

## GREAT FALLS

Written by

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OVER CREDITS:

**BIRD'S EYE VIEW**

A black vein of road.

Weaving through the autumnal flesh of the Montana countryside.

Moving along this vein is a solitary WHITE BLOOD CELL.

We PUSH IN SLOWLY and eventually see it's a SHERIFF'S CAR.

**A ROADSIDE SIGN**

NOW LEAVING GREAT FALLS

As the CAR ROARS by.

**GREASY SPOON DINER**

The Sheriff's car is parked in the unsealed parking lot out front.

A sign tells us the name of the place: SNAKE BITE DINER.

STAN (V.O.)

*Way I see it: a dog bites you, you  
put him down.*

**A COFFEE MAKER**

Dribbling into a pot.

A woman's hand reaches into frame and picks it up. Coffee sloshes over the edge.

We follow the pot as it moves through an unusual mix of patrons--

GRIZZLED RANCHERS. OFF-DUTY AIR FORCE PERSONNEL. HUNGOVER TEENS.

STAN (V.O.)

*Far as I know, there ain't never  
been a killer that got killed that  
killed again.*

The coffee is poured into a cup.

A large hairy hand enters the frame and picks it up.

STAN (V.O.)

*Thanks, Emma.*

PULL BACK TO REVEAL the owner of the hand:

SERGEANT STAN GITTANY (50s). Smiling at the waitress. He wears a tan Cascade County Sheriff Department uniform.

Everything about Stan is thick: his eyebrows, his neck, his accent, his wit.

He plows his fork through a plate of eggs and flashes a look at the Sheriff's car through the rain spattered window.

STAN

You don't agree?

REVERSE ON DEPUTY JOSIE DEUMANN (early 30s). Sitting opposite. Same uniform. Staring at Stan's eggs.

Doesn't smile much. Not much gives her cause to.

She leans in. Whispers:

JOSIE

I don't think we should be here. I told ya we shouldn't have stopped.

STAN

Hey, I ain't driving four hours on an empty stomach.

JOSIE

You coulda got drive-thru...

STAN

I didn't feel like drive-thru. I felt like the best omelette in Cascade County.

He takes a big slurp of coffee and wraps his wet lips around another forkful of eggs.

Josie rocks back in the booth, defeated. Stan waggles his fork at her.

STAN

You haven't answered my question.

JOSIE

What question's that?

STAN

The death penalty? You for it or against it?

JOSIE

Don't know. Don't have an opinion.

STAN

Everyone's got an opinion.

JOSIE  
Well, I don't.

STAN  
You don't think about it?

Josie shakes her head, looks over her shoulder. Paranoid.

STAN  
Know what I think? I think deep down you're against it. You're soft on these things. What with your daddy and then your brother--

A flash of anger in Josie's eyes warns him off this tack.

STAN  
What I'm sayin' is you don't understand what it's like from a victim perspective.

JOSIE  
I don't want to talk about this.

STAN  
Why not? Ain't a more plumb time than this.

He indicates the car parked outside.

STAN  
There's a man sitting in that car out there that's gonna die less than a week from now. And we're the ones taking him to where they're gonna do it. And you can't even muster an opinion on that?

Josie gazes out at the tinted windows of the car. Turns back to Stan.

JOSIE  
No.

She stands.

JOSIE  
I gotta go see a man about a dog.

She heads for a door by the counter marked "Bathroom".

Stan watches her go. Downs the dregs of his coffee and reaches for his hat. Drops some money on the table.

Waves to the waitress behind the counter as he pushes through the front door.

ANGLE ON the money Stan left behind and MATCH CUT TO:

**A DOLLAR BILL**

Lying on the closed lid of a toilet.

WIDER as Josie's places a blue Adderall pill on George Washington's portrait.

Folds the bill lengthways. Takes a lighter from her pocket. Crushes the pill into powder.

PRE-LAP: Heavy rain. A whip-crack of thunder shakes our bones as we CUT TO:

**CAR TIRES**

Tearing through the waterlogged roadway. Spewing a wake of opaque spray across the charcoal pavement.

BRRRRRRR. They run up on the rumble strip.

**INSIDE THE SHERIFF'S CAR**

A cocoon. Fogged windows. Purring engine. Thick rain pounds the windscreen. Wipers drone back-forth back-forth.

ANGLE ON STAN at the wheel. Squinting. Struggling to see through the downpour lashing window.

Josie looks over at him. We might not know it if we hadn't seen it, but she's a little high and wide-eyed.

JOSIE

You okay?

Stan returns a short, sharp nod.

BERNIE HOULE (40s) -- the condemned -- sits in the backseat behind a steel cage.

Chippewa Indian. Greying, patchy beard. Skin a waxy pallor. Like coffee with a little too much cream in it.

Hands cuffed in front, he rocks gently with the movements of the car. Staring straight ahead.

Josie turns to Bernie.

JOSIE

You hungry?

He doesn't answer. She reaches into her pocket and pushes a candy bar through a gap in the mesh.

Bernie hesitates then takes the candy with a nod of thanks.

STAN watches the interaction with revulsion.

STAN  
Shouldn't feed the animals, Deputy.

Josie rolls her eyes. Bernie leans forward, chewing.

BERNIE  
Don't appreciate that, sir.

Stan looks in the rearview.

STAN  
Yeah? What's that?

BERNIE  
Calling me an animal.

Stan hoots with laughter. Slapping the steering wheel.

STAN  
Don't appreciate it?!  
(to Josie)  
You hear that, Deputy? The  
murderer wants to give me some  
lessons on civility.

His eyes flash back to the rearview.

STAN  
You're in a cage, ain't you? Only  
thing I know that lives in a cage  
is an animal. You name me one  
decent person that lives in a cage  
and I'll apologize.

Pause.

BERNIE  
What about you?

STAN  
What about me?

JOSIE  
Sergeant, I don't--

STAN  
No, no. I want to hear what he has  
to say.

Pause.

STAN  
So come on. Let's hear it, Houle.

BERNIE  
Well... you been with the force,  
what? Near on thirty years?  
(MORE)

BERNIE (CONT'D)

Only advanced to Sergeant? That's gotta feel a little... restrictive.

Stan smiles a bitter grin, obviously stung.

STAN

You don't know what the hell you're talkin' about.

BERNIE

Then maybe you can set me straight on something. I heard that Sheriff Docherty started out as a rookie under you and ended up your boss in less than five years.

Stan twists in his seat.

STAN

That's a god damn lie. It took him ten. And that only happened cos his daddy was Sheriff back in the day. If I had the family connections he hadda I would've been made Sheriff a long time ago.

The car veers a little. ON JOSIE, looking concerned.

JOSIE

Sergeant, you best watch the road.

Stan rights the car and waves away her comment.

STAN

I am, I am.

BERNIE

Maybe that's true. But now you're fast pushin' in on sixty, got a couple of kids to put through college, still paying off a mortgage I bet and staring down the barrel of a retirement you can't afford--

Stan spins in his seat again. Locking eyes with Houle.

STAN

Listen here, you god damn piece of--

The car drifts again. BRRRRRRR. We hear the wheels crossing the rumble strip.

JOSIE

Sergeant!

Stan turns back in time to see a blur of red ahead and...

Josie reaches out and grabs hold of the wheel and...

Stan tries to wrench the wheel back but--

THUMP-CRACK! The windshield splinters into a spiderweb explosion of glass and blood.

Josie screams, covering her face as...

STAN'S FOOT jams down on the brake and...

### **THE SHERIFF'S CAR**

Skids along the shoulder. Spinning like a second hand.

Finally coming to rest angled to the road. Brakes steaming.

The lightbar across the roof has broken off. Hanging by frayed wires. Replaced by a mohawk smear of blood.

### **INSIDE THE SHERIFF'S CAR**

Josie breathes heavily. Hands still pressed across her eyes.

Stan frantically scans the rearview.

STAN

What the hell was that? Was that  
a deer?

BERNIE'S POV: Out the back window. A CRUMPLED FIGURE lies on the shoulder of the road. 200 feet behind them.

BERNIE

I... I don't think so...

ANGLE ON STAN. Fury rising. He glares at Josie. Yells:

STAN

Why'd you grab the god damn wheel?!

Josie shakes her head. No answer. He grabs his hat off the dashboard.

STAN

C'mon.

He steps out into the rain. Slamming the door behind him.

Josie watches him go. Meets Bernie's gaze in the backseat. Quickly averts her eyes and climbs out of the car.

### **THE ROADSIDE**

The rain continues to pour down.

Josie trots after Stan, zipping up her khaki jacket. Hair matted across her forehead.

JOSIE  
Sergeant!

He doesn't stop. Trudging glassy-eyed towards the inert form ahead. Dread increasing with each step.

He stops. Looks down at...

A MAN'S BODY. Face down. Covered in dirt abrasions and smears of blood.

Red goose-down puffer jacket. Hood covering his head. Legs bent and twisted like a withered oak.

Josie catches up. Freezes. Face twisted with horror.

JOSIE  
Oh, God...

Stan presses the back of his hand to his mouth. Kneels down and prods the man's shoulder. No reaction.

STAN  
Hey, mister..?

He reaches for the man's hood. Pulls it back, revealing...

The bottom half of the man's face is completely gone.

Chin to nose looks like a tomato that's been run across a cheese grater.

The dead man's crystal blue eyes are wide with terror.

Stan drops the hood back. Lurches off-balance to his feet. Backs off a couple of steps.

Josie breathes hard with panic. On the verge of throwing up.

As they stand there we pull up to the rain-filled sky and take in the entire scene:

THE BODY. Josie and Stan standing over it.

THE BLACK PAVEMENT ROAD.

TREES ARRAYED ALONG THE EDGE OF THE ROAD. Like an army awaiting the order to charge.

LONG ARCING SKID MARKS. Curving off the highway, across the shoulder of the road and finally leading us to...

THE SHERIFF'S CAR. The rain pounding down on it. Already washing away the blood from the roof.

**INSIDE THE SHERIFF'S CAR**

Bernie watches Stan and Josie standing stock still in the distance. A trickle of bloody water runs down back window.

His eyes mechanically scan the interior of the Sheriff's car. Wheels turning as we CUT BACK TO:

**THE ROADSIDE**

Josie is the first to break the silence.

JOSIE  
Sergeant...

Stan shakes his head. Eyes locked on the corpse.

STAN  
(defeated)  
Why'd you grab the wheel?

JOSIE  
I... I don't know. Sergeant, we need... we need to call this in.

Stan looks at her for the first time.

STAN  
You crazy..?

JOSIE  
It was an accident. We can explain--

STAN  
Yeah? And what about him?

He jerks his head toward the Sheriff's car.

JOSIE  
What about him?

STAN  
He'll be chirping like a bird as soon as he gets to Deer Lodge.

JOSIE  
About what?

STAN  
You don't get it, do ya? I wasn't watching the road. Jesus, I was half off it when I hit him!  
(points at the skid marks)  
A first-year rookie could look at this scene and know exactly how it went down.

(MORE)

STAN (CONT'D)

With him as a witness this is vehicular homicide. We'll get two years minimum for this.

Josie thinks for a moment.

JOSIE

He mightn't say nothing.

STAN

(laughing bitterly)

Like hell he won't. That sick bastard'd love nothing more than to see us swing for this. Two last victims for his ledger. Hell, they'll probably keep him alive another couple of years just for the trial.

Josie looks away from Stan and back to the body...

STAN

Jesus Christ, Josie. I've been on the force thirty-five years. Half those guys up in the county jail I put there myself! Two years? May as well be a death sentence! And for what? A mistake? Somethin' we didn't mean to do?

JOSIE

So what do we do?

Stan thinks. He looks back at the Sheriff's car in the distance. The body at his feet. The dark woods by the road.

STAN

We need to hide this.

JOSIE

Are you outta your mind?

STAN

You grabbed the wheel, Josie. You know you did. I mighta missed him.

Josie turns and faces him front on.

JOSIE

You saying this is my fault? You weren't watching the road!

STAN

I'm saying that you wanna call this in, then you should know that my version of events might not exactly line up with yours.

Josie narrows her eyes.

JOSIE  
What the hell're you talking about?

Stan moves towards her menacingly. She turns on her side as he snatches at her jacket pocket and pulls out...

THE BOTTLE OF ADDERALL. He thrusts it in her face.

STAN  
Didn't say nothing cos I knew how much you needed this job. But transporting a prisoner while high? Wouldn't look too good in a court of law.

Ashamed, Josie snatches the pill bottle back.

JOSIE  
You're one cold-blooded son of a bitch.

STAN  
It's not about cold blood. This is self-defense. I won't lose my pension and have June out on the street because of some accident. I got a family to protect. So do you, for that--

He stops. Looking back towards the Sheriff's car with horror. Josie turns and sees...

THE GLARE OF APPROACHING HEADLIGHTS.

Two miles down the road. The lights dip down over the crest and we see they belong to a LOGGING TRUCK.

STAN  
Fuck...

Stan springs into action. Grabbing the dead man by the shoulders of the jacket.

He lifts him and drags him a couple of feet. Then drops him down. Too heavy.

STAN  
Josie!

Josie's eyes oscillate between the BODY and the advancing TRUCK, gaining ground by the second.

STAN  
Josie! Help me!

Josie doesn't move. Stan drags the body a couple more feet. Slips on the wet ground. Falls onto his backside.

Suddenly, Josie is next to him. She grabs the man's legs.

JOSIE

C'mon...

Stan flashes her a look of gratitude. He climbs to his feet and again grabs hold of the dead man's jacket.

The two of them hobble back towards the Sheriff's car.

#### **INSIDE THE SHERIFF'S CAR**

Bernie watches them approach.

Stan lifts the trunk of the car, obscuring his view.

The car dips as a weight is deposited in the back.

Stan slams the trunk closed again. Shoots a glare of hatred at Bernie.

Bernie turns back and looks through the front windscreen. RACK FOCUS on the headlights, now less than a mile away.

#### **LOGGING TRUCK (WINDSCREEN POV)**

The DRIVER slows as he approaches the scene. Josie and Stan are partially obscured by the angled Sheriff's car.

#### **THE LOGGING TRUCK**

Slows to a crawl. Flashing its headlights.

Stan waves back. He turns to Josie, who stares into space, one hand still resting on the trunk.

STAN

Josie...

She doesn't answer. Guilt and paranoia washing over her.

STAN

Josie.

She looks up this time.

STAN

Let me do the talking.

**INSIDE THE LOGGING TRUCK**

The Driver rolls down his window as he pulls up alongside the damaged Sheriff's car.

DRIVER  
Y'all alright?

Stan approaches.

STAN  
Yeah, no problem. Just hit a god damn blacktail. Musta limped off.

The Driver scans the damage and lets out a low whistle.

DRIVER  
Shit. Clipped one of 'em myself only a week ago. One of the benefits of drivin' a bigger outfit.

Stan answers with a half-hearted chuckle.

DRIVER  
You need me to radio it in?

STAN  
No! I mean... nah, we're alright.

The Driver can't help but notice Stan's jumpiness.

He looks over at Josie, noticing her vacant expression.

DRIVER  
She alright?

STAN  
Hmm? Her? Yeah, she just ain't no good with blood.

DRIVER  
(laughing)  
Seems that'd be a pretty essential prequalification for an officer of the law.

STAN  
Well, she's kinda new. Only on her second year.  
(yelling, to Josie)  
You're alright, ain't you, Deputy?

Josie takes a moment to register the question.

JOSIE  
Sorry?

STAN  
Just a little shook up, huh?

JOSIE  
Uh, yeah, I'm fine... fine.

Suddenly, there's a large THUMP from inside the Sheriff's car. Blood drains from Josie's face.

THUMP. Her eyes move to the trunk, wide with panic. THUMP. She steps back, horrified. THUMP. But then realizes...

It's not the source of the noise...

#### **INSIDE THE SHERIFF'S CAR**

Bernie leans back and kicks at the door again.

BERNIE  
Help! Help me! Jesus Christ,  
they're crazy!

BACK TO:

#### **THE DRIVER**

Dips his head and stares at Bernie. Screaming and spitting and crazy-eyed. Breath misting the glass. Voice muffled.

DRIVER  
Shit, you got a fella in there?

STAN  
Ahh, yeah...

The Driver frowns at Bernie, bewildered.

DRIVER  
Jesus Christ... say, ain't that the  
dude who killed them Toohey folks?

Stan nods.

STAN  
Got that right. Taking him to Deer  
Lodge to meet his maker.

Repulsed, the Driver watches Bernie kick and scream.

DRIVER  
Question is, will his maker want to  
meet him?

Stan moves into his eyeline. Shoots him an embarrassed grin.

STAN

We best saddle up before he tears  
up our rig. Thanks for stopping.

DRIVER

No problem. Nice speakin' atcha .

He puts the truck into gear. Raises his hand in a wave.

Stan waves back. Josie doesn't.

We stay with the truck a while as it moves along. The Driver  
looks out the window at...

The faded streak of blood along the roadside. Almost washed  
away by the heavy rain...

He shakes his head and increases his speed.

#### **INSIDE THE SHERIFF'S CAR**

As Stan and Josie climb in and slam the doors shut.

A moment of silence. Each lost in their thoughts.

BERNIE

Are you people outta your god damn  
minds?

STAN

Shut your mouth! This'd never have  
happened if you'da quit needlin'  
me.

Stan turns to Josie.

STAN

We need to get rid of the body.

Josie speaks mechanically. Gazing at the empty road ahead.

JOSIE

We should never have moved him.

STAN

Well we did. And now we're in this  
whether you like it or not.

Josie turns to Stan.

JOSIE

We can still put him back.

Stan firmly shakes his head.

STAN  
They'll comb the car for evidence.  
(re: Bernie)  
They'll speak to this son of a  
bitch. They'll know.

BERNIE  
I won't say nothing. I swear.

Stan turns to him with a sneer.

STAN  
Excuse me if I don't exactly feel  
comfortable trusting my life to the  
word of a killer.

He turns back to Josie.

STAN  
All that's changed now is we've got  
an obstruction charge added onto  
the shitpile.

He tries to gauge her reaction. Leans forward. Places a  
hand on her shoulder. She flinches slightly.

STAN  
We can fix this, Josie.

JOSIE  
How?

Stan hesitates.

STAN  
Your brother still got that place  
up off Route 89?

JOSIE  
No! Hell no! We're not getting  
him mixed up in this.

STAN  
We got no choice. No one'll see us  
if we take the backroad out along  
Deep 'Crik. We need to hide the  
body. Clean up the car. Then we  
radio it in. Then it'll all be over.

JOSIE  
What about him?

Stan looks at Bernie.

STAN  
We can hide him too. Say he  
escaped in the confusion.

JOSIE  
Then what?

A long pause. Stan looks grim.

BERNIE  
Listen, I don't know what you--

Stan juts a fingers at him.

STAN  
I won't tell you again!

He turns back to Josie.

STAN  
We decide on that later. For now,  
getting rid of this dead fella is  
our first and only priority.

Josie considers this. Trapped. She reaches into her pocket. Pulls out the bottle of Adderall. No point in hiding it now.

Taps two pills into her palm and swallows them dry. Then turns to Stan and nods once. Barely perceptible.

Stan breathes a sigh of relief and starts the engine.

STAN  
We'll get through this alright,  
Josie. You'll see.

#### **THE BACK BUMPER OF THE SHERIFF'S CAR**

As it drives off with a spurt of exhaust smoke.

PRE-LAP: 60's GARAGE PUNK (The Ruins - "The End") blasts out.

WE PAN DOWN TO THE GREY-BLACK PAVEMENT AND SEE...

A CIRCULAR PATCH OF RUBY RED BLOOD. Battered by thick droplets of rain. The music continues as we MATCH CUT TO:

#### **GREY METAL**

A fine mist of red paint spatters onto it with a HISS.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL WE ARE IN AN...

AUTO REPAIR SHOP. Once a barn. Room for two cars at best. Chaotic piles of secondhand tools and rusted car parts.

A MECHANIC wearing a respirator and coveralls spraypaints a PICK-UP TRUCK, nodding along to the beat of the music.

We hear the scarcely audible sound of someone bashing on the garage door.

The Mechanic stops. Listens. Puts down the spray gun. Flicks off the old radio behind him.

This time the knocking is heard more clearly.

The Mechanic lifts the respirator revealing a handsome face marred somewhat by an unruly beard.

This is Josie's brother, KYLE DEUMANN (late 20s). He heads for the garage door. Pulls it up...

Josie stands outside.

KYLE

Josie?

JOSIE

Been banging for five minutes!

KYLE

Had the radio on.

Kyle's voice wades through the thick mud of a drug-addled adolescence.

Josie pushes him aside and waves the Sheriff's car in.

Kyle inspects the damage as it rolls in.

KYLE

Holy Jesus! What happened?

Josie flashes him a look and pulls down the garage door.

Stan emerges from the car. Closes the door behind him.

STAN

Kyle, how you doin'?

Kyle sees the worry etched on both their faces.

### **HANDS COVERED IN DRY RED PAINT**

Roll a cigarette.

WIDER REVEALS...

KYLE'S AUTO REPAIR SHOP. Isolated. Surrounded by a maze of disemboweled car chassis. One dirt road in and out.

Hand painted sign over the door: "Deumann Auto Repair"

Kyle sits on a pile of firewood. He runs his tongue along the edge of the rolling paper and lights his cigarette.

Josie stands nearby. Studying his face. Gauging his reaction.

JOSIE

We should never have come here. I shoulda never have put you in this position.

KYLE

You're my sister. You need help. That's the only position I'm in.

**A SPONGE WIPES AWAY BLOOD**

Stan wears Kyle's coveralls. He washes down trunk of the Sheriff's car with bucket of soapy water.

Kyle and Josie enter through the garage door. Pulls it closed behind them.

The BODY lies on the ground, covered by an oil-stained sheet.

STAN

Think I got it clean. Mostly. It'll still test positive if they run a luminol test, but it would anyway if it were a deer.

Kyle locks eyes with Bernie through the window of the car.

KYLE

So what's the plan?

Josie checks her watch.

JOSIE

They're expecting us in Deer Lodge in two hours.

STAN

Alright... we say we hit a deer. We pulled up. The back door wasn't secure. He got it open and made a run for it.

JOSIE

What about the truck driver?

STAN

He'll back up our story. He saw how crazy he was actin'. Then we say after Houle made a run for it we chased him down -- no time to radio it in -- we chased him down through the forest a while and then we... we shot him.

Josie shoots a glance at Bernie in the backseat, who can sense they are talking about them. She shakes her head.

JOSIE  
No... I can't do it.

STAN  
I'll do it.

JOSIE  
It's not right.

STAN  
He's gonna die anyway. What's the difference how it happens?

Kyle steps forward.

KYLE  
This is my shop, I think I got some say in this.

STAN  
So what you want to do?

KYLE  
Firstly, we ain't shooting nobody. Not yet. We just need a little time. See what they know about this dead fella. He coulda been some Unabomber-type, livin' wild. Maybe nobody'll be lookin' for him.

STAN  
(re: Bernie)  
That still don't fix our problem with him.

KYLE  
Maybe there's something we can do... I don't know... some way we can get him to keep quiet. Promise him something.

STAN  
He's supposed to be executed in a week! He's got nothing to lose.

KYLE  
Still, ain't no reason to rush into anything half-cocked. We gotta kill him, I'd rather do it later than sooner.

Stan and Josie think about it.

JOSIE  
He's right.

Stan concedes reluctantly with a nod.

KYLE

So where we gonna keep him?

STAN

We can't keep him here?

KYLE

This place ain't exactly habitable.

Stan gets an idea, reaches into his pocket. Pulls out a set of keys. Unhooks one.

STAN

Got a cabin outside Browning.  
Shouldn't take you more than forty  
minutes to get there.

KYLE

(taking the key)  
That'll work.

Stan nods. They all exchange glum looks. No turning back.

#### **ROWS OF TREES**

We speed by them. They form and break rank, revealing the distant horizon.

PULL BACK. We are...

INSIDE THE SHERIFF'S CAR. Josie grinds her hands together, trying to wipe away the sweat.

STAN

Five minutes out. You wanna call  
it in?

Josie nods. Reaches for the radio. Lifts the handset to her mouth. Takes a deep breath.

STAN

Josie. Wait.

She stops and looks over at him.

STAN

We should say that you were the one  
that left the door unsecured.

JOSIE

Me? Why me?

STAN

They'll never believe a veteran is  
gonna make a mistake like that.  
(MORE)

STAN (CONT'D)  
 (then, apologetically)  
 They'll just put it down to  
 inexperience.

Josie glares at him, trying to control her anger.

JOSIE  
 You should watch the road,  
 Sergeant.

PRE-LAP: The thunderous ROAR of a helicopter as we CUT TO:

### THE CLOUD-FILLED SKY

As a chopper carves across it. Panning down to...

### THE ROADSIDE

The same location where Stan and Josie hit the man.

Dozens of police personnel in high-visibility slickers swarm the surrounding forest.

SHERIFF TOM DOCHERTY (early 30s) scans the scene through narrowed eyes.

Short-cropped hair. Goatee, grey round the edges. He speaks carefully as though on a satellite delay.

He takes it all in. Absorbs it:

The skid marks. The damaged Sheriff's car. Shattered windscreen. Back door open wide. The vast expanse of wilderness beyond.

Like he's watching the whole thing play out before his eyes.

He turns to Stan and Josie. Waits.

STAN  
 I was the senior officer here, Tom.  
 No matter who did or didn't do  
 what, I take full responsibility  
 for what happened.

Docherty turns back to the forest. Looks up to the darkening sky. Almost dusk.

DOCHERTY  
 Well, he can't get too far. Colder  
 than a welldigger's ass out there.  
 Let's just hope he doesn't die  
 before we get to him.

Stan's relief is palpable. He recomposes himself as Docherty turns back to them.

DOCHERTY  
Josie... can I have a word?

He motions for her to follow.

Stan and Josie exchange a look. She trails the Sheriff down the road a dozen yards or so. He waits a good while to speak.

DOCHERTY  
You remember when we met back when we was curtain crawlers? First day of elementary?

Josie shakes her head.

DOCHERTY  
You told me that the paper from your notebook was edible. Made a' cornmeal you said.

Josie smiles at the memory.

JOSIE  
You ate two whole pages before you worked it out.

Docherty laughs, shaking his head.

DOCHERTY  
Nah, nah. Knew from the first that you were lying to me. Just trying to impress you, I guess. Kids can be dumb that way.

Josie reddens a little. Docherty suddenly becomes serious.

DOCHERTY  
But I ain't a kid no more.

The smile drops from Josie's face.

DOCHERTY  
You're lying to me, Josie.

JOSIE  
I, uh...

He moves forward. Nose inches from hers.

DOCHERTY  
You're lying, ain't you?

She's trapped. She hangs her head. A wisp of hair falls into her face.

DOCHERTY  
It was Stan that left that door unsecured, wasn't it?

She pushes the hair off her forehead. Relieved.

JOSIE

Uh... yeah. You're right. It was.

Docherty looks back towards Stan, who fidgets with paranoia. Pretending to avert his eyes.

DOCHERTY

That man is the fuck-up of all fuck-ups in the history of fuck-ups.

(turns back to Josie)

I'd take your badges but Lord knows I'll probably need every man and woman I got out there lookin' the coming days. For now you best go home. I'll deal with both of you in due course. You're dismissed.

Josie wavers. Turns away.

DOCHERTY

Josie.

She stops.

DOCHERTY

I stuck my neck out to get you this job. Despite your... family history. Don't feed me no paper.

Josie nods, trying hard not to burst into tears. She heads back past Stan, face flushed.

STAN

What'd he say?

She shakes her head and walks right by him and WE CUT TO:

#### **BERNIE'S HANDS**

Cuffed behind his back.

PULL BACK as Kyle escorts him up the steps of...

#### **STAN'S LOG CABIN**

Hand built by one man (not Stan) a long, long time ago.

The half-painted PICK-UP we saw in the auto repair shop parked nearby. Tarp covering the bed.

#### **THE FACE OF A GRANDFATHER CLOCK**

As it chimes six. We hear a door unlock. WIDEN TO REVEAL...

A ONE ROOM CABIN. Houle enters first. Kyle follows. They both survey the interior...

Dusty flotsam jettisoned from Stan's house over the decades:  
Grandfather clock, a little too loud.

Dining table, a little too large.

Burnt orange couch, burnt a little too orange.

Several hunting trophies (antlers only) adorn the walls.

Kyle leads Bernie past the black and charred fireplace to a cast iron cooking stove in the corner.

He reaches into his pocket and pulls out the handcuff key. Bernie looks at Kyle over his shoulder.

BERNIE

This ain't right and you know it.

Kyle pauses. Unsure how to respond.

KYLE

I don't think we should talk.

Kyle takes hold of the cuffs to unlock them and suddenly...

BERNIE SWINGS HIS HEAD BACK. Butting Kyle in the nose. He staggers backwards, groaning. Clutching at it.

Bernie runs for the door. Hands still cuffed, he has to turn around to reach the handle.

Kyle recovers. Gets to his feet as Bernie slips out the door.

#### **CABIN FRONT PORCH**

Bernie grabs hold of the door handle. Swings it closed.

Kyle grabs the handle on the other side. A tug of war. Bernie leans forward. Holding the door closed.

KYLE (O.S.)

*Let go! You got nowhere to run,  
you damn fool!*

Bernie's eyes frantically comb the landscape around the cabin. Nothing but ponderosa pines and the mountains beyond.

His grip slackens slightly and...

Kyle jerks the door free from his hands with a yank.

Bernie stumbles forward and lets out a yell of shock as he trips off the edge of the porch.

With no way to arrest his fall he lands heavily, face first in the mud. He lays still. Legs sprawled up the steps.

Kyle stares from the doorway. Face contorted with shock.

PRE-LAP: A HARANGUE OF VOICES assault our ears.

### **A PAIR OF MUDDY BOOTS**

Part a jostling sea of patent leather and designer pumps.

WIDER. The boots belong to Docherty and he's wading through a baying pack of journalists on the steps of the courthouse.

JOURNALIST #1

Is it true Bernie Houle has escaped?

JOURNALIST #2

Have the family of the victims been notified?

Docherty waves away their questions, pushing aside their microphones.

### **CASCADE COUNTY COURTHOUSE**

Docherty makes his way along the marbled hall. Ignoring the sideways glances from the courthouse staff.

PRIDDIS (O.S.)

*Docherty! Sheriff Docherty!*

Docherty glances over his shoulder and sees...

SCOTT PRIDDIS (late 30s) -- BERNIE HOULE'S LAWYER -- approaching. Stubborn, dogged and just about the worst thing you can be in Montana: Californian.

Docherty continues walking. Priddis two steps behind.

PRIDDIS

What the fuck is going on, Sheriff?

DOCHERTY

You'll know when I know.

PRIDDIS

You think this is going to stop my client's appeal process you're very much mistaken. Bernie Houle still has rights, whether you like it or not.

DOCHERTY

Knock yourself out.  
(turning back)  
(MORE)

DOCHERTY (CONT'D)  
And feel free to take that advice  
literally.

Docherty pushes through a door, leaving Priddis behind.

#### **AN OFFICE TELEPHONE**

Red lights blinking all over. People on hold.

SECRETARY (V.O.)  
*One moment, please.*

A SECRETARY replaces the receiver in the cradle and stands as Docherty enters, mumbling:

DOCHERTY  
God damn bunny huggers.

He points to the side office.

DOCHERTY  
She in there?

The Secretary nods.

SECRETARY  
Governor's office has been calling.

DOCHERTY  
Tell him I'm meeting with the  
victims' family.

Without stopping he moves into...

#### **DOCHERTY'S OFFICE**

Half-filled bookshelf. Locked gun cabinet. Desk and chairs.

LIZA TOOHEY (27) and her partner JOSH BEWICK (29) sit waiting. Staring at the rain through the window beyond.

Liza is rake thin and heavily pregnant. Whatever glow this imbued her with has been replaced by a burning fury.

Josh wears glasses and his best suit. Knee bouncing.

Liza notices Docherty enter and attempts to rise. Hand pressed across her swollen belly.

DOCHERTY  
Stay there, Liza, stay there.

Docherty gently places a hand on her shoulder. Knows her determination.

She looks up into the Sheriff's eyes. Softens a little when she sees his dejection.

LIZA

You remember Josh? My fiance?

Docherty nods. Shakes Josh's hand.

DOCHERTY

I seen you at the district court?

JOSH

I'm a clerk down there.

Liza isn't interested in any more small talk.

LIZA

How the hell could you let something like this happen, Tom?

Docherty leans on his desk. Addressing only Liza.

DOCHERTY

We were advised that a large contingent of protestors down in Deer Lodge were gonna attempt to block the transfer. I made the call that a smaller team would be less conspicuous.

JOSH

Well, clearly that was inadequate.

Josh withers under Docherty's glare. Docherty turns to Liza.

DOCHERTY

I've spoken to the commander out at the air force base and he's agreed to assign a hundred and fifty of his people to the search team.

LIZA

What if he dies out there?

DOCHERTY

Well, is that--?

Docherty stops himself. Ashamed. Liza knows exactly what he was going to say.

LIZA

You know how long I've been waiting, Sheriff? I was six years old when that man was sentenced. Twenty-one years.

(MORE)

LIZA (CONT'D)

Twenty-one years of appeals and processes and evidence hearings and petitions and administrative bullshit. I want this over.

Docherty absorbs this.

DOCHERTY

We'll find him. You have my word.

**BERNIE HOULE'S FACE**

Bloody, bruised, dirty. Eyes closed.

PULL BACK. Bernie is handcuffed to the stove in the cabin.

JOSIE, STAN AND KYLE loom over him. Stan holds two bags of groceries.

JOSIE

Jesus Christ, what'd you do to him?

KYLE

I told you, it wasn't my fault. He tried to run.

STAN

He asleep?

KYLE

He's been coming in and out of it a while.

JOSIE

You think he needs medical attention?

STAN

From who?

JOSIE

What about June?

STAN

I'm not getting her mixed up in this.

Stan carries the groceries over to the table.

STAN

This should do you for a couple of days.

Kyle turns around.

KYLE

Do me? Whatta you mean?

STAN  
("ain't it obvious?")  
You gotta stay with him.

KYLE  
Hell no I don't. I did what I said  
I'd do, but my part in this is over.

STAN  
Neither of us can afford to drop  
off the radar right now. It'll  
look suspicious. Josie, tell him.

Josie looks at Kyle, doubt in her eyes.

STAN  
You both need to look at the  
situation we're faced with here.  
We need to play it smart.  
(to Kyle)  
You're the one that can least  
afford for all this to come undone.  
You're on a third strike felony  
conviction. You can't spare a few  
days? What about 25 years in the  
state lockup?

Kyle chews his lip. Knows he is right but:

KYLE  
I can't spend the rest of my life  
babysitting this fella.

STAN  
Well, there we agree. So... we  
gotta figure out what the end game  
is here. What we're aiming at.  
What I'm sayin' is...

Stan grinds his palms together.

STAN  
What if we do it ourselves?

JOSIE  
Do what ourselves?

STAN  
What if we do it? Just like they  
were gonna do down in Deer Lodge.  
Same day. Same time. Same method.

JOSIE  
I'm not gonna kill him.

STAN  
I'm not talking about killing him.  
I'm talking about executing him.

Josie shakes her head, baffled.

JOSIE  
It's the same thing!

STAN  
No it ain't! He's guilty. That's his sentence. Hell, I went to school with the fella that's supposed to do it and he's thick as borrow pit gumbo. If we do it proper -- you know, by the book -- where's the difference between us doin' it and him doin' it?

JOSIE  
The difference is that we weren't gonna be the ones that did it!

She immediately realizes how cowardly this sounds. Tries a different tack:

JOSIE  
What about the family? Of the people he killed? Don't they deserve to know?

STAN  
Let's say this guy had killed someone with no family? Would they up and say "Well, there's no cause to punish him if there ain't no blood relatives around to witness it?" Justice ain't about vengeance. It's about punishment.

Josie turns away with frustration. Stan steps forward. Tries a conciliatory tone.

STAN  
Look, maybe we can... I don't know... send the family a letter a couple of years down the track when we're free and clear. Let them know what we did. Give 'em some peace of mind. Hell, I'll even take credit for it as long as June and the kids are taken care of.

Josie remains unconvinced. She looks at Kyle for support. None forthcoming.

KYLE  
We need to do something, Josie.

And, just like that, Josie is outvoted.

**STOREFRONTS - NIGHT**

We move along them at speed. Apart from the Cascade Food Bank most of them are boarded up or closing down.

PULL BACK to reveal Liza and Josh in their car. The latter at the wheel.

Liza watches her hometown slowly dying outside her window.

LIZA  
(without turning)  
S'pose you're happy, huh?

JOSH  
Sorry?

LIZA  
This's what you wanted right?

Josh cottons on.

JOSH  
I'm not going to talk to you when you're like this.

Liza turns to him.

LIZA  
"Woulda been better if he'd got life without parole". Ain't that what you said?

JOSH  
That was three years ago!

LIZA  
Doesn't matter when it was. That's what you said.

JOSH  
All I meant was that I wish you had some closure. All these appeals and the waiting and now this. Twenty years of stress and uncertainty. At least life would've meant life. Full stop. Period. The end. At least maybe then you woulda been able to move on.

Liza laughs bitterly.

LIZA  
Move on? Move on? Is that what you said?

JOSH

I know you're upset but that's no reason to take it out on me.

LIZA

You don't know what the hell you're talking about.

Long pause. He can't let it go.

JOSH

All I know is that in the five years I've worked at the courthouse there's been two exonerations on murder cases after the fact.

LIZA

So what're you saying? You think this motherfucker is innocent?

JOSH

No! Of course not! This... this's all been a little difficult for me...

LIZA

Difficult? Well it ain't been no picnic for me either.

Josh closes his eyes. A deep breath. Reaches out. Rests his hand on her belly. She lets him do it.

JOSH

I'm sorry, Liza. All I want is for you to be happy. If this is what it takes then I'm with you a hundred percent of the way.

**CLOSE ON A NOTEPAD**

Covered in indecipherable scrawl. Crude diagrams.

STAN

Uh-huh... then you flush the line with saline? So the witnesses don't see him until all the IV lines are hooked up?

ON STAN. Talking on the phone in his modest one-story home. A prominent crucifix adorns the wall above his head.

STAN

I don't know. After everything that's happened I guess I just wanted to satisfy my own curiosity.

REVERSE ON THE FRONT DOOR as Stan's wife JUNE (50) steps through it. She wears a nurse uniform.

Glimmers of a former Miss Montana sparkle beneath her weary surface. Like coins at the bottom of a fountain.

Stan turns away and murmurs into the phone.

STAN

I better go, June's just come in.

(pause)

Yeah, appreciate it. Nice speakin' atcha.

He hangs up. June stands over him, face etched with worry.

JUNE

Father Bryant called me and told me what happened. I was trying to reach you all afternoon.

STAN

I'm okay, I'm okay. Was helpin' with the search. They'll find him.

JUNE

(re: the phone call)

Who was that?

STAN

Uh, that was just Josie.

JUNE

You had dinner yet?

STAN

Not yet.

June moves into the next room. Flicks on the light. We see part of the kitchen but stay with Stan.

JUNE (O.S.)

*I tell you I was worried sick. What'll we tell the people at church? Should we ask them to pray, you think? For things to come out alright?*

Stan is distracted by the scribble on the notepad.

STAN

I dunno. Maybe. Say, you ever heard of somethin' called... pent-oh-bar-bit-al?

June reappears in the doorway.

JUNE

Pentobarbital? Sure. We use it on coma patients. Why you askin'?

STAN

Someone told me that's what they're gonna use on that Houle fella. Ain't that a little funny? They're gonna use medicine to do it.

June shrugs. Heads back into the kitchen.

HOLD ON STAN. Listening to his wife preparing dinner.

PRE-LAP: The sound of a plate SMASHING and we CUT TO:

**A LINOLEUM FLOOR**

As another dish is shattered into a million pieces on it.

JOSIE (O.S.)

*Ma?*

Josie enters the KITCHEN. Her AUNT MAGGIE stands in the opposite doorway watching on impassively.

Between them Josie's mom PAULA (65) snatches piles of tableware from the cupboards.

JOSIE

What the hell's goin on?

Aunt Maggie shrugs.

AUNT MAGGIE

I can't stop her.

JOSIE

Well you sure as hell could try.

Josie moves forward and touches her mother's arm.

JOSIE

Mom, what's going on?

PAULA

That bitch next door keeps swappin' out my dishes for fakes.

She holds up a plate inches from Josie's nose.

PAULA

Look at this: it's got seven fleur-de-lis and my dishes always, always had eight.

She hurls it onto the ground where it shatters. Josie jumps back to avoid the shrapnel.

Paula grabs another plate but Josie grabs hold of her wrist.

JOSIE  
Mom. Those are grandma's.

PAULA  
They're fake, I'm telling you.  
(points out the window)  
She's been sneakin' in here, trying  
to mess with me.

JOSIE  
I know. I know. You're right,  
okay? I'll get your dishes back.  
I'll go over there first thing  
tomorrow.

Paula hesitates. Josie takes the plate from her mom's hand.

JOSIE  
Why don't you go lie down for a  
little bit?

She guides her mother towards the door.

PAULA  
Alright... but I want the locks  
changed.

JOSIE  
I'll call a locksmith right now.

Paula nods, satisfied. Josie watches her disappear down the  
hall. Turns to her aunt. Sarcastically:

JOSIE  
Thanks for your help.

Josie grabs a broom from the corner and starts sweeping up  
the broken fragments.

AUNT MAGGIE  
She needs proper care.

JOSIE  
You offering to pay for it?

AUNT MAGGIE  
Honey, if I had money to spare you  
think I'd be living in Great Falls?  
This town is for people who can't  
afford to die in Florida. If  
you'da saved that money you got  
from selling your musical equipment  
instead of blowin' it all on Kyle--

JOSIE  
He needed that money for his  
business.

AUNT MAGGIE

Puh-lease. The only business  
Kyle's interested in is the meth-  
smokin' business.

JOSIE

(bitterly)

Well, I'm real sorry for imposin'  
on your busy schedule.

AUNT MAGGIE

Hey, you ain't the only one with a  
life, missy. I didn't exactly  
envisage spending my twilight years  
wiping my sister's rear end.

JOSIE

Well then I guess delusion runs in  
the family cos I could see it all  
coming down the turnpike the day  
dad died.

AUNT MAGGIE

Bully for you.

Maggie snatches her bag from the counter and heads out.

JOSIE

You comin' tomorrow?

AUNT MAGGIE (O.S.)

*I'll think about it.*

JOSIE

I got work.

No answer.

JOSIE

Aunt Maggie?

The front door shuts.

Josie snatches a plate from the pile and smashes it.

## **A SPADE**

Digs through hard, icy dirt.

PULL BACK. Kyle digs in the rectangle of light coming from  
the rear window of the cabin.

Hole about four foot deep. Pile of firewood adjacent.

**A HUMAN SHAPED FORM**

Wrapped in a tarp. Dragged along the ground.

Kyle rolls it into the hole. Begins to backfill it.

TIME CUT:

KYLE moves the firewood across to cover the hole. Piece by piece.

TIME CUT:

The grave is well concealed by the firewood.

Kyle inspects his handiwork. Wipes his brow.

He hears a groan from inside the cabin.

**THE CABIN DOOR OPENS**

Kyle enters. Groggy, Bernie watches him. Clocks his muddy shirt. His dirt-smearred hands.

Kyle averts his eyes and moves across the room.

Grabs a lukewarm beer from a grocery bag. Cracks it open. Takes a big swig. Rifles through the bag some more.

KYLE

You hungry?

Bernie is but won't admit it. Kyle pulls out a tin. Reads the label.

KYLE

Stewed steak casserole.

He shows Bernie. Walks over to the cupboard.

Takes out a pot and a spoon. Pulls the ring on the tin. Tips out the contents.

BERNIE

What're you gonna do to me?

Kyle hesitates. Moves towards Bernie.

KYLE

Nothing you didn't already have coming.

Kyle puts the pot on the stove. Opens the grill on front. The embers glow inside.

He opens the flue. The embers start to blaze.

Stirs the casserole as it heats. Watches Bernie. His bruises. The dry blood under his nose.

KYLE  
Sorry you got hurt.

Bernie looks up at him.

KYLE  
You shouldn'ta run.

Bernie looks away again.

Kyle digs into his pocket. Pulls out a deck of cards. Holds them up.

KYLE  
You know how to play poker?

Bernie looks up again. Holds his gaze as we CUT TO:

#### **A GLASS**

Five fingers of auburn liquid sloshes into it.

Sheriff Docherty -- out of uniform -- caps the bottle of whiskey. We're in his kitchen. It's not modern.

He moves across to a small portable CD player. Hits play.

The sound of a female country singer fills the room. Slow and melancholic.

The recording isn't perfect but her talent is undeniable.

Docherty picks a cracked CD jewel case off the counter and sits down at the table. Takes a gulp of whiskey.

CLOSE ON the CD COVER. A Kinko's job. Cut crooked. Faded paper:

A photo of Josie. Ten years younger. Sitting on a rundown fence. Laughing at something just out of frame.

Docherty stares at the picture. Half-smiling. Listening to Josie sing.

CLOSE ON his hand. Resting on his knee. The hand moves. Up his jeans. Towards his crotch.

He rubs himself. Real slow. Unzips his fly but...

A deep BUZZ stops him.

His hand moves across to his pocket. Pulls out a phone. Screen lit up. Incoming call. He answers.

DOCHERTY  
This's the Sheriff.

VOICE (V.O.)  
*Sheriff, it's Cormier. We, ah, we  
found something...*

Docherty zips himself up.

**A MAN'S HAND**

Moves across white sheets. It stops. Feels the cold.

WIDEN TO REVEAL JOSH. Alone in bed. Liza gone. He sits up.

**JOSH'S FEET**

Move down the staircase in the dark house.

JOSH  
Liza?

He continues into the...

**LIVING ROOM**

Very dark. Josh stands in the doorway. Sees a form in the darkness ahead. Reaches out and flicks on the light.

A WOMAN SCREAMS AND...

BANG! A SHOT rings out. Slamming into the wall next to Josh's head. He stumbles sideways, shielding his face.

REVERSE ON LIZA. Sitting in an armchair facing the door. Smoking rifle in her arms.

She puts the rifle down and races forward.

LIZA  
Jesus, Josh. I'm so sorry.

ON JOSH. Stunned. Trying to wipe grit from his eye.

JOSH  
What the hell is wrong with you!?

LIZA  
I thought heard a noise downstairs.  
I must've fallen asleep. You gave me  
a fright and... the gun went off.

JOSH  
The gun went off? You almost blew  
my fucking head off!

He moves over to the rifle and snatches it up. Expertly ejects the spent casing and makes the gun safe.

LIZA  
Josh, I'm sorry. Josh?

Josh doesn't answer. Heads for the back of the house.

LIZA  
What if he comes for us?

The question stops him in his tracks. He turns around.

JOSH  
No one's coming, Liza. This has gotta stop.

He's gone before she can respond.

### **HEADLIGHTS DANCE ACROSS PINES**

An isolated backroad. Docherty at the wheel.

POLICE FLASHERS strobe blue and red through the trees up ahead.

CORMIER (PRE-LAP)  
*Spoke to that truck driver who called in...*

### **CRIME SCENE**

Docherty and SERGEANT CORMIER duck under the yellow tape.

CORMIER  
Apparently Houle was causing one hell of a ruckus. Kicking at the doors. Screamin'. Actin' crazy.

Docherty nods. His eyes fixed on something ahead:

A CHEVROLET TRUCK. Distinctive lime green. Lit up by temporary floodlights.

Forensics comb the interior for evidence.

CORMIER  
Owner is Charlie Cameron out of Helena. Three-day hunting trip. Supposed to come home yesterday afternoon. His wife reported him missing a couple of hours ago.

Docherty runs his eye over the truck.

DOCHERTY  
Anything missing?

CORMIER  
All his camping equipment for  
starters. Gun too.

Docherty winces.

CORMIER  
He mighta been held up by the rain.

Docherty shakes his head.

CORMIER  
You think Houle got to him?

Docherty doesn't answer...

### **A PAIR OF CARDS**

Bullets.

KYLE (O.S.)  
*God damn it.*

KYLE and BERNIE sit at the table in the cabin playing poker.

The latter uncuffed. The former, five beers deep, mucks his hand with disgust.

KYLE  
How're you getting so many aces?

Bernie shrugs and rakes in his "chips"; pieces of paper torn from the grocery bag.

KYLE  
How much I owe you now?

BERNIE  
Make it out to be... hundred twenty  
or thereabouts.

KYLE  
Jesus! Need to go back to the bank.

Kyle starts tearing some more pieces from the tattered grocery bag.

KYLE  
Don't see what you're planning on  
doing with the money anyway.

BERNIE

Bad idea to play against a man with nothing to lose. Dead men don't bluff.

Kyle pauses, thoughtful. Starts dealing out another hand.

KYLE

That bother you? Dying?

Bernie considers the question as he checks his cards.

BERNIE

When I look at it from the outside then I know I probably deserve it. I just wish they did it back then.

Kyle lays out the flop.

KYLE

How do you mean?

Both men examine their cards.

BERNIE

Once found this magazine in the prison library. Article in it said that all the cells in our body replace themselves every seven years. Bet ten.

KYLE

Call.

Kyle deals the turn.

KYLE

That true?

BERNIE

Dunno. If it is... well, then that means this hand...

(raises his right hand)

This hand ain't the same one that held the knife that killed those people. Raise twenty-five.

KYLE

Call.

Kyle sets down the river card.

BERNIE

Who knows? Maybe it's a load of bullshit. I know one thing though...

(taps his temple)

(MORE)

BERNIE (CONT'D)

This ain't the same mind that  
thought to do it. That's the only  
shame in it. They give you time to  
change and then they kill you.

(beat)

I'm all in.

Kyle thinks a long time.

KYLE

I fold.

Bernie shows his cards. 2-7 off-suit. The worst hand in  
poker.

KYLE

Thought you said dead men don't  
bluff.

BERNIE

I ain't dead yet.

#### **A CLOCK RADIO**

Flicks to 7 A.M. The sound of a NEWS ANNOUNCER comes on mid-  
sentence.

NEWS ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

*--expanding the search area for  
escaped death row inmate Bernie  
Houle in the largest manhunt in  
Montana state history, with  
authorities across the state on  
high alert--*

A hand enters frame. Flicks off the radio.

WIDER. We're in Josie's BEDROOM. She gets out of bed. Pads  
over to the window and opens the curtains.

BRIGHT WHITE LIGHT spills into the room. Fresh snow covers  
the ground. The world remade anew.

#### **JOSIE'S LIVING ROOM**

Josie enters and sees...

Paula down on her hands and knees. Carefully running a wide-  
tooth comb through the fringes of the Persian rug.

JOSIE

Morning, Ma.

Paula looks up. Happy to see her daughter. No sign of the  
distress of the previous night.

PAULA  
Hi, sweetie!

She bends back down and combs some more. Tongue clamped between her lips with concentration.

JOSIE  
Snowed last night.

PAULA  
(not looking up)  
Did it?

Josie watches her mother a while. Something about the sight upsets her.

She moves forward. Drops to her knees in front of Paula. Takes her mother into her arms in a tight embrace.

Confused, Paula hugs her back half-heartedly.

PAULA  
Josie, you've gone and mussed up  
the tassels.

#### **OUTSIDE JOSIE'S HOUSE**

Dressed in her uniform, Josie emerges.

She steps over to to the edge of the porch, reaches up and plucks an icicle from the eaves.

She crunches down on it like a carrot. Chewing as she watches the neighborhood wake up.

A couple of laughing teens drive past "hooky bobbing" -- one of them hangs off the bumper and slides along the icy road.

#### **STAN'S CABIN**

Kyle and Bernie sit opposite each other eating a breakfast of leftover stew in silence.

Kyle seems sulky and hungover. Bernie watches him wolf down his food, which seems to bother Kyle even more.

BERNIE  
Can I ask you a question?

Kyle slams down his spoon. Face twisted with bitterness.

KYLE  
Let's get something straight first:  
I'm not your friend, alright?

Bernie nods, taken aback.

BERNIE

That's fine. Don't need a friend.

KYLE

Alright then...

Kyle goes back to eating but curiosity eventually gets the better of him:

KYLE

So what's your question?

Bernie hesitates.

BERNIE

You... you ever been in prison?

Kyle's reaction is answer enough.

BERNIE

You eat quick. And you protect your food.

Kyle looks down. His free arm forms a barricade around his bowl. He moves his arm away, self-conscious.

Looks up at Bernie. Anger melting slowly away.

KYLE

Six years. Down in Missoula.  
Stole rental cars under false IDs.  
Broke 'em down for parts. I  
needed... I had no choice...

Kyle trails off. Bernie leans forward.

BERNIE

You can talk to me, Kyle. I been there myself...

Kyle looks back up. Sees pity in Bernie's eyes and...

LEAPS TO HIS FEET. Bucking his chair half across the room.

He rounds the table and snatches Bernie by the collar.

KYLE

Get up! On your feet.

Kyle fishes the handcuffs from his pocket and drags Bernie over to the stove. Sits him down and cuffs him to it.

Grabs a handful of Bernie's hair and leans down:

KYLE

I'm not like you, you hear? You're  
a god damn murderer. I never hurt  
nobody.

He thumps Bernie's head back against the wall and stalks out of the cabin. SLAMMING the door behind him.

### DOCHERTY'S OFFICE

The Sheriff sits behind his desk.

DOCHERTY

The press are howling for blood and I can't exactly blame 'em. This is a biblical-size caddywampus.

JOSIE AND STAN sit opposite.

DOCHERTY

Sergeant, I know it was you that failed to secure that car door.

STAN

What?

DOCHERTY

There's no use denying it. Josie told me herself.

Stan flashes a look of anger at Josie.

DOCHERTY

Given your seniority and the fact that you didn't own up to your error I'm putting you on indefinite suspension pending the outcome of the Houle search.

STAN

Tom, this ain't fair. It was a mistake. It could've happened to anyone.

DOCHERTY

But it happened to you. I should warn you, when the dust settles you may find yourself without a job. I'm giving you a chance to get your affairs in order in the interim.

STAN

What about my pension?

DOCHERTY

That's not my concern nor purview.

Stan jumps to his feet.

STAN

This is a god damn witchhunt. I'm bein' made a scapegoat here.

DOCHERTY  
You're dismissed, Sergeant. Be  
sure to leave your gear at the  
quartermaster's office.

Stan storms out. Josie starts to rise but--

DOCHERTY  
Josie, wait a moment. I want to  
talk to you.

Josie sits back down. Docherty stands. Rounds the desk.

DOCHERTY  
You know this coulda all been a lot  
worse for you.

JOSIE  
I know. I appreciate it, Tom.

Docherty moves behind Josie.

DOCHERTY  
Do you?

JOSIE  
Of course.

Docherty places a hand on her shoulder.

DOCHERTY  
How you gonna show it?

Josie turns around in her seat.

JOSIE  
Pardon?

DOCHERTY  
Your appreciation. How you gonna  
show it?

Josie gets to her feet. Puts the chair between them.

JOSIE  
Listen... ah, Tom... with Momma  
sick and all I'm not really ready  
to start up anything new...

Docherty grinds his teeth. Barely able to contain his fury.

DOCHERTY  
You know what, Josie--?

Before he can finish he is interrupted by the sound of raised  
voices in the adjacent office.

The office door swings open and Priddis (Bernie's lawyer) storms in waving a piece of paper. Docherty's Secretary follows a few steps behind.

SECRETARY

I told you he's in a meeting.

The defense attorney slaps the piece of paper on Sheriff's desk. Docherty looks down at it.

DOCHERTY

What is it?

PRIDDIS

Stay order. Bernie Houle's execution has been suspended.

Josie tries to mask her stunned reaction.

PRIDDIS

I want this circulated to every one of your trigger-happy deputies. Hunting season is over.

DOCHERTY

We have no intention of killing Bernie Houle, Mr. Priddis. Our only intention is to find him and turn him over to prison authorities.

PRIDDIS

You can't tell me those boys you got tramping around out there in the snow wouldn't love an excuse to cut out the middle man?

DOCHERTY

No one wants to see Houle dead more than me. But I'm a man of the law and I intend to go about it right.  
(to Josie and Priddis)  
You both know where the door is.

### HOSPITAL CORRIDOR

Stan walks along. In one hand he holds a bouquet of two dozen roses, wrapped in cellophane.

In the other swings a maroon sports bag marked "GREAT FALLS SKEET CLUB".

He approaches the reception counter where June searches through the patient files.

Stan winks at the RECEPTIONIST, holding a finger to his lips. She smiles, nods. He knocks on the counter.

STAN

Excuse me, madam. Got an arrest warrant here for June Gittany.

June turns around, shocked. Sees Stan. Starts to laugh.

STAN

Charge is being the most beautiful woman in the county.

The Receptionist swoons. June approaches him.

JUNE

Stan? What on god's green earth are you doing here?

STAN

I've come to take you out to lunch.

RECEPTIONIST

(re: the flowers)  
They're beautiful!

June, slightly baffled.

JUNE

Honey, my break isn't for another half an hour.

STAN

(checks his watch)  
Oh, really? Darn it. Musta got my times mixed up.

RECEPTIONIST

(to June)  
I'm sure if you ask Sue she'll let you off early.

JUNE

Not if you seen the mood she's in.

STAN

Tell you what. I'll go for a little wander and come back in half an hour.

JUNE

You sure?

STAN

No problem.

He blows June a kiss and strolls back down the hall.

RECEPTIONIST

He's one hell of a man.

JUNE  
(thoughtful)  
Yes he is.

#### **A POCKET KNIFE PROBES A LOCK**

Stan has the roses jammed under the crook of his arm. Petals rain onto the floor.

He forces the lock open. Enters a closet. Closes the door marked AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY behind him.

#### **INSIDE THE CLOSET**

Medicine cabinets filled with supplies. Stan scans the shelves. Moving along them methodically.

Snatching up hypodermic needles, empty IV bags. Shoving them into his bag.

#### **HOSPITAL CORRIDOR**

June checks the rooms as she passes. Checks her watch.

#### **INSIDE THE CLOSET**

Stan lifts and drops various vials from a neatly arranged plastic tray. Searching frantically.

Lifts one out. Stops. Holds it in front of his face.

WE SEE THE LABEL: Pentobarbital.

#### **CLOSE ON ROSE PETALS ON THE FLOOR**

Outside the medical closet. June's shoes appear in frame.

PAN UP to her confused face. She reaches forward and opens the door...

Stan stands in front of the shelves. Back to us.

JUNE  
Stan? What're you doing?

ANGLE ON STAN. Frozen. Still holding the vial in front of his chest, which June can't see from her position.

Can't put it back. Can't shove it into his pocket.

He lets the vial drop from his fingers and it lands inside the bouquet of flowers.

Stan turns around. Shoots his wife an embarrassed grin.

STAN

What am I doing? I've gone and got myself lost that's what I'm doing.

June approaches him.

JUNE

I spoke to Sue. She decided to let me go early after all.

She leans over the bouquet and kisses him.

JUNE

You're the sweetest thing. What's gotten into you?

She takes the flowers. He releases them reluctantly.

### HOSPITAL CORRIDOR

As they exit the closet. June heads right.

STAN

(points left)

June, it's this way.

JUNE

Just gonna put these in some water.

STAN

No! Ah, don't you want them at home?

JUNE

I wanna show them off to the girls.

STAN

Jesus Christ... honey, ah, it's hard for me to admit this but...

Stan rubs the back of his neck.

JUNE

What is it?

STAN

I kinda like flowers too, you know? It'd be nice to have some around the house.

June lets out a surprised laugh. She approaches her husband and wraps her arm around him.

JUNE

Well, you're just a big old softie today, aren't you?

Stan nods, smiling awkwardly.

JUNE

C'mon, then. I'm starving.

She takes his arm and they walk out. Stan watching the bouquet out of the corner of his eye.

**A HAND KNOCKS ON A DOOR**

After a moment the door opens revealing Josh.

JOSH

Sheriff?

REVERSE ON DOCHERTY. Grim-faced.

DOCHERTY

Hi, Josh. Liza around?

JOSH

She's asleep upstairs.

Josh notices that Docherty is squinting at something over his shoulder. He turns around. It's the bullethole in the wall.

JOSH

Oh... I was cleaning my rifle the other day. Didn't realize it was loaded...

DOCHERTY

That's the kinda error that gets folks killed.

Josh nods sheepishly. Doesn't have the energy to argue.

JOSH

You want me to get her?

DOCHERTY

Actually... it's you I wanted to talk to. I suspended the senior officer responsible for Houle's escape.

JOSH

Well... I guess that's good news. You think I should tell her?

DOCHERTY

That's up to you. You're her fiance.

Josh nods.

DOCHERTY

There's something else... you may  
wanna keep her away from the  
television for a little while...

**SIP 'N DIP LOUNGE**

WE PAN AROUND the iconic Great Falls Tiki bar.

Through a window behind the bar we can see women dressed as  
mermaids swimming underwater in an indoor pool.

By the bar, PIANO PAT (an institution in her own right) plays  
"Sweet Caroline" on her keyboard. Some patrons sing along.

We find June and Stan in a booth nearby. Heads bowed in  
prayer. Stan's eye lingers on the bouquet by June's elbow...

THE VIAL OF PENTOBARBITAL still nestled amongst the rose  
stalks. Partially visible through the cellophane.

JUNE

Lord, make us truly thankful for  
this food, so fresh and plentiful,  
and all of the other blessings in  
our life. We just humble ourselves  
before you, Lord, and ask for your  
guidance and love. I ask this in  
Jesus Christ's name, Amen.

June hungrily attacks a shrimp primavera.

A teenage WAITRESS, barely visible through a thick layer of  
foundation, approaches.

WAITRESS

How's everything going over here?

JUNE

Grand, just grand. I'm really  
being spoiled today. My husband  
picked me up from work. Bought me  
flowers, took me out to lunch.

WAITRESS

Well, ain't that sweet!

She picks up the roses.

WAITRESS

How's about I put these in some  
water for ya?

Stan snatches them back.

STAN

No!

June and the Waitress look bewildered.

STAN

Uh, I mean. Would you mind getting us some garlic bread first?

WAITRESS

S-sure. No problem.

She heads back to the kitchen.

JUNE

Stan, what's going on? You're acting real owly today.

STAN

Honey, I have to tell you something. Your hair... it's a mess.

June touches her hair.

JUNE

It is?

STAN

Now, you know that sort of stuff doesn't bother me but I know you'd be upset if I didn't say anything...

June checks her reflection in the back of her spoon.

JUNE

Looks okay to me.

STAN

All the same... maybe you should take a look in a proper mirror.

June sighs. Drops her napkin on the table.

JUNE

I'll be right back.

Stan waits until June is out of sight then snatches the roses. Turns them upside down. Tries to shake the vial loose.

No good. It's stuck. He reaches into the bouquet. Sticks himself on a thorn.

The Waitress returns. Stan elbow deep in the roses.

WAITRESS

("Here's your fucking garlic bread, asshole")  
Here's your garlic bread, sir.

She drops it on the table with a look of loathing and leaves.

Stan finally manages to extract the vial. Shoves it into his pocket just as June returns.

JUNE

Honey, I don't know what the hell you're talking about. My hair was just fine.

Stan scratches his thinning hair.

STAN

Huh. Guess I don't know fashion.

JUNE

Hun, your hand is bleeding.

STAN

It is? Well, look at that. Must've caught myself on the cutlery.

He stands up.

STAN

Just gonna go clean myself up. I'll be right back.

He leaves. June prods a fork at her shrimp primavera. Utterly perplexed. Appetite gone.

#### **RESTAURANT BATHROOM**

Stan runs water over his hand. Sweating and sick from stress.

Bloody water spirals around the basin. We push in until our view is consumed by the black void of the sink then FADE UP ON...

#### **A LITTLE GIRL'S BEDROOM**

Shot from above like a dollhouse. Young GIRL (6) asleep in the bed.

Suddenly, we hear a woman's CRY. Cut short by a gurgle.

The GIRL stirs. Sits up.

GIRL'S POV: Her bedroom door. Slightly ajar. Pale white light outside.

**THE HALLWAY**

The Girl's bare feet shuffle out of her bedroom. Her breath fogs in the cold air.

She looks right: THE FRONT DOOR. Wide open. Moonlight streams in. Reflected from the snow beyond.

She looks left: A FIGURE IN BLACK stands at the other end of the hall. Watching her.

The breath catches in her throat. A long beat.

The Figure moves forward. WE SEE THE GLINT OF A KNIFE.

The Figure stops. Towering over the child, who shivers in the cold. Knife inches from her throat.

GIRL'S POV: We see the figure's face for the first time--

BERNIE HOULE. Much younger. Staring ahead at the open door. Expression blank. Vacant.

He transfers the knife to his other hand.

Continues down the hallway.

Closes the front door behind him. Leaving...

**DARKNESS**

CLICK. THE GIRL stands in a sliver of yellow light streaming from the doorway of an en suite bathroom.

Inside the bathroom we can see the partially obscured body of a MAN in navy blue boxers. Blood pooling on the floor.

The Girl reaches into the bathroom and turns off the light.

**DARKNESS, THEN...**

CLICK. A bedside lamp turns on. The Girl climbs into bed. Crawls across the white sheets.

The BACK OF A WOMAN comes into frame. Curled on her side.

The little girl spoons the woman. Resting her mouth on the nape of her neck.

She reaches down and pulls up the sheets which we see for the first time are covered with blood.

PUSH IN ON THE GIRL'S HAND. Gripping the bloody sheets...

The hand morphs. Ages. But the blood remains.

JOSH (O.S.)  
*Liza? Liza, wake up.*

WIDER shows Liza in bed. Blood soaking the sheets near her belly. She stirs. Feels the wetness.

Sits up, confused. Turns to Josh, who stands over her. wide-eyed and terrified.

DOCHERTY (PRE-LAP)  
*The stay'll be dismissed. Just a matter of time.*

### **MONTANA STATE PRISON**

SHERIFF DOCHERTY and the WARDEN traipse across the gravel exercise yard. Guard towers and razor wire loom over them.

DOCHERTY  
 Just want to make sure everything is ready once we catch this son of a bitch.

WARDEN  
 We'll be ready. Gotta say, this whole business hasn't made my job any easier. Number of protesters we're dealing with is doubling by the day. They're talking about bussing in folks from interstate if he's recaptured.

DOCHERTY  
 All the more reason to get things over with quickly once we get him.

A SINGLE-WIDE TRAILER comes into frame. Dirty corrugated siding. They climb the rickety steps leading to the door.

Believe it or not, this is Montana's execution chamber.

### **INSIDE THE DEATH CHAMBER**

We take it all in:

Montana State flag pinned to the fake wood panelling.

An inclined gurney at the head of the room.

A dozen folding chairs make up the witness area.

There is no glass between the witness area and the gurney, only a three-foot-high barrier, like the bar in a courtroom.

Our overwhelming feeling should be: this is tacky, this is cheap, this is amateurish, and, most of all, this is no better place to die than Stan's cabin.

Docherty and the Warden enter. A GUARD mops the linoleum tiles near the gurney.

DOCHERTY  
Missed a spot.

The Guard turns, annoyed. Smile cracks on his face.

GUARD  
Well I'll be...

He drops the mop and moves forward to shake Docherty's hand.

GUARD  
How're you doing Sheriff?

DOCHERTY  
Had better days.  
(to the Warden)  
Rick used to be one of my deputies--

RICK [GUARD]  
Until I saw the light.

Docherty chuckles.

RICK  
Say... you mind if I have a quick  
word with you, Sheriff?

Docherty looks at the Warden, who nods.

WARDEN  
Rick can show you around. I'll  
meet you back at the office.

The Warden leaves. Rick moves closer to Docherty. Murmurs:

RICK  
Wanted to ask you how Stan's doin'?

DOCHERTY  
Stan? Well as can be expected, I  
suppose.

RICK  
He seems real broken up about all  
this. Called me up the other  
night. Asked me all sorts of  
questions about the execution. How  
we're gonna do it. What drugs  
we're gonna use. How long it'd  
take him to die.

DOCHERTY

That right?

RICK

In my experience, a man starts asking questions like that you get to worryin'...

DOCHERTY

How's that?

Rick leans in. Whispers:

RICK

Since I started working here there's been two suicides.

Docherty frowns.

DOCHERTY

You think Stan is...

RICK

Dunno. Maybe. Maybe not. Lot easier to face death when you know what it looks like, if you know what I mean.

On Docherty, pondering this.

DOCHERTY

I'll keep an eye on him.

**HOSPITAL CORRIDOR**

Josh paces back and forth. Sick with worry.

June emerges from a nearby set of swinging doors.

JUNE

Mr. Toohey?

JOSH

(unhappy smile)

It's Bewick, actually. We aren't married yet.

JUNE

We've run an ultrasound and she's suffered a placental abruption. The baby's oxygen levels are a little low so the doctor's decided the best course of action is to undertake an immediate c-section.

JOSH

Whatever you need to do.

Josh presses his hand to his brow. Lets out a soft moan.  
June reaches out. Touches his shoulder.

JUNE

She's going to be okay.

Josh shakes his head. His thoughts suddenly gush out:

JOSH

This is all my fault. She's been under so much stress lately... I've done nothing but made it all worse. The man who killed her parents escapes prison and all I can think of is myself.

June's heart drops.

JOSH

Sheriff came round last night to tell me the officer that let him get away was suspended and I thought she'd take it as good news but she just flew off the handle--

Josh finally notices June's dismayed expression.

JOSH

I'm sorry. I shouldn't even be talking about this. My mouth goes on autopilot sometimes.

JUNE

No... it's okay. Sometimes it's good to let this stuff out. I had no idea she was... she was under so much strain.

Josh rubs his burning eyes.

JUNE

You must be tired. I'll see if I can find you an empty bed so's you can lie down an hour or two.

Josh nods. June leaves. Face contorted with guilt.

### **JOSIE'S CAR**

Josie presses her phone to her ear. Tapping a rolled-up dollar bill on her knee.

JOSIE

(into the phone)

Stan, it's me. We need to talk.

(MORE)

JOSIE (CONT'D)  
Something important's come up.  
Call me back.

Josie ends the call. Wipes away remnants of blue dust from the center console.

### JOSIE'S HOUSE

Josie enters. Stands in the entrance hall.

JOSIE  
Hello?

PULL BACK: The house has been completely trashed.

Josie's feet move through the debris:

Torn photos. Smashed tableware. Upended furniture. The fringes on the rug have been completely cut off.

PAULA sleeps on the couch. Clutching a gaudy 1988 Calgary Winter Olympics pillow to her chest.

Josie examines her mother's serene face, then reaches down and takes the pillow. Her mother wakes.

PAULA  
Oh, there you are. What time is it?

JOSIE  
What'd you do?

PAULA  
What?

JOSIE  
What'd you do to the house?

PAULA  
I don't know what the hell you're talking about.

JOSIE  
You don't?

PAULA  
I'm gant. You gonna make dinner or should I?

JOSIE  
(flatly)  
You haven't made dinner for four years. You've forgotten how.

Paula tuts, exasperated.

PAULA

If you're gonna act like this you  
can just leave me alone.

JOSIE

I can't, Ma. Don't you see?  
That's the problem. I can't leave  
you alone.

PAULA

Josie, you're being ridiculous.  
You need to grow up and take some  
responsibility for your own  
problems and stop blaming  
everything on me.

Josie looks down at the pillow in her hands. Then her  
mother's face.

Weak. Defiant. An infuriating combination.

JOSIE JAMS THE PILLOW DOWN OVER HER MOTHER'S FACE.

Eyes blank with disbelief and exhilaration.

She suffocates her mother, who claws at at her arms. Drawing  
blood.

*Is this a dream? This can't be real...*

Josie looks down at the thin, bony fingers wrapped around her  
bloody wrists and...

JOSIE

Die! Just die already!

Presses down harder. Neck pulsing with effort. Her mother's  
body bucks and spasms.

*Oh God, it's real. This is really happening...*

Letting out a sudden moan of horror, Josie rips the pillow  
away. Throws it aside.

She runs from the room as Paula sits up, red-faced. Coughing  
and spluttering. Her hair tangled chaos.

PAULA

You god damn bitch! Are you  
fucking crazy? Get back here!

Josie runs down the hall and into the...

## **BATHROOM**

Slams the door behind her. Locking it. Her mother still  
yells out after her.

Josie races for the medicine cabinet. Rips it open. Pulls out her pills. Dumps them into the toilet.

Flushes them away. Watching them swirl down the drain in a blue whirlpool.

Suddenly, there is total silence. Josie breathes heavily. Adrenalin dissipating. Then...

HER CELL PHONE RINGS. She answers. Listens...

STAN (V.O.)  
*Josie? I got the stuff.  
 Everything's ready...*

She opens her mouth. Can't speak.

STAN (V.O.)  
*Josie? Can you hear me?*

JOSIE  
 I... I been trying to call you...  
 we need to--

STAN  
 Not over the phone. You know where  
 to meet me?

JOSIE  
 (a beat)  
 Yeah.

STAN  
 Seven o'clock.

Josie listens to him hang up. Exits the bathroom into the...

#### **HALLWAY**

Paula shuffles towards her. Face placid. Hair still messy.

PAULA  
 Sweetie, you gonna make dinner or  
 should I?

Josie stares at her mother. She clearly has no memory of what just happened between them and it's horrifying.

JOSIE  
 I'll make you something, Ma.

She takes her mother by her arm. Leads her into the kitchen.

#### **THE MAROON SKEET CLUB SPORTS BAG**

Sitting on a bed. Stuffed with medical equipment.

A pair of hands reach into frame and zip it up.

### HALLWAY

Stan carries the sports bag towards the front door. It opens before he reaches it.

June steps inside. Sees Stan. He stops. Caught.

STAN

Thought you had a double shift?

JUNE

I wasn't feeling good.

STAN

Oh? That's too bad.

June turns around and closes the door behind her. Presses her back to it.

JUNE

They brought that Toohey girl in to the hospital today. I couldn't face her... I couldn't help but feel... guilty.

STAN

You've got nothing to feel guilty about.

June clocks the bag in Stan's hand.

JUNE

You going out?

STAN

Yeah... just got called in.

Stan reaches past her for the door handle. She doesn't move.

JUNE

Why? Ain't you suspended?

Stan stops. Raises his eyes to meet his wife's. Unable to muster a denial.

JUNE

You haven't bought me flowers for twenty-five years, then you show up at my work with a buck ninety eight bunch of roses.

(beat)

What going on, Stan?

STAN

I've... had a lot of stuff on my mind lately. Needed some time to think. With all this stuff that's happened, it's got me thinking... how lucky I am to have you. How good our life is together.

JUNE

Is that right?

STAN

It's the God's honest truth.

JUNE

Then tell me what's in the bag.

STAN

Nothing. I told you. Work stuff.

JUNE

Show me.

STAN

I ain't got time for this.

He grabs the door handle. June reaches forward and takes hold of the bag strap.

Stan pulls his wife's hand free. She slaps him across the cheek. He presses his hand to it, wincing in pain.

STAN

June, you're acting crazy.

JUNE

What were you doing in that closet today, Stan? Were you getting something for Josie? You told me she had a problem and you two been whispering on the phone non-stop the past coupla days...

He turns away but she grabs his arm, wrenching him back. Voice raised with anger:

JUNE

I wanna know just what the hell you think you're doing.

He glares at his wife, then shakes his arm free. Opens the door and steps out onto the porch.

STAN

I'll be back later. We can talk then.

He pulls the door closed behind him. June stands alone in the hall. Fuming. Shell-shocked.

#### **CAR WINDSHIELD POV SHOT**

Stan heads down the steps of his house.

PULL BACK: Sheriff Docherty watches Stan climb into his blue Chevy Silverado.

Starts up his engine. Tails him down the street.

#### **HIGHWAY**

The sun sets, shimmering through the trees, glistening from the snow.

Docherty hangs a quarter mile back from the Stan's truck. Just keeping him in sight.

The Silverado disappears over a crest up ahead. Docherty rises over the same crest but...

Stan's truck isn't visible.

Docherty speeds up a little and takes the tight curve ahead, revealing the next stretch of road...

A long straight portion of highway: empty.

Docherty presses down hard on the gas. Brings the car up to 90 miles an hour.

Scans the treeline left and right. Shielding his eyes from the sun.

#### **OUTSIDE STAN'S CABIN**

The sun sinks as the Silverado pulls up out front.

Stan steps out of his truck. Josie and Kyle emerge from the front door.

KYLE

We got a big problem.

JOSIE

There's been a stay. Houle's execution has been postponed.

Stan thinks a moment, then...

STAN

So what?

JOSIE

We can't do it if they aren't gonna do it.

STAN

Oh, c'mon! They're gonna do it. This is just lawyer tricks. No man's ever come back from this close.

KYLE

Same day, same time, same method. That's what you said. That's what we agreed.

STAN

Yeah? Well that was before your fucking sister here decided to sell me down the river to the Sheriff.

KYLE

What's he talkin' about?

Before she can respond, Josie hears something. Looks out at the surrounding trees.

IN THE DISTANCE: Two headlights bounce across the rough terrain towards the cabin.

Stan turns. Eyes wide with horror.

KYLE

Who the hell is that?

JOSIE

Were you followed?

STAN

I don't think so.

Stan spins back to them.

STAN

Get inside. I'll get rid of 'em.

KYLE

What about my truck?

JOSIE

We ain't got time to move it.

STAN

Get inside. Quick.

They make for the cabin. Close the door behind them.

Stan moves up onto the porch and turns around. Awaits the car's approach.

**INSIDE THE CABIN**

Josie looks at Bernie who notices the panic in her eyes.

BERNIE  
What's going on?

JOSIE  
(to Kyle)  
You got something to gag him?

KYLE  
Gag him?

JOSIE  
We need to keep him quiet. What if  
he yells out?

Kyle moves over to Bernie.

KYLE  
You ain't gonna holler, are you?

Bernie shakes his head.

JOSIE  
Kyle!

KYLE  
Whatta you want me to do?

JOSIE  
Hold his mouth.

Kyle slides down the wall next to Bernie. Puts his arm  
around him and clamps a hand over his mouth.

KYLE  
(murmuring)  
Sorry.

Bernie nods - *it's okay*.

Josie moves over to the door. Kneels in front of it.  
Listens to the engine of the approaching car.

**OUTSIDE THE CABIN**

Docherty's car pulls up. It sits idling for a moment.

Stan takes a swig from a hipflask. Staring at the tinted  
windows. Steeling himself.

Docherty kills the engine. Emerges from the car and scans  
the scene. Taking particular note of Kyle's truck.

DOCHERTY  
Stan? How you doing?

STAN  
What're you doing here, Tom?

DOCHERTY  
Just paying a visit.

STAN  
You following me?

DOCHERTY  
Not following. Just concerned for  
your welfare.

STAN  
You suspended me, remember? I'm  
not your concern nor purview no  
more.

Stan takes another swig of whiskey.

DOCHERTY  
You driving drunk?

STAN  
Ain't driving, ain't drunk.

DOCHERTY  
I spoke to Rick down at Deer  
Lodge... he was worried about you.

Stan flinches.

STAN  
I'm fine.

DOCHERTY  
Whose truck is that?

Stan looks over at Kyle's truck.

STAN  
Friend of mine.

### **INSIDE THE CABIN**

Josie watches through a notch in the door. Listening to the  
conversation:

DOCHERTY (O.S.)  
*That's Kyle Deumann's truck, ain't  
it?*

STAN (O.S.)  
*Does it matter?*

DOCHERTY (O.S.)  
*Didn't know you and Kyle were close.*

#### **OUTSIDE THE CABIN**

The conversation continues:

STAN  
You need to be close to park your  
truck on another man's land?

DOCHERTY  
I guess not.

Docherty runs his boot across the icy dirt.

DOCHERTY  
Awfully cold out here. You gonna  
invite me in?

STAN  
I don't think so.

DOCHERTY  
How's about we strike a deal? You  
let me come inside, we have a quick  
drink and I'll be on my way.

#### **BACK TO JOSIE**

Panicking. She looks around the cabin.

Windows run along the sides. If they tried to use them  
Docherty would see from his vantage point.

Fireplace at the back. No windows.

Josie looks down at her muddy boots. An idea.

She yanks them off. Starts unbuttoning her shirt...

ANGLE ON KYLE. Hand still pressed across Bernie's mouth.

KYLE  
(hissing)  
What the hell you doing?

Josie ignores him. Unbuckles her belt.

#### **OUTSIDE THE CABIN**

Docherty takes a few steps forward.

DOCHERTY

C'mon. Let's go inside. It's getting dark.

Stan moves to block his path. Holds up a hand.

STAN

Stop right there, Tom. N-now you listen here... a man's got a right to his privacy.

Docherty keeps approaching slowly.

DOCHERTY

Course he does. But I got an obligation to the mental health of my staff.

STAN

You saying I'm crazy?

Docherty stops a couple of feet short. Hand resting on the butt of his gun.

DOCHERTY

I'm saying I ain't leaving until I get a look in that cabin.

STAN

I'm afraid I can't let you do that.

DOCHERTY

You hidin' something from me, Sergeant?

Stan's stony facade cracks as he descends into a visible state of fear.

STAN

You don't want to look in there...

DOCHERTY

Tell me why not.

STAN

Because... because...

Before he can answer the cabin door opens and Josie slips outside and closes the door behind her.

She's wearing nothing but a white singlet and underwear. Blanket wrapped around her shoulders.

Docherty watches her long creamy legs as she glides forward. His understanding growing with each step.

Josie wraps an arm around Stan's waist. Stan cottons on. Drapes his arm across her shoulder.

STAN  
So... now you know.

Docherty glares at Josie with revulsion.

STAN  
I tried to warn you: a man needs his privacy.

DOCHERTY  
(to Josie)  
No time to start something new, huh?

JOSIE  
Sorry you had to find out this way.

#### **INSIDE THE CABIN**

Kyle and Bernie strain to hear. They lock eyes.

Kyle loosens his grip. Gently lifts his hand away from Bernie's mouth.

Bernie nods with appreciation. Doesn't yell out.

#### **OUTSIDE THE CABIN**

Docherty turns back to Kyle's truck. Its presence now making sense.

STAN  
We were trying to be discrete about this. Trying to keep people from getting hurt.

Docherty puts his hat back on his head and tramps back towards his car.

Josie steps forward and calls out after him:

JOSIE  
We'd appreciate it if you kept this to yourself, Tom.

Docherty opens his car door. Spits back:

DOCHERTY  
It's Sheriff, Deputy.

He climbs inside and slams his door.

Starts his engine with a ROAR. Reverses back down the road at speed. U-turns with a rooster tail of snow-slush.

Josie and Stan watch his taillights retreating through the forest. Josie lets out a shiver of relief.

Stan turns to her. Eyes hard.

STAN  
We do it tonight. Midnight.

### HOSPITAL CORRIDOR

Josh walks along the corridor. Stops outside a glass door.

JOSH'S POV: Liza lies in a bed. Watching the television above her bed. Cradling a baby in her arms.

She sees Josh watching. He smiles at her. The smile isn't returned.

Josh enters the room. Sees what is on the television:

SCOTT PRIDDIS being interviewed outside the courthouse.

PRIDDIS (ON TV)  
*Regardless of his current status,  
Bernie Houle is to be afforded the  
same rights as every death row  
inmate and that includes his  
ongoing appeals process--*

Liza snaps off the television. Glares at Josh. An agonizing beat of silence.

JOSH  
Liza...

LIZA  
You knew.

Josh's head dips. An admission. He watches his infant son. Blubbing on his mother's chest.

LIZA  
I want to call him Edward. After Dad.

JOSH  
Of course.

LIZA  
And I want him to be there. When they do it.

JOSH  
Liza, no...

LIZA  
This ain't your call.

JOSH

You want that to be one of his first experiences of the world?

LIZA

I want to be able to tell him. When he asks why he doesn't have a grandpa or a grandma like all the other kids. I want to be able to tell him that he was there when they did it.

JOSH

You of all people should know the world is ugly enough as it is...

LIZA

So you admit it, huh? You think it's ugly?

JOSH

I think... I don't know what I think anymore...

#### **STAN'S CABIN**

Stan sits on the couch. Josie next to him.

Kyle sits against the wall next to Bernie.

All staring into space. Waiting.

The GRANDFATHER CLOCK suddenly begins to chime causing them all to jump. Marks eleven o'clock.

Stan takes a swig from his hipflask. Drunk.

KYLE

I don't think you should drink anymore.

STAN

I ain't had much.

JOSIE

I agree with Kyle.

They exchange a look. Josie, deadly serious.

STAN

Alright, alright. You god damn Deumanns.

Stan screws the cap back on the flask. A long silence. Taps his knee. Can't bear it for long.

STAN

I was there the day your dad died,  
you know?

Josie turns to him.

JOSIE

I don't wanna talk about that.

STAN

I'm talking to your brother.

He turns back to Kyle, who clearly wants to hear more.

STAN

Was only on my second year. First  
man I ever saw die. Seen two more  
since. Never had to kill a man  
myself.

He catches Bernie's eye. Averts his gaze.

KYLE

What happened?

JOSIE

We know what happened, don't we?  
He tried to rob a bank and got  
himself killed for it. He lost his  
job and went crazy. Knowing the  
particulars isn't gonna help.

STAN

Didn't seem crazy to me. He was  
real calm. Real cool about it.  
Like dying wasn't even an option.  
Right up to the end. That was what  
bothered me about it. The  
casualness of it all. The ease of  
it. How it all could come down to  
a fraction of a--

BERNIE

I promise I won't say nothing.

They all turn to him.

BERNIE

If you turn me over. I won't say a  
word. I swear it.

Kyle stares at Bernie for a long beat. Turns to the others.

KYLE

I believe him.

JOSIE

Me too.

Stan shakes his head.

STAN

It's not about believing or not believing. They're gonna wanna know how he survived those freezing nights. Who helped him out. What happened out there on that roadside. They'll get it out of him. That's their job. They got his confession once. They'll do it again. We can't afford to take that risk. Not now we're so close.

He turns to Bernie.

STAN

I'm sorry but that's the way it's been from the start and nothing's changed since.

#### **A POWDER BLUE BEDSHEET**

Lies across the dining table. Fireplace blazing behind it.

On it lies an IV catheter. Tourniquet. Tape. Gauze. Extension tubing. 3ml bottle of saline.

CLOSE ON three vials as Stan carefully places them one at a time on the table:

SODIUM PENTOTHAL. PANCURONIUM BROMIDE. PENTOBARBITAL.

Kyle unlocks Bernie's handcuffs. Leads him over to the dining table.

Bernie hesitates. Then climbs onto it. Lies down flat.

Stan turns to Kyle and Josie.

STAN

You two're gonna need to hold him steady.

They exchange a look then move forward and each take hold of Bernie's wrists.

Stan lifts the IV catheter.

BERNIE

You know what you're doing?

Stan puts the needle back down. His face already glazed in a nervous sweat.

He reaches into his pocket and pulls out a piece of paper. The notes from his telephone conversation with Rick.

He unfolds it on the table, smoothing it out. Passes the rubber tourniquet to Josie.

STAN  
Round his bicep.

Josie hesitates, then ties it on.

Stan leans down to check the veins inside the crook of Bernie's elbow. Breathing hard. Swallows.

STAN  
Okay. Okay. I'm going to  
sterilize the area.

He reaches for a bottle of cleansing solution.

BERNIE  
Why bother?

Stan ignores him and applies the solution to a pad. Rubs the inside of Bernie's elbow.

He leans in again. Having difficulty seeing Bernie's veins.

KYLE  
You okay?

STAN  
I'm fine.

He looks over at Bernie.

STAN  
You ready?

BERNIE  
Can I ask something first?

Stan seems relieved at the potential delay. Nods.

BERNIE  
You reckon you could turn on some  
music?

Stan looks at Josie and Kyle. Shrugs.

Kyle lets go of Bernie's wrist and moves over to a paint-speckled radio on the kitchenette bench. Flicks it on.

SISTER GOLDEN HAIR by America plays and continues over...

### **THE IV NEEDLE**

Hovering. Trembling in the air.

It comes down and pierces Bernie's flesh. There are already two other bleeding pinpricks from failed attempts.

*"Well I tried to make it Sunday but I got so damn depressed..."*

STAN

Fuck!

KYLE

Jesus, you missed again?

STAN

It's not my fault! His veins are shot to shit.

JOSIE

You can't keep sticking him like that.

BERNIE

If you let me sit up on my side I can help you.

KYLE

This is bullshit, man. This is messed up. You don't know what the fuck you're doing.

STAN

Shut up! All of you! I can do this...

He wipes away the blood from Bernie's elbow and brings the needle level with the skin.

*"And I just can't live without you, can't you see it in my eyes..?"*

STAN

Don't think I'm going deep enough.

JOSIE

Be careful.

STAN

What do you think I'm doing?

BERNIE

Wait.

Houle starts pumping his fist to make his vein more prominent.

Josie feels Bernie's muscles tightening through his skin. Sick to her stomach.

Stan plunges the needle back through Bernie's skin.

Frothy ruby red blood gushes from the extension tube, spilling onto the bedsheet.

Stan recoils, accidentally knocking the needle loose.

Blood spurts forth in a heartbeat rhythm, streaming from the puncture wound.

KYLE

Holy shit.

JOSIE

Jesus Christ, Stan. Is that normal?

Bernie lifts his head and checks it.

BERNIE

You hit an artery, I think.

JOSIE

This is pathetic. This is amateur hour!

Stan tosses a medical pad over to Josie.

STAN

Hold this over. I'm gonna try the other arm.

He moves around the table as Josie tries to stem the bleeding.

Kyle steps in Stan's path and holds up a forearm.

KYLE

No.

STAN

What the hell're you doing? Get outta my way, Kyle.

KYLE

I ain't gonna let you keep stickin' him like that. This is over.

JOSIE

He's right. We can't do this. It's crazy we even thought we could.

STAN

You're both out of your minds. Do you know how close we are? I'm not stopping because you two get a little squeamish at the sight of some blood. This ain't even close to what he did to those poor Toohy folks.

KYLE

We're both saying no, right Josie?  
You're outvoted.

STAN

Well, too bad this ain't a fucking  
democracy. Now get out of my way.

KYLE

I'm not gonna let you.

STAN

Step back.

Stan tries to shove him aside. Kyle swings a punch at Stan,  
clipping his ear.

Stan clutches his ear.

STAN

You god damn son of a bitch.

He grabs Kyle's shirtfront. Kyle twists away.

JOSIE

Hey, stop that!

Stan stumbles over Kyle's leg. Regains his balance.

The two men grapple, trying to loosen the other's grip.

Kyle shoves Stan backwards with all his might. His shirt  
tears and Stan staggers backwards. Twisting around...

Feet tangling in the strap of the maroon sport bag as he  
tumbles and...

SMASHES HIS HEAD ON EDGE OF THE FIREPLACE WITH A SICKENING  
CRACK THEN...

Falls down into the roaring flames, which spurts a stream of  
glowing embers across the cabin floor.

He lies face down in the blaze. Unconscious. Not moving.  
Kyle stares, slack-jawed. Total disbelief.

JOSIE

Jesus!

She rushes forward and grabs hold of Stan's leg. Pulls him  
back. He's too heavy.

JOSIE

Kyle. Help me.

Kyle moves forward and grabs Stan's other leg. They pull him  
back. Smearing smouldering ash and kindle across the floor.

Josie drops to her knees and pats out the flames. Rolling Stan over...

SKIN FLAYS AWAY FROM HIS FACE LIKE POTATO PEELS.

He chokes on black ash. Gurgling. Half-cauterized wound on his forehead streams blood. White bone visible beneath.

It's a horrific sight. Kyle and Josie react, recoiling.

Stan tries to speak, but it comes out as a garbled protest and suddenly, just as SISTER GOLDEN HAIR ends...

He falls silent. The ANNOUNCER'S VOICE COMES ON THE RADIO.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

*That was a special request from  
Robert out in Fort Benton...*

JOSIE reaches forward. Presses her fingers to Stan's wrist. Withdraws her hand. Brings it up to her head.

JOSIE

Oh, god. He's dead... Jesus  
Christ, Kyle. You killed him.

KYLE

I--I didn't... it was an  
accident... he tripped... You saw  
it. You both saw it.

Kyle turns to Bernie, who sits on the edge of the table. Holding the pad over his bleeding arm. Staring wide-eyed at Stan's charred corpse.

KYLE

You saw it, didn't you? Bernie?

Bernie looks over at him.

BERNIE

You didn't mean it.

### **DOCHERTY'S CAR**

Docherty drives through the night. Taking his frustration out on the gas pedal. Knuckles white on the wheel.

His phone buzzes. He reaches into his pocket and answers.

DOCHERTY

Yeah.

JUNE (V.O.)

*Hello? This is June. June Gittany.*

INTERCUT JUNE. On the phone, in her pyjamas. Looking at the clock on the wall which reads just after one at night.

DOCHERTY

June? What's going on?

JUNE

Tom, it's Stan... we had a fight and he hasn't come home. I've been trying his phone for the last two hours and he's not answering.

Docherty thinks a moment, lip curled with bitterness.

DOCHERTY

June... I, uh... I hate to be the one to tell you this but I think you should know... I've found out recently that he and Josie have been... you know. Seeing each other.

June reels with shock. Almost dropping the phone.

JUNE

Are you crazy? Stan? He... he wouldn't do that...

DOCHERTY

Afraid I saw it for myself. Followed them up to that cabin he has. I'm sorry you had to find out this way, June. You're a good woman and deserve better than what you're getting.

June stays silent. Gazing off into space.

DOCHERTY

I'll tell you what... I'll put an APB out on his car. If someone spots him, I'll let you know.

JUNE

Okay... thank you...

Docherty hangs up.

END INTERCUT.

June's hand still rests on the phone. Dazed. And then...

SHE RIPS THE PHONE TABLE AWAY FROM THE WALL AND HURLS IT ACROSS THE ROOM.

She whirlwinds around the room, screaming with impotent rage. An eruption of explosive, bottled-up anger.

Snatching family portraits from the walls. Smashing them to the ground.

Tipping over furniture. Sweeping ornaments from the mantle.

June stands in the center of the room. Scanning the aftermath of her destruction.

Her eyes finally land on: HER CAR KEYS.

Lying on the floor next to the roses Stan bought her.

She moves over to them. Snatches them up. Heads for the front door.

#### **OUTSIDE JOSIE'S HOUSE**

Josie escorts Bernie towards the front door, scanning the surrounding houses. It's late and all is still.

Behind her Kyle lingers near Stan's truck. Josie turns:

JOSIE  
You coming?

KYLE  
Maybe I'll wait out here.

Josie stops. Bites her lip.

JOSIE  
She's not the same person anymore,  
Kyle. She don't remember... she  
don't remember anything...

Kyle wavers and then follows.

#### **JOSIE'S HOUSE**

The front door swings in and Bernie, Kyle and Josie enter. The latter flicks on the light.

WIDER. The destruction we saw earlier has been mostly cleared away.

Josie leads Bernie over to the couch. Motions for him to sit.

Kyle scrutinizes the house. It's clear that he hasn't been here for a long, long time.

Josie moves over to Kyle. Whispers:

JOSIE  
What're we gonna do?

KYLE  
I can't kill him, Josie. I just  
can't.

PAULA (O.S.)  
*Josie?*

They turn. Paula stands in the doorway, wearing a nightgown.

JOSIE  
Hey, Ma.

Paula's eyes move from Kyle to Bernie, who holds the Calgary Olympics pillow on his lap.

PAULA  
Who's that?

JOSIE  
This's just a friend of ours.  
Bernie.

PAULA  
Not him. Him.

She points at Kyle. Josie balks, then stammers:

JOSIE  
Uh... t-that's your--

KYLE  
I'm just a friend, too.

PAULA  
Bit late to be bringing friends  
over, don't ya think?

Josie doesn't answer. Paula moves over to Bernie.

PAULA  
You look familiar. We met before?

BERNIE  
Don't think so, Ma'am.

She sits down on the couch.

PAULA  
Sure I've seen your face somewhere  
before...

She sees the pillow in Bernie's hand.

PAULA  
You like that? Got that the first  
time my husband took me overseas.  
You ever been?

BERNIE

To Canada? No, ma'am, can't say I have.

PAULA

Oh, it's a wonderful country. So clean, so civilized compared to the trash you find in Great Falls.

She shoots a pointed look in Kyle's direction.

Josie turns apologetically to Kyle and sees...

His eyes are wide with a sudden realization.

**A CELL PHONE PEALS IN THE DARKNESS**

A bedside lamp turns on revealing Scott Priddis in a hotel bed with someone who likely isn't his wife. He answers:

PRIDDIS

Hello?

We hear Josie's slightly muffled voice but stay with Scott.

JOSIE (V.O.)

*What would happen if Bernie Houle made it across the border?*

PRIDDIS

Who is this?

JOSIE (V.O.)

*Answer the question.*

PRIDDIS

I-I don't know. He'd be extradited I guess.

JOSIE (V.O.)

*Back to Montana?*

PRIDDIS

Yes...

JOSIE (V.O.)

*Would he still be executed?*

PRIDDIS

I don't know... extradition's been refused on capital cases unless certain assurances have been given.

JOSIE (V.O.)

*Like what?*

Priddis starts to understand...

PRIDDIS  
That the extradited party won't be  
subject to the death penalty.

JOSIE (V.O.)  
*What would you do?*

Priddis hesitates.

PRIDDIS  
("I'd turn him over")  
They may still execute him. At  
best he'd get life without parole.

A long pause. Priddis listens to the silence at the other  
end of the line...

PRIDDIS  
You should know that under Title 18  
of the United States Penal Code  
anyone who attempts to aid or  
assist an escaped--

A dial tone interrupts him. He slowly hangs up the phone,  
deeply shaken.

#### **STAN'S CABIN**

Headlights play across it. Kyle's truck is still parked  
nearby but Stan's Chevy is gone.

Wider shows June pulling up outside. Dressed in pajamas and  
a bathrobe. She steps out of her car.

#### **INSIDE THE CABIN**

The door swings in. June stands in the doorway. Debbie  
Boone softly sings "You Light Up My Life" on the radio.

JUNE  
Stan?

JUNE'S POV: The dining table, which has been cleared away,  
blocks the view of her husband.

She moves forward. Catches sight of Stan's leg.

JUNE  
Stan?

She rushes forward. Horrified by his mangled and burnt face.

June reaches down and checks his pulse. Feels something.  
She shakes him by the shoulders.

JUNE

Stan? Stan? Wake up! Answer me!

STAN LETS OUT A GUTTURAL GURGLE.

His eyelids are fused shut. He gulps in oxygen, grasping the air in front of him blindly.

Through his melted lips he manages a rasping:

STAN

Josie?

A knife to June's heart. Face twists with pain. Eyes sting.

She lets go of him. Dodges his outstretched hands.

STAN

Josie? You there?

June moves back out of frame.

We stay with Stan. His arms reaching forward. They move to his face.

We hear the radio switch off.

STAN

Oh god... oh god... I can't see...  
Josie? Why aren't you answering?

June's legs reenter the frame. The back of Stan's hand makes contact with them. He wraps his hand around her calf.

STAN

Josie? I need help. I'm hurt...

REVERSE ANGLE ON JUNE. FLOOR POV.

She holds the radio to her chest. Looks right down at us.

JUNE

It's not Josie.

SHE RAISES THE RADIO OVER HER HEAD AND...

SMASHES IT DOWN ONTO THE CAMERA WITH A SICKENING WET THWACK.

### **JOSIE'S KITCHEN**

Kyle searches the drawers. Josie stands in the doorway. Watching Bernie speaking with her mother in the living room.

Kyle finds what he is looking for: a tattered map of Montana and portions of the surrounding states.

He spreads it out on the table. Runs a finger across it.

KYLE

If we drive up the Burma Road we can follow the border west and cross north of Kinnerly Peak. Shouldn't be many patrols in that area. Once we're over we can follow the valleys up the MacDonald Range. Turn him over in Fernie.

Josie leans over the map.

JOSIE

Difficult terrain up there. It'll take us three days at least.

KYLE

We haven't got a choice. If we move now we can make the trail head by daybreak.

Josie shakes her head, conflicted.

KYLE

There's no other way, Josie. We made this mess. All of us. This's the only way to make it right.

They exchange a long, loaded look. Josie finally answers:

JOSIE

Okay.

Kyle springs into action. He snatches up the map.

## **LIVING ROOM**

Josie moves over to her mother and Bernie. He looks up at her expectantly.

JOSIE

We're gonna try to get you across the border into Canada. We'll be turning you over to authorities when we get there. What they do from there is up to them.

Paula listens, not quite understanding. Bernie nods, grateful.

## **A NAKED LIGHTBULB**

Flickers on and burns.

Kyle surveys the chaotic contents of the small shed.

He grabs a dusty canvas backpack from the shelf. Begins to fill it with items:

Binoculars. Rope. Buck knife. Two steel canteens. First aid kit.

Finally his hand finds a can of bear spray. Rust stains the bottom rim. But it's good enough.

He adds it to the side pocket of the bag. As he does he feels something in the pocket...

He pulls it out. A tattered photograph. He studies it for a moment then drops it on the bench and leaves...

CLOSE ON THE PHOTO: Kyle, around 5, next to his father. Knee deep in a stream. Proudly holding a decent sized trout.

#### **A PANTRY DOOR OPENS**

Revealing Josie. She gathers food from the shelves. Tins. Snacks. Power bars. Anything non-perishable.

#### **A BEDROOM MIRROR**

Bernie stands in frame. Trying on a quilted hunting jacket. His hands don't reach out the arm holes.

Kyle kneels by the closet nearby. Stuffing clothes into his canvas bag. He notices Bernie's plight. Shrugs.

KYLE

Sorry. He was a big man.

Bernie nods. Rolls up the sleeves.

#### **OUTSIDE JOSIE'S HOUSE**

Josie and Bernie emerge. They head for Kyle, who fixes snow chains to the tires of Stan's truck.

Josie twists back to her mother who stands in the doorway watching them go.

JOSIE

Go inside Ma. You'll get a cold.  
Aunt Maggie's on her way.

#### **EMPTY URBAN STREETS**

Great Falls in the dead of night. Snow falls.

The Chevy Silverado navigates through the bleak maze.

**A GLOVED HAND**

Pouring coffee from a thermos.

WIDER shows a bored GRAND FALLS POLICE OFFICER sitting in his idling COP CAR.

Face illuminated by the dash and computer. Heat blasting.

He takes a sip of coffee and sees...

The Chevy glide along a bridge adjacent to the Officer's car and continue along the road.

The Officer leans forward and checks the truck's plates. Prods his computer screen. Sighs.

Window whirs down and he dumps the coffee into the snow.

**INSIDE THE CHEVY**

Kyle at the wheel. Josie next to him. Bernie in the back.

The darkness in the rear window suddenly blazes blue and red.

Kyle's eyes flick to the rearview. Josie turns in her seat.

JOSIE

Get down.

Bernie ducks down. Kyle slows the car.

KYLE

What do I do?

JOSIE

I don't know.

KYLE

Should I pull over?

Josie shakes her head. She doesn't know.

Kyle takes one last look in the mirror and...

JAMS HIS FOOT DOWN ON THE ACCELERATOR and...

WRENCHES THE WHEEL LEFT DOWN A SIDE ROAD and...

The COP CAR ACCELERATES. SIREN WHOOPS ON and...

**THE CHEVY'S TIRES**

Bounces down a tight alleyway behind a row of houses. Smash through trashcans. Crushing the debris and continuing on making a hard right onto a...

**SUBURBAN STREET**

The Silverado slides wide on the snow. Elbows a parked car. Continues on.

The cop car does likewise. Fishtails and stalls.

The engine restarts and veers straight on and continues the chase as we CUT TO:

**GREAT FALLS - HIGH ANGLE**

The soft throttle of two distant engines cut through the silence.

Orbs of light wend rapidly along the dark streets. Quick turns. Left, right, left, right.

THE WHITE HEADLIGHTS of the Chevy. Pulling ahead.

THE RED-BLUE-RED-BLUE strobe of the cop car. Struggling to keep up like an obscene game of PacMan.

Suddenly, at the top of frame another blue and red light materializes. COP CAR #2. Beelining for the chase.

Just as it looks like the Chevy's about to be caught in a pincer...

THE WHITE LIGHT MAKES A SUDDEN SHARP LEFT AND DISAPPEARS.

Seconds later, Cop Car #1 floats by and continues on. Pace slowing slightly as we CUT TO:

**THE CHEVY SILVERADO**

Sitting in a carport between a house and a fence. Lights off, cooling engine clicking. Steam dribbling from the hood.

Cop Car #2 ROARS past behind. Siren whining.

Josie and Kyle exchange a look. Wait for the siren to subside.

Kyle restarts the car and reverses back down the drive.

**THE CHEVY**

Roars along an empty US-89. Red sun crests the horizon.

Bernie watches the sunrise through the scribble of scrolling trees. The flickering light warming his face.

**DOCHERTY'S OFFICE**

Docherty enters. Takes a pile of messages from his Secretary.

SECRETARY

The Marshals Service has sent a BOLO to our friends up north. Every cow, fish and tree cop is on the lookout.

Docherty nods, preoccupied. Heads for his office.

DOCHERTY

Draw me up some suspension papers for Josie Deumann.

SECRETARY

Thought you were letting her slide?

He turns back. Annoyed at being questioned.

DOCHERTY

Well I changed my mind. Is that alright with you?

SECRETARY

(she shrugs)

Chief Edwards called about that APB you sent out on Stan's truck. One of his officers tried to pull him over on Stuckey Road last night. He was liquored up or something and driving like a maniac. Didn't see no reason to chase him down and end up killin' him.

Docherty frowns.

DOCHERTY

What time was this?

SECRETARY

Didn't say.

Docherty doubles back for the main door.

DOCHERTY

I'm goin' out for a few. See if you can get June Gittany on the line for me.

SECRETARY

Something wrong?

DOCHERTY

(mumbling)

Still trying to figure that out.

**A LICENCE PLATE**

A hand enters frame and pulls on the edges.

WIDER reveals Stan's truck. Parked in a gravel dead-end on a small rise.

Kyle plies the plate off the car with a pop. Stuffs it into his backpack.

Behind him, Josie and Bernie gaze out across the snow-covered landscape through a break in the vegetation.

Trees, trees and nothing but trees. Riding the wave of earth. Gently undulating out into infinity.

Kyle approaches them. Checking his compass.

The three of them exchange a look and set off.

**A TARP IS RIPPED AWAY REVEALING**

The battered Sheriff's car. The same one that hit Charlie Cameron.

We're in a FLEET SERVICING SHED. Much more advanced than Kyle's ancient setup.

MECHANIC

Haven't started repairin' it yet.  
Truth be told it's probably a write-off when you add up the costs.

He speaks with Docherty, who circles the car, inspecting the damage. Docherty lifts the trunk lid.

INSIDE THE TRUNK: Clean. Spare tire in the well. Unused jack. Nothing amiss. Except...

DOCHERTY

There supposed to be carpet in here?

The Mechanic rounds the car and takes a look.

MECHANIC

Yeah, normally. Who knows? We mighta spilled something on it and pulled it out.

DOCHERTY

Did you?

MECHANIC

Not that I recall. One of my guys might've. It's an older model.

DOCHERTY

Thanks.

He walks off.

MECHANIC

Should I take it to the wreckers?

DOCHERTY

(without turning)

Not yet.

**ROCK-STREWN PATH**

Cutting through the forest. Kyle leads the party along it. They move single-file careful not to slip on the icy ground. Bernie turns to Josie, who walks behind him.

BERNIE

Why are you doing this? Why didn't you just turn me over?

Josie thinks about this for a beat. Focus on the path ahead.

JOSIE

I'd kill you myself if I had the guts to do it. But I don't. And I'd be fooling myself if I pretended that handing you over wasn't just the same thing.

They come up a rise where Kyle stands and see the border:

A LONG SHARP SWATHE CUT THROUGH THE DISTANT TREES.

Kyle turns back to them...

KYLE

We should keep heading west. Still too close to the Chief Mountain crossing. They might have patrols and cameras out this way.

**HEAVY SNOW FALLING IN HEADLIGHTS**

Docherty at the wheel of his cruiser. Scanning through the gloom. Thick dark clouds fat with snow overhead.

He slows to a crawl. Veers right off the road.

**THE ROADSIDE**

The same spot Charlie Cameron was killed.

Docherty emerges. Leaves the car idling, headlights on. Brings out a flashlight. Sweeps the ground with it.

Finds the tire tracks. Ruts in the mud. Frozen solid.

He crouches down. Runs a finger along the edge of the track.

A twig SNAPS in the trees beyond.

Docherty brings up his flashlight, revealing...

A DEER. Motionless, thirty yards away. Partially obscured in the undergrowth. Eyes glimmer silver like moonlight.

Docherty watches it. A hint of amusement in his expression.

DOCHERTY

Easy, girl. Easy.

WIDER as Docherty rises. The car blowing exhaust. The road stretching out into the murk. Deer just out of frame.

Docherty QUICK DRAWS his service weapon. FIRES. A burst of white smoke EXPLODES.

Docherty waits for the smoke to clear. Reholsters his gun. Traipses out into the forest.

### A TRICKLING RIVER

Kyle dips his canteen into the icy water. Takes a drink. One eye on a band of black clouds approaching from the south.

Josie and Bernie sit on the rocks of the riverbed nearby.

KYLE

It'll be dark soon. We should set up camp.

He twists the cap on his canteen. Turns back and sees...

A GERMAN SHEPHERD bound from the steep tree-lined bank over Bernie's shoulder. Trailing ten feet of taut leash behind.

Seconds later two BORDER PATROL AGENTS follow the dog out. BP AGENT #1, who holds the leash, yanks it to heel.

BP AGENT #1

(waving)  
Hey there!

Hesitation. They couldn't run even if they wanted to.

JOSIE

Hello!

The two agents approach and stop about ten feet short.

BP AGENT #1  
How y'all doing?

JOSIE  
We're alright.

The BP AGENT #2, less friendly than his colleague, clocks Kyle's rifle.

BP AGENT #2  
Doin' some hunting out here?

JOSIE  
Trying to.

BP AGENT #1  
Any luck?

JOSIE  
Not so far.

BP Agent #2 glares at Bernie.

BP AGENT #2  
You guys are awful close to the border.

KYLE  
We are?

BP AGENT #2  
Just over the ridge there.

JOSIE  
Oh, we didn't know.

BP AGENT #1  
Lot of folks get turned around out here.

BP Agent #2 continues to scrutinize Bernie.

BP AGENT #2  
You all American?

KYLE  
Yes, sir.

BP AGENT #2  
Got any ID? Passport?

JOSIE  
Passport? Nah. Didn't bring it.

KYLE  
We're just hunting.

BP AGENT #1  
You're under no obligation to  
provide anything.

BP Agent #2 shoots him a withering glare.

BP AGENT #1  
Unless you wanna, of course.

BP AGENT #2  
(re: Bernie)  
Your friend speak?

Bernie stands up and turns to face him.

BERNIE  
When I have cause to.

BP AGENT #2  
You look familiar for some reason.  
What're ya? Blackfeet?

BERNIE  
Mother was Chippewa.

BP AGENT #2  
Long way out of your neck of the  
woods.

BERNIE  
Not by choice.

BP Agent #2 continues to stare. A dog with a bone. Kyle  
breaks the tension.

KYLE  
Uh... you know what..?

He slings his backpack off his shoulder. Digs into the side  
pocket.

KYLE  
Think I got my driver's licence  
somewhere in here... if that helps  
you fellas out...

BP AGENT #1  
Well, we'd sure appreciate it. Get  
a lot of wingnuts tryin to cause  
trouble outUUHHNNN--

KYLE FIRES A HISS OF BEAR SPRAY INTO HIS FACE.

In agony, BP AGENT #1 twists to the ground, trapping the  
German Shepherd's leash beneath him.

JOSIE  
Kyle! No!

BP Agent #2 gawks at his colleague for a split second, stunned. Then reaches for his weapon.

Before he can unholster it, Kyle sprays him in the face too.

He crumples to the ground. Clawing at his face. Screaming.

The German Shepherd bays and growls, straining against its trapped leash, which gives a little with each tug.

KYLE

Run!

The threesome break for the trees, scrambling over the uneven ground. Leaving the two agents writhing on the rocks.

As they scramble up the steep slope we CUT BACK TO:

### **DOCHERTY**

Moving through the forest. Following the deer's blood trail.

Sweeping the ground with his flashlight. He stops as the light picks up a metallic glint on the ground.

He crouches. Brushes aside the leaf litter to reveal:

A CELL PHONE. Waterlogged. Screen shattered.

Docherty clicks off the light. Twists back towards his...

CAR. Idling still, hundred feet away. Headlights visible through the trees.

The snow getting heavier.

### **ROCKY KNOLL - MAGIC HOUR**

Josie and Bernie ascend to the top of the ridge. Gasping for breath. Sweat lashing from their foreheads.

Kyle, fifty feet behind them, calls out:

KYLE

Keep... going...

He watches them disappear over the crown ahead.

As he nears the top he turns back and scans...

THE SNOWY TERRAIN. Everything is still. And then...

THE GERMAN SHEPHERD appears from a grove of trees. A mere speck in the distance, but gaining at an alarming rate of speed.

Kyle turns back. As he does...

HIS FOOT SLIPS FROM THE ICY ROCKS, wedging down into the cavity between them and...

He tumbles backwards and...

HIS TRAPPED LEG BENDS THEN SNAPS WITH AN AUDIBLE CRACK

Kyle screams in pain. Lying at an awkward angle. Head facing down the slope.

He groans with pain in between breaths. Tries to lift his head to look at his leg. Can't see it.

Twisting his neck, he sights the German Shepherd as it reaches the base of the hill below and bounds towards him.

Less than a minute from catching him.

KYLE

Josie? Josie? Help me!

No answer. The ridge above remains empty.

PRE-LAP: A MECHANICAL WHINE

#### **CAR AIR DUCT**

Blowing hot air.

WIDER. Docherty sits in his car. Windows fogged. He holds the broken phone up to the air duct. Drying it out.

He flicks off the heat. Presses the power button on the phone. Nothing...

He thinks a moment. His phone buzzes in his pocket.

DOCHERTY

Hello?

His Secretary's voice comes on the line.

SECRETARY

It's me. Been trying June Gittany all day. Can't get a hold of her.

Docherty blows a puff of air from his lips.

DOCHERTY

Alright. I'll look into it.

He hangs up. Looks down. His phone in one hand. The broken phone in the other. TIME CUT TO:

**A SIM CARD**

Lying in the cradle of an open phone. Docherty's fingers reach in and pull it out of the slot.

He places it in his phone. Snaps it shut. Powers on.

Navigates to contacts. Just a series of numbers. No names.

He dials the first. After a few rings a VOICE answers.

VOICE (V.O.)

*Charlie? Jesus Christ, Charlie is that you? Where the heck've you been? Heather's been worried sick--*

Docherty's eyes narrow.

DOCHERTY

Charlie who?

VOICE

What's that?

DOCHERTY

Charlie. Who.

CUT BACK TO:

**KYLE, STILL TRAPPED**

Upside down. Frantically scanning the rocks behind him.

Suddenly the German Shepherd looms over a boulder to his right. The slavering hound bounds forward. Snarling.

KYLE

Oh God!

He offers his arm. Anticipates the pain.

The dog clamps down. Teeth tear through his jacket and deep into his flesh.

Kyle screams in pain. Yells into the sky and then...

Senses movement to his right...

Bernie stands over him. Wild-eyed. Raises a football-sized rock over his head...

KYLE

No!

Kyle shields his face as BERNIE SMASHES IT DOWN...

A glancing blow onto the German Shepherd's head. The dog yips with pain. Releases Kyle's arm. Snaps at Bernie.

The Chippewa man raises the rock again. Crunches it down.

This time his aim is true. The dog's head caves in. A gruesome crater of blood, brain and bone.

Bernie isn't done. He raises the rock once more. Smashes it down... again... and again. Pulverizing the dead dog.

KYLE'S POV: Bernie's frenzied expression. Cheeks shudder with each blow. White teeth grit tight.

JOSIE

Bernie...

Kyle looks up. Josie stands at the top of the hill.

Bernie finally ceases his pounding. Panting heavily. He tosses the rock away. Rises gingerly to his feet.

#### **HEADLIGHTS WEAVE THROUGH A FAMILIAR ROAD**

Stan's cabin comes into frame and...

IT'S A SMOULDERING RUIN. Black jagged timber stabs the sky.

Docherty pulls up. Blinks with disbelief. Takes a moment to comprehend what he's seeing. Steps out of the car.

He notices June's car parked to the left. Moves over to it. Wipes frost from the window.

June sits inside. Staring ahead.

DOCHERTY

June?

She doesn't respond. Gazes ahead at the ruined cabin.

He taps on the window. She flinches. Turns to him.

Her electric window purrs down a few inches.

DOCHERTY

June? Where's Stan?

JUNE

(mechanically)

He's dead. I killed him.

Docherty processes this. Horrified.

DOCHERTY

Where's Josie?

She glares at him for a long beat and then...

Her window purrs closed.

### **A GRISLY COMPOUND FRACTURE**

The bone splintering through the calf flesh, which is almost torn in half.

Wincing, Kyle tries to hitch himself up by the elbows to get a look. Every movement agony.

KYLE

Is it bad?

Bernie stands a distance away looking out over the valley below. Wiping his blood-stained hands on his jeans.

Josie puts on a brave face. Knows the situation is dire.

JOSIE

It's alright. I'm gonna try and  
unwedge your foot.

She reaches down into the gap between the boulders. Grabs Kyle's boot by the toe and tries to twist it free.

Kyle's distressed ROAR echoes through the valley below.

Josie sits up. Shaking her head.

JOSIE

I can't do it. I'm just gonna hurt  
you more.

She raises her voice so Bernie can hear.

JOSIE

One of us needs to go for help.

Bernie turns around.

KYLE

No! He can't. They'll kill him.

He twists around to meet Bernie's eye.

KYLE

Cross the border. Get help over  
there.

JOSIE

It'll take him two days at least to  
reach Fernie. We don't have time.  
You're losing blood. It's only six  
hours back to the border crossing.

KYLE

You're asking him to kill himself!

JOSIE

He needs to go back.

KYLE

You go then. He can stay here.

JOSIE

And when they rescue you? They'll still have him.

KYLE

Then -- for Christ's sakes, I don't fucking know -- both of you go!

JOSIE

You think I'm gonna leave you alone out here? For the wolves and the grizzlies? It ain't happening.

KYLE

Leave the damn rifle then... I can take care of myself.

JOSIE

On one leg? Like hell you can.

KYLE

Well, you're sending him back there over my--

BERNIE

I coulda killed her, you know.

Kyle and Josie turn to Bernie.

He moves forward. Rolling down the sleeves of his jacket. Covering his bloody hands.

BERNIE

Liza Toohey. She was right there. All it would have taken was a flick of the wrist. Just a moment. She saw my face. Identified me afterwards. Cos I let her live. I coulda killed her but I didn't. It's the only half decent thing I did in my whole rotten life. Walking out that door. No matter what they do to me, I'll never regret it.

ON Josie and Kyle. Realization dawning on their faces.

KYLE

No. Wait. Bernie, listen to me.  
Please. Just go. You can make it.

BERNIE

I'm sorry. I can't.

Josie nods with gratitude. Kyle squeezes his eyes closed.

**A CHRISTMAS-THEMED COFFEE CUP**

A hand reaches for it.

AUNT MAGGIE (V.O.)

*Get a call in the middle of the  
night. Without a hello or nothing  
Josie's in the middle of telling me  
how something important's come up  
and she needs me to come over.*

WIDER as Docherty brings the cup to his lips. He sits on the couch in Josie's house. Paula sits next to him.

Aunt Maggie sits in the armchair opposite. She throws up her hands, exasperated.

AUNT MAGGIE

Like I can just drop everything at  
her whim.

Docherty winces as the hot coffee touches his lips. He puts it back down.

DOCHERTY

A--um... colleague of hers at the  
police department was killed last  
night. We have the suspect in  
custody but she isn't talking. We  
have reason to believe that Josie  
may have been with the deceased  
around the time of his death.  
We're worried that some harm may  
have come to her.

AUNT MAGGIE

Well, I certainly hope not. She  
the only one in this family that  
tried to make a decent name for  
herself.

(motions to Paula)

Except her mother... but, well, you  
can see how that turned out.

Docherty turns to Paula. Her hands are wrapped around a coffee cup, which rests on the Calgary Olympics pillow.

DOCHERTY

Mrs. Deumann this is important.  
Can you remember anything about  
where Josie said she was going?

Paula looks at her reflection in the coffee.

PAULA

She wanted to go to the Olympics.

Docherty turns to Aunt Maggie, who shrugs and...

AUNT MAGGIE

She a little, you know...

Points to her head as we CUT TO:

**THE BORDER**

A fifty-foot-wide ribbon of dead grass stretching out  
endlessly.

Exhausted, Bernie stumbles down the center of it through a  
worsening snow storm.

TIME CUT:

The strip of grass opens out as a two-lane highway cuts  
across it.

A BORDER CROSSING STATION sits ahead, illuminated and warm in  
the darkness. The shadow of Chief Mountain looms on the  
horizon.

Bernie stops at the crossroad. Looks down. Legs straddling  
the red paint of the border.

To the left, freedom. To the right, death.

He makes for the border station.

A YOUNG BORDER PATROL AGENT sits at the window. Feet crossed  
on the desk. Reading a newspaper.

Bernie enters the bubble of light outside the window.

YOUNG AGENT

(without looking up)  
Closed. Come back tomorrow.

BERNIE

(muffled; through glass)  
Please help me. I need help.

YOUNG AGENT

I said we're--

He looks at Bernie for the first time. Instant recognition.  
Jumps to his feet, throwing the newspaper aside. Juts a finger at Bernie.

YOUNG AGENT  
Uhhh-- don't move. Stay right there.

He moves to the back of the station, fumbling for something on his belt. Disappears through a back door.

ON Bernie, waiting. He hears a voice to his left.

YOUNG AGENT  
Alright... turn around. Uh, away from me.

The Young Agent has a taser out, trained on Bernie.

Bernie raises his hands. Doesn't turn.

BERNIE  
Please. Wait just a second. I need to talk to you--

YOUNG AGENT  
Please comply, sir!

BERNIE  
Hold on. Just listen to me first--

YOUNG AGENT  
You need to turn around.

BERNIE  
I need help. My friends--GUH!

The Agent fires the taser into Bernie's flank.

*TK-TK-TK-TK.* The barbs spark blue as Bernie flops heavily to the ground thrashing with pain.

The Young Agent keeps the trigger depressed and reaches for a baton on his belt. Edges forward.

Bernie glares at him from the corner of his eye. Neck muscles contracting.

BERNIE  
P-p-please--

THWACK! The Young Agent brings down the baton.

**SMASH TO BLACK**

Bernie wakes. Breathing heavily. Face bloody and bruised.

Looks around...

**A DARKENED CELL**

Rises groggily to his feet. Calls out in a hoarse voice:

BERNIE  
HEY. HELLO? IS THERE ANYONE  
THERE?

He pounds on the cell door.

BERNIE  
HEY! ANSWER ME. I NEED HELP.

His hammering becomes more frenetic.

BERNIE  
I NEED TO TALK TO SOMEONE. CAN YOU  
HEAR ME? HEY!

He kicks at the door. It rattles on its hinges.

Just then, he hears a key turn in the lock. Steps back.

The door swings open. BRIGHT LIGHT. Bernie shields his eyes as...

FOUR PRISON GUARDS BURST IN. Tackle him to the ground. Push him face-down. Each taking hold of a limb.

Bernie struggles. One of the guards twists his arm back.

BERNIE  
Aagh!

The silhouette of a FIFTH MAN appears at the cell door. Bald, thin. Not wearing a uniform.

He moves over to Bernie. Bends down between his legs. Yanks down Bernie's jeans.

Bernie catches a glimpse of a needle in the Bald Man's hand.

BERNIE  
No! God! Wait, wait. Don't--

The Bald Man jabs the needle into Bernie's flesh. Depresses the plunger.

The drugs begin to take effect. Bernie's eyelids become heavy. Speech muddled...

BERNIE  
Don't... don't... don't... die...  
don't...

As he drifts into unconsciousness we hear...

PRE-LAP: The CRACK of a rifle shot.

**JOSIE**

Stands at the top of the rocky knoll. Firing the rifle into the air from her hip. It's early morning.

Josie brings up the binoculars...

Miles to the south a helicopter glides over the trees.

Josie waves at it.

JOSIE

Hey!

She fires into the air again.

The helicopter doesn't change trajectory. Disappears behind a mountain range.

JOSIE

God damn it.

She moves down off the ridge.

Kyle lies in the same position as the night before. Pale and weary. Weak and dying.

KYLE

You should save the ammo. Case you need to walk out.

Josie doesn't respond. She sits on the boulder next to Kyle. Unscrews the canteen. Brings it to his lips. He turns away.

KYLE

We're running low.

JOSIE

You need it.

Kyle's lips stay closed.

JOSIE

I'll pour it up your nose if I have to.

Kyle opens his mouth. She pours in some water. He swallows and wipes his lips.

KYLE

You always were a fence wrecker.

**STATE PRISON**

Docherty and the Warden move down a corridor of cells.

WARDEN

Turned himself in just after midnight. Transferred him over here first thing. Border jockeys got a little hit happy.

They stop outside a cell. The Warden unlatches the viewing portal. Docherty steps up and looks inside...

BERNIE lies strapped to a hospital bed. Drooling. Face swollen and bruised. The blood has been cleaned away.

DOCHERTY

Jesus.

WARDEN

Doctor's put him on some heavy sedatives to calm him down. Don't want him making a scene. Guess no one wants to meet his maker.

DOCHERTY

Mention where he'd been?

WARDEN

Understand he was pretty incoherent. Had a coupla' good needlestick marks on his arms. Looks like he went and injected himself with God knows what. Whatever it was sure made him act crazy. He was kickin' and hollerin' half the night.

DOCHERTY

We gonna try and find out? Where he went?

WARDEN

Under normal circumstances?  
("Yes")  
But the Governor gave the word. Doesn't want any more delays.

PRE-LAP: A BABY WAILS...

**LIZA**

Sits at her kitchen table. Bouncing baby Edward in her arms. Staring down at the cell phone lying on the table.

Josh enters. Rubbing sleep from his eyes.

JOSH  
Someone call? Heard your phone.

Liza nods as he sits down opposite her.

LIZA  
The county prosecutor's office.  
They found him. It's happening  
tonight.

Josh bows his head. Hides his face. Struggling to find the right reaction.

When he looks up there are tears in his eyes. He reaches across the table.

JOSH  
I love you, Liza Toohey... I love  
you... I love you...

Liza presses the back of her hand to her forehead. Lets out deep guttural sobs of relief.

Tears drop onto baby Edward's cheeks and...

Liza finally reaches out and squeezes Josh's hand.

### **JOSIE**

Looks up at the night sky. Kyle's head cradled on her knee. She presses a hand to his forehead. They both stare up at...

THE NORTHERN LIGHTS. Shimmering like an oil slick.

KYLE  
You ever think about what the last thought to run through your mind'll be? Like whether it'll be about something important? Like someone you love or something you regret? Or maybe it'll just be something real dumb. Like a stupid old jingle from a TV commercial you saw when you was a kid. Doesn't seem fair. Not getting to choose.

Josie looks down at him. Tears welling in her eyes.

KYLE  
Can you sing me something?

JOSIE  
Whatta ya want me to sing?

KYLE  
Whatever you want...

Thinking, she shakes her head, at a loss. Then she sings the last song she remembers: Sister Golden Hair.

Josie sings it alone. Acapella. It sounds sad. Mournful. Hopeless. But beautiful. She sings and it continues over...

### **LIZA AND JOSH**

As they drive through a throng of chanting anti-death penalty protestors.

### **BERNIE HOULE'S POV**

BLURRY. DELIRIOUS. INTERCUT WITH MOMENTS OF DARKNESS

Watching his hands being shackled to the hospital bed frame then...

DARKNESS.

Grated ceiling panels glide by...

DARKNESS.

We find ourselves in the execution chamber. Bright fluorescent light overhead.

DARKNESS.

Two guards work on each arm. Can't see what they are doing.

DARKNESS.

### **VIEWING GALLERY**

The witnesses file in and take their seats.

Bernie Houle lies bound to the gurney. Still faint and delirious from the sedatives.

Tubes extend from the crooks of his outstretched arms to a panel in the wall behind him. A one-way mirror sits above the panel.

A CHAPLAIN stands next to him. Hand resting on Bernie's knee. WARDEN off to the side, checks his watch.

PAN ACROSS THE MEMBERS OF THE VIEWING GALLERY

A small audience. Some people we recognize. Some we don't.

Liza bounces baby Edward on her knee. Josh next to her. Clutching her hand.

Scott Priddis sits in the back row. Docherty behind him. Next to the door.

A group of four elderly Chippewa Indians sit together to the side. Their relationship to Bernie is unclear.

The Warden steps over to an intercom panel. He presses a button on it.

WARDEN

We ready to commence?

Liza inspects Bernie's face. He looks straight up at the ceiling. It's the same angle she first saw him but now his face is grey, withered and peaceful.

INTERCOM (V.O.)

*We're ready, sir.*

The Warden turns to Bernie and extracts a prepared statement from his pocket.

WARDEN

Bernard James Houle, the state of Montana has sentenced you to death by lethal injection for the crime of two counts of first degree murder. You have two minutes should you wish to make a final statement.

Bernie doesn't move for a long beat. The Warden blinks.

WARDEN

Did you hear me, Mr. Houle?

Bernie's gaze flickers with recognition. He raises his head slowly towards the viewing gallery.

Locks eyes with Liza Toohey. Gazes ahead blankly. It's unclear whether Bernie can even see her.

Liza is pinned under Bernie's gaze. She turns to Josh for solace. He tries to return her look... but cannot. He averts his eyes with shame.

Liza holds Edward, who starts to blubber, tight to her chest.

WARDEN

Do you have any final words, Mr. Houle?

Bernie tries to speak. Breathing hard. Lets out a murmur.

Docherty takes a small step forward. Straining to hear.

WARDEN

If you have anything to say, Mr. Houle, this is your final chance...

ON BERNIE. Shot from above.

Straining to form words and...

His arms tense against his restraints and...

His chest begins to heave with panic and...

Just as we think he might answer we...

**SMASH TO BLACK.**

And we stay on black...

We stay on black for a long, long time...

Long enough to hear our own thoughts again...

Long enough to consider Bernie Houle's last seconds of life.

Liza Toohey's unrelenting pain.

Kyle and Josie Deumann alone and dying in the wilderness.

And just as we think it might all be over...

**WE'RE ASSAULTED BY AN EXPLOSION OF SOUND AND WIND AND LIGHT**

Josie shields her eyes as...

An angel burning like magnesium flame descends from the sky.

No... not an angel...

A helicopter.

Josie tries to shake Kyle awake.

JOSIE  
Kyle! Kyle, wake up!

He groans through his dying delirium.

#### **THE HELICOPTER**

Idles in a clearing at the base of the rocky knoll.

Kyle, strapped onto a stretcher, is loaded onto the helicopter by a couple of paramedics.

Josie climbs in after them.

#### **INSIDE THE HELICOPTER**

Josie sees Docherty, belted into one of the jump seats in the back. She pauses. They exchange a look.

She moves forward. Straps herself into the seat opposite.

One of the paramedics slams the door shut and taps the pilot's shoulder. Spirals his finger upward.

Josie and Docherty stare at each other for a long beat as the engine drone pitches up to a deafening roar.

Josie is the first to speak. Yelling to be heard:

JOSIE  
Is he..?

DOCHERTY  
He's gone...

Josie bows her head.

JOSIE  
How'd you know?

DOCHERTY  
He said it. He said it before the end. Enough for me to know.

Josie looks down at her sleeping brother.

JOSIE  
What's gonna happen now?

DOCHERTY  
We forget about it.

JOSIE  
Everything?

DOCHERTY

Everything. We move on with our  
lives...

(then, the condition:)

... both of us. Together.

Josie consider this. Docherty stares back. A lifeline. But  
at what price? She shakes her head.

JOSIE

I'm sorry, Tom. I can't. I can't  
forget about it. Not anymore.

Docherty lowers his eyes. Stung by her rejection.

DOCHERTY

I always loved you, Josie Deumann.

Josie's lip quivers.

JOSIE

You'll make sure Kyle's alright?  
To look after Ma?

Docherty looks back up. His jaw tight. He nods. Means it.

She turns away. Watches the glimmer of sunlight come over  
the horizon. Tom follows her gaze out the window.

**JOSIE'S FACE**

Framed in the helicopter window as it banks away from us  
and...

Arcs out across the infinite icy wilderness.

Heading for the waking sun.

FADE TO BLACK

**THE END**