front door. He then takes the shotgun and a box of shells, puts them behind the seat in his pickup, and locks the truck.

INT. COREY'S HOUSE / BATHROOM - NIGHT

Corey showers. Bits of blood and filth from a hard day's work wash down the drain.

INT. COREY'S HOUSE / COREY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Corey lies awake in bed, staring at the ceiling. Around him, HALLUCINATIONS OF GIANT CAMEL SPIDERS materialize out of the floorboards. They climb up the walls and across the ceiling. Corey watches them as if it's nothing new, his mind deep in thought.

INT. COREY'S HOUSE / KITCHEN - NIGHT

Standing alone in the kitchen, Corey drinks a glass of milk. The entire wall behind him is CHARRED BLACK.

FADE OUT.

INT. WAREHOUSE - MORNING

A TELEPHONE HANDSET dangles by its cord in the back corner of the vast warehouse. A distant door opens, throwing a column of early morning light across the polished floor.

A MAN of average height and build approaches the telephone. The name tag on his polo shirt reads: ALAN WARD. He lifts the receiver to his ear.

ALAN

Yes?

He picks up a pencil and begins to write as he listens.

ALAN (CONT'D)

Okay. Yes. I can do that. Should
take about two days. Yes, for both.
Mmm Hmm. Okay. Bye now.

On the paper, he has written "Elk Foot, Montana."

EXT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - MORNING

A large sign outside reads "SHERIFF - ELK FOOT, MONTANA."

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

THE TRASHY GIRLFRIEND from the opening sequence sits at the end of a long wooden table voraciously devouring a fast food breakfast. A DEPUTY eyes her inquisitively from a nearby desk.

Sheriff Kinnie enters from outside carrying a box of doughnuts. He steals a glance of the girl before setting the doughnuts on the deputy's desk.

SHERIFF KINNIE

Mornin' Rusty. I brought doughnuts.
Should I start a fresh pot?

DEPUTY RUSTY

Mornin' Sheriff. I'm gonna pass on the doughnuts, but I could go for a warmer-upper if you're fixin' a pot.

SHERIFF KINNIE

You sure? They're the healthy kind.

Sheriff Kinnie holds the box up again.

SHERIFF KINNIE (CONT'D)

(to the girl)

How about you, young lady? Can I interest you in a doughnut?

The girl ignores him.

DEPUTY RUSTY

Yeah, she don't talk much. I know she can talk though. She used the phone right after I brought her in. I'm pretty sure the number was Canadian. Fella on the other end didn't sound too happy when she said where she was, that's for sure.

SHERIFF KINNIE

Hmm. That so? And you said she had blood on her?

DEPUTY RUSTY

She was covered in it. Weren't hers though. She don't seem to have any injuries to speak of.

SHERIFF KINNIE

Any identification?

DEPUTY RUSTY

Nothing she was willing to share with me. Heck, the most interaction I've had with her was when she snatched that egg sandwich out of my hand.

(MORE)

DEPUTY RUSTY (CONT'D)
If I didn't know any better, I'd
say she was feral. I've taken to
calling her Wildcat.

EXT. CRISWELL MEATWORKS - MORNING

Corey arrives early to work. The parking lot is nearly empty. As he enters the building, A WORKMAN is changing the sign to read: "CRISWELL MEATWORKS - DAYS WITHOUT A LOST TIME ACCIDENT: 0."

INT. CRISWELL MEATWORKS / KILL FLOOR - MORNING

Corey, suited up, enters the kill floor. All is very quiet and still. He looks up at Lupe's platform. It's empty. He pulls out the metal viscera bin where he hid the drugs. As he hefts one of the bricks in his hand-

ALEX
Looks like we both had the same
idea.

Corey startles. He whips around. Alex is holding a LARGE DUFFEL BAG. He tosses it on the floor beside Corey.

ALEX (CONT'D)
C'mon. Help me fill it up.

Alex begins to transfer the bricks into the duffel. Corey watches Alex for a long moment, then looks around the empty slaughterhouse one last time.

ALEX (CONT'D)
(as he loads)
This guy I used to buy weed off is
pretty well connected. I can call
him in a little bit. He sleeps
late. He can probably take this
shit off our hands. If not, he'll
know somebody.

Corey thinks for a moment, then hesitantly begins to transfer bricks into the bag with Alex.

ALEX (CONT'D)
There you go! Good man!

I/E. ALAN WARD'S CAR / INTERSTATE - MORNING

Alan Ward, name tag removed, drives his nondescript sedan at a reasonable speed. Everything about him is average. He wears a realistic-looking FAKE MUSTACHE AND EYEGLASSES.

AT AN AIRPORT CHECK-IN KIOSK-

Alan hands over a passport.

TICKET CLERK

Good morning, Mr. Nolan. Where are you headed today?

ALAN

Missoula, Montana.

AT A RENTAL CAR COUNTER-

RENTAL CAR CLERK

Welcome to Missoula, Mr. Walsh. Your car is right outside.

AT A MOTEL CHECK-IN DESK

DESK CLERK

How many keys would you like, Mr. Sinclair?

ALAN

Just one.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Alan turns on the TV and sits down on the edge of the bed. Bracing himself with both hands, he raises and lowers his body, testing the springs on the mattress.

He pulls back a corner of the bedspread, then the sheet. He examines the mattress tag, then replaces the sheet.

He looks back at the fishing show on the TV, then removes his fake mustache and TURNS THE VOLUME UP LOUDER... THEN LOUDER.

He scans the room with his eyes.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Sheriff Kinnie and Deputy Rusty are engaged in a game of GIN RUMMY. They've dealt the girl a hand, which remains face-down on the table in front of her.

DEPUTY RUSTY
Your turn, Wildcat.

She gives Rusty a look of disgust. Sheriff Kinnie picks up her cards, draws from the pile, looks the cards over, then discards the ace of spades. Rusty gives him a look.

SHERIFF KINNIE
She's got a strategy.

Rusty chuckles as he snatches up the ace. THE DOOR OPENS. The two lawmen rise from their seats to greet THE VISITOR.

ALAN
Hello officers. I believe you have my daughter.

Kinnie and Rusty step aside, revealing the girl.

ALAN (CONT'D)
There you are, darling. Your mother's been worried sick.

SHERIFF KINNIE
(concerned)
My deputy here picked her up in the wee hours wandering around the parking lot of the Thriftway. She was covered in blood.

ALAN
(dry)
She sleepwalks. May I take her home now?

Kinnie is taken aback.

SHERIFF KINNIE
Why... sure. Of course you can. I'm sure she could use some rest.

The girl stands and walks toward the door, followed by Alan. The Sheriff studies them as they go.

SHERIFF KINNIE (CONT'D)
(calling out)
Where did you say you folks lived again?

Alan turns in the doorway to face the Sheriff.

ALAN
(a friendly smile)
Oh, I didn't specify.

They exit. A long silence, then-

DEPUTY RUSTY
 Poor fella's got his hands full
 with that one.

SHERIFF KINNIE
 It's a difficult age.

INT. CRISWELL MEATWORKS - DAY

The BREAK BELL rings. Work stops and the employees head for the break rooms.

INT. CRISWELL MEATWORKS / BREAK ROOM - DAY

Alex stands in front of the coffee vending machine smoking a cigarette. Corey enters and inserts a couple quarters without looking at Alex.

ALEX
 You get it out?

COREY
 Yep.

ALEX
 Boss see you?

COREY
 Nope.

Corey takes his coffee from the dispenser and exits.

EXT. RURAL HOUSE - DUSK

Alan Ward removes the mail from the mailbox. He looks through the mail as he walks up the empty driveway toward the house.

INT. RURAL HOUSE / KITCHEN - DUSK

Alan throws a long shadow as he enters through the back door. He casually tosses the mail on the kitchen table.

A CHILD'S BEDROOM-

Alan enters and takes a seat on the bed. Again, he raises and lowers his body, testing the springs. He pulls back the fitted sheet to examine the mattress tag.

He replaces the sheet, then faces forward and applies his
FAKE MUSTACHE.

EXT. CRISWELL MEATWORKS - DUSK

Slaughterhouse employees leave for the night. Corey walks
alone across the parking lot, toward his truck.

IN HIS TRUCK-

Corey looks down at the duffel bag on the floor of his truck,
then back at the slaughterhouse. He watches AN OLDER MAN exit
the building, still specked with dried blood and carrying a
worn old lunchbox. He looks tired and sore. Corey thinks for
a long moment, then turns the ignition and drives out.

EXT. GROCERY STORE PARKING LOT - DUSK

Corey parks at the outer edge of the lot and kills his
headlights. He sits in silence, listening to the radio until
the passenger door opens and Alex climbs in.

ALEX

Sweet ride.

(slapping the dash)

This is some old school shit right
here, bro.

COREY

Belongs to my grandfather.

Alex unzips the duffel.

ALEX

(to the drugs)

How are my babies doin'? Did you
miss your daddy?

COREY

So, where are we going? Where's
your guy live?

ALEX

Man... that fool still ain't texted
me back. Fuckin potheads, man. It's
alright though. I can stash this
shit at my place til we make a
deal.

COREY

I don't think that's a good idea. We gotta be smart about this every step of the way. Even if the law ain't lookin' for this stuff, you can bet the person who put it in them cows sure as hell is.

ALEX

Where do you want to keep it then?

COREY

I got a place.

INT. CLARENCE LAMB'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The front door swings open and a six-year-old boy, SCOUT, rushes in brandishing a pair of new toy six-shooters. He bounds through the living room aiming at various "targets."

SCOUT

Bang! Bang bang!! Bang! Stick em up! Bang!

As Scout continues on through the house, the tall, slender frame of CLARENCE LAMB, the cowboy from the opening sequence, appears in the doorway carrying shopping bags.

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

Bang! Bang bang!!

Clarence removes a hat box from one of the bags and crosses to a large mirror. He removes a brand new Stetson hat and sets it gingerly atop his head, admiring his reflection.

UPSTAIRS-

Scout tromps up the stairs like an outlaw, pistols aimed.

SCOUT (CONT'D)

Bang! Bang bang!!

He continues down the upstairs hallway.

IN A DARKENED BEDROOM-

The door is KICKED OPEN, revealing Scout in a cowboy pose.

SCOUT (CONT'D)

Bam! Bam! Bam!

Then SCOUT GOES SUDDENLY SILENT as his expression changes.

DOWNSTAIRS-

Clarence notices the silence. He glances up at the ceiling, then places the hat back in the box and heads for the stairs.

UPSTAIRS-

As Clarence reaches the top of the stairs, he calls out-

CLARENCE
Scout? Where you at, boy?

Nothing. He continues down the upstairs hallway.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)
You best not be messin' where you
ain't supposed to...

Clarence looks into his bedroom as he passes. It's empty. He continues ahead toward a closed door at the end of the hall.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)
Scout? You playin' hide and seek?

He arrives at the closed door and listens. It's completely silent. He swings the door open.

IN THE CHILD'S BEDROOM-

Clarence freezes in the doorway. Alan Ward, still sitting on the edge of the bed, has a firm grip on Scout, who gazes up at his father as if in a trance. Alan reveals a handgun, using it to point toward A MINIATURE CHAIR, meant for a child.

ALAN
Why don't you have a seat, Mr.
Lamb. This shouldn't take too long.

Clarence takes a seat on the tiny chair. He looks small and humiliated and weak.

EXT. A DENSE PINE FOREST - NIGHT

At the edge of the forest, Corey kills the engine and climbs out of the truck with the duffel bag and a machete.

ALEX
Yo, where you goin' now, bro?

COREY
Gotta hike the rest of the way in.
It ain't far. Maybe a quarter mile.

Corey disappears into the forest. Alex reluctantly follows.

IN THE FOREST-

Corey hacks a path with the machete. Alex stops.

ALEX

Hey. Hold up. I ain't goin' any farther til you tell me what's out here.

COREY

We got a hunting shack just over the ridge. Haven't been out since my uncle hanged himself in it, but it should serve.

ALEX

How much farther?

COREY

Not much. I can see the clearing up there.

Corey makes his way up a wooded incline. Alex follows.

EXT. HUNTING SHACK - NIGHT

Corey and Alex enter the clearing near the old wooden shack. As they approach, Corey sees QUICK FLASHES of a BULLET-RIDDLED CINDER BLOCK WALL. He stops walking and grips the blade of the machete with his white-knuckled fist. A trickle of blood runs down the tarnished blade.

ALEX

What the fuck, bro. You okay?

COREY

(returning)

Yeah.

Corey tosses the machete to the ground and begins to work a combination lock on the door to the shack. Alex watches him closely, studying the spinning dial.

INT. CLARENCE LAMB'S HOUSE / BEDROOM - NIGHT

Clarence is still seated on the tiny chair, his eyes filled with tears.

CLARENCE

(solemn)

How much are they paying you to do this? I'll get you more. I'll give you everything I have. Please.

Scout, still in Alan's clutches, looks confused.

ALAN

I'm on salary. I'm afraid this transaction is non-negotiable, Mr. Lamb. In fact, I was asked specifically to make the experience as painful as possible.

POP!

A SILENCED GUNSHOT rips into Clarence's chest, just below the heart. Blood spills from the wound as Clarence moans. Alan releases his hold on the child.

ALAN (CONT'D)

Go give your father a hug. Say goodbye.

Scout runs to Clarence, wraps his arms around him and whimpers. Clarence begins to choke and gasp.

ALAN (CONT'D)

I shot you through the lung. Eventually it will collapse and you'll die of asphyxiation. I'm told it's extremely unpleasant.

Clarence's choking and gasping grows in intensity, the sound of air escaping through the bullet hole. Scout begins to sob, his face and arms stained with his father's blood.

Clarence chokes and spits a mouthful of blood onto the floor. Suddenly, THE AWFUL GURGLING SOUND STOPS and Clarence seems to catch his breath once again. He sucks in air, fighting to stay alive.

Alan is inquisitive. He walks across the room and squats down in front of Clarence for a closer look.

ALAN (CONT'D)

Ah, you see what's happening here?

Clarence breaths heavily, his eyes fixed on Alan's.

ALAN (CONT'D)

Yes. The blood has begun to congeal in the entry wound, sealing the hole and allowing you to breath again... Fascinating.

Alan leans in close to inspect the wound.

ALAN (CONT'D)

The human body never ceases to amaze me. So resilient.

Alan pats at the lapels of his sportcoat, then reaches into the inside pocket, producing an expensive looking GOLD PEN.

ALAN (CONT'D)

This should do the trick.

As Clarence watches, helpless and terrified, Alan inserts the pen into the bullet hole, giving it a slight jiggle to re-open the wound. As he removes the pen, AIR HISSES FROM THE HOLE and Clarence, once again, begins to choke and gasp.

ALAN (CONT'D)

There we go.

Alan wipes the blood from the pen on Scout's shirt, then returns the pen to his inside pocket, a satisfied look on his face.

EXT. CLARENCE LAMB'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Alan exits the house and walks away, down the road.

I/E. COREY'S TRUCK / RURAL ROAD - NIGHT

Corey drives along a dark stretch of road. Alex sits shotgun.

ALEX

Just let me out right here, dog.

COREY

You crazy? I'll drive you home.

ALEX

It's cool. Some folks on the Rez see me with you, they're gonna ask questions. Might even try to fuck with you. You don't want that. Trust me. I can walk the rest of the way. It ain't that far.

COREY

You sure?

ALEX

Yeah, it's all good, bro.

Corey pulls over and Alex starts to get out of the truck.

COREY

Hey... Alex.

Alex turns back to face him.

COREY (CONT'D)

Be careful.

ALEX

(laughing)

It's all good. I've walked this road a thousand times, bro.

Alex gets out and disappears into the night.

I/E. COREY'S TRUCK / RURAL ROAD - NIGHT

Corey drives alone. His headlights graze the front lawn of a house where CLARENCE LAMB'S SON, SCOUT, stands at attention. He is STREAKED WITH BLOOD, his toy gun cradled in his arms. He pays no attention to Corey's passing truck.

Corey pinches at the bridge of his nose, then pushes in the cigarette lighter and keeps driving.

I/E. COREY'S TRUCK / LIZ'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Corey kills the engine and rolls to a stop under a tree.

Deep in thought, Corey watches as the flickering light from a TV dances on the living room curtains.

After a moment, he starts the engine and drives away.

EXT. COREY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Corey, keys in hand, is about to remove the lock from the hasp on the front door. He stops, his eyes taken by something beside the door.

The window beside the door has been SMASHED OUT. Corey is momentarily frozen as he stares at the window. His heart starts to beat more quickly as his mind races.

EXT. COREY'S HOUSE / DRIVEWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Moving quickly, Corey retrieves the shotgun from the truck.

I/E. COREY'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Corey slowly pushes the door of the house open and creeps inside. He stops in the darkened foyer. He can hear the sound of HUSHED VOICES coming from somewhere. The sound of the voices is very faint, ALMOST HALLUCINATORY.

There's a light on upstairs. He quietly removes his boots and begins to ascend the stairs.

His body quivers with tension as he reaches the top of the stairs. He readies the shotgun before slowly moving down the hallway toward the bathroom. The voices are louder now.

He stops at the bathroom door. He takes a deep breath before slowly pushing the door open with the muzzle of the shotgun.

IN THE BATHROOM -

Grandpa sits happily in the bathtub, immersed to his waist in soapy water. The tension leaves Corey's body as he lowers his weapon.

COREY

Liz?

Liz, the woman Corey watched through the window of the house earlier, is seated on a chair opposite the bathtub.

LIZ

He insisted on a bath. I hope that's not weird.

Corey is beyond shocked to see her there.

COREY

What are you doing here?

LIZ

He might not remember who you are anymore but he sure does remember my telephone number. He called the house all day leaving messages about being held hostage by a strange man. I'm sorry I had to break that window. I tried your cell.

COREY
It got shut off. Where's Hunter?

LIZ
He was here, but Paul picked him up
and took him back home.

COREY
(disappointed)
Paul's back?

LIZ
For now... Well... We'll see.

An awkward silence descends. They both regard Grandpa in the bathtub. He's a poignant facsimile of a happy toddler.

GRANDPA
(breaking the silence)
Cold!

COREY
Let's get you dry, Pop.

INT. COREY'S HOUSE / LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Corey and Liz watch as Grandpa sits too close to the television smoking a cigarette.

LIZ
You know you can't just lock him up
in the house like this. He needs
someone to be living here looking
after him or...

She doesn't want to say it, but Corey catches her drift.

COREY
I can't just put him in some home.
But you're right. I'll figure
something out.

She takes his hand.

LIZ
I know you will.

Corey nods solemnly, appreciating the encouragement. He looks over at Grandpa.

COREY

You know sometimes, when he's not too confused, he talks about you. He thinks we're still married.

LIZ

We were only married for a year.

COREY

Yeah, but he always loved you.

Corey looks into Liz's eyes. She realizes she's still holding his hand and draws it away.

LIZ

I gotta be getting back. It's late.

I/E. COREY'S TRUCK / LIZ'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Corey pulls into Liz's driveway and stops the truck. Grandpa sits shotgun with Liz in the middle. Corey gets out of the truck to let Liz out.

LIZ

You know I have some time on my hands. Hunter's at school all day. I could look after Pop for you while you're at work until you get things figured out.

COREY

You're not workin'?

LIZ

Half the medical assistants at the center got laid off. I suppose it's my own damn fault for getting knocked up and dropping out of nursing school. Paul's been helping out with the rent and bills. It's been tough, but we're trying to make it work.

COREY

It's been tough all around lately. I reckon we're all due a little better luck. I guess Hunter must be happy to have his daddy home.

Liz smiles.

LIZ
He's a good little man.

A moment of silence as they look at each other.

COREY
I've been thinking about you a
whole lot lately.

LIZ
You walked out on me, Corey. And
that was a long time ago. Long
enough that you shouldn't be
thinking about me like that
anymore.

COREY
I didn't walk out. I got deployed.

Liz shrugs her shoulders. They've had this argument before.

LIZ
I gotta go in. Think about my
offer to look after Pop.

Corey watches as she goes inside. He gets back in the truck,
pausing for a moment to watch the light from the TV still
flickering on the window.

GRANDPA
Hurts.

This snaps Corey from his reverie. He looks at Grandpa, unsure
what he meant by this, before noticing that Grandpa's
cigarette has burned down, spilling hot ash onto his leg.

COREY
Shit, Pop.

Corey quickly, lovingly brushes the burning ash away.

COREY (CONT'D)
C'mon. Let's get back.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The TRASHY GIRLFRIEND sits on the still-made bed watching
television. Empty candy wrappers are strewn sloppily around
her. She smokes and listlessly changes channels on the TV.

Alan enters. She becomes agitated at the sight of him.

TRASHY GIRLFRIEND

What the fuck, asshole? You said you'd be right back. I've been sitting in this shithole all night with nothing to eat but fucking stale candy bars. I told you all about that fucking cowboy. Now take me home.

ALAN

You're absolutely right. Why don't you wait out in the car while I settle up with the innkeep?

He holds out the car keys for her. She grabs them from him.

TRASHY GIRLFRIEND

Fucking finally! God!

She storms out the door.

INT. COREY'S HOUSE / GRANDPA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Corey stands over Grandpa watching him sleep. He tucks the blanket under Grandpa's chin, then collects some soiled dishes from the cluttered nightstand.

A FRAMED PHOTO lies face-down amidst the disarray. Corey regards it for a moment before righting it. In the photo, a much younger Grandpa stands with TWO YOUNG BOYS on a fishing trip. One of the boys is unmistakably Corey.

Corey's gaze shifts from his own image to that of the OLDER BOY in the photo. He stares at the image wistfully.

CUT TO:

INT. COREY'S HOUSE / LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Corey, still carrying the framed photo, removes a WORN OLD ADDRESS BOOK from a drawer beneath the telephone. He flips through the pages of hand-written numbers and addresses until he gets to DALE MEAGHER.

Unlike the other entries, Dale's stretches down the entire page, one number after another having been SCRATCHED OUT and replaced with the next.

Corey lifts the receiver and begins to dial the last number that was entered into the book.

INT. FLOPHOUSE / HALLWAY - NIGHT

A PAY PHONE rings in the dimly-lit lobby of the shabbily-furnished flophouse. A SCRUFFY, DISHEVELED MAN dressed in a tattered bathrobe huffs and puffs his way to the phone and lifts the receiver. After a long beat-

SCRUFFY MAN

Hello.

INTERCUT-

COREY

Hello. I'm trying to reach Dale Meagher.

SCRUFFY MAN

Who's this?

COREY

His brother.
(silence)
My name's Corey.

Another long beat, then-

SCRUFFY MAN

He don't live here no more.

COREY

Alright. Thank you. You got a new number for him by any chance?

A CLICK, then a dial tone. Corey replaces the receiver.

I/E. ALAN WARD'S CAR / RURAL ROAD - NIGHT

The Trashy Girlfriend plays with the radio as Alan drives. She flicks from country station to country station, agitated. She slams the off button.

TRASHY GIRLFRIEND

Why do you talk like that anyway?

Alan ignores her, his eyes on the darkened road ahead.

TRASHY GIRLFRIEND (CONT'D)

Innkeep? C'mon. Who the fuck talks like that? So fucking gay.

She laughs mockingly. She looks around.

TRASHY GIRLFRIEND (CONT'D)

What are we, DRIVING all the way home? Where's the fucking airport in this shithole?

Alan pays her no mind. He turns the car onto a dirt road and keeps driving into DARKER DARKNESS.

TRASHY GIRLFRIEND (CONT'D)

Are you fucking lost? You're fucking lost, aren't you? Great...

I/E. ALAN WARD'S CAR / EMPTY FIELD - NIGHT

Alan rolls the car to a stop at the edge of a field.

ALAN

Okay. We're here.

He kills the lights. Suddenly it's very dark. He gets out and walks at a casual pace into the field. The girl jumps out and stalks after him.

TRASHY GIRLFRIEND

What the fuck are you doing now?

Alan, ignoring her, keeps walking. Her anger is fading, she's getting nervous.

TRASHY GIRLFRIEND (CONT'D)

I want to go home!

She's frightened now. Alan keeps walking. She follows.

TRASHY GIRLFRIEND (CONT'D)

C'mon! Where are we going?

They reach the middle of the field. Alan stops and turns to face the girl, her expression barely visible in the darkness. She seems small and lost, like a little girl.

Alan looks directly into her eyes, his own expression inscrutable.

TRASHY GIRLFRIEND (CONT'D)

Please mister. I just want to go home. I'm sorry I made fun of you. Can you please just take me home?

Alan raises a pistol to her forehead.

TRASHY GIRLFRIEND (CONT'D)

Oh god...

POP!

Her body drops to the ground like a stone. Alan walks back to his car.

INT. NURSING HOME OFFICE - MORNING

Corey sits in a chair opposite a MATRONLY SUPERVISOR as she taps on her computer keyboard. He looks out the open door at the drab, dingy lounge area. The NEGLECTED RESIDENTS barely interact or move around. They look lost and lonely.

Corey looks back at the supervisor who continues to tap on her computer. He looks back into the lounge as an OLD WOMAN begins to cry. AN ORDERLY appears and turns her wheelchair to face the wall.

SUPERVISOR

Okay, Mr. Meagher. You'd be looking at about twenty-five hundred a month for the in-home care. That's for an aide, not a nurse. Plus we'd have to add on for any supplies or additional services like doctor visits, medication... things like that.

COREY

That's more than I'm taking home right now, ma'am. Isn't there some sort of government thing that could help out? Medicaid?

SUPERVISOR

Well, as you own the home you won't qualify for Medicaid. You might be thinking of Medicare. Of course, they require at least a three day hospital stay before they'll cover any of our services.

Corey takes this all in. The old woman in the lounge continues to whimper. Corey steals another glance.

COREY

(dejected)

So, what if I put him in here then?

SUPERVISOR

I could put him in one of our suites... that's a shared room with three other residents... and that would run...

She taps at her keyboard.

SUPERVISOR (CONT'D)
... about fifty-two hundred a
month... not including any special
procedures that might be required
down the line.

Corey takes it all in, his eyes fixed on some far off point.

INT. CRISWELL MEATWORKS / KILL FLOOR - MORNING

Corey joins Alex, already on the floor. Alex nods toward the Plant Manager's office.

Corey looks up at the enclosed office where Sheriff Kinnie and his deputy stand and put their hats on. They shake hands with the manager. As the men exit the office, Sheriff Kinnie tucks a SMALL ORANGE NOTE PAD into his hip pocket.

Alex grabs the prone animal in front of him by the head and slices its throat, BLOOD JETS OUT onto his coveralls.

ALEX
They were waiting here when the
place opened up this morning.

Corey doesn't speak, but he's clearly shaken by this turn of events. Mechanically, he sticks the animal Alex has passed him with his knife and slices down its midsection, spilling offal onto the conveyor belt below.

The Plant Manager enters the kill floor, hesitant and cagey.

PLANT MANAGER
I need to see you both in my office
once this lot clears.

INT. CRISWELL MEATWORKS / MANAGER'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Corey and Alex enter the office. The Plant Manager is already seated behind his desk.

PLANT MANAGER
Have a seat, fellas. You alright?
You want Ms. Doris to get you a
soda or something?

They sit down across from the manager.

ALEX

What's up? We in trouble? We seen the Sheriff hangin' around.

Corey shoots Alex a warning glance.

COREY

(to the Plant Manager)

Thanks. We ain't thirsty. What do you need to talk to us about, Mr. Evans?

PLANT MANAGER

Well, I'm afraid I've got a bit of alarming news. A man I purchased a lot of cattle from a few days back was found dead of a gunshot wound right in his own home.

COREY

Suicide?

PLANT MANAGER

Afraid not, Corey. Sheriff's calling it a murder. I can't say I can recall another murder in Elk Foot and I been here for fifty-two years. Just can't imagine such a thing.

ALEX

So, what'd you call us up here for? You think we did it or something?

Corey throws Alex another look.

COREY

Sheriff Kinnie have any leads?

PLANT MANAGER

None so far. He found a check stub from the meatworks in the man's pocket what led him here. Here's what I gave him...

The manager sketches A SYMBOL on a piece of paper.

PLANT MANAGER (CONT'D)

This here's the brand they wore, best I can remember. I hadn't ever seen it before, that's for sure. Sheriff suspects they mighta been rustled.

(MORE)

PLANT MANAGER (CONT'D)
Anyways, you fellas remember this
lot comin' through? Maybe notice
anything odd about it?

Corey looks at the symbol. He remembers it well.

ALEX
Shit. We just kill'em and clean'em.
We don't take em out to dinner and
get to know em.

Corey looks agitated. He glances around the small office.

PLANT MANAGER
I just thought you mighta seen
something jumped out at ya. I'd
like to see whoever did this get
found. That man left a young boy
behind. Already lost his momma to
cancer a couple years back. It's a
damn shame. Boy's an orphan now.

COREY
We'll think on it and let you know,
Mr Evans.

PLANT MANAGER
Thank you, son. I'd like to help
the Sheriff any way we can.

COREY
Me too, sir.

PLANT MANAGER
Alright then, you best get back
down on the kill floor. Thanks for
your time. I'll let you know if I
hear anything.

INT. CRISWELL MEATWORKS / KILL FLOOR - AFTERNOON

Corey and Alex are back to work. They're visibly tense,
their minds clearly racing.

The USDA Inspector hovers nearby, his head wrapped in a heavy
bandage. He has a nasty looking black eye.

INT. CRISWELL MEATWORKS / BREAK ROOM - AFTERNOON

Bloody from their day's work, Corey and Alex huddle in front
of the vending machine, their voices hushed.

ALEX

Josh just texted me. We can go over to his place after work.

COREY

Can he move the stuff or not?

ALEX

Check yourself, dog. These ain't girl scout cookies we're trying to sell. You don't conversate about that shit on the fucking phone. You cool to drive or what?

EXT. JOSH'S HOUSE / FRONT STOOP - NIGHT

Corey and Alex wait by the door.

COREY

Maybe you should knock again? I hear music or something.

Alex shrugs and raises his hand to knock again when it suddenly opens. AURORA, 30's, average, stands inside.

AURORA

Namaste. Sorry I didn't hear the door. I have some lentils going in the pressure cooker. Come in, Come in, please.

INT. JOSH'S HOUSE / HALLWAY - NIGHT

Alex and Corey follow Aurora into the house. Corey takes in the decor: Native American wall hangings, Southeast Asian nick-nacks, incense. Relaxing pan-flute music floats down the hallway. Aurora stops suddenly, whirling around and startling Corey and Alex.

AURORA

SHOES!!

Corey gives Alex a look.

AURORA (CONT'D)

Sorry... house rule. We have an assortment of slippers if you'd like to borrow some. Josh is in the meditation room. It's just in there.

She turns and walks away. Corey and Alex take their shoes off. Alex takes a pair of slippers.

COREY

This don't seem like the place.

ALEX

It's cool, bro. Trust me. Let's talk to the man.

IN THE MEDITATION ROOM-

Corey and Alex enter to find a shirtless JOSH, 30's, ponytail, in the middle of the room holding an ADVANCED YOGA POSE. The pan-flute music continues.

They stand awkwardly watching Josh, unsure how to proceed. Corey gives Alex another look. Alex can only shrug in response.

Finally, Josh breaks the pose before turning to face them.

JOSH

Gentlemen, welcome. Would either of you care for a bong hit?

COREY

No thanks. Just came to talk.

Josh sizes him up.

JOSH

Okay... well, have a seat. Let's talk.

Corey and Alex take a seat on two giant pillows while Josh takes a long tug from a GLASS BONG. Exhaling a plume of smoke, Josh turns to Corey and Alex.

JOSH (CONT'D)

What are you in need of?

ALEX

We're actually looking to sell.

JOSH

Alex, you know I grow my own shit, right? And you know it's the best. Why would I want to buy?

Alex takes a small baggie of heroin from his pocket and puts it on the table. Corey is clearly taken aback by this. Where did he get it?

ALEX

I know you don't grow this shit.

Josh winces at the sight of it.

JOSH

Blow?

ALEX

Smack.

JOSH

Where did you get this?

ALEX

We-

COREY

(cutting him off)

We happened into it. There's fifty pounds and we'd like to move it all at once. We'll give it to you for a fair price.

JOSH

I wouldn't even begin to know what to do with that. I only deal in high-end cannabis. I like to think of it as a fine wine or a nice craft beer. It takes months for me to cultivate my crop, understand? That junk? It's like cheap vodka. They make it in fucking bathtubs.

COREY

Sorry to have wasted your time.

Corey is about to leave. Alex grabs his arm.

ALEX

Whoa whoa, hold up. You don't know anybody who would want this shit? We got a lot, dog. It's worth a lot of money.

AURORA (O.S.)

Joshua, have you seen the-

Aurora enters and GASPS when she sees the heroin.

AURORA (CONT'D)

I want you two to leave my home and take that garbage with you.

Corey and Alex look at Josh.

AURORA (CONT'D)

Now!

AT THE FRONT DOOR-

Josh sees them out.

JOSH

I'm sorry about that. Aurora has a very sensitive spirit.

He closes the door behind him, joining Corey and Alex on the front stoop.

JOSH (CONT'D)

(whispering)

Listen, if you really want to move that shit, you should take a drive down to Kalispell. There's a motel called The Good Knight Inn. With a 'K,' like Sir Galahad. It's right on Center Street. It's basically a halfway house for junkies and derelicts. Shouldn't be too hard to move that stuff if you set the right price. But be careful. If you truly "happened into it" then someone's probably waiting for it to hit the street. Be smart, brothers. Okay?

ALEX

Thanks, dog. You rock.

They fist bump. Josh holds his fist out to Corey. Corey looks at the fist for a beat before giving it a halfhearted bump.

JOSH

Namaste.

INT. TRUCKSTOP DINER - NIGHT

Corey and Alex drink coffee in a corner booth. Corey looks defeated and uncertain... distant. An oblivious Alex devours a plate of bacon and eggs.

ALEX

You pop any tags over in the desert?

Corey drifts back.

COREY
(not listening)
What?

ALEX
Kill anybody, dog. You waste any
Hajis?

COREY
I'm thinking maybe we drive up to
the shack and ditch the shit right
now. Just throw it in the river and
walk away.

Alex almost chokes on his eggs.

ALEX
Wow. We gonna surrender? Just like
that? I thought you was Semper Fi,
dog.

COREY
What are we gonna do? Go down to
Kalispell and sling nickel bags on
the street? End up shot or in jail?
We ain't got the connections to do
this right. We ditch it right now.
Nice and clean. Nobody gets hurt.

ALEX
It's desperate times, bro. I saw
this guy on TV. He tattooed porno
websites all over his face just to
feed his damn kids. On his FACE,
dog. We got a chance to do
something here. You feel me?

COREY
There's too much risk.

Alex looks around the diner, then-

ALEX
You ever done time?

COREY
Nah... I was no saint when I was
younger. Me and my brother used to
boost cars now and then. Take
joyrides and whatnot. We usually
just put em back where we found
them when we were done.

(a chuckle)
(MORE)

COREY (CONT'D)

Some of them we stole more than once.

(thoughtful)

Closest I ever came to doing time was sitting in a hole in the desert waiting to get my head blown off. How bout you?

ALEX

Nah. Me either, bro. Probably should have, but they deal with things a bit different on the rez, you know?

He pushes his empty plate away.

ALEX (CONT'D)

I mean there's some days I feel like I'd rather be doing time, you know? Other days I feel like I am doing time... just waiting for my card to get punched.

Corey watches as Alex rips open sugar packets and pours them on the table. He looks up at Corey.

ALEX (CONT'D)

You know what this is, bro?

COREY

A mess.

ALEX

No. It's dope.

He takes an unopened sugar package and separates some sugar from the pile. He picks up the salt shaker, unscrews the lid and pours some salt onto the smaller pile of sugar.

ALEX (CONT'D)

See where I'm going? We cut this shit up and sell it on the street and we can double... nah fuck that... TRIPLE what we get. Same way I used to sell dime bags of catnip to dumb fuckers in junior high. We could clear a million easy. A MILLION dollars, dog!

COREY

How did your catnip selling business end up?

ALEX

(laughing)

Shit! I sold some to the wrong motherfuckers one time. They fucked me up good, dog. Put me in the damn hospital.

COREY

Right. We ain't no drug dealers. We get rid of this shit in one go. Money or no money.

ALEX

No money? Man, you know what, if you want out just give your half to me. I'll sell that shit on my own.

COREY

What if you get caught? They'll trace it back to the kill floor and I'll go down with you. No way.

Alex sits back in the booth. A bemused smirk on his face.

ALEX

36-22-12.

COREY

What?

ALEX

The combination to the hunting shack, ain't it? Maybe I'll go out there tonight and take my half. Shit, if you don't want yours, maybe I'll take all that shit.

Corey starts to tense up.

COREY

Good luck finding your way back there.

ALEX

Shit... I'm Injun, son. I could find that shit blindfolded.

Corey considers the threat, his mind racing.

COREY

Look, just give me the weekend to think on things, okay? It can wait a couple days.

Alex rolls his eyes and shrugs.

A PRETTY YOUNG WAITRESS approaches the table. She hands a to-go bag to Corey.

WAITRESS

Here you go.

(to Alex)

You mind not pouring any more sugar on the table? I have to clean that up.

ALEX

Shit, baby. I got something right here you can clean up.

He grabs his crotch for greater emphasis. Her upper lip curls in distaste. Corey stands, handing her a twenty dollar bill.

COREY

Here you go, miss. I'm sorry about that. You can keep the change.

(to Alex)

C'mon. Let's go. I gotta get back.

I/E. COREY'S TRUCK / TWO LANE BLACKTOP - NIGHT

Corey drives as Alex fiddles with the radio.

ALEX

You ruined my game in there. That bitch was fucking hot. I coulda been hittin' that.

Corey gives Alex a dubious look.

ALEX (CONT'D)

It's like my uncle told me on his death bed. Fuckin' lung cancer took months to eat him up. I was like fifteen or something. My aunt brought me and my cousins to see him. She thought she was gonna scare us off cigarettes and shit.

Alex lights a smoke.

ALEX (CONT'D)

(a chuckle)

I guess that shit didn't work. Anyway, he was all doped up and for some reason he calls me over.

(MORE)

ALEX (CONT'D)

I don't know why he picked me. We were never close or nothin'. He makes me lean in real close and he whispers in my ear, "I wish I fucked more women." Ain't that some shit? He's about to fuckin' die and all he can think about is that he didn't get enough ass in his life. That shit haunts me, dog. I ain't never gonna let that shit happen to me.

COREY

He was in a room surrounded by his family and that's what he said to you?

ALEX

Yeah, dog. Ain't that some shit?

COREY

Seems like he missed the point.

Alex shakes his head, nonplussed. He turns on the radio and spins the dial, settling on a station playing "Let The Bodies Hit The Floor." He cranks the volume and begins to slap the dash with the beat of the song.

A truck pulling a LIVESTOCK TRAILER pulls alongside. Corey looks out at the ghostly white faces of the cattle peering at him from the darkness.

Alex begins to chant.

ALEX

Let the bodies hit the floor! Let the bodies hit the floor!

REALITY SKEWS-

The cattle MORPH INTO BLINDFOLDED SUNNI MUSLIMS.

Corey is now driving a MILITARY HUMVEE as a group of young marines in their late teens and early twenties chant the same lyrics in chorus.

MARINES

Let the bodies hit the floor! Let the bodies hit the floor!

The Sergeant Corey hallucinated earlier is silently sitting shotgun, wearing the same look of uncertainty Corey had at the truck stop. He turns to Corey, one lens of his spectacles is shattered. He speaks slowly and softly.

SERGEANT

(calm)

Stop the fucking truck.

REALITY BEGINS TO SKEW AGAIN-

SOLDIER/ALEX

STOP THE FUCKING TRUCK!

Corey SKIDS TO A STOP, narrowly missing the livestock trailer as it merges ahead. Corey and Alex both take a moment to consider their close call.

ALEX

What the fuck?! You trying to fuckin' kill us?! Fuck!

Corey remains silent, staring straight ahead, his hands still gripping the wheel tightly.

Alex takes a pen from the cup holder. He looks for something to write on before finally settling on a napkin he finds on the dash. He scribbles something on it and shows it to Corey. Corey looks at the crudely written words: BERTH - DEATH (sic).

ALEX (CONT'D)

You see that dash in the middle?
That's your life, bro. It's short.
You gotta make your dash count.
You gotta live your dash, bro.

Corey takes this in.

ALEX (CONT'D)

I'm gonna walk from here. That dash is short enough, you know what I mean?

He pushes the napkin into Corey's hand and steps out of the truck. Corey watches as he walks away, down the shoulder of the two-lane road.

INT. COREY'S HOUSE / LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Corey enters with his to-go bag from the diner to find Liz sitting on the couch reading. Her son Hunter is sleeping with his head on her lap. Grandpa, wrapped in a blanket, sits inches from the television.

Liz turns and smiles when Corey walks in. They speak quietly so as not to wake the child.

LIZ

Hey there.

COREY

Hey. Sorry it's so late. We had a new lot come in late. Boss wanted them to clear.

LIZ

That's okay. A little overtime can't hurt right now, right?

COREY

I brought you all some food.

LIZ

We already ate. I left some for you. It's in the pot on the stove. You've really got to do something about that kitchen by the way. It looks awful with the walls all charred up like that.

COREY

It's on my list.

Corey places the to-go bag on the coffee table and takes a seat on the couch beside Liz and Hunter.

COREY (CONT'D)

This is nice.

Liz gives him a warm smile as he takes in the domesticated scene his living room has become. For the first time he seems relaxed, his expression satisfied and serene. He looks down at the sleeping child.

COREY (CONT'D)

You know, he don't much look like his Daddy.

Liz looks down at the boy, blushing slightly. As she turns back to Corey to say something he has leaned in to steal a kiss. She pushes him away.

LIZ

No Corey.

There's an awkward moment, neither party is sure what to do. The commotion has stirred Hunter awake.

HUNTER

Mommy?

LIZ
 Be still, honey. It's okay.
 (to Corey)
 We gotta go. I gotta get him into
 bed.

She waits for a response. Corey, mortified by the turn of events, can only nod his head dumbly.

EXT. COREY'S HOUSE / DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Liz watches as Corey loads the sleeping Hunter into the back seat of her car. He closes the door gently before turning to her.

COREY
 Look, I'm sorry about that in
 there.

LIZ
 It's okay. I think it's my fault
 for being around here so much
 lately. It's been hard on both of
 us. Maybe you can find somebody
 else to look after Pop for a little
 while? Sorta let things cool off a
 bit?

COREY
 (quietly)
 Go on then. You gotta get home.
 I'll find somebody.

LIZ
 Are you-

COREY
 (firm)
 Go on now.

Corey has turned to stone. His jaw clenches as he stares at the ground. She gets in the car, backs out of the driveway, and is gone into the night. Corey keeps his eyes on the ground.

INT. COREY'S HOUSE / KITCHEN - NIGHT

Corey removes the lid of the pot on the stove. He stares at the contents.

AT THE KITCHEN TABLE -

Corey quietly consumes a cheeseburger from the to-go bag.

INT. COREY'S HOUSE / LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Corey enters to find Grandpa has fallen asleep in front of the television.

INT. COREY'S HOUSE / GRANDPA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Corey enters the room with his grandfather in his arms. He places him in the bed and covers him. He watches him sleep, deep in thought.

EXT. IDYLLIC MOUNTAINTOP PASTURE - MORNING

The same mountain pasture from the opening scene. TWO FOREST RANGERS are preparing to remove the body of the dead cowboy. The horse he was riding before being gunned down grazes a few feet from his body. The body of the PUNK and his ATV are nowhere to be seen.

Sheriff Kinnie and his deputy survey the scene.

DEPUTY RUSTY

Hikers that found him said the dead cowboy was face down 'cept they didn't know he was dead until they flipped him over, then they was too upset to flip him back. They figured he must've taken a bad spill off his horse until they spied them bullet holes in him.

SHERIFF KINNIE

Mmm Hmm. Died with his boots on.

DEPUTY RUSTY

Now, these two head of cattle here were sliced up the belly and had their insides pulled out onto the dirt. I can't figure why the dead cowboy woulda done that. He left the horse alone for what it's worth. Rangers reckon he'd been out here about a week before the hikers found him. Good thing his horse had plenty to graze on.

SHERIFF KINNIE

He American?

DEPUTY RUSTY

No I.D., But that's Canuck territory just the other side of the lake there. Coulda come down on horseback I suppose, but chances are he's off the Rez.

SHERIFF KINNIE

You reckon he mighta been rustlin these heifers?

DEPUTY RUSTY

If he's off the Rez, you can count on it.

Kinnie shoos a pair of HISSING TURKEY VULTURES so he can inspect the dead cattle. He produces the SMALL ORANGE NOTEPAD from his hip pocket and flips through pages of handwritten notes before settling on a CRUDELY DRAWN SYMBOL. It's the same as the brand the Plant Manager showed Corey and Alex earlier.

Kinnie squats down and places the drawing beside the brand on one of the cows, revealing a match there too. He slides the notepad back into his pocket.

As Deputy Rusty helps the Park Rangers, Sheriff Kinnie strolls toward the discarded bones and skulls on the other side of the pasture.

He stops directly on top of THE HIDDEN TRAPDOOR that the punk propelled himself through on his ATV earlier. A FAINT HUMMING SOUND gets his attention. He looks up into the sky. AN EIGHT-PROPELLERED DRONE appears. It descends until it hovers just a few feet above Kinnie's head. He stares at it pensively.

CUT TO:

INT. DARKENED ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dim light flickers in the darkened room as LOUD DUBSTEP MUSIC thumps in the background. BRICKS OF HEROIN are piled on either side of a MONITOR SCREEN.

Sheriff Kinnie, his face distorted by the fish-eye lens, stares into the camera. HE DRAWS HIS PISTOL and aims it at the lens.

EXT. IDYLIC MOUNTAINTOP PASTURE - CONTINUOUS

Kinnie has his gun trained on the drone in an eerie Mexican stand-off. Deputy Rusty looks on in disbelief, then unholsters his own pistol.

A moment later, the drone abruptly rises and retreats over a nearby hilltop.

Directly below Kinnie's feet, through a few feet of dirt, stone and roots...

INT. SECRET BUNKER - CONTINUOUS

TWO TWEAKED OUT AND TATTED PUNKS aim rifles at the trapdoor hatch. Dirt falls from below the hatch, the dust hanging in the air around a thin ribbon of light.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. WOODED TRAIL - DAY

A CLUSTER OF ATVs roars past. The riders are FULLY CAMOUFLAGED and loaded down with gear. Their faces are hidden behind balaclavas and goggles. The leader of the pack skids to a halt. The others pull up behind him. He looks through pair of high-powered binoculars, scanning the terrain ahead. He signals to the others and they ROAR AWAY down the trail.

I/E. COREY'S TRUCK / MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY

Corey sips from a coffee thermos as he bounces along the neglected, windy road.

THE SAME GROUP OF ATVs bursts from the trees and bounces onto the road behind him. Corey jumps, his truck swerving as he checks his mirror and rights himself. The ATVs continue behind him momentarily before turning off into an open pasture and disappearing from sight.

He grabs the aspirin container and shakes one into his mouth.

EXT. HUNTING SHACK - DAY

Corey approaches the hunting shack where he and Alex left the drugs. When he reaches the door he freezes. The hasp has been broken away from the rotted wooden door frame, leaving the door slightly ajar.

AT HIS TRUCK -

Corey removes the shotgun and chambers a round.

BACK AT THE SHACK -

Corey approaches the door cautiously, shotgun in hand. Aiming the shotgun, he gently eases the door open with his foot.

The interior is dark except for a couple shafts of light penetrating the old wooden roof planks. Corey enters slowly, his weapon at the ready. As he reaches the back of the shack he sees that some floor boards have been pried loose.

He drops to his knees and peers into the hole. The duffel bag is missing. He paws at the hole to make sure... Nothing. He stands up. His heart is pounding as he scans the cabin, desperately searching for a sign of the missing drugs.

He moves toward a small window at the back of the cabin. He clears the window of dust with his shirt sleeve and peers out at the open meadow beyond. Nothing.

He looks up to a nearby tree-stand. It's empty.

As he scans the terrain, his eyes seize on SOMETHING MOVING. He ducks back into the shadows. Sweat trickles down his temple, his breathing slightly ragged.

He slowly leans his head toward the window for a closer look. A FIGURE IN A GHILLIE SUIT raises up from the long grass and scans the area with binoculars before dropping into the grass again. Corey stiffens up. The figure appears to be crawling toward the cabin. Corey raises the shotgun slowly. He takes a deep breath and holds it as he settles the sight on the Ghillie Man. His finger teases the trigger.

IN THE MEADOW -

The Ghillie Man is slowly prone-crawling toward the shack.

SUDDENLY - Corey is on top of him, digging a knee into his back and shoving the gun's muzzle into the back of his head. The Ghillie Man screams and writhes inside the heavy suit.

COREY

(shouting)

Hands behind your head! I said
hands behind your head
motherfucker!

The Ghillie Man complies as Corey stands, his gun still trained on the man's head.

COREY (CONT'D)

(screaming)

Who the fuck are you? What do you want from me? Answer me right now or I'll peel your fucking cap! Answer me!

Muffled cries come from inside the Ghillie suit. Corey is about to reach down and pull his mask off when -

The sound of ROARING ENGINES as FIVE MORE CAMOUFLAGED MEN on ATVs come bounding over the hill. Corey, desperate now, places his foot on the man's throat as he turns to face the new threat.

The lead ATV rider skids to a halt and signals for the others to stop. Corey, focused and intense, in full battle mode, flicks the sights of his shotgun from man to man waiting for the first sign of danger. His finger curls around the trigger as his sights settle on the first ATV rider.

The man raises both hands, showing Corey that they're empty before cautiously removing his head gear, revealing a kindly, middle aged face.

ATV MAN

Mister please! We're birders! We're just birders. We don't wish you any harm at all. We're out here looking for birds. That's all. Please... let Stan go.

Corey watches in amazement as the other men remove their headgear to reveal similarly kind, unthreatening faces. One of them has a BIRD CALL that he places to his lips and gives a little TOOT as if to convince Corey their story is true.

ATV MAN (CONT'D)

Sir. Can you please lower the weapon? I beg of you.

Corey realizes he still has the gun trained on the men. He lowers it slowly before turning to remove Ghillie Man's hood, revealing another kind, middle aged face.

The man is sobbing in terror. His face bright red and streaked with tears and mucus. Corey removes his boot from the man's neck and watches as he scrambles away desperately toward his friends.

The men start their ATVs and speed away. Corey is left alone in the meadow, shaken by how close he came to killing an innocent man.

AT THE SHACK -

Corey returns, shaken but still cautious. He removes a Maglite from his coat pocket. He enters the cabin, led by the light, revealing the squalor of the interior. Dirty pots and pans, spilled food and empty beer cans litter the floor.

He moves toward the spot where the floor boards have been pried away and lowers himself to one knee for a closer look. He gets down on his belly and shoves his head into the hole.

He's met with a MENACING HISS and GNASHING TEETH. A LARGE RACCOON SNARLS and lashes at Corey's face with its claws. He stumbles backward, dropping his flashlight. There's a clatter as the raccoon forces the door open to allow her cubs to escape.

Corey takes a moment to steady himself. He retrieves the flashlight from the floor and lowers himself into the hole. Peering deep into the recesses of the space below the shack, Corey is able to locate THE DUFFEL BAG, surrounded by a number of other found objects that have been made into a sort of nest. He's just able to reach the bag and pull it free. He opens it to make sure the contents of the bag have remained untouched.

I/E. COREY'S TRUCK / RURAL ROAD - DAY

Corey drives toward town, the duffel bag on the bench seat next to him. He turns on the radio. It's still on the LOUD HARDCORE station Alex was playing the night before. He pushes at the vintage preset buttons:

Click: TALKING. Click: PREACHING. CLICK: COUNTRY AND WESTERN. Corey turns up the volume of the Country Music. He takes a deep breath and sits back in his seat.

In the distance, Corey sees THE DEPUTY'S CRUISER approaching from the opposite direction. The cruiser gives a BURST FROM THE SIREN and FLASHES ITS LIGHTS as it's about to pass Corey's truck.

Corey watches in his rearview in dismay as the cruiser performs a u-turn and pulls up behind his truck. Another siren burst and light flash impel Corey to pull over.

COREY

Shit...

He looks at the duffel on the seat next to him. He surreptitiously pushes it onto the floor.

MOMENTS LATER -

Corey rolls down his window as the Deputy approaches, his knuckles gripping his knees so hard they've turned white.

COREY (CONT'D)

How you doin, Deputy?

DEPUTY RUSTY

Howdy. Reason I pulled you over was that cracked windshield you got there. I got a call from some nature enthusiasts sayin there's some sort of lunatic with a rifle runnin' around out here threatening people. I thought that cracked windshield mighta had something to do with it.

The deputy runs his finger across the bullet hole.

DEPUTY RUSTY (CONT'D)

Looks like somebody tried to shoot it out.

COREY

No sir, just some rocks kicked up by a semi out on the interstate. Been meaning to get it fixed. I ain't seen any lunatics out here today.

The deputy eyes the shotgun in Corey's passenger seat. Corey follows his gaze.

COREY (CONT'D)

I was hoping to take a couple turkeys this morning. Season just started up.

The deputy gives a knowing nod.

DEPUTY RUSTY

You don't have to tell me. You get anything?

COREY

Didn't so much as see one. I reckon they must know.

DEPUTY RUSTY

(a chuckle)

I bet they do alright. Well listen, I'm gonna let you off with a warning for that window today.

(MORE)

DEPUTY RUSTY (CONT'D)
 Just make sure you get it seen to
 in the next couple weeks. Damn
 thing is likely to fall in on you
 if you're not careful.

COREY
 Yes sir.

DEPUTY RUSTY
 You have yourself a good day now.

The deputy walks back to his car. Corey watches tensely in his rearview as the deputy gets in his car, u-turns, then speeds off down the road.

INT. COREY'S HOUSE / GRANDPA'S ROOM - DAY

Corey enters Grandpa's room holding a bowl of cereal. Grandpa is sitting up in bed, staring at the wall.

COREY
 Mornin' Pop. You ready for some
 breakfast in bed?

Corey props him up and hands him the bowl. Grandpa just stares at it.

COREY (CONT'D)
 C'mon now. Eat up. Don't make me
 feed it to you.

Grandpa lets the bowl fall from his hands. It crashes to the hardwood floor, spilling milk and cereal.

COREY (CONT'D)
 (patient)
 Alright... you don't want cereal?
 How about we take a drive into town
 and get some DQ? That sound good?

EXT. GOOD KNIGHT INN - DAY

Corey and Grandpa sit in the cab of the truck eating fast food. Corey keeps a close eye on the activities at the dismal, two-storey transient motel.

PROSTITUTES bring JOHNS to various rooms. TWO DRUG PUSHERS sling small bags of dope that they keep stashed behind a dumpster. A FILTHY MAN IN A WHEELCHAIR keeps watch from the corner. He gives a whistle as he watches a SQUAD CAR roll past, signalling to the others to lie low.

GRANDPA

Toilet.

Corey's concentration is broken. He looks over at Grandpa.

COREY

You need the toilet, Pop?

GRANDPA

Toilet.

COREY

Alright... here, gimme those empty containers. I'll toss em out, then we can go over to the bus terminal. They got a head in there you can use.

Corey gathers the fast food wrappers and steps out of the truck, crossing to a nearby dumpster. He keeps a casual eye on the motel. All of the money seems to funnel through room 237. The prostitutes and dope dealers both drop their earnings through an open window next to the door.

BACK IN THE TRUCK-

Corey rolls down his window.

COREY (CONT'D)

Gettin' hot. Ain't even summer yet... Okay, you ready?

Corey begins to turn the ignition. The starter churns, then-

WHAM!

A MAN with sallow, emaciated features has appeared at Corey's window, inches from Corey's face. Corey startles. The truck goes silent.

COREY (CONT'D)

Whoa! Get back!

The man recoils, then returns to the window, speaking in hushed tones through his ROTTING TEETH.

DALE

It's me, Corey. It's Dale!

A look of horror crosses Corey's face. He looks into the man's eyes. The two men look oddly similar yet vastly different. Dale picks at a scab on his cheek as he talks.

DALE (CONT'D)
 You gotta help me, bro. I know I
 fucked up but I need your help
 right now. Please...

Corey remains stoic as he regards Dale.

COREY
 What sorta mess you in?

DALE
 It's bad, bro. You gotta help me. I
 don't even-

Dale stops. He looks past Corey to Grandpa.

DALE (CONT'D)
 Is that Pop? Pop?!

Grandpa doesn't look over.

COREY
 He don't remember you.

DALE
 (earnest)
 Corey, please. I'm family. I'm your
 damn big brother. You gonna let
 them kill me? I been clean for six
 days now. C'mon. You gotta help me
 go straight. I mean it this time. I
 swear to you.

COREY
 (reluctant)
 Get in the truck.

INT. COREY'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Dale stares at a plate of food as he sips coffee. He pushes
 the plate away, then looks at Grandpa, who is seated next to
 him. He reaches into Grandpa's shirt pocket and removes a
 pack of Winstons, shaking one loose.

DALE
 ...havin' a goddamn nic fit over
 here. Shit.

He lights it, then holds one out to Grandpa.

DALE (CONT'D)
 You want a lung dart, Pop?

Grandpa takes a cigarette. They smoke together. Corey enters and watches them from the doorway.

COREY

They had a memorial service for Mom and Dad a few months back. You missed it.

DALE

I missed a lot.

COREY

Ain't you gonna eat nothin'?

DALE

No appetite.

They regard each other for a moment.

COREY

So, how much you need?

DALE

Twelve hundred. I know it don't sound like much, but it's enough to get killed over and it's more than I got right now.

COREY

Who are you in to?

DALE

Guy called Pellet Weeks. That's what I know him by anyways.

COREY

Uh huh. Who is he? Dope dealer?

DALE

The only one still slinging smack. I never would of done business with him if I had the choice. The fucking fucker's fucking nuts. But if you want dope... if you need dope... Pellet's the fucking man around here. No competition.

COREY

How much does he move?

DALE

I'd say he does well. Still a lot of junkies down in Kalispell ain't switched over to ice yet. I'd say he does pretty well alright.

COREY

How do I get in touch with him?

Dale lets out a laugh.

DALE

Aw shit. Look at my little brother. You got the eye of the tiger right there, my man. That's what you got. They teach you that in the army? What do they call that? The thousand yard stare?

Dale chuckles again.

DALE (CONT'D)

Yeah. That's it. The thousand yard stare.

COREY

This all some kinda joke to you?

DALE

(uneasy)

Aw, lighten up, bro. I was just messin'. Damn...

COREY

(a fire building)

Hard to believe there was a time I looked up to you. Guess I was just young and stupid.

DALE

Hey, that ain't necessary, Corey. Now, I told you I was just messin'. C'mon now...

COREY

It's about time you took some responsibility. You ain't done nothin' but shit all over this family for the last ten years. Ain't done nothin' but cause problems. You know that? You think you're some kinda outlaw? Some kinda rebel? Is that it?

Dale averts his eyes.

COREY (CONT'D)
Ain't nothin' but selfishness is
what it is. You ain't livin' life
for no one but yourself.

Dale shakes out another cigarette and lights it.

COREY (CONT'D)
It's time for you to be the big
brother. You hear me?

DALE
(sheepish)
Yeah. I hear you.

COREY
Good. I ain't got nothin' more to
say on it. Now, here's what I need
from you right now. I need you to
keep an eye on Pop. Make sure he
don't wander off or get messed up
in nothin' while I go down to
Kalispell and try to make things
right with this Pellet Weeks. Can
you do that? Can you be the big
brother?

DALE
(quiet)
Yeah. Yeah. I can do that.

Corey is unflinching. He's heard this a thousand times
before. Dale knows Corey isn't buying it.

DALE (CONT'D)
You got my word, bro. Promise.

COREY
'fraid your word don't carry much
currency around here no more.

Corey continues to stare daggers through Dale. Dale's eyes
dart around the room as he takes a long drag on his
cigarette. Corey looks from Dale to Pop, then back to Dale.

COREY (CONT'D)
But you're all I got I suppose. You
and Pop...

Corey takes a moment to consider this, then-

COREY (CONT'D)
So, where do I find Pellet Weeks?

The hint of a smile crosses Dale's face. He takes another long drag, then-

DALE
You wanna get in touch with Pellet Weeks, you got one option. He only leaves his compound once a day. Every morning. Eight o'clock sharp.

FADE TO:

EXT. FLATHEAD DINER - MORNING

A vintage, working class diner. Corey's Truck is parked in the adjacent lot.

DALE (V.O.)
Don't matter if it's snowing, raining or if the goddamn sky's on fire, Pellet eats breakfast with his wife at the Flathead Diner over on West Idaho, 'bout a block past Lucky Lil's Casino...

FADE TO:

INT. FLATHEAD DINER - MORNING

Corey is nestled in a corner booth with a cup of coffee. He watches the clock. It's 7:55AM.

DALE (V.O.)
Now, you'll know him by his wife. She's a big ol' fat woman. Five... six-hundred pounds easy...

Corey watches as the door opens and PELLET'S WIFE comes lumbering into the diner with the assistance of TWO CANES. Her hair and makeup is impeccable.

DALE (V.O.)
She always looks nice though. Pellet buys her nice things. Takes her to the beauty parlor and such. Guess he ain't never heard about puttin' lipstick on a pig.

PELLET WEEKS enters behind his wife. He's her physical opposite, a tall slender frame topped with a head like Rasputin. He strokes his LONG BEARD as he scans the restaurant with his WILD EYES. A HOSTESS greets them.

DALE (V.O.)

Pellet's first wife was a beauty. A real trophy wife. Won pageants and shit. Folks say they was high school sweethearts back in the day. Well, here's how that ended: She spent all his money and fucked half the state of Montana. Then she stole his car and ran off with a couple bush niggers off the rez. He never saw the car or the wife again.

Pellet and his wife are shown to an empty table in the center of the room. They give the WAITRESS their order. Corey watches intently from his booth.

DALE (V.O.)

Once the dust settled and he'd licked his wounds, he vowed to find himself the fattest, ugliest woman he could and marry her on the spot. He figured he'd hedge his bets and find himself a woman that most men would get sick at the sight of. Avoid going through the same mess twice. Seems to be working for him.

The waitress brings food to Pellet's table.

DALE (V.O.)

Now, the other thing I can tell you about Pellet Weeks is that he always eats before his wife. Always. Her food will arrive same time as his and she will just sit there and stare at that goddamn plate with her mouth all slobbery at the sides, but she will not take a bite until Pellet has cleaned his plate.

Sure enough, Pellet digs into his breakfast as she sits silently, swabbing drool from her mouth as she stares at her plate.

DALE (V.O.)

You know why? It ain't outta respect and it ain't because Pellet don't love that woman just as big as she is and don't want her to eat.

Pellet wipes the last bit of yolk from his plate with a crust of bread. He gives it a cursory chew, then swallows it down. His wife watches with intent anticipation.

DALE (V.O.)

It's because they share a set of teeth.

Pellet places his utensils on the empty plate, then reaches deep into the far recesses of his egg-stained mouth with his greasy fingers. After a bit of manipulation, his hand emerges with A FULL SET OF DENTURES, still coated with bits of food. He hands them to his wife, who then inserts them into her own mouth and proceeds to tuck into her breakfast.

DALE (V.O.)

Now, that's what I call love.

Corey gets up from his booth and goes to the counter to pay.

EXT. FLATHEAD DINER - MORNING

Corey watches from his truck as Pellet uses a mechanized lift to load his wife into the back of a WINDOWLESS CARGO VAN. Corey follows the van into traffic.

EXT. PELLET'S COMPOUND - MORNING

The cargo van pulls up outside a small gate which is framed by a ten-foot-high cinder block wall that stretches the entire block. As Pellet approaches the gate with his wife, the door opens from the inside, allowing them entry.

DALE (V.O.)

Most days, after breakfast, they go back to the compound and don't come out again til the next morning. Used to be, he just had his old house there on his family's plot of land... about an acre, right there in the center of town. After the neighbors got to complaining about the state of things, the city ordered him to tidy the place up and kennel his hounds.

(MORE)

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

Instead, Pellet just built himself a big ol' fuck-off wall around the whole dang place, and there weren't a thing no one could do about it.

Pellet returns to the van alone. He gets in and drives away. Corey's truck falls in behind.

DALE (V.O.)

Anyways, the only other time Pellet leaves the compound is to go collect his earnings. He don't trust no one who ain't family, especially with his money.

I/E. COREY'S TRUCK / GOOD KNIGHT INN - DAY

Corey pulls into a spot as Pellet's van comes to a stop outside the seedy motel. The wheelchair man gives a whistle.

The door to room 237 opens and a BAREFOOT CHILD exits the room dragging A LARGE LAUNDRY BAG. She drags the bag down the long, second-story exterior corridor, down the stairs and past the empty pool toward A ROW OF WASHERS AND DRYERS that sit beneath an outdoor shelter.

The child struggles with the bag, shoving the whole thing into a dryer. Next, she inserts a quarter and starts the machine before shuffling back to room 237.

Once the child is back in the room, Pellet exits his van, walks directly to the dryer and removes the bag. Walking back to the van, he tosses the bag into the rear cargo hold and drives away. Corey starts his engine.

EXT. PELLET'S COMPOUND - DAY

Pellet's van pulls up to a GARAGE DOOR built directly into the wall of his compound. The door rolls open and Pellet backs the van into the narrow opening. The door closes.

Corey watches from a safe distance. He takes one final look at the compound before driving off.

INT. WAL MART - DAY

Corey wanders down the long main corridor of the superstore. He's the only shopper without a cart.

AT THE REGISTER-

Corey drops a PACKAGED DISPOSABLE CELL PHONE on the counter.

WAL MART CASHIER
Credit card?

COREY
Cash.

I/E. COREY'S TRUCK / WAL MART PARKING LOT - DAY

Corey opens the packaging with a knife and removes the disposable cell phone. He digs around for a scrap of paper and a pen, then writes the cell phone number down.

EXT. GOOD KNIGHT INN - DAY

Corey is on foot. He approaches the wheelchair man with confidence and tosses a SMALL BAGGIE OF POWDER onto his lap.

WHEELCHAIR MAN
Fuck is this?

COREY
You know what it is.

Corey hands him the paper with the cell number on it.

COREY (CONT'D)
Tell Pellet there's more where that came from.

WHEELCHAIR MAN
Who says I'm working for Pellet?

COREY
Just give it to him.

WHEELCHAIR MAN
Who the fuck are you?

COREY
Don't deliver that to Pellet and you'll find out who the fuck I am.

Corey walks away. The wheelchair man watches him until he's out of sight.

EXT. OPEN SKY - DAY

THE SAME EIGHT-PROPELLERED DRONE from the mountain pass hovers in the big open sky.

EDDIE JOE (O.S.)
This shit's tight, yo!

EDDIE JOE, big, black, dreadlocked and tracksuited, operates the REMOTE CONTROL under the supervision of a PUNK TEENAGER who looks very similar to the ones from the secret bunker. They're standing in the middle of a large open field next to A CORRAL FILLED WITH CATTLE. Eddie Joe's CELL PHONE begins to ring in his pocket. He fumbles with the remote control, trying to get to his phone. Finally-

EDDIE JOE (CONT'D)
Here. Take this shit before I crash
this motherfucker.

Eddie Joe hands off the remote and answers his cell phone.

EDDIE JOE (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Who dis? Who told you that? Uh-
huh... Pellet call him yet? Yeah,
alright. Hold up a sec.

Eddie Joe climbs into a CUSTOM BUILT GOLF CART and drives up, over the crest of the hill revealing-

EXT. RURAL MCMANSION - DAY

MTV-STYLE opulence is on display. A BENTLEY, A BENZ and A HUMMER are parked on the front lawn next to a couple ATVs and a trailer with TWO JET SKIS. The lawn is eroded and brown where someone has frequently done donuts.

Eddie Joe pulls up on the golf cart. The license plate reads "PIMP." Beneath that, "BEAUTIFUL BRITISH COLUMBIA."

INT. RURAL MCMANSION - DAY

Eddie Joe walks through the formal living room where MORE PUNK TEENAGERS play video games on a GIANT TV. He still has the cell phone held to his chest. He stops in his tracks when he sees that one of the punks has his shoes on the LARGE WHITE SOFA.

EDDIE JOE
Man, you must be trippin'. Get your
damn feet off the damn
Chesterfield! Where the fuck you
think you is, Son? Shit.

The boy removes his feet. Eddie Joe continues up the GRAND STAIRCASE, cell phone still held to his chest.

UPSTAIRS-

Eddie Joe walks down a long corridor. The wall is lined with LARGE, IDENTICALLY FRAMED PHOTOS. They're all of the same PUNK KID: On a boat. With a gun. Next to a car. In a white suit. In a black suit... Always trying to look "hard" at the camera.

At the end of the corridor, ANOTHER XXXL TRACKSUIT, like Eddie Joe, except white, is seated on a chair outside a CLOSED DOOR. All his attention is on his cell phone.

Eddie Joe gives Tracksuit #2 a disapproving shake of the head before rapping on the door with his gold rings.

BOSS (O.S.)
 (behind the door...
 groggy)
 Yeah?

EDDIE JOE
 (to the door)
 Got a call for you, Boss. It's
 important.

BOSS (O.S.)
 (behind the door)
 Hang on.

Eddie Joe watches Tracksuit #2 playing a game on his phone. He shakes his head again. Finally, the door swings open-

BOSS (CONT'D)
 Gimme the phone.

The "Boss" is the kid in all the photos from the corridor. He's shirtless and scrawny. Behind him, TWO NUDE WOMEN begin to stir in the king size bed. The Boss snatches the cell phone from Eddie Joe and slams the door closed.

Eddie Joe continues to look at Tracksuit #2 with disgust as he waits to get his phone back. Finally, the door opens a crack and The Boss's hand extends with the cell phone. Eddie Joe takes the phone and the door slams closed. Eddie Joe begins to walk away when the door opens again.

BOSS (CONT'D)
 Eddie Joe!

Eddie Joe turns back to face The Boss.

EDDIE JOE
 Yeah, Boss.

BOSS

Tell Troy to hack Pellet's line and track this faggot when he calls.

EDDIE JOE

You got it, Boss. I'm on it.

EXT. RURAL ROAD - DAY

Corey drives his truck along a tree-lined country road. He glances down at the cell phone. No calls. When he looks up-

COREY

Shit!

He SLAMS ON THE BRAKES. The truck skids to a dusty stop a few feet away from Grandpa, who is wandering half-naked down the middle of the road. Corey loads Grandpa into the truck.

INT. COREY'S HOUSE / LIVING ROOM - DAY

Corey bounds through the already-open front door. The house has been turned upside down. Every drawer hangs open, the contents strewn about the floor.

COREY

Shit... Dale?!...
Dale, you here?!

No answer. He goes room to room calling out.

COREY (CONT'D)

Dale?!

UPSTAIRS-

In the hallway, he finds a pillowcase with valuables spilling out of it, onto the floor.

COREY (CONT'D)

Shit. Dale?!

He sees his bedroom door is open just a crack. He approaches and tries to open it, but it won't budge. Something's blocking it. He leans into it and pushes hard.

INT. COREY'S HOUSE / COREY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The door slides open, pushing DALE'S LIFELESS BODY with it. Corey squeezes into the room and takes in the scene.

THE DUFFEL BAG WITH THE DRUGS has been extricated from beneath the bed. On the floor, next to Dale's body, a bent spoon lies next to a lighter. Corey flips Dale over. He's BLUE IN THE FACE and A SYRINGE still dangles from his arm. Corey gasps.

COREY

Fuck.

INT. COREY'S HOUSE / BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Corey drags Dale's lifeless body into the bathroom and puts him in the tub. He turns the shower on full blast.

COREY

C'mon Dale! Wake up! Don't fucking die right now. Not now!

Corey drops to his knees. He beats on Dale's chest as the water rains down on them both. Corey beats harder...

FLASHBACK TO IRAQI DWELLING-

BOOM! An explosion has filled the SMALL IRAQI DWELLING with smoke and debris. Corey pumps feverishly on the chest of an injured soldier, complete chaos around him. Women and children scream and cry. Other soldiers shout orders. The wall behind Corey is singed with BLOOD AND SOOT. The smoke hangs thick.

COREY (CONT'D)

C'mon Sergeant! Don't fucking die right now!

Corey looks at the Sergeant's face. It's the soldier with THE SHATTERED LENS. His eyes have rolled back. A BLOODY SOLDIER approaches Corey from behind.

BLOODY SOLDIER

He's done, Meagher. Stop it!

Corey continues to beat on the Sergeant's chest.

BLOODY SOLDIER (CONT'D)

He's done, Meagher!

The bloody soldier pulls Corey back, revealing the fact that only the Sergeant's top half remains. His lower intestines have spilled onto the dirt floor of the dwelling.

BLOODY SOLDIER (CONT'D)

He's done. C'mon.

BACK IN THE BATHROOM-

Corey stops trying to resuscitate Dale. He collapses on the tile floor, his back against the tub. His eyes filled with pain, he stands and opens the medicine cabinet. He selects one of the MANY PRESCRIPTION BOTTLES and shakes a few pills directly into his mouth.

He closes the cabinet door and stares at his own reflection in the mirror as he swallows the pills. Dale's leg still dangles over the edge of the tub behind him.

Suddenly-

DALE

WWWWWWHHHHHHHHHAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!!!!!!

DALE SHOOTS UPRIGHT, gasping for air and spitting bile.

INT. COREY'S HOUSE / LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Dale, still looking half-dead, sips coffee at the table. He turns to Grandpa, seated next to him, and pats at his shirt pockets.

DALE

Got a lung dart for me, Pop?

COREY (O.S.)

I guess you're feeling better.

Corey watches from the doorway. Dale finds a smoke.

COREY (CONT'D)

I ain't gonna ask what you was doin' when you found them drugs.

Dale lights his cigarette, stares at Corey.

COREY (CONT'D)

And you ain't gonna ask me where I got all them drugs.

Dale takes a long drag... exhales.

COREY (CONT'D)

We clear?

DALE

As a bell.

Corey takes a seat across from Dale and Grandpa.

COREY

I'm fixin' to sell them drugs to Pellet Weeks. I'm gonna use the money to make things right with the tax collector and get Pop a full time nurse... and if there's any left over, I'm gonna settle the score between you and Pellet. Understood?

Dale gives a sheepish nod.

COREY (CONT'D)

If you can't keep an eye on Pop without fucking things up, then maybe I can't do that last part neither. Now look at me.

Dale looks up slowly.

COREY (CONT'D)

This is the last chance you're gonna get from me. You fuck this up and you ain't part of this family no more. You hear me?

DALE

(quiet)

Yeah.

Corey watches Dale fidget for a long beat, then stands and begins to exit when Dale stops him.

DALE (CONT'D)

Corey?

COREY

Yeah?

DALE

Be careful doing business with Pellet. He might seem like some dumb hick to you, but he's very smart and he's very violent... Pellet Weeks is the devil.

EXT. CRISWELL MEATWORKS - MORNING

Corey sits in his truck watching the other workers enter. He looks at the heroin duffel on the floor. He checks the cell phone. No calls. Something catches his eye. He pulls at the corner of the napkin that Alex gave him: BERTH-DEATH. Corey puts the napkin in his pocket and goes inside.

INT. CRISWELL MEATWORKS / KILL FLOOR

Corey enters the kill floor where Alex is already arranging his tools. Alex turns to face him.

ALEX

You get some rest this weekend?

Alex has a BIG BLACK EYE. Corey looks at the eye, then at Alex's hands. They're also scraped up at the knuckles.

COREY

Not bad.

ALEX

Get laid?

COREY

(staring at the eye)
What happened?

ALEX

What?...

(realizing his eye)
Oh this? Shit. My old lady found some of that dope on me after you dropped me off the other night. She went fucking crazy. Like fucking apeshit, bro.

(a nervous laugh)
She kicked the shit outta me pretty good. Kicked me outta the house... the whole nine.

COREY

(concerned)
She tell anybody else about what she found?

ALEX

What?! No. She ain't like that. It's cool. Everything's cool, bro. So what did you decide? You like my plan or what? We gonna move this shit old school?

Corey is about to continue when the Plant Manager enters.

PLANT MANAGER

Mornin' fellas. Sorry to get in your business first thing on a Monday, but I got a call from Sheriff Kinnie relates back to that lot Clarence Lamb brought in here before he got himself killed. The one I was asking you two about last week.

Alex begins to fidget.

COREY

What'd the Sheriff have to say?

PLANT MANAGER

Well, they found another dead cowboy up in the Kootenai.

Corey's mind races. He eyes Alex's injuries.

PLANT MANAGER (CONT'D)

And the thing is is that there was two heifers had been gutted right there next to the stiff. They wore the same brand as that lot Clarence brought in here. Sheriff thinks the dead cowboy mighta been in cahoots with Clarence. Thinks they mighta been rustlin' them cows across the border from Canada.

COREY

Guess it don't matter now what they was doin seein' as they're both dead.

PLANT MANAGER

Well, no. I guess it don't. I guess it don't. Well, anyways, I was just comin' down to see if either of you remembered anything else about that lot now that you had the weekend to think on it.

ALEX

I remember they squealed when we slit their throats. Oh, and they bled real good too. Buckets...

COREY

That ain't necessary, Alex. We don't recall anything unusual, Mr. Evans. We'll let you know if anything springs to mind.

PLANT MANAGER

Well, alright then. You do that. I'll let you fellas get back to work now.

The USDA Inspector enters the floor. His head bandage has been replaced by a smaller band-aid. The manager exits.

PLANT MANAGER (CONT'D)

(as he walks away)
Mornin', Phil. Lookin' good.

FADE TO:

INT. CRISWELL MEATWORKS / BREAK ROOM - DAY

Corey sips his coffee in front of the vending machine. Alex joins him.

ALEX

You think those cowboys got stitched for rustling cattle or for losing fifty pounds of dope?

COREY

I'd say it was a bit of both.

ALEX

Maybe you're right, then. Maybe we should ditch the shit or at least lay low for a bit. I don't really feel like dying and shit.

Corey pulls the cell phone out of his pocket and shows it to Alex.

COREY

Might be too late.

ALEX

I ain't feelin' you, bro.

COREY

I found a guy down in Kalispell. If this phone rings, we got a deal. You still in?

Alex smokes silently for A LONG MOMENT. He looks like he might back out. Then-

ALEX

Shit, I'm just playin'. Course I'm in, dog... Shit. Show me some love.

Alex offers a fist. Corey "bumps" it.

INT. COREY'S HOUSE / LIVING ROOM - DUSK

Corey, Dale & Grandpa eat supper in silence. Corey has the cell phone right next to his plate.

EXT. COREY'S HOUSE - DUSK

The air is still as Corey exits the back of the house, walking about 50 yards back to a small creek that separates the property from the forest. Next to the creek are two small, modest HEADSTONES. Corey squats down and neatens the area around the graves before taking a seat on a small bench.

He enjoys a moment of quiet reflection before AN ANT crawls across his hand. He looks down as a few more ants crawl across his boot, drawing his gaze to A SMALL ANTHILL.

Corey swipes his boot across the anthill causing THOUSANDS OF ANTS to swarm to the surface.

FADE TO:

EXT. IDYLIC MOUNTAINTOP PASTURE - DUSK

PUNK TEENAGERS funnel out of the underground bunker with A CACHE OF WEAPONS, loading them onto ATVs as the sun sets behind the mountaintops.

INT. COREY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Corey enters through the back door, taking extra care to lock the door behind him. He takes a moment to look at the kitchen walls, still charred from the fire.

IN THE LIVING ROOM-

Corey finds Dale and Grandpa asleep in front of the television. He quietly grabs his keys and leaves through the front door.

EXT. LIZ'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Corey sits in his truck and watches as PAUL, pure white trash, eats dinner with Liz and Hunter.

Paul starts to become agitated. He and Liz are arguing. He grabs his dinner plate and flings it against the wall.

Corey sits bolt upright in the truck.

Paul reaches out and grabs Liz by the hair.

Corey is out of his truck and moving quickly towards the house. He tries the front door. It's unlocked. He walks quickly inside.

INT. LIZ'S HOUSE / DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Paul still has Liz by the hair as he screams in her face.

PAUL
YOU STUPID FU -

Corey moves directly toward them and pulls Paul away from Liz. Paul turns, shocked to see Corey there.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Speak of the devil. What the fuck
are you doing in my house soldier
boy?

COREY
Just settle down.

Paul lunges at Corey. Corey is easily able to deflect Paul's intended blow. He flips him around, pushing him against the wall with his arm behind his back.

LIZ
STOP!

PAUL
LET ME GO!

COREY
You gonna relax?

PAUL
LET ME THE FUCK GO!

LIZ
Corey please.

COREY
Alright. Don't do nothin' stupid
now.

Corey releases Paul who immediately lunges at him again. Corey drops him to his knees with a hard right hook to the gut. He's about to deliver another punch when he's halted by the sight of Hunter at the table. The boy is ashen faced and terrified.

Corey grabs Paul by the shirt and drags him down the hallway. He pushes him out the front door.

FRONT YARD -

Paul stumbles backward.

COREY (CONT'D)
Go somewhere and get yourself
calmed down.

PAUL
I'll see you later, soldier boy.

He starts to walk away. He turns back to Corey.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Tell her I'll see her too.

He turns and starts walking again. This time Corey is on top of him in a flash. He slams him against the hood of his pickup truck, his arm pinned behind his back.

COREY
(snarling)
You ever put your hand on her again
and I'll snap your fuckin arm. You
understand me?

PAUL
FUCK YOU!

Corey pushes Paul's pinned arm upwards, hard.

COREY
UNDERSTAND?

PAUL
FUCK! YES! YES!

Corey releases him and watches as Paul scrambles towards his pickup truck, gets in and drives away.

INT. LIZ'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Corey enters the house as Liz comes down the stairs.

COREY
Are you okay?

LIZ
I'll be fine. I was just putting
Hunter to bed.

COREY
How is he?

LIZ
He's pretty shook up.

Corey nods grimly.

LIZ (CONT'D)
What were you doin here anyway?

COREY
I was... I...

Corey doesn't know what to say.

LIZ
It's okay. Thank you was what I
was trying to say.

She pulls him towards her for a hug and suddenly they locked
in a fiercely passionate kiss.

INT. LIZ'S HOUSE / BEDROOM - NIGHT

The couple lie naked underneath a thin sheet. Liz has her
head on Corey's chest, enveloped in his arms.

COREY
You ever feel like you can't stop
doin' some things even though you
know they're wrong?

LIZ
Maybe... You talking about this?
Because this is a mistake I
wouldn't mind making again.

She snuggles up to Corey and kisses him. Corey smiles at
her.

COREY

No. I definitely ain't talkin
about this. I don't got that voice
in my head telling me it's wrong.

Corey taps himself on the head with his index finger. She
laughs wryly.

LIZ

I hear that voice all the damn
time.

COREY

It just seems like some things you
always end up doing. You do one
thing thinking it's different and
then you realize you're just doing
the same thing all over again just
in a different way... I don't know.

She becomes pensive, turning her head away. Corey, concerned,
reaches over and strokes her hair.

COREY (CONT'D)

Hey. Don't mind me. I'm just
talkin'.

LIZ

No no. It's not that. It's...

They lie there silently for a moment. Corey watches her,
concerned. Finally...

LIZ (CONT'D)

Corey?

COREY

Yeah?

LIZ

I need to tell you something but
you need to promise not to get mad
at me.

COREY

(worried)
What is it?

She takes a deep breath, steels herself.

LIZ

Hunter isn't Paul's boy... He's
yours.

Corey isn't angry. He's completely bowled over by the news. He lies there silently, too shocked to speak. Liz waits nervously for his response.

COREY'S CELL PHONE BEGINS TO RING.

At first Corey doesn't know what it is. He looks around in confusion before the realization hits.

He jumps out of bed and grabs the phone. Pulling on his pants, he starts to exit the room, phone in hand.

LIZ (CONT'D)

Corey?

COREY

I'm sorry. It's about Pop. I'll be right back.

EXT. LIZ'S HOUSE / FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

Corey stands on the front porch wearing only a pair of pants.

COREY

Saturday? Yeah. That'll work.
Where should we meet you?...
Fine... Yeah. I heard you. Call
when I get to the gate.

INT. LIZ'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Corey enters the room and places the cell phone on the dresser. Liz watches him from the bed.

LIZ

You finally pay your phone bill?

COREY

I gotta be in touch with the person
I got lookin' after Pop.

She examines his face.

LIZ

You're not mad?

Corey laughs.

COREY

Nah... I don't know what I am
right now, but mad ain't it.

He sits on the bed, takes her hand.

COREY (CONT'D)
I'm worried about you two here.

LIZ
Don't be. He'll come back here
begging me to forgive him. He
always does. What about you?

COREY
I'm fine. I just got some good
news.

She smiles at him. He leans in and kisses her.

COREY (CONT'D)
I love you.

LIZ
I... I need some time to think
about everything that's happened.
Can you give me some time?

COREY
Sure. We got time.

INT. CRISWELL MEATWORKS / KILLING FLOOR - DAY

Corey and Alex are hard at work on the line. Corey mops bloody matter from the floor as Alex finishes gutting the last animal on the line.

THE BELL SOUNDS and the conveyor belt stops. Corey flicks his goggles on top of his head. He shares a nervous look with Alex.

I/E. COREY'S TRUCK / FAST FOOD PARKING LOT - DAY

Corey and Alex sit in the parked truck. Corey has his eyes closed, his lips moving in silent prayer. Alex stares at him, confused. Corey opens his eyes.

COREY
Ready?

Alex takes a deep breath. He looks out the front window of the truck, unsure.

COREY (CONT'D)
Hey. You ready?

ALEX
 Fuck it. Let's do it.

Corey grabs the duffel bag and they both exit the truck. Corey slings the duffel over his shoulder as they begin walking.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 What was that all about before? In the truck?

COREY
 Prayin'.

ALEX
 I didn't know you were religious, bro.

COREY
 I ain't usually.

EXT. PELLET'S COMPOUND / ACROSS THE STREET - DAY

FIVE of the PUNK TEENAGERS FROM THE BUNKER watch Pellet's compound from inside a DARK SUV.

INSIDE THE SUV-

The Punk in the driver's seat holds a FULL METH PIPE. He places it to his lips, lights the contents and inhales.

His pupils almost disappear as he releases the meth smoke. He passes the pipe to the punk in the passenger seat.

PUNK #1
 Gotta get right.

AT THE COMPOUND GATE -

Alex fidgets nervously as Corey dials a number into his cell phone.

INSIDE THE SUV -

The Punks, tweaked out from the meth, are watching Corey and Alex. Corey's voice can be heard from a hand-held transmitter in the driver's lap.

COREY
 (on the transmitter)
 We're here.

PUNK #1

That's them.

AT THE GATE -

A slot slides open in the doorway. A DARK PAIR OF EYES peers through the hole at Corey and Alex.

COREY

We're here to see Pellet.

The slot closes and they hear the sound of something being dragged along the ground. The door rolls open slowly to reveal a ragged, unkempt, EERILY SILENT BOY of about seven. Beside him is the small step-stool he used to reach the peep hole.

The gate begins to close behind Corey and Alex as they step inside. The child turns and starts walking.

INSIDE THE COMPOUND -

Corey, quickly and surreptitiously, slides a piece of rusty pipe with his foot onto the door track. It wedges against the jam, preventing the door from closing completely.

Corey and Alex follow the boy through the junk-filled interior courtyard. STRAY MONGREL DOGS stalk menacingly around the dirt lot.

As they approach the door, they pass ANOTHER CHILD sitting naked in a kiddie pool partially filled with murky water. AN OLD HOUND DOG stands by the pool watching them. The dog casually lifts its leg and urinates directly into the water. The boy in the pool doesn't react.

Corey locks eyes with the hound as they pass.

INT. PELLET'S HOUSE - DAY

Despite the daylight outside, the house is poorly lit and dark. Corey and Alex follow the boy down a hallway through the labyrinthine interior.

The boy stops outside a darkened room and points down the hallway. He enters the room where he joins THREE OTHER RAGGED CHILDREN on a filthy sofa. An old television flickers in the corner, providing the only illumination in the filthy, debris strewn area. A SMALL DOG rips at the sofa with its teeth. The children ignore him.

Corey and Alex appear almost bovine-like as they continue their progress down the narrow, chute-like hallway.

Corey sees QUICK FLASHES of the Iraqi dwelling. The bullet-riddled cinder block wall. He fights it off.

PELLET (O.S.)
You bring the shit?

Like a spider, Pellet moves slickly out of the shadows, snapping Corey back to reality. A flickering electric lantern on the wall barely illuminates Pellet's gaunt, corpse-like face.

Corey hoists the bag from his shoulder to show Pellet. Pellet moves toward Corey and Alex and frisks them quickly with his long, skeletal fingers.

PELLET (CONT'D)
Come on then.

He turns and starts walking. Corey and Alex follow him into the deeper, darker recesses of the house.

INT. PELLET'S COMPOUND / DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Corey and Alex follow Pellet into the room to find Pellet's wife sitting at the dining room table. An untouched plate of food sits on the table in front of her.

Pellet picks his plate up from the table and shovels the last few morsels of food into his mouth with his hands as Corey and Alex watch. He drops the empty plate on the table before reaching into his mouth and removing his food encrusted dentures. Ropes of drool dangle from the dentures as he hands them to his wife.

She takes the dentures and places them in her mouth. There's an AUDIBLE SQUELCH as she settles them into place. Alex fights down the urge to gag as she begins to eat.

PELLET
Alright. Give that bag here.

Corey is about to pass the duffel bag over when-

ALEX
Whoa. Hold up. Where's the money?
Put the money on the table first.

Pellet's eyes flash as he stares at Alex. The only sound in the room is Pellet's wife eating as Pellet takes a long moment to look Alex over.

He approaches him slowly, his tongue flicking over his TOOTHLESS GUMS.

He stops, his face inches from Alex's, his wild eyes darting as he studies Alex's features. He continues to lick and suck on his toothless gums.

PELLET

You a Prairie Nigger, boy?

Alex gives Pellet his best hard look but he's clearly intimidated.

ALEX

Where's the fucking money?

Like a dog, Pellet sniffs Alex.

PELLET

Okay. Let me give you an example.
Let's say I'm me and you're you...

There's an uncomfortable pause before PELLET PUNCHES ALEX HARD in the side of the face, sending him sprawling to the ground. Corey tenses but restrains himself. Alex, stunned, unsteadily rises to his feet.

Pellet's wife continues to eat.

PELLET (CONT'D)

There. That make more sense now,
Kemosabe?

Corey drops the duffel bag onto the table.

COREY

You made your point, Pellet.

Pellet's malevolent eyes turn to Corey, who coolly returns his look.

PELLET

Did I? I hope so. I hope you got
my point. But just in case...

He rips open his shirt, revealing a CRUDELY MADE EXPLOSIVE VEST. TWO ELECTRODES are taped to his bare chest.

PELLET (CONT'D)

I only trust family to work for me,
so this here's my personal
bodyguard. My heart stops and this
blows everything around me to shit.

Corey tenses when he sees the vest. He holds up his hands in a gesture of appeasement.

COREY

We're just here to do business.

PELLET

Alright. Let's see what you brung me.

Pellet reaches into the duffel and removes a heroin brick. He takes a GREASY STEAK KNIFE from his dinner plate and licks it clean before cutting open the brick of heroin.

Corey looks over at Alex as if to say "don't do anything stupid."

Pellet cooks a hit of heroin from the brick over a candle on the table. He fills a syringe.

PELLET (CONT'D)

Dennis!

A moment as Pellet waits for Dennis.

PELLET (CONT'D)

(louder)

DENNIS!

DENNIS, a gaunt sixteen year old, appears through the door to the dining room. He obediently approaches Pellet and stands in front of him.

Pellet takes the syringe and plunges it into Dennis's neck. He grabs Dennis by the face and looks carefully into his eyes for what seems like an eternity.

PELLET (CONT'D)

Is it good?

Dennis doesn't speak, but Pellet can tell by what he sees that the heroin is having the desired affect.

PELLET (CONT'D)

Oh yeah. It's good. It's real good. Back to your room now boy.

Dennis leaves the room.

PELLET (CONT'D)

Let's talk business.

Suddenly -

FOUR OF THE PUNK TEENAGERS from the SUV burst into the room. They are HEAVILY ARMED and FULLY TWEAKED OUT ON METH. Pellet's wife stops eating.

PUNK #2
PUT YOUR FUCKING HANDS IN THE AIR!
ALL YOU MOTHERFUCKERS PUT YOUR
FUCKING HANDS IN THE AIR!

Another one of the Punks grabs the duffel and looks inside. He nods to the others as he slings the bag over his shoulder.

PUNK #3
(to Pellet)
WHERE'S THE FUCKING MONEY?

Punk #3 points two pistols, one in each hand, at Pellet. Pellet looks at him, sucking his gums disdainfully.

PELLET
Fuck you.

The punk smashes Pellet above the eye with the butt of his gun, dropping him to his knees.

Alex tries to run for the door right as one of the Punks swings his assault rifle to face him. He immediately pulls the trigger.

A bullet RIPS THROUGH ALEX'S HEAD, splashing Corey's face with BLOOD AND BRAIN MATTER. Alex drops like a stone.

The LOUD PERCUSSION of the gunshot in the small room has left COREY'S EARS RINGING. He can barely hear the sound of the Punks yelling. He sways slightly and his VISION BLURS around the sickening sight of his dead friend on the ground. Everything appears to him like it's HAPPENING UNDER WATER.

Pellet, taking advantage of the chaos, grabs the steak knife from the table and plunges it into Punk #3's neck.

The room EXPLODES BACK INTO REAL TIME for Corey. Punk #3 has dropped his pistols and is flailing at the steak knife embedded in his neck.

The other Punks train their guns on Pellet. Pellet and his wife disappear in a HAIL OF GUNFIRE as Corey runs for the door.

One of the punks turns and is about to unload on the escaping Corey when...

PELLET'S VEST EXPLODES -

DARKNESS. THEN -

Corey awakens. He opens his eyes slowly. Smoke and fire everywhere.

He coughs out plaster dust and wipes debris from his eyes before he realizes one of the Punks is laying on top of him.

The punk comes to. He starts to scramble for A PISTOL a few feet away. Corey grabs him around the waist and pulls him back as the Punk kicks at him furiously.

Corey manages to scramble on top of the punk. He grabs him by the hair and smashes his head into the ground until he goes limp.

He stands and retrieves the pistol.

Coughing from the smoke, he begins to move down the hallway.

THE RAT-TAT-TAT OF MACHINE-GUN FIRE as bullets thud into the wall beside Corey. He ducks into a doorway as more bullets whiz by his head.

He leans slowly back out of the room to see one of the punks, eyes wild, charred and bloody, stalking down the hallway toward him, machine gun in hand.

The punk fires first. He misses as Corey steadies himself and pulls the trigger of the pistol, UNLOADING SEVERAL ROUNDS. The bullets strike the Punk in the chest and head before he disappears into a fog of smoke and blood spray.

In a crouching posture, Corey moves down the hallway backwards with his gun trained on the area the last Punk came from.

Behind him, another CHARRED, BLOODY PUNK APPEARS. The Punk raises his gun and is about to pull the trigger when -

BOOM!

Corey turns to see the punk drop to the ground with a giant hole in the middle of his chest. Dennis, Pellet's heroin test dummy, is standing behind the punk with a smoking shotgun. Corey locks eyes with Dennis and they both lower their guns. Corey moves past him, gingerly, down the hallway.

BULLETS SMASH into the wall beside him. One of the bullets CATCHES HIM IN THE SHOULDER. He spins to the ground, firing in the direction the bullets came from before...

CLICK! CLICK! CLICK!

His gun is empty.

MORE GUNFIRE forces Corey to scramble down another darkened, smoke filled hallway. It looks like a DEAD END. He's desperate now, blood is flowing from the wound in his arm.

He HEARS MORE GUNFIRE.

He backs toward the pitch black end of the hallway. He turns, scrabbling at something in the dark. Finally his hand finds A DOOR KNOB. He turns it and pushes open the door.

THROUGH THE DOOR -

The garage containing PELLET'S CARGO VAN. Corey enters the garage, smashes the passenger window and climbs into the van.

INT. PELLET'S COMPOUND / GARAGE - DAY

Punk #3 bursts through the door CARRYING DENNIS'S SHOTGUN. He's singed and charred, the steak knife Pellet buried in his neck still sticking out of him.

His face is twisted with rage as he moves toward the van with the shotgun raised. He can't see anything in the side mirror.

IN THE VAN -

Staying low in the cab, Corey has cracked the steering column open. He sparks two wires. The ENGINE RUMBLES to life. Corey throws the van into gear.

HE SLAMS THE GAS PEDAL DOWN WITH HIS HAND.

EXT. PELLET'S COMPOUND / GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

The van BURSTS THROUGH THE GARAGE DOOR into the street. It careens wildly before SMASHING INTO A PARKED CAR.

The punk exits the garage and PUMPS A ROUND from the shotgun into the back window of the van. He pulls the trigger again but the gun is empty.

He drops the gun to the ground before grabbing the handle of the steak knife in his neck and yanking it free. He runs toward the van wielding the knife.

The van suddenly peels out in reverse. It slams into the punk and SMASHES HIM against another parked car, killing him instantly. Pinned between two vehicles, the dead punk's head lolls sickly atop his crushed torso. His hand unclenches and he drops the bloody steak knife to the ground.

The transmission groans and the van takes off forward. The punk's body slides to the ground.

I/E. PELLET'S VAN / STREET - CONTINUOUS

Corey is now upright at the wheel of the van. He screeches around the first corner past THE LAST LIVING PUNK who's still waiting in the SUV outside the compound. The SUV takes off after Corey.

When Corey looks in the rearview to see the chasing SUV he notices in the reflection that Alex's brains still decorate his face. Disgusted, he tries to clean his face but only succeeds in smearing the remnants more.

He scans the road ahead nervously.

He sees QUICK FLASHES of the IRAQI DESERT as he drives a Humvee.

The SUV is managing to keep pace behind Corey. Corey skids around another corner, taking him off the main street and onto a road that leads into the wilderness.

Corey steps hard on the gas pedal. The SUV is right behind him. There's nothing but two-lane blacktop in front of them. Corey eyes the HUNGRY HORSE DAM off to his right.

AT THE DAM -

The two vehicles speed across the top of the dam.

As they near the end of the dam traverse, there's a steep bend in the road. Corey spins the wheel. He's traveling too fast to make the turn. The van slides off the road and down a steep embankment toward the river below.

Corey is thrown violently around the cab of the van as it careers wildly downhill through the overgrown terrain.

THEN -

THE VAN SMASHES into a concrete footing at the base of the dam. Corey is thrown violently forward. His head is rammed into the steering wheel, KNOCKING HIM UNCONSCIOUS.

SMASH CUT TO:

FLASHBACK-

I/E. IRAQI HOUSE / FALLUJAH VILLAGE - NIGHT

Corey rises IN A FOG as the bloody soldier pulls him back, revealing the fact that only the Sergeant's top half remains. His lower intestines have spilled onto the dirt floor of the dwelling.

BLOODY SOLDIER

He's done. C'mon.

Corey turns to see ANOTHER SOLDIER in the room with his gun trained on AN OLDER IRAQI WOMAN, her face streaked with tears.

IRAQI WOMAN

(in arabic)

No! Please! No!

The soldier pulls the trigger and the woman drops to the ground. He turns the gun on a SCREAMING CHILD kneeling beside the woman.

Corey couldn't be more disgusted. He storms out of the house.

IN THE STREET -

The bloody soldier follows him.

SOLDIER

The fuck you doin', Meagher?

Corey ignores him. He gets in THE HUMVEE parked outside, starts the engine and roars away into the Iraqi night.

SOLDIER (CONT'D)

(shouting)

HEY! COME BACK MEAGHER! WHAT THE
FUCK ARE YOU DOING?!

I/E. HUMVEE / IRAQI DESERT ROAD - NIGHT

Corey speeds along the dirt road in the Humvee.

His walkie-talkie crackles -

VOICE ON WALKIE

Meagher! Meagher answer your radio!
GET BACK HERE! THIS IS DESERTION!

SUDDENLY -

A HUGE EXPLOSION as A ROADSIDE IED is detonated. The Humvee flips and tumbles, engulfed in flames.

Corey drags himself out of the vehicle. HIS LEG HAS BEEN COMPLETELY SHREDED to a pulp. He collapses in the dirt.

SMASH CUT TO:

I/E. PELLET'S VAN / RIVER BANK - DAY

The dust has settled. Corey's head is still on the steering wheel. He slowly regains consciousness and realizes where he is. It's quiet now. He looks around the van and can't see anything outside.

He checks himself quickly. His arm is still bleeding from the bullet he took. He checks his head. He's bleeding from a gash but it's superficial.

THE VAN LURCHES FORWARD.

Corey tries to hit the brakes, but something prevents him. He looks down to see that HIS ANKLE HAS BEEN HANDCUFFED TO THE GAS PEDAL.

The van lurches again, closer to the roaring river.

OUTSIDE THE VAN -

The punk is using his SUV to push the van, with Corey inside, into the river. He backs the SUV up the embankment before slamming on the gas pedal and SMASHING THE SUV INTO THE BACK OF THE VAN.

The SUV digs in and maintains its traction as it pushes the van towards the river.

The van nose-dives into the rushing water. Water flows through the smashed out passenger window and the van begins to sink.

INSIDE THE VAN -

Corey struggles as the cab of the van rapidly fills with water.

Desperate, he reaches down and hikes up his pant leg, unlacing his combat boot and REVEALING A PROSTHETIC LEG.

He unhooks the leg from his body and wriggles free. He reaches back, grabbing the prosthesis around the ankle and engaging a QUICK-RELEASE that separates the leg from the foot, freeing it from the handcuffs.

The cab of the van is now completely submerged. Corey opens the metal cage door leading to the back of the van and crawls up and in. The water is now rising into the back of the van as it sinks deeper into the river.

Corey can't reach the back doors of the van above him. He treads water as the level rises and the gap closes toward the square of light above.

Corey realizes that there are HUNDRED-DOLLAR BILLS floating in the water around him. The money is coming from DOZENS OF LAUNDRY BAGS just like the one he saw Pellet collect at the Good Knight Inn.

He pulls one of the bags open. It's FILLED WITH MONEY. He tries another bag. Same result.

He's now only a foot away from the smashed out back window, bathed in the sunlight that pours through the opening. He puts his prosthesis in one of the bags and collects as many of the other bags as he can carry before slipping through the makeshift exit.

RIVER SURFACE -

Corey gasps and struggles in the strong current as the van disappears beneath the surface of the water. In the distance, the Punk's SUV speeds away across the dam.

RIVER BANK -

Down river, a ONE-LEGGED COREY scrambles ashore with SIX LAUNDRY BAGS in tow. Exhausted, he collapses on the muddy river bank.

EXT. PELLET'S COMPOUND - DUSK

A bloody, bruised Corey drives by slowly in his pickup truck.

The area is hectic with activity. Police cars, ambulances and EMERGENCY PERSONNEL are everywhere. BODY BAGS decorate the sidewalk.

One of the CHILDREN FROM THE COMPOUND sits on the sidewalk, being tended to by A PARAMEDIC. Corey locks eyes with the child. Corey holds the look as he continues driving, the light from the police cars finally obscuring his view.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MILES OF MATTRESSES - MORNING

The strip-mall MATTRESS EMPORIUM sits opposite a Canadian Tire automotive center.

INT. MILES OF MATTRESSES - MORNING

A RED GUMBALL LIGHT rotates atop an in-store display. MUZAK plays as SHOPPERS test mattresses in the VAST SHOWROOM.

ALAN (O.S.)

Now, this is one of my favorites.
It employs space-age technology in
its coil design. You won't get a
better night's sleep anywhere else.

Alan Ward, dressed in a polo shirt and name tag, wears a big smile as he sells a mattress to a YOUNG COUPLE.

ALAN (CONT'D)

Go ahead. Sit on it. Heck, lay on
it! Tell me what you think.

The couple lays down awkwardly on the mattress as Alan's CELL PHONE begins to ring in his pocket.

ALAN (CONT'D)

That's nice, eh?

Alan silences his phone.

ALAN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry about that. I thought I
had it on vibrate. Now, if you like
it, I could have you two sleeping
on it tonight. I'll even waive the
delivery fees. How's that sound?

The PA SYSTEM crackles

VOICE ON PA SYSTEM

Alan, you have a call on line two.
Alan line two.

Alan looks up at the ceiling-mounted speaker, his expression shifts briefly, then-

ALAN

I'm awfully sorry, but I have a
call. I'll be right back. Can I
bring either of you a cold pop or a
bottled water? It's on the house.

INT. WAREHOUSE - MORNING

In the back of the warehouse, Alan lifts the handset on the same wall-mounted phone he used earlier. His expression has darkened considerably.

ALAN
 (into the phone)
 I told you... if I don't answer,
 I'm busy. What is it?
 (he listens)
 Okay. I'll take care of it.

CUT TO:

AIRPORT-

TICKET CLERK
 There you go, Mr. Matthews.

RENTAL CAR COUNTER-

RENTAL CAR CLERK
 Here are the keys, Mr. Stevens.

MOTEL CHECK-IN-

MOTEL CLERK
 You'll be in room 109, Mr. Clark.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Alan sits on the bed and tests the springs. He lifts the bedspread to read the tag on the mattress. He applies his fake mustache and turns on the television.

A HUNTING PROGRAM plays on the TV. Alan turns the volume louder, louder, louder, LOUDER-

INT. COREY'S HOUSE / LIVING ROOM - DAY

The SAME HUNTING PROGRAM plays on the TV. Dale is asleep on the couch. Corey appears in the doorway. He's cleaned up and the cut on his forehead has scabbed over. He hops to the table where he sits and attaches his prosthetic leg.

Leg attached, Corey turns off the TV, then wakes Dale. Dale pops up urgently.

DALE
(disoriented)
What day is it?!

COREY
Sunday.

DALE
(immense relief)
Oh good!

Dale rolls back over, facing the back of the couch.

COREY
(to Dale's back)
I'm takin' Pop over to the rest
home. They're gonna size him up.
See what sorta help he's gonna need
here at the house.

Dale doesn't respond.

COREY (CONT'D)
(to Dale's back)
Guess I won't be needing your help
around here no more.

Still nothing from Dale.

COREY (CONT'D)
I can give you a bit of walkin'
around money. Get you started
anyways.

Still nothing. Corey stands and fishes his keys out of his coat pocket. THE DISPOSABLE CELL PHONE falls to the floor with a clatter. Corey picks it up and looks at it. He cracks it in half, removes the battery and throws the whole mess into the wastebasket.

COREY (CONT'D)
Okay Pop, you ready?

Grandpa is propped up in a chair by the door. Corey has dressed him in a nice suit and combed his hair, but his face is still twisted into a confused grimace.

EXT. COREY'S HOUSE - DAY

Corey has Grandpa loaded into the truck. He starts the engine and drives away. The house is basked in beautiful light.

I/E. COREY'S TRUCK / RURAL ROAD

Corey points out familiar sights as he drives.

COREY

Look Pop. You remember that spot?
That's where you taught me how to
fish when I was just a pup.

Grandpa can only muster a LOW GROAN.

EXT. COREY'S HOUSE - DAY

The house looks like an oil painting, framed against the surrounding forest. Alan Ward appears in the driveway carrying a briefcase. He looks up at the house, then walks casually up to the door and knocks. Nothing.

Alan looks around. Nothing but forest. He turns the knob. The door opens.

I/E. COREY'S TRUCK / RURAL ROAD

Corey tries to engage Grandpa.

COREY

There's the Miller's old place. You
remember Gus? From the lumber yard?
Didn't he fix you up with Memaw?
Used to say he did...

Grandpa's eyes are distant and watery.

INT. COREY'S HOUSE / LIVING ROOM - DAY

Alan creeps into the living room and discovers a sleeping Dale on the couch, his head still buried in the back cushions... snoring.

Alan calmly sets the briefcase on the dining table and removes A SMALL PISTOL. He keeps it at his side as he approaches the couch, eyeing the remnants of the disposable cell phone in the wastebasket as he moves closer to Dale.

Placing the muzzle of the pistol against Dale's temple, Alan asks-

ALAN

Mr. Meagher?

Dale, groggy, twists his upper body to face Alan. Alan keeps the muzzle pressed firmly to Dale's forehead.

DALE

What?

ALAN

Corey Meagher?

Dale processes this for a moment, grasping the consequences of his answer. Then-

DALE

(solemnly)

Yeah. That's me.

EXT. NURSING HOME - DAY

Corey's truck pulls into the porte cochere and stops. A FEW RESIDENTS are seated in wheelchairs on the small patch of lawn.

IN THE TRUCK-

COREY

Okay, Pop. We're here.

Corey turns to face his Grandfather. The tension has left Grandpa's face. His eyes are still open, but he looks peaceful. Corey regards him for a moment. He strokes Grandpa's hair, then delicately closes his eyes.

OUTSIDE-

The truck pulls out of the porte cochere and drives away.

INT. COREY'S HOUSE - DAY

Corey enters carrying Grandpa's lifeless body. Dale's legs are still draped over the arm of the couch.

IN GRANDPA'S ROOM-

Corey lays Grandpa down on the bed, folding his arms naturally across his waist.

COREY

There you go. You're home now, Pop.

Grandpa, still dressed in a suit, looks more dignified than he has throughout.

IN THE LIVING ROOM-

Corey returns downstairs and leans against the door frame looking at Dale's legs.

COREY (CONT'D)
 (firm)
 Dale. Dale, get up. Pop died...
 Dale!

Frustrated, Corey approaches the couch. Grabbing Dale by the shoulder, Corey begins to shake him. Dale's head rotates slightly revealing a TIDY ENTRY WOUND... right between the eyes.

COREY (CONT'D)
 No...

Corey drops to his knees. The room turns around him. Photos of the family... Mom, Dad, Grandpa... Corey and Dale as little boys. Corey is defeated. He leans back against the wall staring in disbelief at his dead brother. His gaze settles on DALE'S LEGS, still draped over the arm of the couch.

CUT TO:

INT. COREY'S HOUSE / BATHROOM - DAY

Corey selects a prescription bottle from the medicine cabinet and swallows some pills. When he closes the cabinet door, the reflection reveals Dale's legs draped over the edge of the bathtub.

Corey approaches the bathtub. He's carrying a RECIPROCATING SAW and a WELDING TORCH. He sits on the edge of the tub and lights the torch, holding the bright blue flame to the saw's LONG SERRATED BLADE.

Once the blade has gone RED HOT, he pulls Dale's leg into his armpit like a wrestling hold, then slowly lowers the WHIRRING BLADE down onto Dale's lifeless limb, just below the knee.

Just as the blade is about to make contact, Corey releases the trigger and the blade stops. COREY CHOKES AND VOMITS onto the bathroom floor.

Composing himself, Corey again takes a firm hold of Dale's leg and reengages the saw.

FLASHBACK-

Corey is fireman-carried into a tent and flopped down onto a gurney by a member of his squad. MEDICS go to work on him. Muffled, distorted calls for TOOLS AND SUPPLIES. The word "AMPUTATE" floats by. A BONE SAW is raised, its diamond-sharp blade spinning at high RPMs.

Corey, still in shock, strains to watch as the spinning blade enters his MUTILATED LEG.

CUT TO:

INT. CRISWELL MEATWORKS / KILL FLOOR - DAY

Corey uses a bone saw to remove the hooves from a skinned carcass. He drops the hooves into THE GRINDER where they're CHEWED INTO PULP to be rendered down for cattle feed.

The Plant Manager enters and approaches Corey.

PLANT MANAGER

Looks like ol' Alex never turned up today. That right?

COREY

Haven't seen him.

PLANT MANAGER

Musta had one a them powwows out on the rez over the weekend. He's probably sleeping it off. I'm sure we'll see him tomorrow. Well, thanks for pickin' up the slack, son. You do good work.

Corey just nods. The QUITTING BELL sounds.

PLANT MANAGER (CONT'D)

Well, that's another day done. I'll see you bright and early. Goodnight, Corey.

COREY

(sheepish... guilty)
Night.

The manager exits, followed by the USDA Inspector. Corey looks up as Lupe climbs down from her perch. He's now ALL ALONE on the kill floor.

He walks to the bin where he and Alex hid the drugs. He pulls the bin out, reaches inside, and removes a PLASTIC-WRAPPED PACKAGE bound with duct tape.

Corey gives one last look around the facility before unwrapping the package and revealing DALE'S SEVERED LEG.

Corey steps on a pedal, engaging the grinder. He looks down at the large, interlocking STEEL BLADES as they churn, BITS OF BLOODY VISCERA still present from their last task.

With a heavy heart, he drops the leg into the grinder. He watches solemnly as THE LEG IS SWALLOWED UP by the churning blades.

IN THE LOCKER ROOM-

COREY PUNCHES OUT. His expression makes it clear that this is the last time he'll do this.

When he slides his timecard back into the rack, his focus shifts to the name on the timecard directly above his... ALEX PETTIGREW.

INT. COREY'S HOUSE / COREY'S ROOM - DUSK

Dale's body lies prone on Corey's bed. His leg has been neatly amputated and cauterized at the knee.

Corey enters and sits on the edge of the bed. He empties Dale's pockets, retrieving his wallet. He checks the I.D., then removes his own wallet and slides it into Dale's pocket.

Still sitting on the edge of the bed, Corey lifts his pant leg and REMOVES HIS PROSTHETIC LEG. He lovingly attaches the prosthesis to his dead brother's body.

He stands, hoisting a LARGE GASOLINE CAN, and spills some fuel around the bed.

EXT. COREY'S HOUSE - DUSK

Corey exits the storm cellar with a LARGE BACKPACK slung over his shoulder. He uses an OLD CANE to stabilize himself on one leg.

THE FLAMES have already begun to lick at the window frames of the house. BLACK SMOKE billows out.

Corey's pickup truck is still parked in its usual spot. He hobbles past it and INTO THE FOREST, where he SLOWLY DISAPPEARS FROM VIEW.

In the sky above, TWO TURKEY VULTURES circle above the trees as the sun sets over the distant mountaintops.

EXT. LIZ'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Liz arrives home with Hunter in tow, her arms loaded down with groceries. There's a LARGE, UNMARKED BOX on her doorstep.

INT. LIZ'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Liz gets Hunter situated, then hefts the VERY HEAVY BOX, dropping it onto the table. Using a kitchen knife, she cuts away the duct tape.

Cautiously curious, she slowly folds back the flaps to reveal the contents. SHE GASPS, startling Hunter.

LIZ
I'm sorry, baby.

Her eyes begin to well up with tears as she reaches into the box, lifting out HANDFULS AND HANDFULS OF CASH and piling it on the table in front of Hunter.

FADE OUT.

THE END.