

BY THE HANDS OF WALLY VINE

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. VINE HOUSE - NIGHT

At the end of a wooded cul-de-sac is a grand Victorian home. Peaceful, with a SYMPHONY OF CRICKETS. Kid's bike lying in the yard. Tire swing hanging from a tree.

WALLY VINE (40) paces past a window INSIDE. He's untucked, unshaven, unstrung. Cell phone to his ear.

INT. VINE HOUSE - NIGHT

Pendulum wall clock CHIMES. 11 pm. Blank forms on a table: "DIVORCE", "CHILD CUSTODY".

Hostage to a DISTRESSED VOICE on his cell, Wally's eyes are bloodshot from tears, booze, or both.

WALLY

Put her on-- So wake her.

(swigs from bottle)

I don't want the house, I want you, both of you. It's too big for one per-- Then I'll sleep in the shop-- No no, don't hang-- Anne-- Annie!

Wally drives his fist toward the clock--

EXT. DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Door bursts open. Wally storms out flexing his bloody hand en route to his car.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

The car veers onto the shoulder as wind thrashes trees.

EXT. LAKE HOUSE - NIGHT

Headlights go off as the car crawls up a tree-lined drive. It stops outside a two-story log home.

Under a ceramic frog on the porch Wally finds a spare key.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

A night light projects stars. Birthday balloons hover above a book, "OUR SUN, THE STAR", on the night stand.

Wally watches JANIE sleep. She's 9, adorable, pigtails with RED RIBBONS. He picks her up, steps into...

THE HALLWAY

He hears VOICES from a bedroom and dashes for the stairs.

EXT. LAKE HOUSE - NIGHT

Wind and rain rouse Janie from sleep as Wally sets her in the back seat of his car.

JANIE

Daddy?

WALLY

Happy birthday, sweetie. Seatbelt.

She clicks her seatbelt.

INT./EXT. CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT

Wally's CELL TRILLS on the seat beside him. It reads "ANNE". He shuts it off, slips it in a coat pocket.

JANIE

Are you and mommy getting a divorce?

WALLY

I'm trying not to. Who was she with?

JANIE

(shrugs)

I stayed in my room because of the smell. Where are we going?

WALLY

Thought we'd go to the Pyramid for your birthday. How's that sound?

Janie cheers, pumps her fist. Fully energized.

JANIE

Daddy, did you know the sun is a star? Like the ones at night? It rises earliest and sets latest on my birthday. Miss Jansing says I'm Soul Dust.

WALLY

I think she means Solstice. More light to celebrate with. So what kind of smell? Like daddy's cologne?

JANIE

No. It was like burning.

Confused, Wally looks back at Janie. Just then her eyes pop. She screams at something OUT THE WINDSHIELD--

He whips his focus back to the road: a tree branch plummeting. His foot stomps on the brake--

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

The car swerves, skids, SLAMMING into a massive tree. One headlight still shining.

INT./EXT. CAR - NIGHT

Windshield wipers continue to WHIR. Airbag, steering column jammed into Wally's torso, his watch cracked, hands frozen in time. He gasps for air as...

Janie, saved by her seatbelt, is struck with terror. Her window busted, rain ravages her as Wally gets his bearings.

WALLY
(struggling)
In my coat. My cell.

Janie reaches into his bloody coat. Retrieves a smashed cell. She whimpers, tugs on him, but he's pinned.

WALLY (CONT'D)
Baby Jane. You need to get help.

She eyes the downpour through the lone headlight beam.

WALLY (CONT'D)
You're a brave girl. You're Soul Dust.

Unsure, Janie slips on her shoes and jacket. Pulls the hood over her head. Gives Wally a teary look and opens the door.

Janie walks away in the headlight beam.

HEADLIGHTS in the REAR-VIEW MIRROR.

A DARK CHEVELLE stops beside the wreck. The DRIVER'S SILHOUETTE turns to Wally with a cigarette glow.

WALLY (CONT'D)
My daughter, she went for help--

The Chevelle continues, stops beside Janie. Passenger door opens. She speaks to the unseen driver. Then gets in. Door shuts. The Chevelle disappears down the road.

Wally stares after it. Dumbstruck. But reality hits hard. He tries to thrash free, yelling, VISION BLURRING.

LATER, under a hint of sunrise, FLICKERING RESCUE LIGHTS appear through the trees. SIRENS merge with SHRILL CICADAS.

EXT. VINE HOUSE - DAY

CICADAS. Bright sun. Pile of mail on the porch. The lawn of the once-perfect Victorian home is a weedy jungle.

"FOR SALE" signs outside neighbor's homes.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

DUST SPECKS in a sunbeam as CLOCKS TICK. They're everywhere, each one emitting their own unique sound.

EXT. WORKSHOP - DAY

A separate structure next to the stand-alone garage. SAWING WOOD emanates from inside.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Strewn about a workbench are clock gears and tools. Wall shelves are lined with unfinished clocks.

Wally, bags under eyes, beard and mop of hair, handsaws wood held in a vise. The blade snaps, cutting his hand.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Dishes piled in the sink. Wally, dirty bandana on his hand, sits at the table tying a RED RIBBON around a wrapped gift.

SUPER: "ONE YEAR LATER"

He licks an envelope, seals it: "HAPPY BIRTHDAY JANIE".

INT. JANIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Wally sets the gift on the bed. Gazes at a wall covered with COLORFUL DRAWINGS OF SUNSETS. He crosses the room, presses a hand to one as if feeling its warmth.

He's wearing his BUSTED WATCH.

INT. HOSPITAL OPERATING ROOM - DAY

SURGEONS, PERFUSIONISTS, ANESTHESIOLOGISTS, full scrubs and masks, prepare an INFANT for open heart surgery. Chest open, beating heart exposed. OVERLAPPING CHATTER.

A cardiopulmonary bypass machine WHIRS as blood flows through the tubes.

Surgeon ANNE VINE (40) focuses on the patient while ALAN (35), surgical assistant, readies instruments.

ANNE
Commence cardioplegia.

A NURSE injects serum into an IV line. Anne grips a scalpel as the heart-lung machine takes over.

NURSE
(watching monitor)
Steady at twenty-five Celsius.

The team readies for surgery. But Anne is mesmerized by the TINY HEART STOPPING.

ALAN
Doctor Vine?

Anne snaps out of it.

ANNE
Opening pericardium.

INT. HOSPITAL OFFICE/HALLWAY - DAY

On the wall, photos of child patients, collage of cards thanking "...DR. VINE FOR ALL YOU'VE DONE..."

In casual clothes, posture-perfect, Anne is at her desk searching online for "PRIVATE INVESTIGATORS". Giant mug of coffee, fingers tapping with renewed energy.

Alan, still in scrubs, knocks on the door frame. She jumps, turns off the monitor.

ALAN
Another child with a bright future. We still on for lunch?

ANNE
Today's no good, Alan. Rain check.

Anne grabs her bag, slips past a bewildered Alan down the corridor, past a CLOWN entertaining YOUNG PATIENTS.

EXT. VINE HOUSE - DAY

A Lexus stops in the driveway. Anne gets out.

She kicks aside mail and tries the door. Locked. Her key doesn't work. She rings the BELL then pounds on the door.

ANNE
Wally, it's me, open up.

INT. WALLY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Prescription bottles top a dresser. Wally, in a bed sheet pretzel, jolts awake with the BANGING. Disoriented, he proceeds to get out of bed but falls to the floor.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

COFFEE MAKER DRIPS. Wally cleans gunk from a mug as Anne eyes the wrapping paper. He hands her a COIN: "TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE", a "1" inside a pyramid.

ANNE

(hands it back)

It's a month early.

WALLY

For good behavior I suppose.

Anne brushes him aside, begins washing dishes. He pours coffee as she stares out the window above the sink into the overgrown back yard. Eyes glistening with emotion.

WALLY (CONT'D)

She's ten today. Double digits. Won't be long before she wants to borrow the car.

ANNE

Should've kept the housekeeping and lawn services. Contracts are through the Fall.

WALLY

I can manage it myself.

Wally sits on the counter. Anne shuts off the water, dries her hands with a towel. She can't look him in the eye.

WALLY (CONT'D)

What's it like being an essential cog in all this machinery?

ANNE

I just came to get some jewelry I left behind. I don't have time for your bullshit metaphors--

WALLY

But you're literally a life saver. Unlike me--

ANNE

That's right. Because you did this.

They finally lock eyes, both spent, both suffering.

ANNE (CONT'D)

Yet we both have to live with the consequences. If you call this living. At least I'm trying. Why can't you?

WALLY

Because he's still out there. Laughing at us.

Wally heads out the door to the back yard.

INT. JANIE'S ROOM - DAY

Anne takes a shirt from the dresser, puts it to her cheek. Her eyes shift to the SUNSET DRAWINGS on the wall.

EXT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Anne picks flowers outside the workshop, forms a bouquet, making sure it's perfect.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Anne approaches Wally from behind as he works. PHONE RINGS. She checks caller ID on the cordless: "DALE VINE".

Wally answers but presses "END CALL". He sees the bouquet.

ANNE

If he can't help us we should think outside the box.

WALLY

Like what?

ANNE

Private investigator.

(leaving)

Tormenting yourself doesn't seem to be working.

As the LEXUS ENGINE STARTS Wally eyes NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS above his work bench:

"FBI TASK FORCE DISBANDED"

"LOCAL COPS BUNGLER CASE"

He zeroes in on "SUSPECT FOSTER RELEASED". PHOTO shows a pock-marked man, mid 30s.

INT. MORGUE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Wally leans on a cane, Anne beside him, both in winter coats. They stand before a window covered by a curtain.

Behind them, waiting IN THE HALL, are FBI AGENTS and COPS.

The curtain opens to reveal...

A BODY BAG on a gurney. CRACKLY SPEAKER picks up the distorted sound as a CORONER UNZIPS it. Ugly and grating.

Wally stares in disgust, lips pursed. Fights back tears as a primal scream rises from Anne, fists clenched.

EXT. STREET - DAY (BACK TO PRESENT)

Wally charges down a sidewalk, cuts across a busy street to a strip mall parking lot.

EXT. STRIP MALL PARKING LOT - DAY

From behind a parked van, Wally spies on...

RANDALL FOSTER, the man from the news clipping, pushing a shopping cart train to the "SAVE MORE" discount store.

LATER, his shift ended, Foster waves to a CO-WORKER.

FOSTER

Alright. See ya tomorrow.

Wally peers around the van and sees...

Foster at a **BLACK 1970 CHEVELLE**. Tosses a shopping bag in, shuts the door, crosses the lot, disappears into the woods.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Wally follows Foster at a discrete distance on a path.

Foster, sensing someone, turns.

But Wally ducks behind a tree and grabs a rock. Through the trees he spots...

A school bus. CHILDREN pour out. Some enter the woods.

The kids, startled by Foster, slip past him.

Wally waits for them to pass, mumbles encouragement to himself, steps onto the path with fake courage.

Foster closes in on Wally. But Wally stands his ground, clenching the rock with a trembling hand.

WALLY

It's her birthday today.

Foster eyes the rock. Back to Wally with a slight dismissive shake of the head. Then turns and vanishes down the path.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Wally charges down the shoulder, muttering as HONKING cars swerve past him. He whips the rock at a stop sign.

EXT. CEMETERY HILL - DAY

Anne's Lexus is parked overlooking a sea of headstones. And Wally at one gravesite in particular.

A blue sedan pulls up to the Lexus, driver to driver.

INT. SEDAN/LEXUS - DAY

DALE VINE (45) is behind the sedan's wheel. Cigarette in one hand, popping sunflower seeds, husk and all, in his mouth with the other. Thick mustache, cheap suit.

He and Anne lower their windows.

DALE

How long's he been like that?

ANNE

(checks watch)

Nearly forty-five minutes.

Dale looks up at OMINOUS STORM CLOUDS.

DALE

He's gonna get soaked.

ANNE

I don't think he cares, Dale.

Dale takes a drag. An awkward moment passes between them.

ANNE (CONT'D)

Any progress?

Dales exhales with a sigh. Stubs out his cigarette.

DALE

Still blacklisted. Cap's got me on a short leash. Bullshit cases.

ANNE

Well, detective, you might wanna give your brother a different answer if he asks. You owe him that much.

Anne drives away. Dale lights another cigarette then turns the ignition.

EXT. GRAVESITE - DAY

A few raindrops. Wally runs his fingers along the headstone's words: "JANIE VINE, OUR BELOVED". Atop it is Anne's bouquet.

WALLY

A second chance.

(shuts eyes)

Just give me a second chance.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT

Wally, soaking wet, attaches a lid to a to-go coffee as he shuffles to the front. GLASS BOTTLE BREAKS. He sees...

CARLY (9), armload of 40-ounce brews, broken glass and suds at her feet. Cute as a button yet consumed with fear as her dad, KEVIN (35), grabs her arm.

Wally takes a step, contemplates intervening, but stops.

KEVIN

Go pay. We gotta pick up mom.

Kevin, "SARA" neck tattoo, in a grease-stained jumpsuit, shoves cash in her pocket, nudges her to the counter. He heads OUTSIDE for a smoke under the awning.

Wally helps Carly with the bottles.

CLERK

Daddy's gotta pay for the ones you broke.

WALLY

I got it.

Wally pays, and the Clerk bags the beer. Carly smiles at Wally then carries the bag outside.

Kevin snatches the bag, manhandles Carly into the passenger seat of a pick-up. It drives off in the rain.

WALLY (CONT'D)

You sell umbrellas?

CLERK

Sort of.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Wally, wearing a goofy umbrella hat, walks past a school sipping coffee. Sign reads "DAWSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL".

The blue sedan slows to a crawl beside him. The passenger door opens. Wally quickens his pace, the car tracking him. CARS HONK behind the sedan.

DALE (O.S.)

Get in.

INT. SEDAN (MOVING) - NIGHT

Dale drives while popping sunflower seeds, ashy cigarette between fingers. He eyeballs Wally's umbrella-hat.

DALE

The fuck is that?

WALLY

Keeps my hands free.

DALE

Ever hear of a jacket with a hood? That's real fake-leather you're dripping on.

Wally removes the hat as Dale pops more seeds.

WALLY

You should spit out the husk. They'll shred your insides.

DALE

Least of my problems.

WALLY

Where's Michaels?

DALE

Administering a polygraph. Oh, so get this. That serial flasher we're looking for? Nabbed him outside Chuck E. Cheese. Dude only has one testicle, yet he wears a ski mask.

(laughs)

Talk about visible distinguishing marks.

WALLY

Lie detector seems like overkill.

Dale's laughter subsides.

DALE
Yeah, well, crimes involving children,
Wally. We take that shit seriously.

The POLICE RADIO SQUAWKS. Dale clicks it off, flicks his
butt outside.

WALLY
I saw him again.

DALE
You can barely dress yourself, you wanna
play vigilante?

WALLY
You let him go--

DALE
By law. D.A. won't touch him now--

WALLY
Whose fault is that--?

DALE
Look, I'm already on thin ice. On the job
half my life, and I'm demoted to looking
for willy wavers at an arcade. What do
you suggest I do?

WALLY
Plant something.

Dale scoffs.

DALE
I'm trying to stay outta trouble, Wally,
not invite more--

WALLY
Fine. You asked me.

Dale lights a cigarette.

DALE
Anyway, I got eyes on him.

WALLY
I thought you're off the case.

DALE
Just worry about you. I'll take care of
my end.

Wally lowers his window. Dale raises it, locks it shut.
He exhales smoke, and Wally coughs.

DALE (CONT'D)

I know it's been tough. I can't imagine. But if you let Anne go last year none of this would've ever happened.

Wally seethes, jaw clenched. He's heard it a million times.

DALE (CONT'D)

You swallow your pride, sign the papers like a normal person. You stay home, you don't get in the goddamn car. You leave Janie at the lake house--

WALLY

Pull over.

Dale floors the accelerator.

DALE

You two were on the rocks way before Foster came along. This just tipped it over the edge.

Wally tugs at the door handle. Locked. Dale slams on the brake, and Wally snaps to a stop, spilling his coffee. He swallows his rage, unfastens his seatbelt.

WALLY

However you do it, just fix it.

Wally gets out, doesn't shut the door. Headlights shine on him as he walks away. Dale calls after him.

DALE

And what about you? Can't just sit around feeling sorry for yourself.

WALLY

Just worry about you. I'll take care of my end.

Wally vanishes into the darkness. Dale smashes the umbrella hat, whips it outside.

INT. MEN'S ROOM - DAY

Dale washes his hands at a rest room sink as a TOILET FLUSHES. Detective ANDERS (45) leaves a stall, zips up. Fit, in a sharp suit, Dale's antithesis.

ANDERS

Heard you guys nailed your uniballer.

DALE

You re-check Foster's alibis?

Anders washes his hands as Dale dries his.

ANDERS

Like I'm gonna take your advice.

DALE

You got no pressure on him.

Anders dries his hands as Dale combs his mustache.

ANDERS

Dale, I know you know this, but you're poison. Your interrogation stunt, the evidence tampering--

DALE

That's bullshit, Anders, I didn't tamper--

ANDERS

You moved it, it got tossed. Whaddya call that? As family you shoulda never been there to begin with.

DALE

You'd do the same if she was your niece.

ANDERS

I only have nephews. Maybe you closed some tough cases, but it only takes one misstep to lose your credibility. And the department's.

Anders opens the door. Dale kicks it shut. They square off.

DALE

You need to keep on him.

ANDERS

Press will have a field day we keep harassing the guy--

DALE

There's still just the one dark-colored Chevelle in a thirty-mile radius.

ANDERS

And the only person who allegedly saw it was legally impaired and concussed. Even if Wally's testimony is accurate, don't you think Foster woulda painted the goddamn car by now?

DALE

People do stupid shit. Been telling you six months: he's the one.

ANDERS

And your word, like your brother's, ain't worth jack. Go catch a bed-wetter.

Anders stuffs his used paper towels in Dale's shirt pocket and leaves.

INT. SQUAD ROOM - DAY

PLAIN CLOTHES DETECTIVES and UNIFORMED OFFICERS go about their jobs amidst PHONE RINGS and CHATTER.

Dale fidgets with a pen at his desk, earbuds in. A file open: typed reports, WHEELER'S MUGSHOT, photo of a **RED RIBBON**, numbered tag beside it.

DALE (V.O.)

You own a 1970 white Chevelle.

WHEELER (V.O.)

Yeah, so what.

DALE (V.O.)

So, you go joyriding during storms?

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Wheeler slouches across the table from Dale in an interrogation room. Dale offers a cigarette. Wheeler slips it behind his ear for later.

WHEELER

Like I said, I was nowhere near Portage Lake--

DALE

Eleven-thirty PM, June twentieth--

FOSTER

Did I stutter?

DALE

What about the meth?

FOSTER

I don't know what you're talking about.

DALE

You were pretty amped up that night.

FOSTER

Says who?

DALE

Your alibis. Got a whole list of em--

FOSTER

Who? Gimme a name.

DALE

Take you pick.

FOSTER

Come on, man, you think I'm stupid? I gotta piss in a cup every month.

DALE

Yes, I do.

FOSTER

You do what?

DALE

I think you're stupid. Must be all that ice you're smoking. Rots the brain.

FOSTER

Just get me my lawyer.

DALE

You already waived your right to counsel. I can play back the tape if you like.

Foster puts the cigarette in his mouth, leans forward. Dale flicks his Zippo, lights it. Foster sits back, takes a long drag and exhales out his nose.

DALE (CONT'D)

Your mother lives with you?

Foster sits up, more alert.

DALE (CONT'D)

What is it, bone cancer? Yeah, my dad had it in his throat, got his larynx removed.

(holds up pack)

Too much of this shit. At least your mom can still talk. What's she say about these allegations?

FOSTER

Don't you talk about my mother.

DALE

I'm sure she raised you better than this.

Foster, visibly shaken, taps his fingers on the table.

DALE (CONT'D)

I'm sure if she was here right now she'd tell you to cooperate. Maybe she is.

(MORE)

DALE (CONT'D)

(taps head)

Right? I can't help you if you play hard.

FOSTER

Help? Ain't no one ever help me, man.

(takes long drag)

Maybe the girl, what was her name again?

DALE

Janie.

FOSTER

Maybe Janie...was begging for it.

Dale stares daggers at Foster, stubbing out his smoke.

FOSTER (CONT'D)

(points to Dale's ring)

You're married. Over forty. So unless your pecker don't work you got kids. You know how the little fuckers can get.

Maybe she triggered something.

(smug grin)

Maybe Janie got what she deserved.

Dale lunges at Foster--

INT. SQUAD ROOM - DAY (BACK TO PRESENT)

Dale, staring at FOSTER'S MUGSHOT, listens to the recording of OVERTURNED CHAIRS, YELLING, PUNCHES. His eyes shift to a PHOTO of his WIFE and TWO KIDS.

FOSTER (V.O.)

Get him off me--

His earbuds are ripped out by MICHAELS (60), a frumpy giant, wrinkled suit, gray buzz cut, holding a file.

MICHAELS

He confessed.

Dale wipes sweat from his forehead as he composes himself.

DALE

What? Who did?

MICHAELS

Tadich, our half-sack flasher. Took one look at the poly wires and copped to everything. Even an assault we didn't know about. Power of technology.

Michaels slaps the "TADICH" file down on the desk. Then grabs Foster's file before Dale can stop him.

MICHAELS (CONT'D)
 (flips through file)
 What is this? You copied the file?

Captain NORA VOGEL (55), dressed in a sharp uniform, elicits respect from everyone as she strides with confidence past Dale and Michaels. They straighten up.

DALE
 Morning, Cap.

She gives him a nod then disappears into her office. Dale snatches the file back from Michaels.

MICHAELS
 Don't drag me back into this. I only got a month to retirement.

Michaels heads to his desk.

DALE
 (to self)
 Prick.

Dale locks Foster's file in his desk, wheels his chair out, cutting off uniformed Officer REDSON (25).

DALE (CONT'D)
 Officer Redson. How would you like some real police work for a change?

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Dale leans against his parked sedan, door open, MUSIC PLAYING. Popping sunflower seeds, he eyes the Chevelle.

Redson, in street clothes, returns from the Save More. Eager to please, a bit skittish.

REDSON
 His shift ended at two.

DALE
 Then what's his car doing here?

As Redson searches for an answer a school bus drops off KIDS. Dale reaches into his sedan, removes keys from the ignition. Redson follows him back to the Save More.

DALE (CONT'D)
 One thing you need to learn, Henry, may I call you Henry--?

REDSON
 Well, my name's Todd--

DALE

Henry, the longer you're on the job the more it starts to bite back. When you sense you're on the right track, don't let anyone tell you otherwise.

REDSON

Has Captain Vogel signed off on this?

DALE

She wants what's best for the community. So do I.

REDSON

What's with all the bird food?

DALE

Keeps me from smoking.

Dale takes a final drag from a cigarette and flicks it.

INT. SAVE MORE - DAY

Dale and Redson enter the store.

DALE

Wait here a few in case he returns. Then head back before they notice you're gone.

REDSON

But you drove.

Dale leaves poor Redson at the door and flashes his badge to a pimply CLERK.

DALE

Manager?

INT. BREAK ROOM - DAY

Clutter. Cleaning supplies stacked in a corner. The female MANAGER (40) shows Dale to a bank of lockers.

DALE

Said you hired him on the spot? A little risky, wouldn't you say?

MANAGER

Technically he hadn't done anything wrong.

DALE

Technically I'm Santa Claus every Christmas Eve.

MANAGER

That's his. Lucky number seven.

DALE

No locks?

MANAGER

It's a break room, not a bank vault.

Dale rummages through the locker. Clothes, cigarettes, Xbox games, box of condoms.

DALE

Got a girlfriend?

MANAGER

No sir, straight since college-- Oh, you mean Foster. Ain't my concern. How long's this gonna take? We're in the middle of inventory.

Dale shuts the locker. He sees snapshots tacked to a bulletin board and gets a closer look.

DALE

What's all this?

MANAGER

My cousin's son was in Mott Children's Hospital back in May. Few of my employees went to cheer up the whole ward.

Dale zeroes in on PHOTOS of Clowns playing with children in hospital gowns, hugging them. A sign on the wall: **"CONGENITAL HEART CENTER"**.

DALE

He had surgery?

MANAGER

Two of em, back to back. VSD.

DALE

Who was his doctor, you remember?

MANAGER

Place is huge. Everyone's in a white coat.

The Pimply Clerk ducks his head in.

PIMPLY CLERK

That shipment of Pringles is missing. I looked everywhere.

MANAGER

Not again. Excuse me.

The manager leaves. Dale pockets the clown photo, heads back to lucky locker #7. He runs a finger along a video game's cover, picking up white powder.

INT. SEDAN - DAY

Dale surveils the Save More entrance from behind the wheel. He sees Foster leave.

INT. WOODS - DAY

Dale follows Foster down the same trail as Wally. He ducks behind the same tree when Foster turns. FOOTSTEPS RECEDE.

At the edge of the woods, Dale parts branches to see...

Foster walking across a school parking lot, eyeing a line-up of yellow buses.

INT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY

Wally takes a new saw blade off a hardware store rack.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Hardware bag in hand, Wally sees the "SAMMY'S TAVERN" sign down the block.

EXT. SAMMY'S TAVERN - DAY

Wally peers INSIDE THE BAR window: PATRONS tip back beers, smoke cigarettes under a "NO SMOKING" sign.

The bar's owner, SAMMY (65), lean, muscular, hook for one hand, steps out a side door, tosses a garbage bag into a dumpster. He spots Wally.

SAMMY

Holy jumpin'!

Sammy surprises Wally with a bear hug. On Sammy's forearm is a "USMC" tattoo with "SEMPER FIDELIS".

SAMMY (CONT'D)

Barely recognized you. How're things at home? How's Annie? You two holding up?

Smiles fade. Sammy shifts gears.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

Saw that S.O.B. on the news again. He's got a job.

WALLY

Yeah, Save More, off Stadium.

SAMMY

And still crying for your brother's head.
You ask me, someone should take him to
the woods, put a bullet behind his ear.
Your pop woulda said the same.

Wally breaks eye contact. He has nothing to add. He continues down the sidewalk.

EXT. GREYHOUND STATION - DAY

Passing VAGRANTS outside the bus station Wally sees...

SARA (27), cut-offs, tanktop, a week-old black eye, helping Carly out of a beaten two-door Chevy.

Kevin's pick-up SCREECHES to a stop. He bolts from the truck, barrels toward Sara as she ushers Carly behind her. The woman is tough but afraid for her child.

Kevin blocks the entrance to the station.

SARA

What are you gonna do? There's a dozen witnesses.

KEVIN

Bitch, you could take a bus up to fucking Jupiter, and I'd still find you.

SARA

You wouldn't know up from a thumb in your ass.

Wally stands frozen as Kevin lunges, grabs Carly, who cries as he drags her to his pick-up.

Sara goes after him, pounding her fists into his back. He backhands her across the mouth.

SARA (CONT'D)

Motherfucker! Let her go!

Wally finally rushes over, separates Kevin from Carly. She hides behind Sara.

All eyes on Wally. Even the Vagrants stare. Some walk away, wanting no part of this.

KEVIN

You know this hobo?

Sara shakes her head. Kevin tries to skirt past Wally, but Wally stiff-arms him. Kevin lunges, headlocks Wally, and slams his face into the Chevy's hood.

SARA

Oh my God.

Carly resumes crying. Kevin gut-punches Wally, who doubles over.

EXT. SAMMY'S TAVERN - DAY

Sammy heaves trash in the dumpster and hears the FIGHT.

EXT. GREYHOUND STATION - DAY

Wally throws a nothing-punch. Kevin yanks his beard down, thrusts a knee into his face. Wally drops hard. Kevin winds up to kick him...

But Sammy lunges from behind, locks Kevin in a chokehold, his hook-hand scratching his cheek. Kevin goes limp then gasps as Sammy releases him.

Kevin glares at Sara. But it turns to remorse. He takes a step toward her, Carly clinging to her leg.

KEVIN

Sara--

She backs up, wanting nothing to do with him. He understands with a nod, hops in his truck and drives off.

SAMMY

Kid never could throw a punch. Gimme a hand.

Sara helps Sammy lift Wally.

INT. SAMMY'S TAVERN - DAY

Wally holds ice to his face. Across the booth from him are Sara and Carly, staring.

Sammy sets down a glass of water and aspirin for Wally, a BOX OF CRAYONS for Carly. She starts drawing on napkins.

SAMMY

(to Sara)

Sure you don't want anything?

Sara nods. Sammy returns to the bar as Wally watches Carly draw. He sips water and winces.

SARA

Hurts, huh?

Wally gestures "a little bit" as he plucks a bloody tooth from his mouth, plops it in his water glass, and sips.

SARA (CONT'D)

Maybe something stronger?

WALLY

This is as strong as I get.

SARA

Anyway, I'm Sara. This is Carly.

WALLY

Pleasure to officially meet you both. My name's--

CARLY

I once had a caterpillar named Wally. He went to sleep one day. When he woke up he flew away.

Wally smiles, impressed by little Carly.

SARA

Sammy filled us in.

WALLY

What exactly did he tell you?

SARA

Just that he's an old family friend.

WALLY

(rubbing neck)

Guess he's my guardian angel in more ways than one.

SARA

Listen, I'm truly grateful--

WALLY

I was just lucky to be walking by.

(touches swollen cheek)

Or unlucky.

Wally eyes Sara's faded shiner as Carly gawks at him.

CARLY

Does your face get itchy?

WALLY

No. Why do you ask?

CARLY

Because of your beard, silly.

Wally feels his beard, acting surprised as he checks his reflection in the napkin dispenser.

WALLY

Musta grew while I slept. Not as cool as wings, though, is it?

Carly lets out a cute, infectious giggle.

WALLY (CONT'D)

You're very pretty. I'm sure your mommy tells you that every day.

Carly blushes, shies away.

SARA

Well, I appreciate what you did, but we gotta find a place to stay.

WALLY

What about the bus?

SARA

Kevin's right. He'd find us.

Sara takes Carly's hand, heads out the door. Wally admires Carly's DRAWING OF A BUTTERFLY.

WALLY

Sammy, I need that thing we talked about.

SAMMY

You sure?

WALLY

I'm not sure about much of anything.

Sammy reluctantly unlocks a safe under the bar.

SAMMY

I promised your pop I'd keep it in mint condition.

WALLY

I'll wear gloves.

EXT. SAMMY'S TAVERN - DAY

Wally, with a cigar box and his hardware store bag, catches up to Sara and Carly.

WALLY

You can stay with me. I have plenty of room.

Sara turns to see Sammy in the doorway.

SARA

You vouch for this guy?

SAMMY

He don't bite. Far as I know.

INT. CHEVY (MOVING) - DAY

Wally, riding shotgun, struggles with the seatbelt as Sara drives.

SARA

So where's your car?

WALLY

In the shop.

SARA

Don't bother, it's broke. That's why Carly sits in back.

Wally turns to see Carly. She smiles at him.

WALLY

You left this behind.

He hands her the butterfly drawing then tries to lower his window. It won't budge.

SARA

Also broke. Seems the only thing you can do in this dungheap is stop, go...

Lighter pops out. She lights a cigarette.

SARA (CONT'D)

...and smoke. Bad habit, I know.

(to Carly)

Right, baby?

CARLY

She's been quitting for two years.

Sara offers Wally a cigarette. He waves it off while trying not to cough.

EXT. VINE HOUSE - DAY

Sara pops the Chevy's trunk, grabs a duffle bag, breezes past Wally through the overgrown grass.

SARA

My go-bag finally came in handy.

Carly runs to the tire swing as Sara climbs the porch steps. The pile of mail is even bigger.

SARA (CONT'D)

You're a little backed up here.

WALLY

I've been away.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sara admires a grandfather clock in the living room as Carly is in awe of all the other clocks TICKING.

SARA

I thought clockmakers lived in castles.

Wally makes a feeble attempt to clean the room.

WALLY

We do. It's more of a hobby these days, so I downsized. Something to drink?

SARA

I really could use a beer.

WALLY

Sorry, no beer. You like Vernors?

Sara shakes her head with a grimace. Carly nods excitedly.

CARLY

It makes my nose itch, but I wait for the bubbles to go down.

WALLY

Smart girl.

Wally leaves the room. Sara scans family photos, sees Anne in a red dress.

SARA

Who's the lady in red?

WALLY (O.S.)

That's Anne. My wife.

Wally returns with water for Sara, Vernors for Carly.

WALLY (CONT'D)

We've been separated for a year.

SARA

Shit, I'm sorry.

WALLY

I've gotten used to living alone.

Sara eyes the mess and Wally's shaggy look.

Carly touches a broken clock, the same one Wally punched a year ago. Hands and pendulum fall off. She gasps.

WALLY (CONT'D)

It's okay. Been meaning to fix this one.

Carly sees a photo of Janie on the tire swing.

CARLY

Who's that?

WALLY

My daughter Janie. Just turned ten.

INT. JANIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Wally flips on the light, hides the gift behind his back. Carly is in awe with the sunset drawings. Sara remains in the doorway, skeptical of Wally.

CARLY

Wowwww. She drew all these?

WALLY

Every last one. There's brand new PJs in the dresser.

SARA

What do you say, Carly?

Carly surprises Wally with a tight hug.

CARLY

Thank you, Wally.

INT. GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Wally shows Sara to a cozy chamber. She sets her bag on the four-poster bed.

SARA

So. Risk your life for strangers often?

WALLY

Look, I'm not asking you to move in--

SARA

Hey I'm grateful, really. But-- I mean you're a dad, you get it, right? Can't be too careful. Carly's already been through the ringer.

WALLY

Well you're here now, might as well get a good night's sleep. My room's just down the hall.

(off Sara's look)

There's lock on all the doors.

Wally follows Sara's gaze to scars on the insides of his wrists. He leaves.

WALLY (CONT'D)

Good night.

The door shuts behind him.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Sara, wearing an oversized Detroit Lions jersey-T, leaves her room. She steps down the hall, presses her ear against a door, and hears a DRESSER DRAWER OPEN.

INT. WALLY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Wally clears the prescription bottles into the drawer.

On the floor, he struggles with sit-ups in a band of moonlight. Scars branch across his torso, thick scar tissue where his belly button used to be.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Creeped out by WALLY GRUNTING, Sara heads back to her door, shuts it, continues on to...

INT. JANIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Sara shuts the door behind her. LOCKS IT. Wedges a chair under the doorknob. Then slides into bed with Carly, who's sound asleep.

INT. JANIE'S ROOM - DAY

Sara wakes to the sound of a DIESEL ENGINE. Carly is gone. The door is wide open.

EXT. BACK YARD - DAY

Wally, holding frozen peas to his face, watches DELIVERY MEN unload wood planks from a diesel truck. His beard is gone. Not a clean shave, but he looks human.

Carly chases a butterfly with a net. Grass past her knees.

Wally sees Sara in the kitchen window lighting a cigarette.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

As Sara smokes, Wally cracks the window above the sink.

SARA
You clean up well.

WALLY
Carly was right. It was getting itchy.

They watch Carly OUTSIDE while sipping coffee.

SARA
I cut hair, I could give you a trim.

WALLY
I'm good, thanks.

Sara stubs out her cigarette.

SARA
I took Carly to work one time. This Miami chica wanna-be struts in, ass hanging out of her short-shorts, braids down to her coin slot. Says she wants some areas tightened. Then Carly gets to whining, she's hungry, she's this, she's that. Chica goes "Better feed that brat 'fore you mess up my locks".

WALLY
She said this?

SARA
I'm fucking pissed, dude. I take the clippers -- zzeeoorrmm -- down the middle of her knobby head.

WALLY
(laughs)
What did she do?

SARA
Nothin'. She's like...
(eyes pop, mouth agape)
(MORE)

SARA (CONT'D)

So I point the clippers gansta-style. I'm like "Want me to wax that mustache of yours, too, bitch?" She whips off the apron, runs out crying. Never saw her again.

Wally laughs. It's good therapy. But it wanes as he watches Carly OUT THE WINDOW.

SARA (CONT'D)

Gotta protect our girls. Whatever it takes.

PHONE RINGS. Wally answers a cordless as Sara leaves through the back door.

WALLY

Hello?

NEWSPAPER REPORTER (V.O.)

Mr. Vine, Ann Arbor Times. Care to make a statement about the recent news report?

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Wally watches A LAPTOP with increasing agitation:

A TV REPORTER with a mic stands in a forest clearing.

TV REPORTER (V.O.)

It was here in Roscommon last February where the story took a gruesome turn.

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

K9 dogs sniff a snow covered field lit by flood lights. Police tape marks a perimeter as CSIs and DETECTIVES, including Dale, Michaels, Anders, gather evidence.

TV REPORTER (V.O.)

Her body, found by hikers, had been dumped earlier in the year.

EXT. CORN FIELD - DAY

SEARCHERS scour a harvested field for clues.

TV REPORTER (V.O.)

After eight months a massive search yielded no physical evidence and only a handful of anonymous tips.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Searchers scan the woods as bloodhounds sniff.

TV REPORTER (V.O.)

The investigation hinged upon a single eye witness account of the abduction. The father, Wallace Vine...

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

CELL PHONE FOOTAGE: EMTs ready a stretcher. FIREFIGHTERS pry open the door to Wally's totaled car. Emergency vehicles, police cars block the flare-marked road.

TV REPORTER (V.O.)

...who described the arrival of a mysterious stranger at the scene of his accident exactly one year ago today.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Anne pushes a bandaged and battered Wally in a wheel chair as microphones and cell phones are shoved in his face.

WALLY

I've given my statement to the police, and I'm confident in their efforts.

A CACOPHONY OF QUESTIONS are hurled at Wally as Anne pushes him through the crowd. Dale ushers them away.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

The TV Reporter speaks INTO THE CAMERA.

TV REPORTER

But with a blood-alcohol level of point-one-two, many considered Mr. Vine's account to be nothing more than a wild tale. Including the primary suspect...

INSERT PHOTO of Foster. Shirtless, grinning, beer in hand.

TV REPORTER (V.O.)

Randall Lee Foster.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

Foster, arm in a sling, face battered, speaks to the TV Reporter as he walks to his black Chevelle, his CURSE WORDS BLEEPED.

FOSTER

'Course I deny it. Cop in charge is his own brother? Fuck's sake, man. That don't reek of conspiracy, don't know what does. Lucky I didn't press charges.

TV REPORTER

Do you have anything to say to the family?

FOSTER

I feel real bad for them folks, but I didn't do a fuckin' thing. And if I'm harassed again I'll get a restraining order. I have rights. Ain't my fault the guy can't protect his fuckin' kid.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Wally glares at the FREEZE FRAME IMAGE of Foster staring back at him.

EXT. VINE BACK YARD - DAY

Carly nets a butterfly as Sara sits in a lawn chair flipping through a magazine.

Wally barges out the back door. He means business.

WALLY

Where is he? Where's your husband?

SARA

Dude, forget it. Yesterday's scrap will look like a pillow fight if you poke him.

WALLY

(tucking in shirt)
I'll be fine. My brother's a cop.

SARA

I've gone to the cops.
(points to her black eye)
See what that got me?

CARLY

Mommy, look!

Carly shows Sara the butterfly she caught. But Sara instead focuses on the bruises on both of Carly's arms.

CARLY (CONT'D)

What should I do with it?

SARA

Keep it for a bit then let it go.

Carly examines the butterfly up close then releases it.

CARLY

(waves)
Come back soon.

WALLY

Like you said: Gotta protect our girls.

EXT. COOPER'S GARAGE - DAY

Auto repair shop. Clutter and grease. Cars on blocks, hoods open. A sign reads "COOPER'S GARAGE & SALVAGE". The Chevy pulls up, and Wally steps out.

Two portly, twin mechanics, LUKE and LANCE (25), in jumpsuits, names stitched on, stare at him.

WALLY

Kevin around?

LANCE

Through the garage, out back.

LUKE

Don't wake Jessie.

Wally cuts between the two grease monkeys and into the garage. He hears them SNICKER.

INT. COOPER'S GARAGE - DAY

Wally steps through the shop. FLUORESCENTS HUM above a workbench covered with parts and tools.

He sees a rottweiler sleeping in front of the back door.

WALLY

Jessie, I presume?

Wally opens the door wide enough to slip through. But his shoelace catches on the dog's collar. Jessie jolts awake.

Snarls, teeth bared. They clamp down on Wally's pant leg. He tries to jerk his leg free. Luckily a SHARP WHISTLE sends Jessie bolting outside.

EXT. SALVAGE YARD - DAY

Towering walls of junk cars and scrap metal. A magnetic crane lifts a crushed heap and stacks it atop others.

Pet by Kevin, Jessie growls as Wally cautiously approaches.

KEVIN

Well look who's ready for round two.

WALLY

I don't want any trouble. Your wife and daughter are staying with me.

Kevin spits tobacco.

WALLY (CONT'D)

I know what you're probably thinking.

KEVIN

Hell, if you did you'd be gone by now,
cowboy.

Kevin whistles, ordering his beast loping into the stacks. He closes in on Wally, grabbing a SHARP METAL SCRAP along the way.

WALLY

It's just for a few days. Look, I get it, maybe things weren't going the way you wanted. Mistakes were made.

KEVIN

Man putting his foot down is the law of nature, bro. Ain't no mistake about it.

WALLY

You hit your wife. In front of your daughter. You don't see anything wrong with that?

KEVIN

Got a plump pair on you. I respect that.

Wally briefly relaxes at the odd compliment. But Kevin inches closer, backing Wally into a stack of pipes.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

Tell you what's wrong, you hairy fuckin' faggot. You don't know a goddamn thing about keeping a family together. If you did you wouldn't need to steal mine.

WALLY

I'm not stealing anyone--

KEVIN

I thought you looked familiar.

Wally shifts from fear to confusion.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

And then it me like a sack 'a runny shit. You were front page news last year. Helluva story. But I sure as shit ain't gonna let you fuck up my family like you did yours.

Wally tries to speak, but Kevin grips his throat, sticks the rusty metal shard into Wally's ear canal.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

Half an inch you'll scream in pain.
Another half you won't even hear it. So
you tell them to come home, where they
belong. Tonight. Nod if you hear me.

Wally nods, terrified. Kevin releases him, tosses the metal scrap, disappears into the stacks.

A WHISTLE sends Jessie charging in attack mode. Wally sprints for his life back to the garage.

He barely makes it inside, slams the door shut, Jessie slobbering on the glass.

EXT./INT. CHEVY - DAY

Behind the wheel, Wally fumbles the keys, finds the right one, turns the ignition.

The engine WON'T START. *Shit!* Lance and Luke approach as he pumps the gas pedal. Finally the ENGINE KICKS IN.

EXT. COOPER'S GARAGE - DAY

Kevin whistles for Lance, nods to the Chevy driving away. The twins head to a souped-up Cutlass.

EXT. SIDEWALK CAFÉ - DAY

Anne lunches with Alan at a sidewalk café crowded with DINERS.

ALAN

To the best surgeon in the Midwest.

Alan clinks his glass against Anne's, her mind elsewhere. He places his hand atop hers. She withdraws.

ANNE

Don't make it awkward, Alan.

ALAN

What's the matter? I thought you and
Wally were--

ANNE

(scanning menu)
How about dessert? We can share one.
That's something, right?

Alan looks like he's seen a ghost. Anne follows his gaze, and she spots Wally in the Chevy at a red light.

INT./EXT. CHEVY - DAY

Wally sees them, throws open the door, charges between traffic toward the café as HORNS HONK.

ANGRY DRIVER (O.S.)

Move your car, moron!

EXT. SIDEWALK CAFÉ - DAY

Alan digs for his wallet as Wally barrels toward them.

ALAN

I'll go pay.

Alan follows a passing WAITRESS. Diners notice Wally's appearance. So does Anne. She pulls him aside as he grabs bread from an abandoned table.

ANNE

What are you doing?

WALLY

I haven't eaten all day.

Wally dips the bread in a saucer of olive oil as a BUSBOY clears a table. He takes a huge bite.

ANNE

Whose car is that?

WALLY

A friend's.

Anne examines his face more closely. He jolts back.

ANNE

You look half-human without your beard, but my God, what the hell happened?

WALLY

See Foster playing the victim card again?

Anne nods, still concerned with his injuries.

WALLY (CONT'D)

(brushing her hand away)

Well Dale says he's taking care of it.

He drinks water from another finished table, eyeing Alan at the waitress station.

ANNE

Taking care how? What's that even mean?

WALLY

I don't know. New leads or something.

ANNE

He didn't say anything to me about it.

(off Wally's look)

He's still my brother-in-law. I'm allowed to talk to him. What new leads?

WALLY

(watching Alan)

I don't know. What's going on here?

ANNE

It's just lunch. Does he think Foster's gonna confess all of a sudden?

WALLY

I don't know. Some sort of side investigation.

ANNE

How? He's off the case.

Wally shrugs, turns back to Anne.

ANNE (CONT'D)

You don't know. The Vine brothers don't know anything.

(takes paper from purse)

I put together a list.

Wally takes the paper and scans it.

WALLY

Loden Jack? Vinnie Romano? You get these from a comic book?

ANNE

They're two of the top rated private investigators in the entire Midwest.

WALLY

We're not hiring a private investigator.

ANNE

We need a fresh perspective. It can't hurt.

WALLY

You saw how Foster reacted to actual police pressure.

ANNE

No, we saw how he reacted to Dale's incompetence.

WALLY

How do you think a fake cop will fare?

ANNE

These aren't fake. Most are retired detectives with thirty years of experience.

WALLY

All they see are dollar signs.

ANNE

(increasingly agitated)
So what? Gives them incentive. You accuse me of sitting back. You think I don't have the same degree of outrage? As if your lack of personal hygiene somehow makes you more in touch with your feelings. I'm not all steady hands, Wally, believe me. Except now I'm doing something. I can't sit around waiting for you to perk up or Dale to suddenly do his fucking job.

Anne, aware of diners watching them, calms herself. She reaches for the list, but Wally holds it out of reach.

WALLY

Is Alan part of your healing process?

Alan returns. Wally pockets the list, gives Alan a stern look and heads back to the Chevy.

ALAN

You're right. This was awkward.

The CHEVY SPUTTERS, kicks out black smoke as it drives off.

EXT. VINE GARAGE - DAY

The Chevy parks in the garage. Wally gets out, not seeing the Cutlass down the road doing a u-turn and peeling away.

EXT. BACK YARD - DAY

Carly gathers grass with a rake. Sara kills the push mower when she sees Wally head to his workshop.

SARA
 Yo. I got bored.
 (sees Wally's torn pants)
 Dude, I warned you.

Sara hurries toward Wally.

SARA (CONT'D)
 Was that stupid-ass dog of his, wasn't it?

WALLY
 Just lotsa chest thumping. You're safe
 here. Did I mention my brother's a cop?

He enters the workshop, shutting the door behind him--

INT. CAPTAIN'S OFFICE - DAY

Door shuts. It's Dale, with a file. He peers back through the blinds INTO THE SQUAD ROOM at Anders and lights a cigarette. Cap is at her desk writing up a report.

CAP
 By all means, come in.

DALE
 If you give me another chance I think I
 can nail Foster all on my own.

Cap takes a bottle of vodka and two glasses from a drawer.

CAP
 What you think and what's provable--

DALE
 Yeah yeah, light years apart. What if it
 was your little brother? Could you
 forgive him?

CAP
 (pouring two drinks)
 Well, I'm an only child, so... Look,
 Wally's actions set this in motion, but
 yours kept it going. Blaming each other
 won't bring her back.

Dale downs his drink in one gulp and gags in disgust.

DALE
 Is that water? This whole time I thought
 you kept vodka in there.

CAP

You watch too many movies.
(nodding to file)
What do got there?

DALE

Foster's alibis. Twentieth to twenty-third of June last year.

CAP

I ordered you to hand everything over to Detective Anders.

DALE

Guess papers got mixed up.
(flipping through file)
Louis Driscoll said he and Foster were out boozing the night of the abduction.

CAP

We already know that--

DALE

Tells me it's a bar in Manchester. A week later, tells Michaels it's Stockbridge.

CAP

They were bar hopping, it's old news.

DALE

Both owners eventually admitted the two assholes weren't at either one, right?

CAP

Cut to the chase, Dale.

DALE

Well I thought maybe, with your permission, I could take a drive out there, see if they change their tune a third time.

CAP

Absolutely not.

DALE

I can punch out, go off the books--

CAP

The alibis don't matter--

DALE

Of course they matter--

CAP

You have other cases--

DALE

But I want this one--

CAP

What are you, a child? I've cut you a ton of slack, so has Internal Affairs. As far as they're concerned you're still on probation. So whatever you got going, even a passing thought on the shitter, shut it down. Leave witnesses, alibis, evidence collection to Anders. If he needs help, he'll come to you.

DALE

Won't hold my breath.

CAP

I don't know what promises you made to Wally, but don't string him along. Cases go cold. Sorry it might happen to hers.

Dale is dejected. He knows she's right.

INT. SQUAD ROOM - DAY

At his desk, Dale studies PHOTOS OF FOSTER: outside a mobile home, beside his Chevelle, drinking with buddies.

On the file: names, addresses, dates. Dale zeros in on a phone number for "DRISCOLL, LOUIS" and dials his cell.

AUTOMATED VOICE (V.O.)

The number you are trying to reach has been dis--

Dale ends the call as Anders breezes by, laughing with others.

ANDERS

Cap shorten your leash again?

EXT. SALVAGE YARD - NIGHT

Jessie roars, his CHAIN LEASH taut. A SHARP WHISTLE, and the beast sits quietly.

INT. WORKSHOP - NIGHT

As Wally planes a wood plank he hears RUSTLING outside. He takes the cigar box from a drawer. Opens it, unfolds a felt cloth to reveal a .38 and bullets.

CLANG CLANG!

EXT. WORKSHOP - NIGHT

Gun aimed hip-high, Wally hears another *CLANG* and sees...

Raccoons dash from tipped garbage cans, trash strewn about.

INT. DEN - NIGHT

Wally gathers Carly's drawings from the floor.

INT. JANIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Sara sleeps beside Carly in bed. Carly opens her eyes, smiles at Wally as he tapes her picture to the wall beside Janie's. She waves at him. He waves back.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Wally drinks a glass of water, the faucet still running. He sees Sara's reflection in the window above the sink.

SARA

I dreamt there was a marching band outside.

She takes the glass from him.

SARA (CONT'D)

Forget about Kevin. He'll never change.

(shuts off faucet)

I don't know what went down between you and your wife, and I ain't asking. Lord knows you never wanna talk about it. But I found this earlier.

Sara hands a folded paper to Wally. He opens it. It's Anne's private investigator list.

CAR DOORS. Sara recognizes a DOG'S BARK.

SARA (CONT'D)

Shit.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

Wally steps onto the porch, peers into the darkness. Nothing but CRICKETS. Sara appears behind him, then Carly, rubbing her sleepy eyes.

The CHAIN LEASH JANGLES. Kevin emerges from the shadows, the twins in tow. Lance has growling Jessie by the leash.

KEVIN

Hey, Carly cutie.

CARLY
 (hiding behind Sara)
 Hi, daddy.

SARA
 Kevin, just leave.

KEVIN
 Not without my family. This freak ain't
 right in the head.

As Kevin nears the porch Wally takes the gun from his
 waistband, aims at Kevin. Sara gasps, shielding Carly.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
 You are a true cowboy, I will give you
 that, Wally Vine.

SARA
 He knows your name?

Wally stands his ground as Kevin climbs the steps.

KEVIN
 Baby, you wanna play house with this
 sideshow, go right ahead. Sweet Pea's
 coming with me.

Kevin lunges, grabs Carly. She screams as he darts down the
 steps. Wally makes a move, but Sara leaps from the porch.

SARA
 Carly!

Jessie charges. Lance yanks him back, inches from Sara.

Wally goes after Kevin, who uses Carly as a shield. She
 thrashes free. Kevin chases after her, but Wally fires--

--a BULLET SMASHING into the tree next to Kevin.

Everything freezes. Except Jessie's fierce, guttural
 roars. Both twins need to hold the leash.

Kevin WHISTLES, and Jessie sits like a good doggy. He
 takes the leash.

KEVIN
 Sometimes heros die in the end.

Lance and Luke follow Kevin into the darkness. CAR DOORS.
 ENGINE STARTS. The TRUCK PEELS AWAY.

Sara takes Carly inside. Wally follows, but the door
 slams in his face. It's locked, so he knocks.

INT. FOYER - NIGHT

Door opens. It's Anne, facing the woman inside, PAMELA (45), exhausted, irritated. They eye each other, tension a mile thick.

Dale comes to the door. Pamela throws Anne a look of contempt before retreating into the house.

INT. DALE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Dale leads Anne through the living room, TV BLARING a VIOLENT ACTION MOVIE. He lowers the volume with a remote.

DALE
Aunt Annie's here.

ANNE
Hey, kids.

JULIE (10) and DANNY (12) throw lazy waves, eyes glued to the TV. The SOUND returns to 11 as Dale leads Anne to...

INT. STUDY - NIGHT

Cluttered desk. Bag of sunflower seeds. Packed ashtray. Dale checks the hall, shuts the door after Anne enters. She's annoyed as he rummages through papers on the desk.

DALE
Call first if you're gonna come here.

He finds a pint of bourbon, takes a belt, offers it to Anne. She ignores it.

ANNE
What's this about a side investigation?

DALE
It's more an informal inquiry.

ANNE
Yeah? How informal? Is it even sanctioned by the department?

DALE
What do you think?
(lights cigarette)
Something's off about Foster's alibi.

ANNE
Which one?

DALE

Driscoll. I can't find him. Cell phone's disconnected.

ANNE

I thought you cleared him.

DALE

I did. But there's a timing issue. Could be nothing.

ANNE

Or could be everything. Where is he?

DALE

If I say I don't know, I don't know.

ANNE

I'm hearing a lot of that lately.

Anne snatches Dale's cigarette. But before she can take a drag he offers her the pack.

DALE

I'm trying to quit.

She takes one. He lights it for her.

DALE (CONT'D)

You remember a patient, Kyle Peterson? Last month. Had something called VSD.

Anne thinks, shaking her head.

ANNE

Could've been a referral, another team member. Why?

DALE

How often did Janie visit you at the hospital?

ANNE

Wally brought her by a few times. She hated the smell.

DALE

Who doesn't? Were there volunteers?

ANNE

It's a hospital, there's always volunteers.

DALE

Vetted?

ANNE
I assume so. Why?

Dale shows her the photo.

ANNE (CONT'D)
What is this?

He holds it closer to her. She studies it, a look of disgust growing at...

Randall Foster dressed as a clown.

Her color drained, eyes glassy as Dale pockets the photo.

ANNE (CONT'D)
When was that taken?

DALE
Last month. I'm assuming it wasn't his first time.

Anne is stunned.

ANNE
You said he was out joyriding, that it was random.

Dale has no words as Anne clears a space on the desk, leans against it.

PAMELA (O.S.)
You two have ten minutes until bedtime.

The KIDS PROTEST. Dale hides the booze under papers as FOOTSTEPS APPROACH THEN FADE.

DALE
Department's more worried about its PR image. I need to tread carefully.

Dale stubs his smoke, pops sunflower seeds in his mouth.

ANNE
Randall Foster has been the prime suspect for eight months. How long is this going to fucking take? Had it been one of your kids you would've bent the rules--

DALE
I did bend them--

ANNE
Not far enough!

ACTION MOVIE GUNFIRE in the next room. Anne adds her cigarette butt to the disgusting ash tray.

ANNE (CONT'D)

I have a P.I. consultation next Tuesday.

DALE

You wanna get ripped off, be my guest.

ANNE

I can afford it. I need a plan.

DALE

I have one.

ANNE

A shot in the dark isn't a strategy.

(eyes cluttered desk)

And clutter isn't a sign of genius.

Anne heads to the door but stops short of opening it.

ANNE (CONT'D)

So who's Wally's new friend?

DALE

What's it matter he has a friend? Or new shoes? Or anything? Isn't that what you wanted?

The door opens. It's Pamela. There's that tension again.

PAMELA

It's after eleven. The kids have school tomorrow. And you're letting them watch that idiotic crap.

DALE

You know where the remote is.

Anne tries to slip past Pamela, who doesn't budge. Then moves out of the way. Anne leaves. FRONT DOOR OPENS and SHUTS. Pamela locks eyes with Dale.

INT. EVIDENCE ROOM - NIGHT

A bored EVIDENCE ROOM CLERK flips through a magazine as Dale steps to the window.

DALE

I need to examine the Tadich interview.

EVIDENCE ROOM CLERK

Transcripts are on the server.

DALE

They haven't been uploaded yet. I need the physical recordings.

The clerk sighs, checks a log book.

EVIDENCE ROOM CLERK

Tadich, Tadich. Was that the pussy grabber or the dick waver?

DALE

Both, I think.

On a clipboard Dale signs his name as "GARY MICHAELS".

EVIDENCE ROOM CLERK

TD four nine six five.

The Clerk BUZZES Dale into...

THE STACKS

Dale passes up box "TD4965", takes two different boxes to a corner blind to a security cam. He lifts a bag of meth and glass pipe from one, removes the lid from the other.

Inside: PHOTOS, PHONES RECORDS, CREDIT CARD STATEMENTS. He removes SOMETHING RED.

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Dale leaves the evidence room, is about to turn down another corridor when Michaels cuts him off.

MICHAELS

Tadich was arraigned this afternoon. Cap wanted to know where you were.

DALE

Family matters.

Dale heads down the hall.

MICHAELS

Wanna trade me in for some kid to be your partner, just say so. I'd be happy to duck out early.

DALE

I don't need a partner.

Dale's out the door, and into the night.

EXT. VINE BACK YARD - DAY

More wood planks delivered. Wally guides the same delivery men to a space beside the patio.

He sees Sara inside the kitchen window, cigarette dangling from her lips. He waves, but she draws the curtain.

INT. GUEST ROOM - DAY

Wally pops his head in as Sara finishes packing her bag. She barges past him into...

THE HALLWAY

Wally catches up to her.

WALLY

I was just trying to help.

SARA

I don't need your help. You made things worse.

WALLY

I meant Carly.

Sara stops, turns.

SARA

For a guy who claims to love his daughter, you sure don't talk about her much.

(heading to Janie's room)

My cousin Deedee lives in Buffalo. Hope my car makes it that far.

Wally grabs her arm from behind. She turns, appalled at his tight grip. He realizes his mistake and releases her.

INT. JANIE'S ROOM - DAY

Sara helps Carly pack her things as Wally waits in the doorway, ashamed of himself.

CARLY

Is Wally coming with us?

SARA

No, baby. Wally's got his own family.

Sara escorts Carly past Wally.

EXT. VINE HOUSE - DAY

Wally steps onto the porch as Sara climbs in behind the wheel of her Chevy. The ENGINE WON'T START while...

...he descends the porch steps, walks to the tire swing, gives it a push.

The STRAINING ENGINE finally goes silent. Sara buries her face in her arms resting on the steering wheel.

EXT. TRAILER PARK - DAY

Foster emerges from inside a trashy mobile home carrying a case of empties. Other trailers on either side, his Chevelle parked nearby.

Dale appears out of nowhere, scaring Foster.

FOSTER

Aw shit. What do you want?

DALE

An exchange of ideas. Just like you and that reporter.

Foster dumps the empties into a trash can.

DALE (CONT'D)

Those are a dime apiece.

FOSTER

Ain't worth the hassle.

Dale admires the Chevelle as they return to the trailer.

DALE

Never understood how you could afford that. Gotta be worth, what, fifty grand?

FOSTER

Sixty-two five.

DALE

Gonna look great in our impound lot.

Foster enters his trailer, tries to shut the door. But Dale blocks it and squeezes inside.

INT. MOBILE HOME - DAY

Tattered furniture, clothes strewn about. Dale shadows Foster as he cleans up food wrappers and video game discs.

FOSTER
 Didn't invite you in.

DALE
 Don't worry. I'm not a vampire. But I'll
 need a tetanus shot after being in here.

Dale peeks inside a cardboard box. Inside are Save More's
 stolen Pringles. But it's what's behind it that piques
 his interest: a CHILD'S SHIRT. He holds it up to Foster.

DALE (CONT'D)
 Must be tight on you.

FOSTER
 The neighbor's. We play Xbox together.

DALE
 Naked?

FOSTER
 Gets hot in here. I don't got A.C.

DALE
 Guy spends sixty-two five on a car, he
 can't cool down a two-room trailer?

Dale pokes around, sees a wheelchair in the corner, a
 folded hospital bed. Gentle sincerity washes over him.

DALE (CONT'D)
 I, uhh, was sorry to hear about your mom.

FOSTER
 Yeah, I doubt that.

Dale spots a RED CLOWN NOSE. He reaches into his pocket.
 Foster jumps back.

DALE
 Relax. If I wanted to pop ya you'd never
 see it coming.

Dale holds up the RED RIBBON.

FOSTER
 What's that, your tampon string?

DALE
 Found it behind your toilet, remember?

FOSTER
 Because you put it there--

DALE

DNA off hair confirmed it belonged to my niece.

FOSTER

Man, fuck you, I'm calling my lawyer.

Foster reaches for a phone. Dale knocks it out of reach.

DALE

Just because some flunkie bungled my search warrant to this disaster you call a home doesn't mean there's no case.

FOSTER

I think that's exactly what it means. You should know. You were the flunkie. Every goddamn thing is inadmissable.

Dale slams Foster against the wall, gets nose to nose. Foster's indignation shifts to genuine fear.

DALE

I could dig a hole in the middle of town, bury you in broad daylight, no one would bat an eye.

Dale releases Foster, who's a rattled. He resumes cleaning.

FOSTER

I don't have to file a T.R.O. this time. One call to the papers, your harassment will be front-page news.

DALE

You think you're smart, don't you?
(reaches into couch)
So smart you're stupid.

Foster turns to see Dale holding the bag of meth and pipe.

DALE (CONT'D)

With your record? Fifteen years. Easy.

FOSTER

That ain't mine. You planted it--

DALE

But I tell ya what...
(pockets drugs)
I'll hang onto this, come back with a proper warrant, tear this cesspool apart.

Foster keeps a poker face.

DALE (CONT'D)
I don't know what you're cooking,
Randall, but I know it stinks.

Dale's CELL CONTINUES TO CHIME as he puts the clown nose
over Foster's.

DALE (CONT'D)
How's that friend of yours? Louis
Driscoll.

FOSTER
Ain't seen him in months.

DALE
Your best alibi, and you lose track of
him? Like I said, Randall. So smart
you're stupid.

Dale leaves. Foster rips the clown nose off him.

EXT. MOBILE HOME - DAY

Foster leaves his trailer, makes sure the coast is clear,
and dumps a bag in the neighbor's garbage. He gets in his
Chevelle and speeds away.

Dale emerges from behind the trailer, takes the bag from
the trash. Inside: WALLET PHOTOS of college kids, DRIVER'S
LICENSES from different states, a HANDWRITTEN LEDGER.

EXT. BACK YARD - DAY

Dale, leaning against the shop, pops sunflower seeds as
Wally busts his ass stacking planks of lumber.

DALE
Might explain his jumpiness, but fake IDs
aren't exactly the smoking gun I need.

WALLY
But it's something, right? You don't turn
down a hundred bucks 'cause you think
you're gonna win the lotto.

DALE
True. But bad apples fall and rot, Wally.
One of Newton's laws or something. So
what's up? Anything to do with that
punching bag you call a face?

WALLY
Gimme a hand with this.

EXT. FRONT YARD - DAY

Sara pushes Carly on the tire swing, glances over her shoulder to the back yard.

CARLY

Higher, mommy.

EXT. BACK YARD - DAY

Dale, sleeves up, helps Wally carry planks to the shop. The most physically active he's been in a while.

DALE

I can get a patrol car to swing by.

WALLY

No. I want you to go.

DALE

I'm already watching Foster.

WALLY

You had a year. What's another day?

They drop the wood planks atop others then get more.

DALE

Why hasn't she pressed charges?

WALLY

Why do you think? You're saying I shouldn't do something?

DALE

I'm saying you don't need this shit. You're acting like it's your kid.

Wally slams his end down. The plank kicks back into Dale.

WALLY

He yanks her around like a rag doll. And don't tell me what I need. I'm taking care of my end.

Dale, out of breath, fishes for his pack and lights a cigarette. Wally waves smoke away from him.

DALE

Just a few days ago you were Mr. Coma. Now you're jacked up over some broad.

WALLY

He trespassed on my property.

DALE

You fired a weapon at him.

WALLY

A warning shot.

DALE

Even if it was stand-your-ground it's an unregistered firearm. You don't think, Wally, that's your problem. If you did Janie might still be here, and you wouldn't need to save this other girl.

Wally takes a swing at Dale, but Dale easily dodges it, spins him around, holding him tight.

DALE (CONT'D)

You're supposed to be patching things up with Anne. Remember her?

Dale releases Wally, turns him around to face him, and places a gentle hand on his cheek.

DALE (CONT'D)

Forget about this broad. They'll be fine.

They both see Sara at the side of the house.

SARA

Yeah, forget this broad. Who cares, right?

INT. SEDAN (MOVING) - DAY

Dale drives as Wally scrunches down on the backseat floor.

WALLY

Just don't tell him your real name.

DALE

Relax, I been doing this twenty years.

EXT. COOPER'S GARAGE - DAY

Dale walks toward legs extending from under a junker. RATCHET SOUND as he shows his badge under the car.

Kevin slides out, stands, wipes his hands. A look of recognition hits Dale.

KEVIN

What do you want?

DALE

We received a complaint about a trespassing last night.

Kevin spits tobacco near Dale's shoe. Dale heads to the garage, examining junk along the way.

DALE (CONT'D)

Who's Cooper?

KEVIN

Old man who died, left this holy empire to me.

DALE

When was this?

KEVIN

Eight months ago. It's why I moved here. They send a gold shield for a trespassing?

DALE

Moved here from where?

KEVIN

Stockbridge.

DALE

How's business?

KEVIN

Everyone needs a mechanic. Death, taxes, and shitty engines.

DALE

Be a shame you lost it all.

Dale enters the garage.

INT. SEDAN - DAY

Wally reaches over the seat, turns the key. The dash lights up. He lowers the window and faintly hears:

DALE (O.S.)

You ever hit her?

KEVIN (O.S.)

Who?

INT. COOPER'S GARAGE - DAY

Dale points to Kevin's "SARA" neck tattoo.

KEVIN

Thought this was about trespassing.

Dale examines an auto part fashioned into a bong. He sniffs the bowl. Kevin is worried until Dale tosses it aside.

DALE
Just answer the question.

KEVIN
Is this an interrogation?

DALE
Can be.

Dale flips open a cigar box. Inside are DRIVER'S LICENSES from different states.

KEVIN
I never hit no one. Especially my wife.

DALE
(re: licenses)
What's this?

KEVIN
People leave all sorts of shit when they junk a car.

DALE
Indiana, Ohio, West Virginia? You must come highly recommended.

KEVIN
When a car dies, it dies. Don't matter where you're from.

Dale points to a PADLOCKED DOOR.

DALE
What's in there?

KEVIN
Valuables.

DALE
May I see?

KEVIN
Not without a warrant.

DALE
I can get one.

KEVIN
So get one.

They lock eyes. Wally bolts from the sedan.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
Oh shit. This guy--

WALLY
Stay away from them--

Dale restrains him.

KEVIN
Or what? Whaddya gonna do, freak?

Dale stands between them, Wally's chest heaving as Kevin grins, motioning him closer.

DALE
Get back in the car.

Wally retreats as Kevin closes in.

KEVIN
That's right, ya little bitch, back away.

Dale puts a hand on his holstered gun. Kevin lifts his hands chest-high in mock surrender.

DALE
Don't gimme a reason to come back.

Kevin glares as Dale and Wally get in the sedan. It turns onto the street and drives off.

INT. SEDAN (MOVING) - DAY

Wally clicks his seatbelt as Dale drives.

DALE
That went well.

WALLY
Just take me home.

Dale turns the car.

DALE
Got a couple things to show you.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Dale's sedan approaches "DAWSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL".

DALE (O.S.)
When you followed Foster the other day,
you notice anything strange?

WALLY (O.S.)
I was too busy trying not to piss myself.
Just like now.

At the edge of the lot the sedan parks next to another, driver-to-driver. School buses are lined up.

INT./EXT. SEDAN - DAY

Dale adjusts his rear-view mirror, lowers the windows. In the other car is Redson.

DALE

Anything?

REDSON

Not yet. I think Cap is getting suspicious.

DALE

Don't worry. This'll all be over soon, and you can go back to being a meter maid.

Embarrassed by the insult, Redson drives away. Dale checks his watch.

DALE (CONT'D)

Just because you don't get the results you want doesn't mean the gears of justice aren't turning.

A SCHOOL BELL rings. CHILDREN pour out of the school. TEACHERS chaperone them as they board the buses.

DALE (CONT'D)

Teachers have more responsibilities than cops these days.

DONNA JANSING (30), long dark hair, smart dresser, sees them and approaches. She is, in essence, a HOT TEACHER.

DALE (CONT'D)

And they've come a long way from horned rims and library buns.

Donna smiles and waves as she goes to Wally's window.

DONNA

Hey, Wally. What brings you here?

WALLY

I'm not sure.

DALE

How's the school year, Donna?

DONNA

One more week to go.
(back to Wally)
(MORE)

DONNA (CONT'D)

I still have some of Janie's drawings.
You want them?

WALLY

No, you keep them. You were her favorite.

Donna offers a sympathetic smile, touches Wally's hand resting on the door. It verges on a caress.

Dale sees it then checks his watch as the PRINCIPAL (60), in a sweater vest, motions for Donna.

DONNA

Gotta go. Take care of yourself, Wally.

Dale watches her ass as she walks away. Wally tries not to.

DALE

Don't blame you for wanting to tap that.
After all, we're only human--

WALLY

Dale, what are we doing here?

DALE

(points to Principal)
School Principal. Single, dog and two cats, cabin in Roscommon close to where Janie was found. On our radar, but the only thing alarming about him was his propensity for sweater vests.

Dale checks his watch again.

WALLY

Late for something, Rainman?

DALE

When you got bullied at school, who'd you direct your anger at?

WALLY

What are you talking about?

DALE

Me, that's who. Bloody nose on the playground was my fault 'cause I didn't protect you.

WALLY

You coulda stepped in once in a while.

DALE

You say I didn't do enough to put Foster in prison. But I've sat, just like this. Watched. And waited.

WALLY

For what?

DALE

Patterns. Nothing makes an investigation shit the bed faster than a lack of hard evidence. So you need to find patterns.

Dale points across the lot to the edge of the forest. Wally is shocked to see...

Foster emerge from the trees. He strolls toward the buses.

WALLY

The hell?

Foster slows as he passes a group of kids.

Wally, anger rising, throws open his door. But Dale pulls him back, reaches across and shuts the door.

DALE

He walks by after work. Goes back for his car later.

WALLY

What is he, window shopping? Can't you arrest him?

DALE

He's not breaking any laws.

Dale turns the ignition as Foster cuts into a field.

INT. SEDAN (MOVING) - DAY

Back on the road, Dale takes a PHOTO from his pocket, shows it to Wally. It's Foster drinking with two buddies.

DALE

Went through some old evidence.

(pointing)

That's Foster. That's Louis Driscoll.

WALLY

So what? I thought you cleared Driscoll.

Dale snaps his fingers, points to the glove box. Wally opens it, retrieves a sheet of paper.

WALLY (CONT'D)

What is this?

It's a credit card statement for "LOUIS DRISCOLL". Rows are highlighted.

WALLY (CONT'D)

(reading)

Bay Shore Inn, Island Cycle Rentals--

DALE

Look at the dates.

Wally scans the column of dates, ranging from 6/20/2016 through 6/22/2016.

DALE (CONT'D)

Anders requested this after I got eighty-sixed from the case. At least he did something useful. But at the time Foster was making a stink with his harassment accusations, so this info was buried. I don't know who, doesn't matter at this point. Fuckin' politics.

WALLY

Driscoll was on Mackinac the time of Janie's abduction. Why would he lie for Foster?

DALE

Money? Threat of death? Except I can't find the guy. And Anders doesn't seem interested.

Wally studies the photo.

WALLY

Who's this other one?

DALE

Driscoll mentioned a step-step-brother, whatever the hell that is. I never met him. Until today.

EXT. VINE HOUSE - DAY

Dale lights Sara's cigarette, then his own. Both he and Wally eye her with newfound interest.

WALLY

I'm gonna buy you two each a case of Nicorette.

Dale crouches to Carly eye-level, glances at her bruises.

DALE
Keeping an eye on my little brother?

CARLY
Yes.

Carly scrunches her face as Dale exhales smoke to the side.

DALE
Yucky, right?

Carly nods.

SARA
Thank you, Dale.

DALE
Anytime. Talk to you a sec?

She and Dale step aside. Wally leads Carly to the tire swing.

Sara studies the photo. The third guy with Foster has his face turned. But his neck tattoo clearly reads "SARA".

DALE (CONT'D)
Sure you never heard of Randall Foster?

SARA
I don't keep tabs on every one of Kevin's drinking buddies.

Dale pockets the photo while eyeing Sara.

WALLY
Where's Louis?

SARA
Haven't seen him in months.

DALE
How many specifically?

SARA
(shrugs)
He vanished just before we moved here from Stockbridge. What is this?

WALLY
What do you mean vanished?

SARA
You know him, he had a big mouth, loud as shit. You could tell he was here one day, gone the next.

DALE

Why didn't you notify the police?

SARA

What for? Louis was a drifter, more or less. He'd hop freight trains, like they did in the Depression, just for fun. We just assumed he hitchhiked to Alaska or some shit. He would've inherited the garage--

WALLY

From Cooper.

SARA

Yeah. Kevin's step uncle.

DALE

How many steps does this family have?

SARA

God knows. Like they say: divorce earns you a step, a bastard earns you a flight.

DALE

Clever. Who says that?

SARA

I do. The Mantz-Driscoll extended clan's got blood all over the Midwest. Anyway, Kevin got the business after Louis split. I'm actually glad he's gone.

DALE

Why do you say that?

SARA

I always thought there was something strange about him.

DALE

Strange how?

SARA

Let's just say I wasn't comfortable with him being around Carly.

BEHIND THEM, Carly laughs as Wally pushes her on the swing.

DALE

What do you know about Wally's car accident?

SARA

Didn't know he had one. Seems fine.

DALE

Does he?

SARA

What are you, his brother or shrink? He stood up for me. More than I can say for most guys. He said his car's in the shop, that's it. What's it got to do with Kevin?

DALE

I don't know yet.

SARA

Look, Kevin was always out gettin' fried. Both him and Louis. Typical white trash.

DALE

But not you.

SARA

Man, I'm a good mom, I work hard. Long as those two weren't around I didn't give a shit where they went. For Carly's sake.

Wally watches Sara and Dale finish their animated discussion. Sara heads toward him, won't give him eye contact as she takes over pushing Carly on the swing.

The brothers walk to the sedan as...

Sara looks over her shoulder at them.

DALE

She's a tough one. But my gut says she's kept her head in the sand. I'll contact Protective Services.

WALLY

You think it's necessary?

DALE

What did you think would happen? She's not your kid.

(gets in sedan)

Get away a few days til I can figure this out. And for God's sake, get a haircut.

Dale drives away.

EXT. BACK YARD - DAY

Wally is in a lawn chair, wearing a barber apron. Sara cuts his hair, trying her best to hide her agitation.

Carly, with the butterfly net, sits in the grass. Wearing a white dress. RED RIBBONS in her hair.

CARLY
You got style, mister.

SARA
Carly, what are you wearing?

CARLY
Wally said I can have anything in Janie's closet.

SARA
Go get my bag. Now.

After Carly disappears into the house.

SARA (CONT'D)
I can afford to buy her clothes.

WALLY
Just figured since Janie's not wearing it--

SARA
Yeah? And where is Janie? Where is anyone? Like a ghost town around here.

Sara forcibly angles his head and continues cutting.

SARA (CONT'D)
Your brother was supposed to get Kevin to back off. Now I'm suddenly grilled about other shit.

WALLY
He's just doing his job.

SARA
There's enough victim-blaming these days. Cops are useless until they're not.

WALLY
I agree, but no one's blaming you--

SARA
Don't know any Randall Foster. Don't watch TV, go online, no smart phone. Got enough on my plate without worrying about everyone else's. In turn, nobody cares about a broad like me.
(stops cutting)
But I ain't some bird with a broken wing.

Sara waves the scissors close to Wally. Her WORDS FADE as he starts to zone out.

SARA (CONT'D)

Shoulda dealt with him myself. Who's gonna cry about one less Kevin in the world? No jury would ever convict me, right? Louis probably pissed off the wrong people, too...

Wally **IMAGINES** Janie through the trees, on that night, climbing into the IDLING CHEVELLE, the SOUND crisp like he's inches away. He blocks everything else out until...

SCISSOR SNIPS bring him back to reality.

SARA (CONT'D)

...like I told Dale, I don't know what Kevin does with his time, and I don't care. Wouldn't be surprised if he's dealing drugs out of the garage.

Carly returns with the bag. Sara shakes out the apron, digs through the bag for a cigarette, but her lighter won't work, *FLICKING* it repeatedly.

CARLY

What are you guys talking about?

SARA

Nothing, baby.

WALLY

I have a lake house.

SARA

So happy for you--

WALLY

No, I mean, given the circumstances, I think we should go. Like today.

CARLY

I think so too.

(to Sara)

Can we go fishing?

Sara's lighter kicks in. She sparks up, takes a long drag.

SARA

(off Carly's look)

Well don't look at me. It's his lake house.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

The Cutlass backs off the Chevy, does a u-turn.

The Chevy continues on, winding its way through s-curves. A gorgeous day. Green hills for miles.

INT. CHEVY (MOVING) - DAY

Wally drives. Sara's beside him. Carly's in back. All enjoying the countryside, MUSIC PLAYING. A happy family.

EXT. COOPER'S GARAGE - DAY

Lance and Luke step out of the Cutlass as Kevin wipes his hands on a greasy rag.

KEVIN

Told you to watch 'em.

LANCE

We did. They took off.

LUKE

You didn't say follow.

Lance and Luke scoot past Kevin, who whips the rag aside.

EXT. LAKE HOUSE - DAY

Sara chases Carly down stairs to a beach as...

Wally retrieves the spare key from under the ceramic frog. Slips it in the lock. Doesn't work.

INT. BACK PORCH - DAY

A stick breaks a pane of glass on the back door. Wally's hand reaches in and unlocks it.

INT. LAKE HOUSE COMMON ROOM - DAY

A large room of knotty pine. Balcony and upstairs bedrooms line the perimeter. Rustic furniture.

Wally admires a FRAMED PHOTO: he and Janie, smiling before a FIERY ORANGE SUNSET.

Caption reads "**PYRAMID POINT**".

INT. LAKE HOUSE BEDROOM - DAY

Wally flips on the night light. Stars on the ceiling. "OUR SUN, THE STAR" book is still there. Deflated birthday balloons dead on the floor.

He opens a drawer, sees a box of crayons and drawings.

INT. LAKE HOUSE MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Wally eyes the bed. He hears LAUGHTER from outside.

CARLY (O.S.)

One, two, three!

OUTSIDE THE WINDOW: Sara and Carly, in their underwear, jump off the dock into the lake.

INT. LAKE HOUSE KITCHEN - DAY

House phone to his ear, Wally opens a cupboard, sees an array of booze bottles. OUTGOING PHONE RINGS.

ANNE (V.O.)

You've reached Dr. Anne Vine. I can't take your call. Please leave a message.

BEEP.

WALLY

It's me. I'm sorry I ruined your lunch. We can talk about that list--

The back porch DOOR OPENS and SHUTS. He speaks softer.

WALLY (CONT'D)

I'm trying, Anne, I really am. I'm away a few days in case you stop by the house--

He hangs up just as Sara and Carly enter. Both in wet underwear, holding bundled clothes, shivering.

CARLY

It looked warmer.

INT. LAKE HOUSE COMMON ROOM - DAY

Wally grabs towels from a closet. Carly and Sara quickly wrap themselves.

SARA

Who were you calling?

WALLY

Just checking if the phone works.

EXT. DOCK - DAY

Carly and Wally fish off dock, backs to each other watching their respective bobbers.

CARLY

How long do we sit here?

WALLY

Until the bobber goes under, then reel it in like I showed you.

CARLY

Wally, do you think me and Janie could be friends?

Wally stares at his bobber, searching for words.

WALLY

You two are very much alike. So yes.

A butterfly lands on the tip of Carly's pole.

CARLY

(whispers)

Wally, look.

Wally cranes his neck to look, but his bobber goes under. He spins back, reels in the strong fighter as...

Carly reaches for the butterfly, stretching too far. She slips off the dock, but...

Wally clutches her shirt and pulls her back to safety. The butterfly is gone.

CARLY (CONT'D)

He flew away.

WALLY

He'll find you again. I'm sure of it.

EXT. BACK PORCH - DUSK

Wally sits on a porch swing admiring the SUNSET over the lake. Sara, holding two drinks, sits beside him.

SARA

Nice place. Who gets it in the divorce?

She hands him a drink, fiddles with the swing's EXCESS CHAIN dangling from her arm rest.

WALLY

Not sure if she wants it, but everything's hers. Every light switch, every blade of grass. I just make clocks, remember?

He sniffs his drink, a year of sobriety at risk. Sara takes a big swallow, continues JANGLING THE CHAIN.

SARA
Ahhh, times flies when you're having rum.
What's your poison?

WALLY
Rye. My dad drank it, so did his.

SARA
Bunch of cowboys, huh?

WALLY
Too stubborn to change.

SARA
Was that the reason she left?

WALLY
Among many.

SARA
(holds glass out)
Well, here's to moving forward and never
looking back.

Wally, mesmerized by the sunset, gives a meager clink of the glasses. The JANGLING CHAIN GROWS LOUDER.

INT. CAR - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

CHAIN JANGLES as the Silhouette's glowing cigarette faces a pinned, bleeding Wally. The Chevelle's back window FOGS UP with a DOG WHIMPER. ANOTHER PERSON, maybe two, inside--

EXT. BACK PORCH - NIGHT (BACK TO PRESENT)

Wally stops Sara's hand from jangling the chain.

WALLY
I have a hard time believing you don't
know who Randall Foster is.

Sara scoffs at the accusation.

SARA
Jesus, you too? I spent the better part
of a year thinking up ways to escape.
Names don't mean shit to me. Protecting
Carly does.

She downs her drink, heads inside.

SARA (CONT'D)
I'm getting a refill.

Wally finally takes a sip. It's the best taste ever.

EXT. VINE HOUSE - NIGHT

Kevin's pick-up pulls into Wally's driveway.

EXT. BACK YARD - NIGHT

Jessie lopes across the yard, triggering a motion-sensor floodlight. KEVIN WHISTLES, and the dog stops.

Kevin tries a back door. Locked. He sees the scissors, uses them to pick the lock. But he's no locksmith.

So he breaks a window with the rake, cuts his hand as he pulls himself inside.

The door opens from inside, and Jessie enters.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Kevin flips on a light. His jaw hits the floor at all the ticking clocks.

KEVIN

What the fuck?

After smearing his bloody hand on family photos he begins smashing all the clocks. Then turns to a whimpering Jessie.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

Well go on then.

Jessie craps in the middle of the room.

INT. JANIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Kevin sees the drawings signed by "CARLY".

INT. GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Kevin pokes around Sara's room. Bras, panties, BIRTH CONTROL PILLS.

INT. STAIRCASE - NIGHT

Kevin stomps down the stairs, gouging the wall with the scissors, eager Jessie passing him on the steps.

INT. COOPER'S GARAGE - NIGHT

A door knob jiggles. Dale enters, pocketing lock-picking tools. Clicks on a flashlight, steps to the workbench.

The cigar box is empty. He approaches the padlocked door. Tries to pick it, but he's not that good.

He runs his fingers atop the door frame and finds a key. Slides it into the lock, pops it open. Puts the key back.

INT. GARAGE OFFICE - NIGHT

Dale turns on a desk lamp, rifles through drawers. Finds a large SACK OF WEED and dime bags of crystal meth. But something else catches his eye across the room.

He pulls down a white screen attached to the ceiling. Then sees a line on the floor five feet away as well as a...

Camera on a tripod. Dale turns it on, flips open the...

LED SCREEN. Scrolls through HEAD SHOTS OF TEENAGERS.

More rummaging. Dale finds a lock box. He spots a screwdriver, jams it in, forces it open.

Inside are the drivers licenses. Including one for **LOUIS DRISCOLL** splattered with DRIED BLOOD. He pockets it.

Dale presses "CALL LOG" on the office cordless phone. He scrolls through names, stopping on...

"FOSTER, R". He can't believe his eyes. He hesitates then presses "TALK". OUTGOING RINGS.

FOSTER (V.O.)

Told you to use the goddamn burner--

Dale ends the call as a CAR APPROACHES. He clicks off the lamp. CAR DOOR, FOOTSTEPS, DOG CLAWS ON PAVEMENT.

KEVIN (O.S.)

Go on. Git.

DOG RUNS OFF. CELL PHONE RINGS. Dale hides under the desk as KEVIN NEARS.

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

Wasn't me, I just got here-- Your detective's been poking around-- 'Course I didn't, I ain't stupid.

Kevin appears in the doorway, peers inside the office.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

I'll take care of the freak, you deal with his brother.

(ends call, dials a number)

One of you assholes didn't lock the office-- I'm standing right here, it's wide open. I told you, no outgoing calls.

The door closes. PADLOCK CLICKS. FOOTSTEPS. CAR DOOR.
TRUCK DRIVES AWAY.

Dale emerges from under the desk, tries the door. He hears
DOG CLAWS CLACKING on the garage floor.

He peeks under the door gap, sees Jessie snoozing.

He then spots a small window near the ceiling and makes a
wobbly staircase out of a chair and boxes. He climbs,
balancing precariously.

EXT. COOPER'S GARAGE - NIGHT

Dale's torso is halfway through the small opening as the
Cutlass rolls into the lot. He's stuck. The car's getting
closer.

He can hear JESSIE BARKING in the garage. Finally he
squeezes through just before headlights shine on him.

He falls eight feet to the ground. Stifles a scream,
grabbing his hand. Then dashes to his sedan parked across
the street.

EXT. LAKE HOUSE - NIGHT

The Lexus parks outside the lake house. The Chevy is gone.

INT. LAKE HOUSE COMMON ROOM - NIGHT

Anne is confused by crayons and drawings on the floor.

ANNE

Wally?

EXT. BACK PORCH - NIGHT

Anne peers out the back door, sees the drinks, hears a CAR.

INT. LAKE HOUSE COMMON ROOM - NIGHT

Door opens. Anne sees Wally, with Sara and Carly behind
him. Awkward. No one knows what to say.

Sara takes Carly's hand, heads upstairs. Anne focuses on
the girl's dress as Wally goes to the kitchen...

INT. LAKE HOUSE KITCHEN - NIGHT

Wally grabs a whiskey bottle from the cupboard, takes a
swig. Puts it down just as Anne enters.

ANNE

A few days ago you could barely get out of bed.

WALLY

How'd you know I was here?

ANNE

Caller ID, genius. Who is she?

WALLY

Someone I met.

ANNE

Online?

WALLY

God no--

ANNE

Did you call any of those P.I.s? Could you even do that?

Wally's at a loss. Anne eyes the whiskey bottle.

WALLY

I'm not sleeping with her--

ANNE

You do what you want. Isn't that your way?

Anne leaves.

EXT. BACK PORCH - NIGHT

Anne is looking at the stars, wipes away tears as Wally steps out. He wants to get close but keeps his distance.

ANNE

I lost a nine-year-old boy yesterday. Atrial septal defect. Miracle he lived as long as he did. When I broke the news to the parents I was jealous.

WALLY

Of what?

ANNE

I watched their grief rise and hang there until it just drifted away. They accepted his death with such calmness and resolution because they knew they had each other.

Wally moves in to embrace Anne, but she nudges him away.

INT. LAKE HOUSE COMMON ROOM - NIGHT

Wally follows Anne inside as Sara descends the stairs.
Carly is watching from the balcony.

ANNE

(to Sara)

Don't put too much faith in this one.

(looks at Carly)

For her sake.

Carly runs down the stairs and outside. Sara goes after her.

ANNE (CONT'D)

Go on. There's your chance to start over.

Anne leaves. Silence except for a CLOCK TICKING.

EXT. DOCK - NIGHT

Wally approaches Sara at the end of the dock. Carly is
asleep in her lap. Full moon overhead. A LOON CALLS OUT.

WALLY

Wasn't always a ghost town.

(sits beside Sara)

Anne and I were happy. Until we weren't. We
stuck it out for Janie.

Wally watches the moon's reflection shimmer in the water.

WALLY (CONT'D)

She was abducted. Just over a year ago.

Wally lets that sink in. Sara holds Carly tighter, eyes
filling with tears.

WALLY (CONT'D)

Six months later her body was found.

She'd been...violated. Strangled.

(struggling with emotion)

Her tiny throat-- I should've told you.

Sara takes his hand, turns it over, traces the scars on
the inside of his wrist.

SARA

Randall Foster.

He nods. She shuts her eyes, doesn't want to know...

SARA (CONT'D)

And Kevin?

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

SILHOUETTES inside the Chevelle. JANGLING CHAIN. Fogged-up back window.

EXT. DOCK - NIGHT (BACK TO PRESENT)

Wally meet Sara's eyes. His non-answer is enough for her.

SARA

And if your brother can't do anything?

WALLY

Then we get Carly somewhere safe.

EXT. GAME MART - NIGHT

TVs in the window play first-person shooters. A BOY (10) exits with a bag, gets in the Chevelle. It drives off.

Down the street, headlights burst to life.

INT. SEDAN (MOVING) - NIGHT

Dale flexes his injured hand, eyes on the Chevelle UP AHEAD. OUTGOING RINGS from his cell attached to the dash.

INT. LAKE HOUSE COMMON ROOM - NIGHT

The PHONE RINGS. Answering machine kicks in.

DALE

Wally, Dale. If you're at the lake, stay there. I'll explain later.

EXT. TRAILER PARK - NIGHT

The sedan parks in the shadows between street lights.

INT. SEDAN - NIGHT

Dale taps an unlit cigarette against the steering wheel, eyes focused on Foster's trailer. He pops sunflower seeds.

EXT. TRAILER PARK - NIGHT

Foster charges from his trailer to the sedan with a crow bar. Dale bolts from his car.

DALE

Don't you do it--

SMASH! Foster shatters a headlight.

The boy, now shirtless, pokes his head out from the trailer. MACHINE GUNS, METAL MUSIC pouring out.

FOSTER
Get back in, lock the door!

The boy does as he's told. Dale moves toward the trailer.

DALE
The hell's going on in there?

FOSTER
Killing bad guys.

Dale runs to the trailer, bangs on the door.

DALE
Open up, kid, I'm a cop.

The boy appears in the window. Foster shoos him away.

FOSTER
Just got yourself a restraining order.

DALE
Yeah? And you're paying for that headlight.

FOSTER
What, you mean this one?

Foster is about smash the other headlight. Dale jumps in front of him.

DALE
Alright alright! Let's talk about Louis.

FOSTER
What about him?

Dale shows his hands, slowly reaches into his pocket. Brings out Driscoll's bloody ID.

DALE
Ten bucks says that ain't ketchup. Case of Pringles says it's a match.

Foster examines the ID closer. He reaches for it, but Dale pulls it away.

DALE (CONT'D)
Your buddy Kevin--

FOSTER
Kevin who--?

DALE

He had it stashed away with all the others. Not very well, mind you.

Dale closes in on Foster with newfound confidence.

DALE (CONT'D)

Wasn't just you that night, was it? It was the three of you.

FOSTER

The fuck are you talking about?

DALE

Louis played ball as long as he could, even lied for you. When his conscience prevailed you killed him.

FOSTER

(laughs)
You're fuckin' crazy. That asshole owed me six grand. Split to New Mexico.

DALE

Fake IDs, meth and weed on the side. That how you afford that car of yours? Giving the kids a taste?

Foster readies for a home-run swing. It's now Dale who backs away.

FOSTER

Don't pin this on me 'cause of some guilt trip. Eight months you're up my ass.

Foster fakes a swing, and Dale flinches.

FOSTER (CONT'D)

You ain't even working the case. In fact, word is you're barely working. So get the fuck off my property.

Dale realizes he's backed onto the road. He points his gun at Foster's face.

DALE

Your property ends at the street.

Foster lowers the crow bar. Dale grabs it, chucks it in the weeds. Then spins him around, shoves him to his sedan where he bends him over the hood.

FOSTER

After you're done fucking me you can kiss what's left of your career goodbye.

Dale kicks open Foster's legs, pats him down rough, gun jammed into his neck.

FOSTER (CONT'D)

Dirty Harry wanna-be can't even solve a girl's murder--

DALE

(cuffing Foster)
You're under arrest--

FOSTER

Bullshit. What charges?

DALE

Suspicion of child endangerment,
counterfeit IDs, possession and
distribution of controlled substances--

FOSTER

Hope you got a good lawyer, man. You can
use mine if you want--

DALE

Shut up. Kid, get outta there!

FOSTER

He's too smart to trust a pig.

Dale violently spins Foster around. Face-to-face. Foster gives his patented shit-eating grin as SIRENS APPROACH.

The boy's face appears in the window, phone to his ear.

FOSTER (CONT'D)

Told you.

A cop car, light's flashing, stops behind Dale. Redson and another UNIFORMED OFFICER step out.

REDSON

Detective Vine?

Dale holsters his gun, eyes locked with Foster's as he unlocks the cuffs.

INT. MOBILE HOME - NIGHT

While the boy plays a video game Foster makes a phone call.

FOSTER

It's me. We got a problem.

INT. LAKE HOUSE MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Wally hears his DOOR CREAK open. Sees Sara in the doorway. She approaches, pulls back the covers, slides in bed, nuzzling her cheek against his neck.

Wally, unsure, puts an arm around her. Moonlight bright across their faces.

INT. LAKE HOUSE KITCHEN - DAY

Carly sees the photo of Wally and Janie at Pyramid Point.

CARLY

There! I wanna go there.

SARA

No, baby, you're gonna stay with cousin Deedee for a while, I told you.

WALLY

It's okay. Little out of the way, but it's worth it.

Wally picks up Carly. They examine the photo together.

WALLY (CONT'D)

That is a very special place. And you, my dear, are a very special girl.

Carly smiles ear to ear and hugs Wally.

EXT. COOPER'S GARAGE - DAY

Kevin hops into his pick-up as the twins shut the doors of the Cutlass. ENGINES REV.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Wally and Sara see the smashed clocks, blood on the photos, dog crap in the middle of the room.

Carly bounds in, full of energy. Sara ushers her out.

EXT. VINE HOUSE - DAY

Wally tightens a hitch under the Chevy's rear bumper as Sara and Carly carry their suitcases to the car.

SARA

What can I do?

WALLY

Tighten this. Carly, gimme a hand, sweetie.

Sara tightens the hitch as Carly helps Wally pull an old trailer to the back of the Chevy.

INT. WALLY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Wally empties everything from his dresser drawers except the pill bottles into a large duffle bag.

INT. JANIE'S ROOM - DAY

Wally removes one of Janie's sunset drawings from the wall.

INT. STAIRCASE - DAY

Wally lugs his bag downstairs, sees the gash in the wall.

EXT. VINE HOUSE - DAY

The trailer is packed full. Wally pulls a tarp over it, ties it off on the side. He scans the grounds nervously.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

The Chevy chugs as it pulls the overloaded trailer.

INT./EXT. CHEVY (MOVING) - DAY

Wally and Sara keep a nervous watch on their surroundings.

CARLY

How long til we get there?

WALLY

About four hours.

SARA

Carly, try to take a nap. Wally says it's a hard climb.

WALLY

Well, for an old man like me. You two will be fine.

Carly closes her eyes. AN ENGINE GROWS LOUDER until...

SMASH! They're hit from behind.

Kevin's pick-up tailgates the Chevy. It closes in for another ram.

SARA

Oh my God.

WAM! Another collision. Wally has trouble steering as the trailer whips back and forth on the pavement.

INT. PICK-UP (MOVING) - DAY

Kevin clenches the steering wheel, eyes focused.

INT./EXT. CHEVY (MOVING) - DAY

Wally regains control of the Chevy as Carly screams.

CARLY

Mommy!

BAM! All three lunge backwards.

SARA

Speed up.

WALLY

(flooring gas pedal)

It won't go any faster.

Sara sticks her head out the window, looking back, her defunct seatbelt flapping in the wind.

SARA

Your daughter's in here!

Kevin jerks his pick-up into the other lane, pulling even with the Chevy.

KEVIN

Pull over!

But Wally concentrates on the road ahead.

The pick-up slows, retains its spot behind the Chevy as...

Carly rocks in her seat, cupping her ears.

SARA

Shhh, shhh. It'll be okay.

In the MIRROR Wally sees the CUTLASS closing in fast.

It overtakes the pick-up in the oncoming lane as...

A car approaches from the other direction.

The Cutlass slices onto the shoulder, allowing the car to pass, then resumes its place parallel to the Chevy.

Wally sees Luke and Lance, Jessie, in the back seat, slobbering on the glass, barking.

The Cutlass slams into the Chevy which...

...rumbles onto the gravel shoulder. Items from the trailer fly off, smack the pick-up's windshield.

INT./EXT. PICK-UP (MOVING) - DAY

Kevin SEES the melee ahead of him.

KEVIN
Stop, you idiots.

Kevin lays on the HORN. Panic sets in.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
Pull back, goddamnit!

The Cutlass eases back then jets forward, hits the left rear of the trailer.

INT. CHEVY (MOVING) - DAY

Wally's grip shakes as the fish-tailing trailer whips the car onto the shoulder, edging a steep gully.

Carly screams. Sara digs her fingernails into the dash as Wally slams on the brake.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

The Chevy careens down the hill.

INT./EXT. CHEVY (MOVING) - DAY

Branches slap the car as Wally loses control of the wheel.

TIME STANDS STILL as Wally sees a horrified Carly in the REAR-VIEW MIRROR and Sara bracing for impact.

He clenches eyes shut just before...

The Chevy *SLAMS* into a fat oak tree.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

The Chevy is a grotesque mass of twisted steel. RADIATOR STEAM ESCAPES with a sharp scream.

Further down the hill, the trailer continues to roll, leaving items in its wake.

INT. CHEVY - DAY

Wally's eyes pop open. Gash across his forehead. He gasps for air as his eyes dart side to side.

CARLY (O.S.)

Wally?

The roof is collapsed onto the backseat.

WALLY

Are you hurt?

CARLY (O.S.)

I don't know.

Sounds of MOVEMENT.

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

Is mommy okay?

As Wally regains his bearings he notices the windshield on the passenger side is blown out. Sara is gone.

Bloody shards are strewn about the mangled hood. The defunct seatbelt hangs limply along the passenger door.

Wally, wincing from pain, unbuckles his seatbelt. Tries to open the door, but it's jammed. With his elbow he clears away the remaining glass from his busted window.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Wally slithers out the window, drops to the ground, groaning in pain.

CARLY (O.S.)

(crying)

Wally, don't leave me!

Wally tries to stand, but his legs buckle. He drags himself, stops and stares in shock at...

Sara, thrown from the wreck. Arms and legs at impossible angles. She struggles with shallow, wheezing breaths. A piece of metal has punctured a lung.

Her bloody face turns to Wally. Subtle movement of her eyebrows are pleas for help.

Wally struggles to his feet.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Kevin bolts from his truck.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Kevin trips, rolls downhill, gets to his feet then pushes on. He stops when he sees the smashed Chevy and Wally staggering at a snail's pace to Sara.

Kevin looks back atop the hill at the twins.

KEVIN
I said pull back!

Kevin, filled with anguish, approaches CARLY'S CRYING.

INT. CHEVY - DAY

Carly is wedged between the Chevy's crushed roof and the back seat floor. The door is pried open.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Wally brushes Sara's matted hair from her eyes. He can't speak, lips quivering, eyes pooled with tears.

CARLY (O.S.)
Mommy! Mommy, wake up!

Carly SCREAMS and WAILS.

KEVIN (O.S.)
I got you, baby.

CARLY (O.S.)
No no, put me down!

Wally shuffles as fast as he can back to the crash.

Kevin and a screaming Carly near the top of the hill.

A snarling Jessie is in Wally's path. A WHISTLE. Jessie turns tail and dashes up the hill.

Wally falls to his knees. Eyelids heavy, vision blurry...

MUTTERING VOICES (V.O.)
(overlapping, repeating)
...who was driving? / what caused it? /
did she make it? / same guy from last
year / he's nuts / he's a drunk / it's
his fault / it's all his fault...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

BLURRY VISION OF PEOPLE becoming clearer.

DOCTOR (V.O.)

...put fifteen stitches in his head, he needs rest. He'll have a heck of a headache.

ANNE (V.O.)

Thank you, doctor.

Anne COMES INTO FOCUS. She's in a dimly lit hospital room. Dale is seated in the corner, his hand bandaged.

Wally's head is wrapped in gauze. Oxygen tube in his nostrils. A NURSE checks an IV drip fed into his arm then leaves. Wally tries to sit up, but Anne eases him back.

WALLY

I have to help them--

ANNE

You're loaded with morphine.

Dale approaches the bed. Offers a straw in a cup of water to Wally. He sips with effort.

DALE

Blood tests are pending. But I wanna hear it from you. Prior to the accident...were you drinking?

Wally is insulted by the question.

DALE (CONT'D)

Were you drinking?

WALLY

It wasn't an accident--

DALE

Were you drinking?

WALLY

He took Carly--

ANNE

Wally, answer him--

WALLY

I wasn't fucking drinking!

He winces, digs a knuckle into his throbbing head. The nurse rushes in, but Dale waves him off. As he leaves, Wally sees a uniformed COP in the hall.

DALE

What do you remember?

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

The Chevelle / Silhouettes / JANGLING CHAIN--

WALLY (V.O.)

We just returned from the lake.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

The moving Cutlass / Twins inside / Jessie in back--

WALLY (V.O.)

The house was broken into. It was him.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Dale approaches Wally's bed.

ANNE

Who, Foster?

DALE

Mantz. Driscoll's brother. Thick as thieves.

WALLY

They started coming at us.

DALE

They being?

WALLY

The twins, Kevin. He's responsible, not me--

DALE

They were coming at you how--?

WALLY

Check their vehicles for paint transfer.

Dale and Anne share a look, not really buying his account.

ANNE

Why was there a trailer?

Nothing from Wally.

ANNE (CONT'D)

And stuff from the house. Where were you going?

WALLY

You have to find Carly.

Dale shares another glance with Anne.

DALE

Look, Wally, we both know this guy's a piece of shit. Maybe worse. But Carly was with him the past two days. Spoke to her myself before coming here.

WALLY

He's making her say it. Carly was with us. Ask Sara.

Wally presses a knuckle to a temple, oxygen tube slipping out of place. Dale looks away, irritated, back to Wally:

DALE

I have zero leverage at the department, I can't help you--

WALLY

Talk to Sara. She'll confirm everything--

DALE

I can't.
(beat)
She's dead.

Wally goes slack, lump in his throat the size of an 8-ball.

Dale leaves the room. Anne corrects Wally's oxygen tube then also leaves.

INT. HOSPITAL HALL - NIGHT

Dale hugs Anne in the hall. She breaks it off as Redson, Michaels, and Captain Vogel approach.

MICHAELS

How is he?

ANNE

Concussion. But beyond that?

Anne shrugs. She's spent.

ANNE (CONT'D)

I need coffee.

She heads down the hall.

CAP

Gimme one good reason why I shouldn't suspend you again.

DALE

Foster's been surveilling the school. Tell him, Redson--

CAP

We're not in the espionage business.

DALE

He and Kevin Mantz are in it together--

MICHAELS

In what? More conspiracy theories--

DALE

Thought you had to pack for retirement.

A BEEPING ALERT brings a team of DOCTORS and NURSES racing by with a crash cart. Cap pulls Dale to a vacant hospital room's doorway. Michaels and Redson join them.

Across the hall, the medical staff tries to revive a DYING PATIENT with defib paddles.

CAP

You don't have the authority to make Officer Redson sit in a parking lot--

REDSON

I don't really mind--

CAP

Shut up.

DALE

You care more about Foster's civil liberties than putting a killer behind bars.

CAP

So to hell with due process, right?

DALE

Since when is bending over for a child murderer due process?

CAP

You are out of line, detective.

DALE

Put me back on the case I promise I'll nail him. I'll do everything by the book.

MICHAELS

Suspicious aren't evidence.

DALE

So we keep digging. Anders sure won't.

(back to Cap)

(MORE)

DALE (CONT'D)

I can't be relegated to third tier investigations with Frank Drebin here.

MICHAELS

You ever stop to think Foster might actually be innocent?

DALE

Aw Jesus, who's side are you on? My brother's trying to piece together what's left of his life because of that prick.

(back to Cap)

I know I messed up. I take full responsibility. But don't tell me there's nothing we can do. Because there is always something we can do.

The patient across the hall FLATLINES.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Wally stares at the clock. Shuts his eyes, listening to the SECOND HAND TICKING.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

TICKING CLOCK. Wally's head is bandaged. He opens his eyes. The room is still a disaster, save for that one clock.

CAR DOOR. FOOTSTEPS. A THUD. JEEP DRIVES AWAY.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

Wally opens the front door, sees another pile of mail.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Wally lines up pieces of the broken clocks in neat rows.

He scrubs dried blood from the photos.

INT. JANIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Wally flips on the light, admires the drawings, both Janie's sunsets and Carly's butterflies.

EXT. KITCHEN - DAY

Wally rinses out a mug, the COFFEE MACHINE GURGLING. DOOR BELLS then KNOCKS.

INT. FOYER - DAY

Wally peels back a curtain, sees Anne getting into her Lexus and driving away.

EXT. BACK YARD - DAY

Wally sips coffee, notices Sara's cigarette butts then the butterfly net.

He watches a butterfly flit about and land on his knuckles. It opens, closes its wings then flies away. His eyes glisten with tears, but he holds steady.

INT. WORKSHOP - NIGHT

Wally flips on his workbench light. Takes the gun from the cigar box, tucks it in his waistband as the PHONE RINGS.

Caller ID reads "DALE VINE". Wally answers then hangs up.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Wally types on his laptop, finds an address for "MANTZ, KEVIN". The sight of that name makes his blood boil.

Open "DIAZEPAM" and "ZOLPIDEM" prescription bottles on the table. Wally crushes pills with a mortar and pestle.

He takes ground beef out of a package, kneads the powdered pills into it.

EXT. VINE HOUSE - DAY

Purple sky of dawn. HORN HONK from a finned Cadillac idling in the driveway. Wally leaves the house.

INT. CADILLAC (MOVING) - DAY

Sammy drives as Wally rides shotgun, paper sack on his lap.

SAMMY

Last time I drove you around you were
shit-faced.

WALLY

Could always count on you, Sammy.

SAMMY

We're all fueled by mistakes. Thriving on
self-defeat. It's what makes us human.
Just don't do anything too stupid today.

EXT. DEFUNCT MALL PARKING LOT - DAY

The Caddy parks in an empty lot, the sun rising above a boarded-up mall.

INT. CADILLAC - DAY

The rising sun beams through the windshield.

SAMMY

Sure you wanna do this?

Wally opens the door, and just as he's about to get out Sammy grabs his arm.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

I want that piece back. Undamaged.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY

Low-income residential. Wally refers to a scrap of paper: "1879 WILLOW". Checks the numbers on houses.

EXT. MANTZ HOME - DAY

Wally stops at a run-down home, faded "1879" by the door. He peeks in the garage window, sees Kevin's truck. Then works his way around the side of the house.

INT. VINE LIVING ROOM - DAY

Dale enters, pocketing his lock-picking tools. He sees the mess then heads to...

THE KITCHEN

He sees the pill bottles, clicks on "BROWSER HISTORY" on the open laptop, sees the address of KEVIN MANTZ.

EXT. PATIO - DAY

Wally peers inside at Kevin, ducks, his heart pumping. He looks again. No Kevin, just Jessie sleeping.

He removes the ground beef from the paper sack, sets it on the patio, reaches for the door handle. It's unlocked.

INT. MANTZ LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jessie perks up as the door slides open, but no one's there. He sees the ground beef OUTSIDE and licks his chops.

EXT. PATIO - DAY

Wally is flat against the wall as Jessie pads to the meat. He slips inside and shuts the door.

INT. MANTZ LIVING ROOM - DAY

Wally hears CARLY CRYING and inches toward the hallway while readying his gun.

CARLY (O.S.)

I want mommy.

KEVIN (O.S.)

She's gone. Get dressed.

Wally is sweaty, head bandage stained with fresh blood. He squeezes eyes shut, shakes off dizziness.

CARLY (O.S.)

I don't wanna go.

Wally peers around a corner and sees...

INT. CARLY'S ROOM - DAY

Kevin throws clothes at Carly, sniffing. She's a wreck, bags under eyes, hair tussled.

Kevin stuffs Carly's belongings into a backpack.

KEVIN

What else? You want this thing?

Kevin holds up a stuffed chimp. Carly whimpers as he crams it in the backpack.

INT. MANTZ LIVING ROOM - DAY

Wally presses flat against the wall as Kevin leaves Carly's room and enters another.

INT. CARLY'S ROOM - DAY

Carly sees Wally poke his head into her room. He presses a finger to his lips.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Kevin charges down the hall to...

CARLY'S ROOM

No one's there. He returns to...

THE LIVING ROOM

Wally stands in his way, pointing the gun at his face with a trembling hand. Carly is across the room. Kevin inches to Wally, who cocks the hammer.

Kevin freezes. Jessie peers in the patio door, growling.

WALLY
You took our girl away.

KEVIN
She's my kid.

Jessie begins barking.

WALLY
On your knees.

Kevin just smirks, not buying Wally's tough-guy act.

WALLY (CONT'D)
Hands behind your head, fingers locked!

KEVIN
(complying)
You don't wanna do this, man.

Jessie stands on hind legs, scratching at the glass, snarling with fangs bared.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
It was an accident--

WALLY
There are no accidents!

Wally steadies his hand as he presses the barrel tip into the top of Kevin's head.

WALLY (CONT'D)
You were there.

INSERT: Silhouettes in the Chevelle. Dog in back.

Wally presses the barrel harder into Kevin's head as...

Jessie roars, chomping at the glass with massive jaws, saliva flying. A horrific, deafening sound.

CARLY
(crying)
Wally.

KEVIN
(shuts eyes)
Please God.

JANIE (V.O.)
Daddy?

Jessie's roaring wanes to whimpers. He sits.

Wally imagines JANIE LAUGH. As he turns to Carly, Kevin slams him into the wall, runs to the patio door, whips it open, and whistles.

Jessie pads in, sits, eyes half-mast. Kevin whistles.

KEVIN

Get him, boy, get him.

Jessie yawns then keels over. Kevin rushes to him.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

Jessie? Come on, boy. The hell you do to my dog, asshole?

Kevin charges Wally, but Wally is ready and slams him to the ground. He retrieves the gun, points it at Kevin who surrenders.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

Whatever it is you think I did, wasn't me. It's Foster you want--

WALLY

You were there.

KEVIN

I don't even know where there is, man. Your head, you ain't thinking straight. You were just in a bad accident--

Wally smashes the gun into Kevin's head. Then again and again until Kevin topples over.

Wally stares at his bloody deed, reaches into Kevin's pocket for keys. He offers a hand to Carly. She walks over, takes it, unable to take her eyes off Kevin.

INT. MANTZ GARAGE - DAY

Wally raises the garage door. Blinding sunlight pours in.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY

Dale's sedan screeches to a halt outside the Mantz home. The garage is empty.

INT. MANTZ LIVING ROOM - DAY

Dale sees the puddle of blood around Kevin's head. He grabs a sofa pillow, presses it to the wound. Then checks Kevin's pulse as he takes out his cell.

But he pockets it, scans the room, spots Kevin's phone.
Uses it to call 911.

DALE

I need an ambulance. One eight seven nine
Willow. I think he hit his head on
something. Me? I'm a neighbor.

Dale wipes his prints from the phone, still-connected, sets
it atop Kevin. Then nudges sleeping Jessie with his foot.

INT. ANNE'S APARTMENT - DAY

DOOR BUZZER. Anne opens up. It's Dale.

INT. PICK-UP (MOVING) - DAY

Carly watches Wally, steering with one hand, remove his
bloody head bandage. The side of his head is shaved,
revealing a large, sutured gash.

She finds a bandana in the glove box, wipes a drop of
blood from his cheek, then holds it against the gash.

INT. ANNE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Dale paces as Anne sits in complete shock.

ANNE

How bad is it?

DALE

He clocked him pretty good, didn't think
he had it in him. Normally there'd be an
AMBER Alert and BOLOs statewide. But no
one's looking for him.

ANNE

How come?

DALE

Mantz was with Foster that night, so fuck
him. If he wakes up, he can finger Wally
himself. I owe it to my little brother--

ANNE

Wait, back up. This girl's dad was with
Foster when he abducted Janie?

DALE

I'm almost positive--

ANNE

Almost?

DALE

Not good enough for you? "Almost" let's us put this nightmare behind us. Justice can be messy.

Dale lights a cigarette. His hands are shaking. Anne snags it for herself. He lights another.

DALE (CONT'D)

Any idea where he might be headed?

Anne gazes at the blazing low sun out her patio door.

ANNE

How could you let this happen?

DALE

He made his choices. We all did. And we all failed Janie.

ANNE

We should've come clean a year ago--

DALE

What good would it have done?

ANNE

You promised Foster would be convicted. Open and shut. He should be rotting in Hell right now.

DALE

What makes you think he isn't?

ANNE

What is that supposed to mean?

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Randall Foster is playing a VIOLENT VIDEO GAME on his Xbox. Loud CARS, GUNFIRE. DOOR KNOCK.

Foster opens the door. It's Dale.

DALE (V.O.)

It means he couldn't live with the guilt anymore.

Dale bursts inside, slams the door shut. Foster reaches for a knife, but Dale beats him to it, whips it across the room. Then points a snub-nose .38 at Foster's face.

DALE (V.O.)

Things have a tendency of working themselves out.

Foster backtracks, sinks into the sofa as Dale takes out a handkerchief. He unfolds it, revealing meth and a pipe.

DALE

Smoke up. It's your birthday.

Dale cocks the gun. Foster nervously loads some ice in the stem. Dale flicks his lighter, puts it to the pipe as Foster inhales. Sharp coughs, eyes watering.

DALE (CONT'D)

Another one.

Foster takes a second, deeper hit. He's flying now. But he starts to cry, shrinking into the sofa.

For the first time, Dale shows Foster some sympathy. Remorseful, he lowers the gun.

FOSTER

This what you want? Get me tweakin' and haul me in for possession? Look, man, it wasn't me, I swear to God--

DALE

You a righty or lefty?

Confused, Foster raises his right hand a few inches. Dale presses the gun barrel against Foster's right temple.

FOSTER

No, please--

BLAM! Left side of Foster's head explodes in a collage of brain and skull.

Dale, splattered with blood, stares at his dirty deed as the VIDEO GAME RAGES.

With a hankie he wipes prints from the gun, places it in Foster's right hand.

DOOR KNOCKS.

BOY (O.S.)

Randy, you playing without me?

Dale flattens against the wall. Reaches over, locks the door just before the knob turns.

More KNOCKS. He holds his breath, HEART POUNDING, peeks past a curtain at...

The boy walking away.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Dale marches through the forest, tears welling up. He rubs blood off his hands and face harder and faster.

EXT. DAWSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - NIGHT

Dale's sedan is the only car parked in the school lot.

INT. SEDAN - NIGHT

Door open, ENGINE IDLING. Behind the wheel eyeing the bloody handkerchief, Dale lights a cigarette then the handkerchief.

He drops it on the asphalt and watches it burn to ash. Then slams the bag of sunflower seeds against the dash. They explode everywhere.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

The pick-up zooms past a "SPEED LIMIT 45" sign.

INT. COP CAR - DAY

A radar gun reads "87".

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

The cop car accelerates from behind an abandoned shed, flashing lights and SIREN on.

INT. PICK-UP (MOVING) - DAY

Wally sees the cop car in the rear-view mirror and slows. As it nears, he floors the gas pedal.

INT. COP CAR (MOVING) - DAY

Officer TAGGERT speaks into the CB mic as she accelerates.

TAGGERT

In pursuit of Ford pick-up, northbound
route thirty-seven, mile marker eighteen.
License plate alpha, queen, nine--

INT. PICK-UP (MOVING) - DAY

Wally moves the gun from his waistband to under his seat as Carly digs her fingers into the seat.

INT. COP CAR (MOVING) - DAY

Taggert continues her high-speed pursuit of the pick-up.

DISPATCHER (V.O.)
 Vehicle belongs to Kevin Zachary Mantz,
 Ann Arbor. One-eight-seven-nine Willow.

INT. PICK-UP (MOVING) - DAY

Wally's half-mast eyes are glued to the road. Beside him, Carly glances at her mad chauffeur.

DISPATCHER (V.O.)
 Wife, Sara Elizabeth Mantz, deceased,
 criminal charges pending. May have
 daughter Carly Renee Mantz, age eight.
 Approach with caution.

INT. SEDAN (MOVING) - DAY

Dale and Anne listen to the police radio report.

DISPATCHER (V.O.)
 In need of back-up for ten-eighty. All
 units in the vicinity please respond--

DALE
 (into CB mic)
 State Police, seven-eight-four-two,
 requesting suspect not be approached.
 Repeat: do not approach. Over.

Dale and Anne await a response.

DISPATCHER (V.O.)
 All units in pursuit please stand by. Do
 not approach. Over.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY

The pick-up turns onto a dirt road, kicking up dust as it rumbles along.

INT. PICK-UP (MOVING) - DAY

Carly looks out the window at a rolling field. Sand dunes in the distance.

CARLY
 Will I see mommy again?

Wally can't find the words as Carly rolls down her window and enjoys the wind in her face.

EXT. SANDY ROAD - DAY

The pick-up reaches a hill, rises over a crest and enters a forest clearing. A sign reads "PYRAMID POINT".

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - DAY

The pick-up rolls to a stop. Wally gets out, gun in his waistband. He helps Carly out on his side.

Behind them five cop cars park. Taggert and other PATROLMEN open their doors and aim guns at Wally.

Wally glances back at them. He takes Carly's hand, walks her to a trail leading into the woods.

TAGGERT

Kevin Mantz, put the weapon down, step away from the girl.

Carly spins around.

CARLY

His name is Wally!

The patrolman look at each other as POLICE RADIOS blurt INCOHERENT BABBLE.

Dale's sedan pulls up behind them. Anne and Dale jump out.

DALE

(shows badge)

Lower your weapons, stand down!

EXT. FOREST TRAIL - DAY

Wally leads Carly up a steep sand path. Rays of sunlight filter through the leaves. Carly is exhausted and lags behind. Wally carries her piggy-back up the hill.

Further back, Anne and Dale scamper up the peak.

Near the top, Wally's pace has slowed to a painful shuffle. He slips, sets Carly down. Carly takes his hand.

CARLY

Hurry, Wally!

Carly leads the final leg of the climb.

EXT. PYRAMID POINT - DAY

Wally and Carly reach the top. They gaze at...

Sapphire Lake Michigan stretching to infinity. Waves reflect the SETTING SUN, the sky a vibrant orange-red. To either side, mountains of sand.

Carly sits, feet dangling over the cliff. A butterfly lands on her knuckle.

Wally sits beside her. They watch the butterfly flit away. He takes her hand in his.

Dale and Anne reach the top and see Wally and Carly. Anne puts a hand over her mouth, tears in her eyes.

Just as the sun dips behind the horizon, Wally's WATCH BEGINS TICKING.

DALE

Mantz and the twins are in custody.

Wally releases Carly's hand. She hugs him.

DALE (CONT'D)

Carly, come to me, sweetie.

Carly goes to Dale. Then Wally puts the gun to his temple.

Anne steps in, puts her hand over the gun, lowers it, tosses it aside. She embraces him tight. Taggart rushes in and cuffs Wally, forcing Anne to back away.

Dale collects the gun, opens the cylinder: NO BULLETS.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - NIGHT

Dale, Carly, Anne follow Wally as cops escort him to a flashing police cruiser. Like a funeral procession.

In the cruiser's backseat Wally shares a look with Carly as he rides away.

JUDGE (V.O.)

Mr. Vine, you have been charged by the State of Michigan with possession of an unlicensed fire arm, felony assault...

INT. COURT ROOM - DAY

Wally, in prison garb, stands with his ATTORNEY before the JUDGE. STATE PROSECUTORS sit at a table.

Behind them in the gallery is one person: Anne.

JUDGE

...grand theft auto, operating a vehicle without a license, and child endangerment. Do you understand these charges?

WALLY

Yes, your honor.

JUDGE

The maximum penalty, if convicted of all charges, is fourteen years in prison and a fine of twenty-two thousand dollars. How do you plead?

Wally's attorney speaks into his ear.

WALLY

Not guilty, your honor. And if I could just put it all in context--

JUDGE

Save it for the trial. Given extenuating circumstances stemming from your ordeal this past year, I am setting bail at fifty thousand dollars.

The judge hits the gavel. Wally sees Anne leave the room.

INT. SQUAD ROOM - DAY

Amidst the busy squad room, Dale rubs his temple as he looks at Foster's mugshot. He then ties the red ribbon around his desk lamp. Michaels raps on the desk.

MICHAELS

Cap wants to see you.

INT. CAP'S OFFICE - DAY

Dale sits as Cap closes the blinds. Standing off to the side is a MAN IN A SUIT.

CAP

Foster was running drugs and fake IDs out of the garage. But I guess you already knew that. The big news, however, is that two nights ago Randall Lee Foster committed suicide.

Dale doesn't react. Cap takes the bottle and two glasses from her desk drawer, pours two fingers in each.

CAP (CONT'D)

Not the reaction I expected.

DALE

I expected him to be rotting in jail four months ago. But I'll take what I can get.

Dale downs his drink in one gulp. He gasps, throat burning.

CAP

What did you think it was, water?
 (sips drink)
 When's the last time you took a family
 vacation?

DALE

I dunno. Been a while.
 (to Man in the Suit)
 I'm sorry, who are you?

CAP

How's Wally?

DALE

Court dates, lawyers.

CAP

He has a good one?

DALE

We'll see. He made some poor choices, but
 I'm sure he'll be glad to hear Foster
 shot himself.

CAP

Never said how he died.

Dale catches the Man in the Suit staring at him.

DALE

I just assumed. Ninety-nine percent
 effectiveness. Which seems a little low,
 unless you're not concentrating.

CAP

Neighbor kid came by to play Xbox. Forty-
 eight hours in that hot box, he was
 already starting to stink.

Cap opens a folder, displays a photo of Foster's corpse,
 gun in his right hand.

CAP (CONT'D)

He was a lefty. Maybe he wasn't
 concentrating. Drugs and video games.
 Just say no.

(sips drink)

My nonna used to say "conscience is as
 good as a thousand witnesses". I wouldn't
 have a reason to think it was anything
 other than suicide. Would you?

DALE

Like you say, Cap, there's either something there, or there isn't.

Cap locks eyes with Dale as she sets a letter on the desk. Header reads "RESTRAINING ORDER". "RANDALL LEE FOSTER" and "DETECTIVE DALE VINE" can be seen below it.

CAP

He filed a few days ago. Press will have a field day with this. Last thing we need is a bleeding-heart campaign defending the honor of a child murderer.

(rips up letter)

Now. What are you gonna do for me?

Dale looks at the Man in the Suit, back to Cap. Then unholsters his gun, sets it on the desk. Removes his shield, sets it alongside the gun.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Wally works on a clock. The shop is tidy, rows of finished clocks. Mailing labels, boxes, packing material.

Janie's unopened gift sits on a shelf.

Wally checks the time on his repaired watch. Then begins setting all clocks to the correct time.

He unpins the newspaper clippings from wall, puts them in a shoebox, including one that reads "ACCUSED CHILD MURDERER COMMITS SUICIDE".

He's wearing an ANKLE MONITOR.

EXT. VINE HOUSE - DAY

Leaves are changing. Fall is coming.

A car with a "DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES" decal pulls into the driveway.

Carly bolts out, runs to the back yard. A SOCIAL WORKER follows her, past Sammy's Caddy, Anne's Lexus, and an SUV.

EXT. BACK YARD - DAY

At a table feasting on barbecue: Sammy, Dale, Pamela, Danny and Julie, the Social Worker and Carly, Wally and Anne. LAUGHTER. CROSSTALK.

Wally eyes Anne and Dale as they laugh at an inside joke.

Pamela, too, shoots a look at Anne and Dale. Then shares a knowing glance with Wally.

PAMELA

It's nice to see you and Anne back together. We really should do this more often.

Awkward between the two couples as Danny tags Carly.

SON

You're it!

Carly chases Danny, followed by Julie.

DALE

I was just saying Wally was always late for the bus. The amount of times we had to walk to school--

ANNE

In a blizzard, uphill, both ways--

DALE

I'm serious! Wore out the treads on my Chuck Taylors. Now look at him. He literally makes time.

(raises glass)

To more of it together. As family.

Everyone clinks glasses except Wally.

DALE (CONT'D)

Excuse us a moment.

Dale's fake smile vanishes as he takes Wally aside. They watch Anne play with Carly and Dale's kids.

DALE (CONT'D)

What's your range?

WALLY

House, shop, yard. Might shrink after the trial.

DALE

Mantz and those Neanderthal clones got five apiece. You're bound to get less.

WALLY

What about you?

DALE

Cap's recommending I get full pension.

Wally and Dale, both pensive, watch Sammy hold court with the others as the kids chase each other around the yard.

DALE (CONT'D)

That's what closure looks like. It's time we put this nightmare behind us.

A breeze gives Wally a shiver. He shoves his hands in his pockets, looks up at storm clouds rolling in.

Julie runs over.

JULIE

Mom says she wants to go soon.

Dale scoops up Julie.

DALE

God, you're getting big. Wally, with mom and dad gone, we're orphans. Not as dramatic now that we're in our forties, but we gotta watch out for each other.

JULIE

(scrunches face)

You said you were gonna quit smoking. You smell like burning.

DALE

Sorry, honey.

Dale stomps out his cigarette, lets her down. Wally watches her run back to Carly and Danny. Carly waves at him.

INT. WALLY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Anne rubs lotion on her hands. Wally joins her in bed. She gives him a forced smile, clicks off her lamp, and turns her back to him.

LATER, Wally is wide awake. He slips out of bed.

INT. JANIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Wally sits on Janie's bed. Clicks on the lamp, projecting stars on the ceiling.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Janie walks away in the headlight beam.

INT. JANIE'S ROOM - NIGHT (BACK TO PRESENT)

Something in Janie's drawings catches Wally's eye.

INT. CAR - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Wally turns to the Silhouette in the Chevelle.

INT. JANIE'S ROOM - NIGHT (BACK TO PRESENT)

Wally examines the drawing UP CLOSE. What appears to be a bird in the distance is actually a BLACK CAR.

INT. CHEVELLE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

The CHEVELLE'S PASSENGERS are not Driscoll and Kevin. And in back is not Jessie. It's just a mutt.

INT. JANIE'S ROOM - NIGHT (BACK TO PRESENT)

Wally runs a hand through his hair, clutching a handful.

INT. LAKE HOUSE HALLWAY - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

With Janie cradled in his arms Wally hears the MUTED VOICES from a bedroom.

JANIE (V.O.)

It was like burning.

EXT. BACK YARD - DAY

Dale exhales smoke. Stomps out the cigarette.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT (BACK TO PRESENT)

Anne awakens, startled to see Wally staring at her. She sits up as Wally opens a dresser drawer. Inside are the GUN and PRESCRIPTION PILL BOTTLES. He opts for the pills.

EXT. VINE HOUSE - NIGHT

Tree branches violently thrash about.

FADE OUT.

THE END