

KIRBY IN LIMBO

Written by

Jamie Campbell

jamiecampbellcomic@gmail.com
(224) 201-9810

FADE IN:

INT. INSURANCE OFFICE - DAY

A row of cheap, identical desks sit side by side in an open-floor, understated storefront office.

Our hero, KIRBY JENKINS, 66 - a kind-eyed, friendly-faced man who always looks before he leaps - stands, holding a cardboard box.

One by one, he picks up his personal items and places them in the box: a stress ball, a quote of the day calendar, a few photos that include a young girl in a soccer uniform and a pic of Kirby and his wife when they were in their forties.

Kirby opens his desk drawer and pulls out four separate award plaques - each one announcing him as "Eastern Fidelity Insurance Salesman of the Year." He adds them to the box.

CLIFF PARSONS, 45 - tan, stocky, and kind - walks up to Kirby's desk.

CLIFF

Gettin' all packed up?

KIRBY

After thirty-six years, you'd think I'd have more than half a box of stuff.

CLIFF

Before you go, I've got something I'd like your opinion on. In the break room.

Kirby eyes Cliff suspiciously.

KIRBY

I told you I don't want a party.

INT. BREAK ROOM - DAY

The break room is brimming with EMPLOYEES eating cake and chatting excitedly.

Kirby stands alone in the corner, nonplussed, holding a tiny plate with a huge slice of cake. Pieces of confetti are stuck to his shirt. A banner on the back wall says, "We'll Miss you, Kirby."

Cliff stands at one end of the room and taps his plastic fork against a paper plate to get everyone's attention. It doesn't really make any noise, so he raises a hand into the air and clears his throat.

CLIFF

Ahem!

The room gets quiet.

CLIFF (CONT'D)

Thirty six years is a long time to work for a company. Longer than some of us have been alive.

A YOUNG CO-WORKER, 25, grins and smiles, exposing a mouthful of frosting.

CLIFF (CONT'D)

When my father was still running the office, I interned here in the summer. Back then, Kirby was THE MAN. No one could sell like him. He was our Michael Jordan.

Kirby looks down at the ground, uncomfortable with the attention.

CLIFF (CONT'D)

I asked him his secret. He told me, you have to understand people and their need to feel safe. What we sell is the opposite of fear.

Cliff grabs a small gift bag off a nearby table.

CLIFF (CONT'D)

We don't sell insurance. We sell *assurance*. The assurance that everything's gonna be okay.

Cliff walks over to Kirby and hands him the bag.

CLIFF (CONT'D)

Normally, at your retirement, that bag would contain a gold watch. But, we decided it was time we caught up with technology.

Kirby pulls a small box out of the bag, revealing a Fitbit.

CLIFF (CONT'D)

It's a Fitbit!

INT. JENKINS HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Kirby sits at a dining table across from CLAIRE, 64 - a brightly-dressed, adventure-lover who is the yin to Kirby's yang. They both eat bowls of ice cream.

Kirby displays the Fitbit on his wrist.

KIRBY
It's a Fitbit.

CLAIRE
Samantha has one of those. They tell you how many steps you've taken.

Kirby looks down at the device.

KIRBY
Four thousand two hundred and three. Is that good?

Claire shrugs. They both take a bite of their ice cream.

CLAIRE
You can sleep in tomorrow. That'll be nice.

Kirby nods and reaches for a bottle of chocolate syrup. He squirts a liberal dose onto his ice cream.

KIRBY
How's your sciatica?

CLAIRE
Why? Feelin' frisky?

Kirby wags his eyebrows at Claire. She blushes.

KIRBY
Maybe.

Claire reaches for the bottle of chocolate syrup, and drizzles some onto her own ice cream.

CLAIRE
It's good, I think.

KIRBY
You think? Or you're sure?

CLAIRE
Pretty sure.

KIRBY

I just don't want to take a pill,
then find out your back hurts.

Claire shifts from side to side in her chair, testing for back pain.

CLAIRE

I feel good. Giddy-up cowboy.

INT. JENKINS HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

A prescription bottle of Viagra sits on the nightstand with the lid off. Kirby snores loudly while Claire sleeps peacefully next to him.

INT. JENKINS HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

The first hints of sun peek through the window. The digital clock on the nightstand reads 5:47am. Claire is fast asleep. Next to her, Kirby lies fully awake, with eyes wide open. He gets up and quietly pads out of the room.

INT. JENKINS HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

The sun shines through the window next to a coffee maker. Claire wears a bathrobe and pours steaming coffee into a mug. Suddenly, the sun disappears and her face is covered in shadow.

She peers out the window and sees an enormous recreational vehicle pulling up to the house.

EXT. JENKINS HOUSE - DAY

The R.V. is parked in the driveway. The driver's side window is down. Kirby sits behind the steering wheel, content as a kid on Christmas. Claire walks out and approaches the vehicle.

KIRBY

Don't be mad.

Claire stares in wonder.

CLAIRE

It's too big! This isn't the one we
decided on.

Kirby disappears from view. The side door to the RV opens, and Kirby stands in the entrance.

KIRBY

I crunched the numbers. We can afford it. I didn't sign the paperwork yet. If you don't like it-

Claire grins.

CLAIRE

I didn't say I didn't like it.

Kirby reaches out a hand to help her up the stairs.

INT. R.V. - DAY

Kirby and Claire stand, gazing in wonder at the vehicle's luxury interior. It's nicer than most apartments.

Claire walks around, examining a large flatscreen television, and a kitchenette with ample counter space.

Claire sits down on a couch.

CLAIRE

This is better than the furniture we have in the house.

Kirby opens a side door.

KIRBY

And, you'll have your own closet.

Claire opens a different door, revealing a toilet and a sink.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Heated toilet seats!

CLAIRE!

No!

Kirby grins and nods toward the rear of the vehicle. Claire walks ahead of him, marveling at the bedroom suite. She holds out her arms and collapses onto the queen-sized bed.

CLAIRE

Oh, Kirb! It's a dream.

KIRBY

The only setback is there's not enough room for a washer and dryer. It was that or the extra closet.

CLAIRE
 So, we'll use laundromats. I can
 live with that.

Kirby lies down next to her and points to the ceiling, which features a large skylight revealing a beautiful blue sky.

KIRBY
 A month from now, we'll go to bed
 under the stars in the Rocky
 Mountains.

Claire reaches out and laces her fingers through Kirby's. They lie, staring up at the skylight, holding hands.

There is a VIBRATING sound. Kirby looks down at his Fitbit.

CLAIRE
 What's that?

KIRBY
 My Fitbit. Says it's time to get up
 and move.

INT. KIRBY'S CAR - MOVING - DAY

Kirby weaves a late model Buick through a busy parking lot. Claire sits in the passenger seat, eating a sandwich.

In front of them, a car pulls out of a parking space. Kirby heads toward it, but is thwarted when another vehicle darts in front of him, stealing the space.

Claire reaches across the seat and HONKS the HORN.

CLAIRE
 Asshole!

KIRBY
 What if that was one of Sam's
 professors?!

Claire shrugs and takes a bite of her sandwich.

EXT. COLLEGE STADIUM BLEACHERS - DAY

On the field, a college graduation ceremony is in progress.

STUDENTS are seated in rows of chairs, wearing caps and gowns, rising when their name is called to receive their diploma.

Kirby and Claire sit among PROUD FRIENDS AND FAMILY MEMBERS of students.

The UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT, 63 - a stiff and proud woman in a buttoned-up pantsuit - stands at a podium, calling out names.

UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT
Doctor Samantha Jenkins.

Kirby claps and smiles proudly. Claire reaches into her purse, pulls out an AIR HORN and HONKS it. It is very loud. A PARENT seated in front of them turns and glares.

CLAIRE
Sorry. Didn't realize it would be so loud.

The parent turns away, peeved.

On the stage, SAMANTHA JENKINS, 29 - smart and down-to-earth, radiating joy - grabs her diploma, turns toward her parents, and waves.

KIRBY
Woo!! That's our girl.

CLAIRE
"Doctor Jenkins." I like the SOUND of that.

Claire holds Kirby's hand and rests her head against his shoulder. As they nuzzle, she reaches her free hand out and honks the air horn again, startling the disgruntled parent in front of them.

INT. CHILI'S RESTAURANT - DAY

Kirby and Claire sit at a booth across from Samantha, who has changed out of her graduation gown into a Florida Atlantic University sweatshirt and jeans.

Kirby and Samantha sip glasses of lemonade. Claire pours creamer into a cup of coffee and stirs.

KIRBY
So, what's it gonna be? University professor or big money engineer?

SAMANTHA
Actually, I got ANOTHER offer. A private construction firm. They're offering twice as much as Jefferson.

CLAIRE
How does Emily feel about that?

Samantha smiles slyly and digs around excitedly in her pocket.

SAMANTHA
I was gonna wait to tell you this,
but we're engaged!

Kirby almost chokes on his lemonade. Claire squeals as Samantha pulls the engagement ring out of her pocket.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)
We wanted to tell you when we were
all together, but she won't have
any free time until her residency
ends and I'm too excited!

Their SERVER, 23, - male, sassy, a little frazzled - approaches the table and puts two fresh glasses of lemonade in front of Samantha and Kirby.

SERVER
Did we save room for dessert?

CLAIRE
How about a round of margaritas?!

SAMANTHA
(to Claire)
Really?

CLAIRE
(to server)
We're celebrating!

The server gets out his pad and writes their order.

SERVER
Three margaritas.

KIRBY
None for me, actually. I'm driving.

The server nods and walks away.

Samantha takes her father's hand. Kirby looks into his daughter's eyes.

SAMANTHA
Dad, aren't you gonna say anything?

Samantha holds up her hand with the ring on it. Kirby's eyes tear up. He smiles, reaches out and squeezes her shoulder.

KIRBY

You're gonna make a beautiful
bride. That Emily's one lucky girl.

Samantha beams at Kirby.

SAMANTHA

And you said no one would ever want
to marry me if I didn't stop biting
my nails.

KIRBY

I'm not too proud to admit I was
wrong. Also, take the job at the
firm. If you hate it, you can
always go back and teach.

INT. KIRBY'S CAR - DAY

Kirby sits in the driver's seat. Claire is on the passenger side, searching through her purse for a stick of gum. Samantha, in the backseat, slides toward the center, between her parents.

Kirby checks the mirror and carefully backs the car out of its parking spot.

KIRBY

Dr. Jenkins, would you mind
buckling your seatbelt?

Samantha rolls her eyes and slides over behind Claire, who turns to her and offers a stick of gum.

Kirby pulls out onto the road. Raindrops begin to fall. He turns the windshield wipers on.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

(to Samantha)

You're parked back at the stadium?

CLAIRE

She told you she walked from the
apartment.

KIRBY

That's right. Where do I turn
again?

Claire holds her hand out. Samantha gives her the wrapper from her piece of gum.

SAMANTHA

Up on Clairmont. Take a right.

Kirby signals and gets over to his right. The rain starts to come down harder. He adjusts the wipers.

KIRBY

Here?

Kirby slows down to make the turn.

SAMANTHA

No! Go straight. This is Montrose.
Clairmont's a block down. GO
STRAIGHT!

Kirby turns his blinker off and looks back at Sam as the light turns yellow. Sam points forward.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

Dad! The light!

The light changes to red as the cars rolls into the intersection. Kirby turns and faces forward. OUT OF NOWHERE a semi truck SMASHES into the passenger side of the car.

BLACK.

EXT. INTERSECTION - DAY

Kirby stands expressionless. One side of his face is covered in dark blood from a wound over his eye.

The rain pours down hard.

SFX: CONTINUOUS - A steady, high pitched RINGING.

The wrecked Buick sits, half on the sidewalk, half on the road. The passenger side of the car is completely caved-in.

Across the street, the semi-truck that hit them is jackknifed. A TRUCK-DRIVER, 42 - bearded, burly - hops out of the cab and surveys the damage, horror-stricken.

PEDESTRIANS watch from beneath umbrellas, jaws agape. A MIDDLE AGED WOMAN pulls over a minivan and makes a phone call.

Kirby turns slowly in a circle until he sees his car. He stumbles towards it.

A tuft of Claire's hair and part of her elbow are visible through the shattered window. Samantha's hand presses, completely still, against the only part of glass that remains intact.

Kirby drops to his knees and cries out to the sky as an ambulance rounds the corner.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

The pews are packed with MOURNERS dressed in black.

Kirby stands at a podium, in front of a casket, wearing a black suit. Next to the casket, an ornate urn sits atop a table beside a large flower arrangement.

Kirby stares blankly at the congregation for several seconds. Finally, he leans forward and speaks.

KIRBY

I don't exactly know what to say. I don't really feel like speaking.

Kirby pulls a handkerchief out of his pocket and dabs his forehead.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

This is unimaginable. The two most important people in my life are gone. And, I know if I don't say something, I'll always regret it.

Tears flow down Kirby's face. He makes no attempt to wipe them.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

I don't know what I'm going to do. It's funny. Well, I guess not funny. Nothing about this is funny. But, Claire wanted to be cremated.

Kirby gestures to the urn and then the casket.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

But, the idea of having her body burned absolutely abhorred Samantha. So, we have a combo package here.

A few polite laughs flutter through the congregation. Kirby's body begins to shake as his sobs intensify.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

I don't know what else to say. God knows Claire and Samantha deserve a better eulogy than this. Thank you for being here on such a terrible day.

In the front pew, LOU BOUTON, 62 - bald, funny, and loyal - stands and approaches Kirby. He gives him a hug, and then reaches into his pocket for the funeral program.

LOU

(into microphone)

I believe Emily, who was Samantha's fiancée, would like to sing a song.

Lou gently guides Kirby back to his seat.

INT. CHURCH FOYER - DAY

Kirby, stands, stone-faced, amid a sea of flowers, in front of two large placards with photos of Claire and Samantha.

Lou stands next to him, holding a small plate, eating a finger sandwich.

KIRBY

Thanks for coming to the rescue up there.

LOU

Yeah, well, what are friends for?

A receiving-line of FUNERAL GOERS are lined-up to greet Kirby.

EMILY, 30 - short-haired with glasses and a stiff demeanor - stands across from Kirby, in a grief-stricken daze.

KIRBY

That was a beautiful song, Emily.

Emily nods.

EMILY

Thank you.

KIRBY

If you'd like, you can stop by the house, go through Sam's things. Have anything you want.

EMILY

I appreciate that.

They nod at each other in painful understanding, unsure what else to say.

EMILY (CONT'D)

I'm going to get a cup of coffee.
You need anything?

Kirby shakes his head. Emily walks away.

A CRYING WOMAN, 52 - in a pantsuit with mascara running down her face - approaches Kirby and puts a hand on his shoulder.

CRYING WOMAN

I am so sorry. Claire was a saint.
And I know she was so proud of
Samantha. I cannot imagine.

Kirby gives her a small, polite smile. She reaches out and takes his hand.

KIRBY

How did you know Claire?

CRYING WOMAN

She was my realtor.

The crying Woman turns to Kirby, wraps her arms around him, and begins to sob violently. Kirby stands, awkwardly trapped in her embrace.

INT. JENKINS HOUSE - SHOWER - NIGHT

Steam fills the shower as hot water rains down. The shelves are lined with feminine bath products: color-safe shampoos, salon-quality conditioners, and assorted scrubs in pastel containers.

Kirby sits naked, on a portable plastic shower seat, staring blankly as the flow of water pours over him.

INT. JENKINS HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

With each hand in a potholder, Kirby opens the oven, pulls out a casserole dish, and sets it down on the counter next to a sink overflowing with other casserole dishes.

He removes the pot holders, pulls a spoon from a drawer and somberly digs out a scoop of the casserole. It is steaming.

The doorbell RINGS.

LIVING ROOM

Kirby walks to the door, still holding the spoon. He opens it, revealing Lou standing on his porch, with a suit jacket draped over his arm.

LOU
Forget I was coming?

KIRBY
Want some casserole?

Lou eyes the spoon suspiciously.

LOU
What kind of casserole?

KIRBY
Fuck if I know.

INT. JENKINS HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

Kirby and Lou sit across from each other, finishing up plates of casserole. There are half-empty glasses of iced tea in front of them.

LOU
I need to talk to you.

KIRBY
Thought we were talking.

LOU
Not as your friend. As your lawyer.

Kirby sighs and looks down at his plate. Lou reaches out and places a comforting hand on Kirby's. He looks up.

KIRBY
Let's have a drink.

INT. JENKINS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Two identical worn leather recliners sit side by side. Kirby sits in one, holding a nearly-empty glass of bourbon. Lou sits on the couch with his own glass.

They both inhabit the room's uncomfortable silence, unsure how to start.

LOU
Things are all squared away with
the insurance. Police report was
cut and dry.

Kirby stares at his glass. Lou waits for a response. Getting
none, he continues.

LOU (CONT'D)
Between the life policies and the
liability-

Kirby reaches down and slams the handle on his recliner
bringing his foot rest down loudly. Lou waits a moment, then
continues.

LOU (CONT'D)
Sam had you and Claire as the
primary on her policy, too.

Kirby grips the armrest. His breathing intensifies.

LOU (CONT'D)
I've never heard of a kid under
thirty having such comprehensive
insurance, but then again, she's
your daught-

KIRBY
Stop! Please. I don't want to talk
about it.

LOU
It's just over four mill-

Kirby stands abruptly.

KIRBY
I SAID I DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT
IT!

Lou throws his hands up in surrender.

LOU
I'm sorry! This isn't fun for me,
either, but someone's got to go
over this with you.

Kirby walks over to the window and looks out at Claire's
garden. He grabs ahold of the drapery to steady his shaking
hand.

KIRBY
I don't want the money.

Lou stands, walks up behind Kirby, and puts a hand on his shoulder. Kirby tries to shake him off and collapses to the floor, taking the drapery down with him.

Kirby sits splayed out, wrapped up in the huge curtain like a lost little boy.

Lou sits next to him and wraps an arm around his friend, holding him as he rocks.

KIRBY (CONT'D)
Just send the money back, okay?

Lou shakes his head.

LOU
You set it up to direct deposit, remember? You wanted it to be easy for Claire if something ever happened. It's already in your account.

They sit silent for a moment until a VIBRATING sound emanates from Kirby's wrist. Kirby looks down at his Fitbit. The screen says "TIME TO GET MOVING." Kirby rips the device from his wrist and flings it across the room.

INT. JENKINS HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

The room looks like a Lego museum. There is soft track lighting, and the walls are surrounded by shelving displays of Lego models - a Darth Vader mask, a Statue of Liberty, a Rolls Royce, etc. - all perfectly assembled and on display.

On a table near the wall is a tiny Lego model of a town square. In the center of the room sits a butcher block table with a stool. There is an instruction manual for a Lego model typewriter and a pile of partially-assembled pieces.

The door at the top of the stairs opens, and Kirby enters. He is unshaven, in a bathrobe, holding a glass of milk. He slowly plods down the stairs and sits at the table.

Kirby picks up the manual and pulls out a bookmark, opening it to the page where he left off. He follows the instructions and begins assembling the Lego typewriter.

Kirby reaches for a Lego piece and accidentally knocks the manual to the floor. He bends down to pick it up, and it flips to the first page, where something has been written in black marker.

Kirby reads where Claire has inscribed the book, "This reminded me of your old typewriter. Happy birthday. I love you more than anything. - Claire."

Kirby drops the book to the floor.

INT. JENKINS HOUSE - SAMANTHA'S BEDROOM - LATER

The bedroom clearly hasn't changed since Samantha was a teen. There are soccer trophies on a shelf. On the wall are posters of Zac Efron and the band Arctic Monkeys.

Kirby, still in his bathrobe, looks around the room. He stops in front of Sam's desk, flipping through a stack of books. On the bottom of the stack, he discovers her diary. He shrugs and opens it up.

Printed on the first page is the phrase "These are the PRIVATE THOUGHTS of Samantha Jenkins." Kirby closes the diary respectfully and places it down on Sam's desk.

INT. JENKINS HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

Kirby, still in his bathrobe, opens the freezer. It is almost completely bare. He pulls out the lone item - the final casserole dish.

Kirby removes a layer of foil from the dish and places it in the oven.

INT. JENKINS HOUSE - BATHROOM - LATER

Kirby stands at the toilet, urinating. He looks over and catches a glimpse of himself in the mirror. He flushes and approaches for a closer look.

Kirby looks old, sad, and exhausted. He sighs and pulls the mirror toward him, opening the medicine cabinet. He pulls out a bottle of ibuprofen and stops, noticing a prescription bottle behind it.

The bottle lists "Claire Jenkins" as the intended patient. Kirby picks it up and examines the label.

The prescription listed is "Librium." The instructions state, "Take two pills at night for sleeplessness. WARNING: DO NOT take more than-"

Kirby walks out of the bathroom with the bottle in his hand.

INT. JENKINS HOUSE - BEDROOM - LATER

OLD SCHOOL URBAN BLUES in the vein of Muddy Waters plays from an out-of-date IPOD, sitting in a dock. A glass of water sits on the nightstand next to the bottle of Claire's prescription pills.

A nice blue suit and tie have been laid out on the bed next to a starched white shirt.

Kirby enters, from the closet, freshly shaven, wearing a towel around his waist.

INT. JENKINS HOUSE - DEN - LATER

Kirby sits at a roll top desk, wearing boxer shorts, dress socks and a white t-shirt. The iPod can be heard playing another blues tune from down the hall.

Kirby finishes writing a note on a yellow legal pad. He tears the paper from the pad, folds it neatly, and places it in an envelope.

INT. JENKINS HOUSE - BEDROOM - LATER

Kirby stands in front of a full length mirror, wearing the blue suit. He reaches up and adjusts his tie.

Kirby walks over and sits on the edge of the bed. He reaches into his coat pocket, removes the envelope and places it on the nightstand.

He grabs the prescription pill bottle, and takes off the cap.

Kirby gets a whiff of something. He sniffs the air, confused. Then, his eyes go wide as he remembers.

KIRBY
THE GODDAMNED CASSEROLE!

INT. JENKINS HOUSE - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Black smoke fills the hall. Kirby enters from the bedroom, more annoyed than scared.

INT. JENKINS HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Kirby stands in the doorway, staring in disbelief. The kitchen is ablaze - flames and black smoke everywhere.

EXT. JENKINS HOUSE - NIGHT

Kirby stands in his suit at the edge of the driveway, watching his house burn. Under one arm, he holds the urn containing Claire's ashes.

NEIGHBORS line the street, watching the fire. A FIRE ENGINE is parked next to the RV, lights flashing.

A LINCOLN MARK VII pulls up and parks across the street. The door opens and Lou pops out. He looks at the house, shakes his head, and walks over to Kirby.

LOU
What the hell happened?

KIRBY
I burned a casserole.

Lou puts an arm around Kirby's shoulder. They watch as a firefighter douses out the last of the flames. The melted remnants of a Lego model of the Statue of Liberty peek out of the rubble.

LOU
Are you wearing a suit?

INT. LOU'S KITCHEN - DAY

Kirby sits at a table in a spacious kitchen, wearing a pair of pajamas that are a bit too tight. The name "Lou" is embroidered on the breast pocket.

A stack of toast sits on a plate in the center of the table. Kirby takes a slice and butters it. Lou stands at the counter, refilling both of their coffees.

LOU
Stay here as long as you need.

KIRBY
I appreciate it, but I think I'm
just gonna move into the RV.

Lou walks over and takes a seat across from Kirby

LOU
Oh, horseshit. It's just me here. I
got the room. I could use the
company.

Kirby looks down into his coffee mug like he wants to crawl into it.

KIRBY

I was going to kill myself last night.

Lou laughs nervously, then stops abruptly.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

That's why I was wearing the suit. Figured it would save the funeral director the hassle of getting me dressed.

Lou's entire body stiffens as he takes in Kirby's confession.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Had the sleeping pills in my hand when I realized the house was on fire.

LOU

Jesus Christ, Kirby. You could have come to me. I wish you would have.

Kirby shrugs.

KIRBY

Didn't want to be talked out of it.

Kirby grabs a piece of toast.

LOU

If you wanted to kill yourself, why didn't you just stay in the house?

KIRBY

I wanted to die painlessly in my sleep, not be burned alive.

Lou nods and takes a contemplative sip of his coffee.

LOU

Gonna try again?

Kirby thinks about it for a moment, then shrugs.

KIRBY

Not sure. I don't think so.

INT. R.V. - DAY

Kirby sits in the driver's seat, staring at the remains of his house through the windshield.

He takes a deep breath and inserts the key into the ignition. He freezes, unable to turn it. His breath quickens. He pulls the key out and collapses back in the seat in a cold sweat.

EXT. KIRBY'S HOUSE - DAY

A tow truck sits in the driveway, hooked-up to Kirby's R.V. The DRIVER, 40 - a gruff, deadpan woman in overalls - waits behind the wheel. Kirby stands in the driveway, giving the remnants of his home one last glance.

The driver checks her watch and yells through the open window.

DRIVER

You comin'? I got another pick-up to get to.

Kirby notices something sticking out of the rubble. He holds a hand-up.

KIRBY

Just a second.

Kirby ambles over to the debris. In the ground, next to what remains of his melted Fitbit, the corner of a picture frame sticks out. He struggles a little, but manages to extract it.

Kirby examines the shattered frame, which holds Samantha's senior photo. The edges have been burned, but Sam's face remains intact.

Kirby carries the photo to the tow truck, and hops into the passenger seat.

The driver pulls out, hauling Kirby's R.V.

INT. TOW TRUCK - MOVING - DAY

Kirby sits in silent contemplation, clutching the photo to his chest. The driver pulls a can of Skoal from her shirt pocket. She offers it to Kirby.

KIRBY

No, thank you.

She packs the can, opens it, and deposits a dip between her lip and gums.

EXT. TRAILER PARK - DAY

Kirby's luxury R.V. stands out like a sore thumb among several rows of mobile homes. There are some scattered R.V.'s and campers, but they all look worse for the wear. In front of the park is a sign that says "JUNIPER MANOR."

Kirby looks around at his new neighborhood as the tow truck drives away.

INT. R.V. - DAY

Kirby is fast asleep, wearing nothing but a pair of faded boxer briefs. Sunlight shines through the skylight onto the bed, illuminating his pale, pasty body. His face sports a few weeks worth of white beard growth.

The R.V. is a mess. Takeout containers and clothes are strewn all over the place. The only spot that isn't dirty is a shelf which holds Samantha's senior photo and the urn containing Claire's ashes.

There is a KNOCK at the door. Kirby sits up and wipes drool from his face.

Kirby stands and puts on a bathrobe. The KNOCKING resumes. He pads to the front door and opens it.

Lou stands in the entrance, holding a brown paper sack and a stack of mail.

LOU
You look like shit.

Kirby stares, nonplussed, at Lou, who grins back.

LOU (CONT'D)
I brought bagels. And a check. The lot your house was on finally sold. You gotta get your mail forwarded, Kirby.

Kirby turns and walks toward the kitchenette. He opens a cabinet and pulls out a container of instant coffee.

Lou walks behind him, looking around at the R.V.

LOU (CONT'D)
You don't have to live like this, you know.

KIRBY

Like what? It's a goddamn luxury
R.V.

LOU

It smells like a defensive
lineman's armpit.

Lou reaches into his coat pocket and removes an envelope. He hands it over to Kirby, who opens it and pulls out a real estate check for one hundred twenty-seven thousand dollars and sixty-seven cents. He tosses it on the counter.

LOU (CONT'D)

The offer still stands. Come stay
with me.

KIRBY

I like it here.

Lou raises an eyebrow in disbelief. Kirby reaches into the bag and pulls out a single-serving tub of cream cheese.

LOU

Mind if we eat outside? This place
is kind-of killing my appetite.

EXT. TRAILER PARK - DAY

Kirby has changed into sweatpants and a wrinkled polo shirt. He and Lou sit, eating bagels at a small picnic table in a community section of the trailer park.

LOU

What do you got planned for the
summer?

KIRBY

You're lookin' at it.

LOU

Could start a meth lab. Probably be
real popular with your neighbors.

KIRBY

(sarcastic)

You're hilarious, you know that?

Lou wipes cream cheese off of his mouth with a paper napkin.

LOU

You still not drivin'?

Kirby shakes his head.

KIRBY

I don't think I'll ever get behind the wheel again.

LOU

That's okay. Walking's good for you. What else is new?

KIRBY

Thinking about planting a little garden. That was always Claire's thing, but it might be nice. Give me something to take care of.

They watch a CHUBBY KID, 6, walk by, pulling a red wagon.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

(to himself)

Maybe I ought to get one of those.

Lou walks over to a nearby garbage can and tosses his napkin in. He turns back to Kirby.

LOU

I gotta ask. You doing okay?

Kirby shakes his head.

KIRBY

No. But, I'm not *supposed* to be doing okay. My whole world got turned upside down.

LOU

Fair enough. But, you can't hibernate forever.

KIRBY

Who says I can't?

Lou sits next to Kirby.

Across from them, a beat-up pickup truck pulls up to a trailer. The windows are down. The DRIVER, 35, - unshaven with a leathery construction-worker's tan - reaches his hand out and flicks a cigarette butt onto the ground.

LOU

Why are you living here, Kirby? You can afford-

KIRBY

Listen, Lou. I appreciate you checking in on me, everything you've done. I really do.

A PREGNANT WOMAN, 25 - trashy-cute, wearing cut-off shorts and a crop top - gets out of the truck's passenger side.

LOU

Okay. Well, I-

KIRBY

But I need you to leave me the fuck alone. I don't want to be around anyone. Everything hurts. I don't know how to stop it. I just need to be sad for awhile.

Lou stares at him, concerned but unsure how to respond.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Maybe that's why I'm in this shitty trailer park. I can't bring myself to spend the money on anything nicer. I don't *WANT* something nice.

The pregnant woman walks around to the driver's side, leans in, and gives the driver a kiss before heading into her trailer. The truck pulls away.

LOU

Having any more suicidal thoughts?

KIRBY

I think I'm past that. Taking it day by day.

Lou nods, sullen, but understanding.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

I'm not saying stay away forever. Just give me a little space.

LOU

You remember that time in college? When you stood up to that guy at Volstead's and saved my ass?

Kirby grins and shakes his head.

KIRBY

As I recall, I didn't save anyone's ass. We both got the shit kicked out of us.

LOU

Getting your ass kicked alone is a lot different than getting it kicked with a friend.

A GRUNGY DUDE, 28 - pulls up to the pregnant woman's trailer driving a Trans Am covered in primer paint and HONKS the HORN.

KIRBY

I remember weighing the risks. I figured if I got my ass kicked, but saved him from killing you, I'd at least still have a friend.

LOU

You also didn't realize the guy was an NCAA wrestling champion.

KIRBY

I should've known. He didn't have a neck.

Lou puts an arm around Kirby's shoulder.

LOU

I'll give you the summer. But, if you're still feeling sorry for yourself come fall, I'm dragging you through the car wash.

The pregnant woman comes out and hops into the passenger seat of the Trans Am. The car drives away. Lou nods toward the pregnant woman's trailer.

LOU (CONT'D)

What do you think's going on there?

KIRBY

I believe the term is "polyamorous."

Lou chuckles.

INT. LAUNDROMAT - NIGHT

Rows of old, beat-up, coin-operated laundry machines sit atop a floor of peeling linoleum. Some of the machines have tape over the lid and signs indicating they are "OUT OF ORDER."

In one corner a change machine sits next to a vending machine that dispenses candy bars, detergent, and fabric softener.

Kirby enters through the front door, toting a red wagon just like the one the chubby kid was pulling through the trailer park. The wagon holds basket full of dirty laundry and a big tub of store-brand detergent.

Kirby wears sweatpants and a faded sweatshirt. His white beard is quite a bit longer.

Kirby stops in front of a pair of washing machines. He unloads his laundry, tossing dark clothes into the machine on the left and white clothes into the machine on the right.

He sets his basket on the ground and unscrews the container of detergent. Instead of measuring the liquid, he just pours a healthy amount into each washing machine.

On the other side of the room, VAYDA DIXON, 59 - a gravelly-voiced, weather-beaten woman - wearing jean shorts and a low-cut v-neck t-shirt, stands, puffing on a vape pen, folding laundry.

Kirby walks over to the change machine. He pulls a crisp ten dollar bill from his wallet and attempts to insert it into the machine. It won't take his bill.

Kirby looks down and notices the machine is unplugged. He reaches down, takes the cord, and plugs it into the wall.

He inserts his ten dollar bill. This time, the machine takes it.

Kirby stares, waiting for his quarters to appear. Nothing happens. Frustrated, he grabs the machine and is just about to shake it, when Vayda coughs. He stops himself and looks around like a kid who was almost caught breaking a rule.

KIRBY
(under his breath)
Damn thing ate my bill.

Kirby spies a door with a sign that says "OFFICE." He walks over and knocks politely.

VAYDA puffs on her vape pen and watches him, amused. She loads her folded laundry into a basket.

Kirby knocks again, this time a little louder. Getting no answer, he shrugs and walks back to the change machine.

Kirby opens his wallet. All he has is a twenty. He pulls it out, sighs, and inserts it into the machine. Once again, no quarters come out.

Kirby fumes. He shakes the shit out of the machine. Behind him, VAYDA cackles under her breath.

An exasperated Kirby walks back to the office door and POUNDS FURIOUSLY. Still, no answer.

KIRBY (CONT'D)
HELLOOO?!?!

Kirby huffs back to the washing machines and begins pulling his dirty laundry out, placing it back into the basket. The clothes are covered in detergent, which gets all over his sweatshirt.

KIRBY (CONT'D)
(to himself)
Goddammit!

Vayda takes her basket of clothes and walks to the office. She unlocks the door. Kirby notices her and stops unloading the laundry.

KIRBY (CONT'D)
Excuse me. Do you work here?

Vayda enters the office. Kirby follows her to the doorway.

OFFICE

There is an old desk with a small television sitting on top. Vayda sets the basket of folded laundry down, then walks around to take a seat behind the desk.

VAYDA
I'm VAYDA. I own this fine establishment.

KIRBY
Didn't you see me knocking on the door?

VAYDA
Almost knocked it off the hinges. You gonna be a problem?

This question takes Kirby aback.

KIRBY
Your change machine ate thirty of my dollars.

VAYDA opens one of the desk drawers and pulls out a large, thick plastic bag.

VAYDA
Machine was unplugged for a reason.

KIRBY
You should put a sign up if it's out of order.

VAYDA
It's not out of order. It's out of quarters. My boyfriend ran off with the key.

VAYDA begins loading the folded laundry into the plastic bag.

KIRBY
I'm sorry to hear that.

VAYDA opens another drawer and removes a lockbox. She opens it and pulls out three rolls of quarters.

VAYDA
Here you go. Now, try not to break anything hot shot.

Kirby sheepishly takes the quarters.

KIRBY
Thank you. Sorry again.

INT. R.V. - DAY

Kirby stands in the R.V.'s dining area, unpacking his laundry from the wagon.

Through the window, he can see the porch of the trailer next door. The door swings open and MIRANDA, 23 - a feisty, freckle-faced redhead with a tough-exterior and a heart of gold - storms out.

Right behind her, RUDY, 31 - a redneck with a hair trigger temper and a panty dropping smile - follows fast on her heels.

RUDY
Ain't nothin' happening, Miranda. I mean it.

MIRANDA
You're a liar. Get the fuck out!

EXT. TRAILER PARK - DAY

Rudy reaches into his back pocket, pulls out his phone and holds it out to Miranda.

RUDY

Here. Delete her number. She don't mean shit to me.

MIRANDA

Then, why'd you send her a picture of your dick?!

RUDY

It was a joke.

Miranda's eyes lower towards Rudy's crotch.

MIRANDA

It's a joke alright.

Miranda reaches out and snatches the phone from Rudy. She turns and stomps back into the trailer, slamming the door.

RUDY

Goddammit, Miranda!

Rudy rushes to the trailer door. He tries the knob, but it's locked. He pounds on the door. Behind him, the door to Kirby's R.V. opens. Kirby stands, watching Rudy as he pounds harder.

RUDY (CONT'D)

I'll knock this goddamn door in!

Kirby CLEARS HIS THROAT LOUDLY. Rudy turns around and glares at him.

KIRBY

Everything alright?

Rudy turns on the charm, relaxing his demeanor, giving one of his million dollar smiles.

RUDY

Just a little lover's spat. You know how it is.

KIRBY

Maybe you ought to cool off.

RUDY

You think so?

Rudy's smile disappears, but he remains calm. He steps toward Kirby's trailer.

RUDY (CONT'D)
Maybe you wanna keep your nose in
your own business, old man.

The door to Miranda's trailer opens. She stands there, holding Rudy's phone. The screen has been smashed to bits. He turns around and sees what she's done. She drops it on the ground, turns around and closes the door.

Rudy bends over and picks up the ruined device.

RUDY (CONT'D)
That's a brand new phone!
Goddammit!

KIRBY
Maybe you oughta be running along.

Rudy turns toward Kirby and spits on the ground.

RUDY
And, what if I don't?

KIRBY
What is it your generation says?
Fuck around and find out?

Rudy lets out a surprised chuckle.

RUDY
You got some balls, old man. I tell
you what, I'm gonna let that slide.
But, just this once.

Rudy walks over to a rusty, old Chevy Silverado. He hops in, turns it on, and backs out fast, trailing a cloud of dust in his wake.

As the pickup pulls out of sight, Kirby's shoulders relax. He lets out an exasperated sigh, and the tiniest proud smile arrives at the corners of his mouth.

Miranda's face appears in the window of her trailer. Kirby turns around and goes back inside.

INT. R.V. - DAY

Kirby holds a garbage bag in one hand as he walks around the living area, throwing away takeout containers, soda cans, and the remains of microwaveable meals.

Kirby looks in the fridge. It's empty except for a carton of milk. He opens it and sniffs, then makes a sour face before pouring the milk down the sink.

Kirby's phone begins to ring. He pulls it out of his pocket and answers.

KIRBY

Hello.

EMILY (V.O.)

Hey. It's Emily.

KIRBY

Sam's Emily?

EMILY

Sorry for the short notice, but would you be able to meet up?

Kirby tosses the empty milk container into a garbage can.

KIRBY

Everything alright?

EMILY (V.O.)

I stopped by your house and it's-

KIRBY

Burnt to a crisp? Sorry, I should've let you know.

EMILY (V.O.)

I've got a box I'd like to give you. Some of Sam's things.

KIRBY

Got a pen? I'll give you my address.

INT. R.V. - LATER

Kirby stands by the front door. His hair is combed, and he wears a clean polo shirt and pair of khaki shorts.

He opens the door to reveal Emily, wearing leggings, a windbreaker, and a Tampa Bay Rays cap. She holds a small cardboard box.

Through the gap in the door, Kirby can see a U-Haul trailer attached to the bumper of Emily's Honda Accord.

KIRBY

Come in. Sorry about the clutter.
I'm in the middle of cleaning.

Emily steps inside, handing the box to Kirby.

EMILY

Not on account of me, I hope.

Kirby sets the box down on the R.V.'s small dining table.

KIRBY

Saw the trailer out there. You
moving?

Emily nods and puts her hands in her jacket pockets, clearly uncomfortable.

EMILY

Got an offer at a research clinic
in Houston. You're my last stop on
the way out of town.

KIRBY

Congratulations. Sounds like a good
opportunity.

EMILY

It'll be good for me to be
somewhere without so many . . .
memories.

Kirby nods awkwardly.

KIRBY

I'd offer you something to drink,
but I'm out of, well, everything.

EMILY

That's alright. Got case of water
in the U-Haul.

KIRBY

Thanks for dropping these off.

EMILY

How are you doing?

Kirby shrugs his shoulders.

KIRBY

I'm okay, but not really, if that
makes sense.

EMILY

I feel the same way.

KIRBY

Like a three-legged dog. You keep trying to move forward, but every step's hard.

Kirby reaches into the box and pulls out an old gray sweatshirt, with several holes in it. Across the front, in cracked, green letters, it says "Stetson University."

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Thought I lost this thing years ago.

Emily smiles.

EMILY

Sam said she stole it from your closet when she left home freshman year. It was her favorite sweatshirt.

KIRBY

It was mine, too.

EMILY

She refused to throw it away, even with all the holes in it.

Kirby smiles and nods.

KIRBY

Claire always wanted me to throw it away, too.

EMILY

Like father, like daughter.

Kirby sets the sweater down and looks through the other items.

EMILY (CONT'D)

The rest is just some books and an old day planner. I thought you might want them. Especially after the fire.

KIRBY

I appreciate it.

They stare in awkward silence for a moment, bonded by tragedy, but unsure how to connect.

EMILY

Well, I better get going.

Emily nods, then turns and exits the trailer. Kirby turns back to the box, picks up the sweatshirt, and smells it.

INT. TRAILER PARK - DAY

Kirby lies in bed, wearing boxers and a t-shirt. A sunbeam shines on his face through the window. In his hands, he clutches the sweatshirt Emily brought over.

He rises and groggily pads to the R.V.'s kitchenette, emptying the meager remains of a box of Raisin Bran into a bowl.

Kirby opens the refrigerator. It is completely bare. He glances over at the garbage can where the empty milk container from yesterday taunts him.

KIRBY

Shit.

EXT. TRAILER PARK - DAY

Kirby emerges from the side of his R.V., pulling his red wagon, wearing the same shorts and polo shirt from the night before.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Kirby walks on the shoulder, pulling the wagon behind him. Sweat beads across his forehead.

Cars pass in both directions.

A sputtering, dented Ford Tempo pulls up alongside him and slows down, keeping pace with his steps. He looks over and sees the windows are down. Miranda is driving.

MIRANDA

Want a ride?

Kirby shakes his head.

KIRBY

No, thank you.

MIRANDA

C'mon. It's hot out. Where you going?

KIRBY

Thanks, but I could use the exercise.

MIRANDA

Suit yourself.

She hits the gas, and drives away.

EXT. TRAILER PARK - NIGHT

Kirby turns the corner and down the road towards his R.V.

The wagon is full of supplies: some wooden planks, a bag of groceries, and various household odds and ends.

His shirt is soaked in sweat, but he looks content as he ambles along slowly.

INT. R.V. - NIGHT

Kirby is cleaned-up and wearing pajamas pants and the sweater Emily brought him.

The previously bare counter is covered in food. Bags of nuts and chips, a loaf of bread, a bunch of bananas, etc.

Kirby stands at the counter, chopping vegetables and placing them into a salad bowl.

Outside, a loud engine revs and headlights flash across the window. The engine stops, and there are sounds of LAUGHTER and a truck door opening and closing.

MIRANDA (O.S.)

Shut up. I am *not*.

RUDY (O.S.)

Yes you *ARE*. Drunk as a skunk.

MIRANDA (O.S.)

I must be drunk to fall for your shit again.

Both of them laugh.

Kirby peeks through the window and sees Miranda and Rudy standing at her front door.

RUDY

Let's go inside.

Rudy leans in gives Miranda a passionate, but sloppy kiss. She struggles not to get swept up.

MIRANDA

(coy)

I'm mad at you. We're not good for each other.

RUDY

C'mon. Please.

Miranda laughs as Rudy kisses her neck. Kirby's microwave DINGS.

Miranda opens her door and walks in, leading Rudy by the arm. Before he enters, he turns around, looks directly at Kirby and winks.

Kirby shakes his head like a disappointed teacher, then opens the microwave, pulls out a mug of steaming water, and drops a teabag into it.

EXT. R.V. - DAY

Kirby is in the side yard, constructing a box garden. He stands, pouring a bag of soil into one of three rectangular-shaped boxes.

Miranda's door opens, and she comes out, holding a basket of wet laundry. Kirby nods politely.

Miranda unravels a rope that's attached to her porch and latches it to a hook that's been screwed into a nearby tree, creating a clothesline.

KIRBY

Morning.

Miranda nods at Kirby. She begins attaching the clothes from her laundry basket to the clothesline.

Kirby goes back to putting soil into his boxes. Miranda eyes him, curiously.

MIRANDA

Looks like a good spot to bury a body.

Kirby raises an eyebrow towards her.

KIRBY

You bury a lot of bodies?

Miranda continues hanging her clothes on the line. She hangs a lacy pair of panties. Kirby notices them and looks away.

MIRANDA

I just watch the news. Least I did before Rudy got shitfaced and smashed the tv.

KIRBY

He do that a lot?

MIRANDA

Smash t.v.s?

KIRBY

Get shitfaced.

Miranda shrugs.

MIRANDA

That some kind of garden?

Kirby nods.

KIRBY

Box garden. Thought I'd grow some cabbage. You know, until I have to bury a body.

Kirby winks. Miranda grins at his joke and resumes hanging clothes.

INT. R.V. - NIGHT

Kirby lies in bed, holding the urn with Claire's ashes, staring up at the stars, through the skylight.

He points up to the sky and talks to the photo.

KIRBY

That one there is Orion. And that's the Big Dipper.

Kirby sets the urn on the nightstand, and his eyes mist up.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

I know. I know. I promised you the Rocky Mountains.

INT. LAUNDROMAT - DAY

The laundromat has a few CUSTOMERS, including a MOTHER, 27 - exhausted and overworked, and her LITTLE BOY, 4 - unbathed, shirtless, and full of manic energy. She sits as the little boy runs around, exploring the laundromat.

Kirby enters, dragging his wagon full of laundry. He finds a secluded spot in back and begins to load his clothes into a pair of washing machines.

In the back corner, Vayda pulls clothes out of a dryer. She notices Kirby and walks over.

VAYDA

Got the change machine re-filled.

Kirby smiles. VAYDA takes a pull off of her vape pen.

KIRBY

That's good.

VAYDA

Some asshole threw a tantrum, so I figured I better do something.

Kirby laughs.

KIRBY

Sorry about that.

VAYDA

By the way, the two dryers on the left are the only ones that work.

KIRBY

Seriously?

VAYDA

The other ones'll spin, but there's no heat. I'll get 'em fixed soon.

KIRBY

Thanks for the heads-up.

Vayda looks Kirby over. Her gaze stops on his wedding band.

VAYDA

Divorced? Or widowed?

Kirby stiffens up, uncomfortable.

VAYDA (CONT'D)

Sorry. It's none of my business.

KIRBY
My wife passed away.

Kirby turns away and begins pouring detergent into one of the washing machines.

VAYDA
I'm sorry to hear that.

KIRBY
How did you-

VAYDA
You're using about a half gallon of soap in every load.

Vayda nods to the detergent container that Kirby is freely pouring into the washing machine. She reaches onto the top of the washer and grabs the container lid.

VAYDA (CONT'D)
This ain't just a lid. It's also a measuring cup.

KIRBY
I did not realize that.

VAYDA
No shit, Sherlock.

EXT. TRAILER PARK - DAY

Kirby pulls his red wagon, full of clean, folded laundry, down the street towards his R.V.

Miranda is sitting in the driver's seat of her car. The engine turns over and smoke begins to creep through the hood.

Miranda steps out of the vehicle in a huff, slamming the door behind her.

MIRANDA
Goddammit!

Kirby stops in front of the car.

KIRBY
What's wrong with it?

MIRANDA
Fuck if I know. That's what I get for buyin' it off Craigslist.

Miranda checks the time on her phone.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)
Guess I'm walkin' to work.

She storms down the road on foot, fuming.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)
Fuck!!!

Kirby watches her walk away, then glances at the car, curious.

EXT. TRAILER PARK - NIGHT

Kirby stands in front of Miranda's car. The hood is up.

He is drenched in sweat. Oil stains decorate his shirt. He holds a flashlight as he leans-in, fiddling with the engine.

A Honda Fit, driven by one of Miranda's CO-WORKERS, turns down the road and stops in front of Miranda's trailer.

The passenger side door opens and Miranda pops out, holding a six-pack of cheap beer. She waves to her co-worker.

MIRANDA
Thanks, Kelly.

The car drives off.

Miranda notices the silhouette of a man standing behind the raised hood of her car. She walks around to front of the vehicle, cautious and a little pissed.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)
What the fuck you think you're doing?!

Kirby looks up and smiles.

KIRBY
Your fuel injector was clogged.

Miranda sighs in relief to see it's just Kirby.

MIRANDA
You scared the shit out of me.

Kirby grins sheepishly.

KIRBY
Sorry about that.

MIRANDA
You fix my car?!

KIRBY
Not sure. Start her up.

Miranda sets the beer on top of the car and hops into the driver's seat. She turns the ignition. It comes to life. Kirby grins. An elated Miranda hops out of the driver's side.

MIRANDA
Hot tits! You fixed my car!!!

Miranda's smile fades as she gets suspicious. No one does nice things for free.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)
WHY did you fix my car?

KIRBY
I don't know. I like puzzles, I guess. I'm retired. I didn't have anything else to do.

Miranda stares at him.

MIRANDA
I ain't gonna fuck you.

Kirby is surprised by this statement, but not offended.

KIRBY
Okay.

She glares at him for a second, then softens.

MIRANDA
You want a beer?

KIRBY
Alright.

EXT. MIRANDA'S BACKYARD - NIGHT

Kirby and Miranda sit in lawn chairs behind Miranda's trailer, sipping their beers.

MIRANDA
You some kind of mechanic or something?

Kirby shakes his head.

KIRBY
I sold insurance. But, when my
daughter was sixteen-

MIRANDA
You got a daughter?

Kirby nods.

KIRBY
Samantha. She was always curious
about how things work. When she was
sixteen, she and I took an
automotive class together down at
the Vo-Tech.

Miranda bites her nails as she listens. Kirby notices, and
gets choked up. His eyes start to water.

MIRANDA
You alright?

KIRBY
You bite your nails.

Miranda looks down at her nails and laughs to herself.

MIRANDA
I had this foster mom. She'd get so
mad anytime a kid would bite their
nails. Drove her nuts. I started
doing it just to piss her off. Now
I can't stop. Ain't that some shit?

Miranda notices as Kirby wipes his eyes.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)
You alright?

Kirby, suddenly uncomfortable, stands up.

KIRBY
I should go. It's getting late.

MIRANDA
Want a beer for the road?

KIRBY
No, thank you.

Miranda shrugs and cracks open another can.

MIRANDA
Thanks for fixin' my car.

KIRBY
My pleasure.

Kirby turns and walks away. Miranda takes a swig of her beer.

EXT. TRAILER PARK - DAY

It's an oddly quiet day. Fallen leaves litter the small yards in front of the mobile homes.

Lou's car drives up and parks in the space out front of Kirby's R.V.

He opens the driver's side door and gets out, whistling to himself. He wears an orange sweater and brown slacks.

He peers around the side of Kirby's R.V., notices the box garden and smiles before walking up the front steps and KNOCKING on the door.

The door opens. Kirby stands there, in pajama pants and a clean t-shirt, holding a container of chocolate milk.

LOU
You look like you've been showering. I'm impressed.

KIRBY
Good morning to you, too.

INT. R.V. - DAY

Lou follows Kirby inside.

KIRBY
Got another check for me?

LOU
No, I do not have another check for you. The fire insurance was it. You'll have to find some way to survive on your millions.

Lou looks around, surprised to find the interior so clean. He runs a hand across the counter and peeks in a cabinet to discover it organized and stocked with food.

KIRBY
What the hell is this? Some sort of inspection?

LOU
Sorry. It's just that last time I
was here you were falling apart.

KIRBY
Told you, I just needed some time.

Lou reaches out and puts a hand on Kirby's shoulder.

LOU
It's Thanksgiving, Kirby.

KIRBY
It's Thanksgiving?

Lou nods.

KIRBY (CONT'D)
No shit?

LOU
Got any plans?

Kirby laughs and shakes his head.

LOU (CONT'D)
I know you don't have any family,
and it's no secret Claire's
relatives aren't exactly rolling
out the red carpet.

KIRBY
You can say that again.

LOU
Get dressed. You're coming with me.

INT. LOU'S CAR - DAY

Lou drives. Kirby sits in the passenger seat. He has changed into a collared shirt with a red sweater vest and slacks.

KIRBY
Who's gonna be at this shindig?

LOU
My sister, Rita. It's her place.
Her husband, Dan, my other sister,
Darla, her partner Courtney.

KIRBY
Okay.

LOU
Rita's sons, Max and Kevin. Their
wives and kids.

KIRBY
The whole fam-damilly.

LOU
That's right.

Lou reaches into the center console, pulls out a vape pen, takes a drag, and lets out a cloud of vapor. Kirby stares at him, surprised.

KIRBY
How long you been doing that?

LOU
Got my medical card about a year ago. Helped me get off the Vicodin after I tweaked my back.

KIRBY
(curiously)
Really?

LOU
Yep. After I healed up, I don't do it much, but I found this vape pen in my junk drawer. You want?

Lou offers the vape pen to Kirby, who shrugs and takes it.

LOU (CONT'D)
I've decided to retire.

Kirby takes a pull from the vape pen and emits a cloud.

LOU (CONT'D)
Gonna put my house on the market, move to Costa Rica. Live the good life.

Kirby hands the vape pen back to Lou.

KIRBY
No shit?

LOU
You could come with. Be my roommate. Couple old bachelors on the prowl-

Kirby shifts in his seat, uncomfortable.

KIRBY
I'm not a bachelor.

Lou holds his hands up in surrender.

LOU
Got it. No pressure.

EXT. RITA'S HOUSE - DAY

Lou's car pulls into a driveway on a street filled with manicured lawns and nice two story houses.

The front door opens and RITA, 61 - tall, wide, red-cheeked, and boisterous, the kind of woman who "doesn't do boundaries" - steps out, sporting an enormous grin, wearing a sweater with a large turkey on the front.

The driver's side opens. Lou gets out.

RITA
Lou!! Get over here and let me see your face.

Lou walks over and Rita swallows him in her arms.

Kirby gets out of the car. Rita notices him, immediately disengages with Lou, walks over and looks him up and down.

RITA (CONT'D)
You must be Kirby.

KIRBY
Hello.

RITA
(to Lou)
He doesn't look depressed. He looks fine.

LOU
Jesus, Rita.

Rita turns back to Kirby, and before he knows it, he's trapped in a bear hug. He pats her on the back politely.

The ROAR of a MOTORCYCLE ENGINE fills the air. Everyone turns to see a Harley Davidson rounding the corner and into the driveway, driven by COURTNEY, 62 - broad shouldered, and weather beaten, with a thousand yard stare.

Courtney is wide enough that it seems like she's the only one on the bike, until DARLA, 58 - tiny, adorable, and foul-mouthed - hops off, wearing a floral-print dress.

RITA
Courtney! Darla!

Darla waves at everyone.

LOU
How was the ride in?

DARLA
I-Ninety Five's full of potholes. I think my asshole fell off somewhere near Titusville.

Kirby's eyes go wide. Lou lets out a laugh.

LOU
Let's get inside.

Rita leads them up the steps. As Courtney walks in, Kirby notices the back of her t-shirt says "IF YOU CAN READ THIS, THE BITCH FELL OFF."

INT. RITA'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY

Kirby and Lou sit in the center of a long dining table, along with Rita, Courtney, and Darla. Next to Rita sits her husband, DAN, 71 - bald, bespectacled, and curious.

On the other end of the table are Rita and Dan's middle-aged SONS and their WIVES.

At a smaller table are several young CHILDREN, including MISSY, 6 - adorably inquisitive and wide-eyed - a modern version of the kid from those old Welch's grape juice commercials, and CARTER, 8 - rambunctious and leery of adults, and DAVIS, 7 - a cute, chubby mess.

Dan stands and carves the turkey. Kirby sits in a daze, taking in the scene of this family at Thanksgiving.

MUSIC CUE: Classic soul like "It Makes No Difference Now" by Ray Charles, continuous over...

MONTAGE

- Everyone around the table holds hands and bows their heads as Rita says grace.

-Dan stands and delivers a toast. The adults at the table raise their wine glasses. The kids raise glasses of juice, soda, etc.

-Darla offers Kirby more gravy. He waves it away and pats his belly.

-Kirby digs into a piece of pumpkin pie with whipped cream on top. Across the table, Lou sprays whipped cream into his mouth. Darla playfully punches him in the arm and takes the whipped cream away. One of the kids takes the whipped cream and sprays it into their own mouth. Lou high fives them.

BACK TO SCENE

Kirby looks the table with a glassy-eyed grin.

DARLA

Kirby, are you alright?

Kirby doesn't respond. He just stares off absently.

LOU

Kirby!

Lou claps his hands in front of Kirby's face. Kirby blinks a couple times and looks at Lou.

KIRBY

Everything okay?

LOU

I was about to ask you the same thing.

Kirby wipes some drool from the corner of his mouth.

KIRBY

Sorry. I was just remembering our first Thanksgiving with Samantha. Claire burned the turkey and we had to order pizza.

Kirby chuckles to himself.

LOU

For a second, I thought you were goin' senile on me.

KIRBY

No. I'm alright.

A tiny hand reaches out and tugs Kirby's sleeve. He looks down to see little Missy, staring up at him, wide-eyed.

Kirby smiles and looks down at her.

KIRBY (CONT'D)
Hello, young lady. Did you need something?

Missy nods her head up and down, gazing at Kirby in wonder.

KIRBY (CONT'D)
Well, what is it?

MISSY
Are you *him*?

KIRBY
I'm sorry. Am I who?

MISSY
Santa Claus.

Kirby's jaw drops a little. Lou lets out a guttural laugh. Missy remains unphased, determined to get her answer.

Kirby leans down, winks, and very slowly nods his head up and down, then holds a finger up to his lips.

KIRBY
Shhhh.

Missy squeals in delight and runs off to the other kids.

MISSY (O.S.)
It *IS* him. I told you, I told you!!

Kirby chuckles and the other adults at the table laugh.

INT. RITA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Lou sits in a recliner. Kirby relaxes on the couch next to Dan and Courtney.

Through the window, the other adults can be seen playing horseshoes out in the yard. A football game is on the tv.

Kirby covertly passes the vape pen to Courtney.

DAN
You think the Dolphins actually have a chance at making the playoffs this year?

Courtney sneaks a quick hit on the vape pen and holds the vapor in as Dan looks at her for a response.

She nods her head. As soon as Dan turns towards the tv, she exhales and palms the vape pen to Lou, who pockets it.

Courtney coughs a bit.

DAN (CONT'D)

You okay?

COURTNEY

Just a tickle in my throat.

Lou smirks, holding back a laugh.

Missy marches into the living room, trailed by all the other children. She stops directly in front of Kirby.

Lou nudges Kirby, who is a little zoned-out. Kirby looks down at the kids, who are all seated in a semicircle behind Missy, staring up at him like an idol.

KIRBY

Hi, there.

MISSY

Where are your reindeer?

Kirby chuckles, and thinks for moment before responding.

KIRBY

Well, every Thanksgiving, my Reindeer all go to Wisconsin.

MISSY

What's Wisconsin?

KIRBY

The land of beer and cheese. That's what my reindeer like to eat and drink the most. So, I send them to Sheboygan for the holiday.

MISSY

Ooooh.

KIRBY

Any other questions?

The other children shoot hands in the air. Kirby laughs and swoops Missy up and onto his lap. She squeals in delight as he nods to Carter.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

(to Missy)

What's that kid's name?

MISSY

Carter.

KIRBY

Of course it is. It's hard for me to remember everyone's names without my naughty and nice list in front of me.

Kirby points to Carter.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Carter, what's your question?

CARTER

How do you know if we're naughty or nice?

Lou raises his eyebrows and grins.

LOU

Yeah, Santa. How CAN you tell who's naughty or nice?

KIRBY

I used to have elves keeping an eye on everyone. But these days, I just tap into your electronics.

CARTER

Like Alexa?

KIRBY

Oh yeah. Alexa is one of my helpers. If you have an Alexa device in your house, she's listening in and reporting to me.

Davis's eyes go wide.

DAVIS

We have one of those.

KIRBY

Cellphones, too. They have microphones I tap into.

A surprised Carter looks towards the other adults. Lou nods, confirming Kirby's statement.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

What else do you want to know?

CARTER

How can you go to every house in one night?

Kirby pauses, then leans forward conspiratorially.

KIRBY

Now, this is top secret, okay?

The children nod gravely.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

My sleigh is equipped with something called a flux capacitor. Instead of just traveling through space it also travels backwards in time just a little with each house.

Lou's eyebrows raise, impressed with Kirby's response. Kirby gives him a wink.

DAVIS

How many cookies do you eat in a night?

KIRBY

Quite a bit. But, my doctor's worried about my blood sugar, so I usually take a little nibble out of each cookie and then feed the rest to my reindeer.

LOU

You don't say.

Lou looks over at Dan, who has stopped paying attention to the game and is taking in Kirby's responses.

KIRBY

Their metabolism's very fast, and they burn off the calories while flying from house to house.

MISSY

How old are you?

KIRBY

Eight hundred and thirty-six. My birthday's March fourth.

LOU

You look pretty good for a guy in his eight hundred thirties.

KIRBY
Well, I moisturize.

The adults in the room crack up at this. Lou pats Kirby on the back.

INT. LOU'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

Lou drives. Kirby sits in the passenger seat, relaxed and grinning like a dope.

LOU
How stoned are you?

KIRBY
I'm not stoned.

Lou raises his eyebrows.

KIRBY (CONT'D)
Okay, I'm a *little* stoned. That stuff is strong. Not like what we smoked in college.

Kirby gets a worried look.

KIRBY (CONT'D)
Are *YOU* stoned?

LOU
I came down a couple hours ago.

KIRBY
God, that was FUN tonight. With the kids.

LOU
You're a natural. Those kids are gonna talk for years about the Thanksgiving they spent with Santa Claus. You were really good.

KIRBY
I was, wasn't I?

LOU
You know, they're hiring over at the Hillcrest Mall. You don't need the money, but... could be something fun to do.

Kirby nods, deep in thought.

INT. SHOPPING MALL - DAY

The mall is decorated for Christmas, and buzzing with HOLIDAY SHOPPERS. Kirby wears slacks and a tucked-in button-down. He carries a folder.

He walks past stores to the center of the mall, where a line of PARENTS wait with their CHILDREN outside of a faux cottage covered in fake snow with a sign that says "SANTA'S WORKSHOP."

He approaches a kiosk, where an EMPLOYEE, 23 - dressed as an elf - cheerily greets him.

EMPLOYEE
Happy holidays!

The employee looks Kirby up and down.

EMPLOYEE (CONT'D)
I don't want to assume, but something tells me you might be here for a job.

KIRBY
I'm interested in filling out an application-

Kirby notices the children nearby and lowers his voice.

KIRBY (CONT'D)
to be a Santa Claus.

EMPLOYEE
Can you pass a background check?

KIRBY
Of course.

EMPLOYEE
Didn't mean to insult you. I have to ask.

KIRBY
I understand.

EMPLOYEE
Miss Rutherford manages the holiday display. She's on break at the food court, but should be back in a few minutes.

KIRBY
No problem. I'll just look around.

Kirby walks over near the checkout and picks up a pricing sheet. He examines it and sees the following items -

"PICTURE WITH SANTA - \$35." "DIGITAL UPGRADE - \$8" "PICTURE ON HOT COCOA MUG - \$45" "VIDEO CARD WITH RECORDING OF YOUR VISIT - \$55" "PERSONALIZED ORNAMENT - \$35"

Behind him, there is a tap on his shoulder. He turns around and sees MISS RUTHERFORD, 42, - a buttoned-up, no nonsense woman with perfect hair and a sour face.

MISS RUTHERFORD
(deadpan)
Merry Christmas. I'm Dorothy
Rutherford, hiring manager.

Kirby extends his hand for a shake. She limply grabs it and lets go.

KIRBY
I'm Kirby. But, I'm hoping to be
Santa.

MISS RUTHERFORD
Well, you certainly have the look.
Let's have a chat.

INT. SHOPPING MALL - FOOD COURT - DAY

Miss Rutherford sits across from Kirby at a table. She opens Kirby's folder and glances down at his résumé.

MISS RUTHERFORD
Says here you were an insurance
salesman.

KIRBY
Yes. I'm retired. Can I ask you a
question?

MISS RUTHERFORD
Certainly.

KIRBY
Your prices. For everything - they
seem a little steep.

MISS RUTHERFORD
I think you'll find our rates
comparable to most malls in the
region.

KIRBY

Okay. But-

MISS RUTHERFORD

And, our Santas are well-compensated and given regular breaks.

KIRBY

What about the poor kids?

MISS RUTHERFORD?

Poor kids?

KIRBY

The ones whose parents can't afford to spend thirty five bucks. They want to see Santa, too.

MISS RUTHERFORD

That's not really our responsibility. This is a business.

Kirby nods and rises.

KIRBY

I see. Well, thank you for your time. I'm no longer interested in the position.

He holds his hand out to shake. She stares at him in surprise and holds her hand out reflexively. Kirby gives it a quick shake.

MISS RUTHERFORD

You're serious?

KIRBY

Merry Christmas.

Kirby turns and walks away.

INT. LOU'S CAR - MOVING - DAY

Lou drives while bopping his head to a classic rock rendition of a Christmas tune as he pulls into Kirby's trailer park.

Lou grins and waves to a TODDLER riding a tricycle in his underwear.

LOU
 (to himself)
 Where the heck are your parents,
 kid?

Lou parks in front of Kirby's R.V., which is now covered in red side paneling with accents of garland and Christmas lights. In large white letters across the side are the words "NORTH POLE EXPRESS."

LOU (CONT'D)
 (to himself)
 He's out of his goddamned mind.

Lou turns off the ignition and opens the driver's side door.

EXT. TRAILER PARK - DAY

Kirby opens the front door to his R.V. and stands in the doorway with a jolly grin.

LOU
 What the hell is going on?!

KIRBY
 Get inside and I'll tell you.

INT. R.V. - DAY

Lou sits at Kirby's dining table. Kirby is at the counter, fixing hot cocoa.

LOU
 Jesus Christ, it's like your a
 different person.

He turns around, grinning big, and brings two mugs over and hands one to Lou.

KIRBY
 I *feel* like a different person.
 It's been a long time since I
 felt... I don't know... excited.

LOU
 Spill it, Kirby. Why'd you call me
 over here?

Kirby reaches behind the table and pulls out a large posterboard map, with different areas marked on it.

KIRBY

This is a map of the city's lower income neighborhoods.

Lou examines the map, perplexed.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

We're going to each of them. I'll play Santa. They'll get to meet me and take pictures - all for free.

Kirby reaches under the counter and pulls out a bag containing an elf costume and hands it to Lou, who laughs incredulously.

LOU

Absolutely not.

KIRBY

Come on! I need a photographer. Plus, someone's gotta drive Santa's sleigh.

LOU

This is ridiculous. I'm not doing it. No way in Hell.

INT. R.V. - MOVING - DAY

Lou sits behind the steering wheel, wearing the elf costume, looking as grumpy as a Grinch. He navigates the R.V. through a residential neighborhood. Kirby sits next to him, in a Santa suit, looking down at Google Maps.

KIRBY

Each of these neighborhoods has a median income below the poverty line. We're going from the bottom up.

LOU

You're gonna get us shot, you know that?!

KIRBY

Oh, relax. Nobody's gonna shoot Santa Claus.

Lou looks over at Kirby, in disbelief.

LOU

Who *ARE* you?

EXT. ROUGH NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Most houses are boarded up or run down. Several buildings have bars over the windows. Kirby's RV, now completely decked out as the North Pole Express, rolls down the street.

INT. R.V. - MOVING - DAY

Lou is in the driver's seat, looking uncomfortably at the scenery. LOW INCOME RESIDENTS - some shady, others just minding their own business - stand on street corners, looking on curiously. They pass a storefront covered in graffiti with a sign that reads "PAY DAY LOANS."

LOU

I'm gettin' a bad feeling, Kirby.

KIRBY

Why? 'Cause it's a black neighborhood?

LOU

You know I'm not racist.

KIRBY

Then, what's got you so worried?

LOU

YOU. I don't think I've seen you take an uncalculated risk your entire life.

They drive past a run-down church with boarded up windows.

LOU (CONT'D)

And now you're having me drive us into a war zone.

Kirby points to an empty parking lot next to a crumbling, three-story slum.

KIRBY

Park here.

Lou sighs and pulls the R.V. up to the curb beside the lot.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

And, it's not an uncalculated risk. I just don't have anything left to lose.

EXT. ROUGH NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

The door to the R.V. opens. Kirby gets out, and looks around.

Across the street, LAMAR, 15 - black, tall, skinny, and jumpy - and BERTO, 17 - Latino, broad-shouldered, tattooed and charismatic - stand on the corner like a couple teenage thugs up to no good, which is exactly what they are.

Lamar nudges Berto and points toward Kirby.

LAMAR

Yo, Berto, it's Santa Claus.

BERTO

Oh, shit! Saint Nick! You in the wrong neighborhood! Ain't nobody on the nice list here.

The teens cross the street to approach Santa.

LAMAR

You deaf, fat man? Can't be on this corner. You gonna fuck up business. If you wasn't Santa, I wouldn't even be askin.'

Berto lifts his shirt to reveal a pistol in his waist.

BERTO

We'd just blast that cracker ass.

Lou steps out of the R.V. Lamar and Berto look at him and immediately crack up.

BERTO (CONT'D)

You got a elf, too?! It's a goddamn Christmas miracle!

LOU

C'mon, Kirby. Let's go.

Kirby holds up a hand.

KIRBY

I don't want any trouble, and I certainly don't want to mess up your business.

LAMAR

So, whatchu want?

KIRBY

I'm Santa Claus. I want to talk to the kids in the neighborhood. Take pictures with them. Ask what they want for Christmas.

BERTO

Can't nobody afford no pictures 'round here.

KIRBY

It's free.

BERTO

Free? For real?

Lou steps down and stands by Kirby's side, like a good friend who thinks you're an idiot, but still has your back.

LOU

He's for real.

LAMAR

Damn. Mario would love that.

KIRBY

I assume you guys have someone you report to, and have to make your money every day regardless.

Kirby reaches into his pocket and pulls out a wad of cash.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Would five thousand dollars be enough for you to close up shop for the day?

Lamar snatches the cash from Kirby and begins to count it.

LAMAR

We takin' this either way.

KIRBY

That's just twenty five hundred. I'll give you the other half if you go tell the kids in the neighborhood I'm here.

Berto steps forward and glares menacingly from about an inch away from Kirby's face.

BERTO

What's stoppin' us from takin' the rest right now?

Kirby calmly returns Berto's gaze.

KIRBY

You could do that. And, I couldn't stop you. Or you could be the heroes who brightened the whole neighborhood's day. Up to you.

The teens look Kirby and Lou up and down, sizing them up. Then look at each other and nod.

LAMAR

Alright. Santa Claus.

BERTO

(to Lou)

Get your camera ready, Rudolph.

Berto puts his fingers in his mouth and whistles loudly. A second floor window opens and a LITTLE KID, 8 - adorable but tough - pops out, shimmies down a drain pipe, and runs over.

BERTO (CONT'D)

Hey, Lil' Georgio. Go 'round the block. Tell EVERYBODY Santa Claus is here.

The Little Kid looks up at Santa with a sneer.

LITTLE KID

You really Santa?

Kirby nods.

LITTLE KID (CONT'D)

That's what's up.

The kid gives him a fist bump, turns, and runs down the street.

LOU

Rudolph was a reindeer. I'm an elf.

BERTO

Oh, word?

EXT. ROUGH NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY - LATER

Kirby sits on a red velvet throne outside the R.V. There is a big, Christmas-ey backdrop set-up behind him.

A line of NEIGHBORHOOD KIDS waits to see him.

Lou stands behind a camera on a tripod, snapping pics.

At the front of the line is LUCY, 5 - shy, but curious. She stares up at Kirby in awe. He waves her over. She steps forward tentatively.

As she gets close, Kirby reaches out to lift her onto his lap. She backs away.

KIRBY

Don't you want to sit on my lap?

She shakes her head, then looks down at the ground, ashamed.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

That's okay. What's your name?

LUCY

L-Lucy.

KIRBY

I like that name. You know who I am?

She looks up at him and slowly nods.

LUCY

You're Santa.

KIRBY

That's right. Now, Lucy, is there anything in particular that you want for Christmas this year?

Lucy thinks for a second and then bites her lip before gathering her courage and looking Kirby in the eye.

LUCY

I don't think I'm getting anything.

KIRBY

Why would you say something like that?

LUCY

I been bad. I'm on the bad list.

Lucy is too ashamed to maintain eye contact. She looks down. A tear leaves her eye and lands on the ground.

KIRBY

Can I tell you something, Lucy? I decided something this year.

(MORE)

KIRBY (CONT'D)

I decided not to keep that list anymore. I'm tearing up the naughty list.

Lucy stares up at Kirby in surprise.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Every kid gets a gift this year. Naughty OR nice.

Lucy's face breaks out into a grin. She rushes up to Kirby and hugs him. Lou snaps a picture.

INSERT: Graphic of an animated map showing the North Pole Express traveling from neighborhood to neighborhood. It travels from Allen Heights to Crane Park to Booneville Commons.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

Kirby sits in front of the backdrop. Lou snaps pictures. A line of excited PARENTS AND CHILDREN of all races lines the block and extends around the corner.

MUSIC CUE: A soulful holiday tune like the Otis Redding version of "Merry Christmas Baby," continuous over...

MONTAGE:

-A LITTLE BOY hops off Kirby's lap and runs to his mother, overjoyed.

-A CHILD whispers in Kirby's ear. Kirby nods and holds up a notebook and writes down "Terrance Wilkins - Playstation," right below a previous note that says "Kenny Carter - skateboard."

-Lou laughs and snaps a picture of Kirby sitting with three GRINNING CHILDREN in his lap.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

The R.V. sits parked on a narrow strip of sidewalk next to a playground. The backdrop and chair are set-up. Kirby visits with kids as Lou takes photos. A line of LOCAL CHILDREN AND ADULTS are in line to meet Santa.

An ELATED CHILD, 4 hops off of Kirby's lap and runs excitedly toward their GRANDMOTHER, 70.

Lou pulls a photo off of a printer and hands it to the grandmother.

A food truck rounds the corner and people move out of its way. Across the top of the truck a sign reads "FALAFEL KING."

The truck pulls onto the curb at an angle and parks haphazardly next to Kirby's R.V.

The FOOD TRUCK DRIVER hops out of the truck, wearing traditional Muslim garb and eyes Kirby's set-up, frustrated. He walks up to Lou, irate.

FOOD TRUCK DRIVER
You can't be here. This is my spot.

LOU
Look, buddy, it's a public street.

The food truck driver angrily eyes Lou up and down, his gaze lingering on Lou's pointy elf ears.

FOOD TRUCK DRIVER
I park my truck here *every day!*

LOU
Despite my appearance, I happen to be an attorney. And, we've got just as much right-

FOOD TRUCK DRIVER
You're going to kill my business!

The driver throw his hands in the air in despair. Kirby stands and walks over.

KIRBY
Everything alright?

FOOD TRUCK DRIVER
No. It's *NOT* all right. This is my spot. I told him-

Kirby turns around to the line of people behind him.

KIRBY
Who wants lunch? It's on me!

The crowd CHEERS. Kirby pulls out his wallet and hands a credit card to the driver.

KIRBY (CONT'D)
(to the driver)
Ring it all up. Whatever they want.
I'm good for it.

The driver stares, stunned at his good fortune. Then, he smiles, his spirits suddenly lifted.

FOOD TRUCK DRIVER

Okay!

He turns around and jogs back to his truck.

INT. R.V. - MOVING - NIGHT

Lou drives. Kirby sits in the passenger seat. They are still dressed as Santa and an Elf, respectively.

KIRBY

Admit it. You had fun.

Lou grins.

LOU

I did. You're really great as Santa.

KIRBY

I haven't felt that good in a long time.

LOU

What have you been writing in that notebook?

Kirby pulls the notebook out.

KIRBY

A shopping list. We've got a lot of gifts to buy.

LOU

Are you really planning on getting these kids what they asked for?

KIRBY

Timmy Watkins wanted his parents to not be divorced. I think he's going to have to settle for a bicycle. But, for the most part, I think I can manage to make their wishes come true.

LOU

You really are Santa Claus.

INT. R.V. - NIGHT

Kirby sits in front of his television. He wears pajamas and sips a mug of cocoa. On the television, the credits roll on an old black and white version of *A Christmas Carol*.

Lights twinkle from a small Christmas tree that sits on the countertop. Kirby takes a last sip of cocoa and stands. He walks over, places the empty mug in the sink, and turns off the television.

Kirby walks to the back bedroom area. The photo of Samantha that he rescued from the fire sits in a new frame by his bedside. He picks it up. His eyes get misty.

KIRBY
Merry Christmas, Sam.

He sets the photo down next to Claire's ashes. He puts a hand on the urn and gazes at it lovingly.

KIRBY (CONT'D)
Merry Christmas, Claire. I hope I
made you proud.

Kirby lies down in bed, pulling the covers up to his chin. He reaches out and claps his hands twice. The Christmas tree lights go out.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

A NEWS REPORTER, 37, female, kind-faced, great hair - stands, holding a microphone, in front of an enormous stack of wrapped Christmas presents.

Behind her is a van that says "KTRF NEWS 23." A CAMERAMAN, 45, tall - stands holding a camera.

NEWS REPORTER
In what some are claiming is a
Christmas miracle, large piles of
gifts have appeared in
neighborhoods all over the city.

The News Reporter turns around and holds a gift.

NEWS REPORTER (CONT'D)
Each bearing the name of a child.
This one is for Calvin Bailey.

She sets the gift down on the pile and turns back to the camera.

NEWS REPORTER (CONT'D)

No one knows who the anonymous gift giver is.

LUCY (O.C.)

They're from Santa.

The reporter looks down. Little Lucy stands, hugging a doll, with a magical grin on her face.

INT. R.V. - DAY

Kirby sits in a chair, wearing the same pajamas from last night, watching the news report on television.

INSERT: Kirby's T.V. screen.

NEWS REPORTER

I stand corrected. Thank you Santa, wherever you are.

A MICROWAVE BEEPS. Kirby lifts his remote and turns the television off. He walks to the microwave, opens it, and pulls out a tv dinner.

Through the window, he sees Miranda standing out front of her trailer, wearing a bathrobe, smoking a cigarette. He waves at her. She nods and gives a small wave before putting her cigarette out and turning to go inside.

As Miranda turns profile, Kirby notices a bruise on her cheek.

EXT. TRAILER PARK - NIGHT

Rudy's truck pulls up and parks haphazardly in front of Miranda's trailer. The driver's side door opens. Rudy nearly falls out and proceeds to stumble toward the trailer.

He leans on the front door and pounds the side of his fist against it.

RUDY

C'mon, baby. I'm sorry. It's Christmas. I love you.

Rudy walks off the porch and peers in the trailer's front window.

KIRBY (O.S.)

Merry Christmas!

Rudy turns around and sneers as he sees Kirby standing in the doorway of his R.V.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

I don't believe Miranda's home. I saw her leave earlier with an older woman. I think it was family.

RUDY

She don't talk to her family.

KIRBY

Maybe it was a friend. Either way, she's not home.

Rudy looks downhearted.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

You want to come inside. Have a cup of coffee?

Rudy scoffs.

RUDY

I bet you'd like that, wouldn't you, you old queer. Wanna stuff my stocking? Have me sit on your lap, tell you I been a good boy?!

Rudy stumbles over to his truck and opens the door. Kirby steps over to him and puts an arm on his shoulder.

KIRBY

I know we aren't exactly friends, but you're in no shape to drive.

Rudy's arms shoots up, and Kirby backs away respectfully.

RUDY

Get your faggot hands off me.

Kirby looks at Rudy, full of pity and disappointment.

KIRBY

Let me call you a cab. An Uber or something. C'mon. It's Christmas.

All of a sudden, Rudy's body stiffens. Projectile vomit shoots out of his mouth, splattering the front of Kirby's shirt.

Rudy cackles and grins, wipes his mouth on his sleeve, then hops into his truck and peels out.

Kirby stands, covered in vomit, watching the truck drive away.

KIRBY (CONT'D)
(to himself)
Merry fucking Christmas.

As Kirby turns and heads back inside, Miranda peers through the window.

INT. LAUNDROMAT - DAY

The place looks completely different. The old washing machines and dryers have been replaced by shiny new chrome models, all decorated with big red bows.

Kirby wheels his wagon through the front door, carrying his usual laundry supplies.

The office door is open. Vayda sits at her desk, watching a court tv show.

Kirby hums a Christmas tune to himself as he approaches a pair of the new washers. He begins separating his clothes.

Vayda peers over her desk and notices him. She pops out of the office, cheerier than ever.

VAYDA
Hey, you old goat.

Kirby smiles.

KIRBY
Hey there, Vayda. Looks like you really upgraded things.

She looks around admiringly.

VAYDA
It's the damndest thing.

She reaches up and strokes a red velvet bow that adorns one of the washers.

VAYDA (CONT'D)
I get a call the morning after Christmas. There's a delivery. Somebody bought all new washers and dryers and I don't know who it is.

The slightest hint of a smile flickers across Kirby's face as he looks away.

KIRBY
Probably Santa Claus.

VADYDA
Yeah, well, I guess. Wish I knew
who it was so I could thank 'em.

KIRBY
Looks real nice in here.

VAYDA
They even got me a new change
machine. This one takes Venmo, you
believe that shit?

Kirby pulls a red Santa suit out of his laundry bag and puts
it into the washer. VAYDA notices and eyes it suspiciously.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Lou lies in a hospital bed, hooked up to machines that
monitor his vitals.

On the television, a SMARMY HOST stands in Times Square,
hosting a New Year's Eve countdown celebration.

Kirby enters, full of concern, wearing a t-shirt that's a
slight shade of pink.

KIRBY
I came as soon as I got your
message. How are you feeling?

LOU
Is that shirt supposed to be pink,
or are these meds making me loopy?

KIRBY
I accidentally washed my Santa hat
with my whites.

Lou laughs, then winces in pain.

LOU
Oof. Don't make me laugh.

KIRBY
Happy New Year. I'm glad you're
alive.

Kirby sits in a chair next to the bed.

LOU
I'm just lucky I wasn't alone.
Otherwise, you'd be down your only
elf.

Kirby raises an eyebrow questioningly?

KIRBY
Oh yeah? Who were you with?

LOU
Remember that steakhouse we went to
in our Christmas costumes?

KIRBY
The waitress?!

Lou grins mischievously.

KIRBY (CONT'D)
You dirty dog.

LOU
Slipped me her number when you were
in the bathroom. Turns out she's
got a weird thing for elves.

KIRBY
How weird?

LOU
Made me wear the costume. Even the
pointy ears. The woman was
insatiable.

Kirby gestures to their surroundings.

KIRBY
Clearly.

LOU
She was on top, really getting into
it. I felt like a mechanical bull.
All the sudden, I get this pain in
my chest.

KIRBY
Good thing she was there. Otherwise
you might not've made it to the
hospital.

LOU
If she wasn't there, I wouldn't
have needed to go to the hospital.

Both of them laugh. Lou winces again.

LOU (CONT'D)
You didn't walk all the way here
did you? It's like five miles.

KIRBY
(proudly)
I learned how to order an Uber.

INT. R.V. - DAY

Kirby sits, eating microwave popcorn, watching a streaming crime show on tv - something like *The Lincoln Lawyer*. To the left of him are some scattered Lego blocks and a partially-assembled model of a log cabin.

His PHONE RINGS. The screen says "unknown number." He shrugs and answers.

KIRBY
Hello.

TRAVEL AGENT (V.O.)
Is this Mister Kirby Jenkins?

Kirby is immediately suspicious.

KIRBY
You a telemarketer?

TRAVEL AGENT (V.O.)
I'm Carmen Velasquez with Landmark
Travel Agency.

Kirby uses the remote to mute the television.

TRAVEL AGENT (V.O.)
Last year, you inquired about a
Grand Canyon visitor's package for
you and your wife. I believe her
name is Claire, correct.

KIRBY
That's right.

TRAVEL AGENT
We're doing a New Year's special
and I wanted to see if you'd
thought anymore about visiting the
Grand Canyon.

KIRBY
My wife is dead.

The phone goes silent for a beat.

TRAVEL AGENT (V.O.)
I am so sorry, Mister Jenkins. I
didn't realize. My condol-

KIRBY
We were planning on taking the trip
together. That's why I never got
back in touch.

TRAVEL AGENT (V.O.)
I'll remove you from our list. I
really am so sorry for your loss.
Happy New Year.

Kirby hangs up the phone.

INT. LOU'S HOUSE - DAY

Lou sits in the living room, sipping tea in a recliner. Kirby
sits across from him. There is a college football game on the
t.v.

LOU
Goddammit. Catch the ball!

KIRBY
Since when do you care about Notre
Dame?

LOU
Since I bet a thousand bucks they'd
cover the spread.

KIRBY
That's a big bet. Should I be
worried?

LOU
Nah. I just did it to have
something exciting.

Kirby grabs the remote and turns the television off.

KIRBY
I'm gonna turn this off. You're
getting all red in the face.

LOU

No salt. No fried foods. Can't have a beer. I'm supposed to just stay home and rest. My heart's gonna be fine. I'll die of boredom.

KIRBY

What about the medical marijuana?

LOU

I'm off that shit. Ate too many edibles and ended up lost and crying in a Costco.

KIRBY

I may have a way to get you some excitement.

Lou takes a sip of his tea and grimaces.

LOU

More exciting than this herbal decaf tea? 'Cause I gotta tell you, it's a thrill ride.

KIRBY

(excitedly)

We're going to the Grand Canyon!

LOU

Didn't ya hear me? I gotta stay home.

Kirby's face drops.

KIRBY

I didn't realize a road trip would be dangerous.

LOU

Sorry, pal. I know you were probably hoping I'd drive. I've never been to the Grand Canyon.

KIRBY

It was Claire's favorite place in the world. I asked her to marry me on a trip to the Grand Canyon.

LOU

I remember.

KIRBY

I'd like to spread her ashes there.

LOU

I think that would mean a lot to her.

Lou finishes his tea and sets his cup down.

LOU (CONT'D)

This tea is awful.

KIRBY

I was thinking I might hit some other landmarks along the way. Make a trip of it.

LOU

If I went on a road trip with you this soon after the heart attack, you'd be spreading my ashes, too.

KIRBY

Of course. I don't know what I was thinking. I'll figure something out.

EXT. TRAILER PARK - DAY

Kirby stands on small ladder in front of his R.V., taking down Christmas lights. He rolls them up carefully and places them in a rubber bin.

Miranda's front door opens. She steps out, carrying a bag of garbage to the curb. The bruise on her cheek is beginning to heal.

Kirby waves.

KIRBY

Happy New Year.

MIRANDA

Happy New Year, Kirby.

She turns and walks back inside. Kirby watches her for a moment, struck with a thought.

He walks across the street and knocks on the door. Miranda opens it.

KIRBY

This might seem weird, but I was wondering if I might be able to pay you to do something for me.

INT. KIRBY'S R.V. - DAY

Miranda sits behind the steering wheel. Kirby stands beside her.

MIRANDA

That' it? I just gotta drive? And you're gonna pay me-

KIRBY

A thousand dollars per week. Plus meals.

MIRANDA

You live in a trailer park. How the hell you gonna pay me a thousand bucks a week?

Kirby pulls out his wallet, removes some cash, and hands it to Miranda. She counts it.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

Six hundred eighty-six dollars.

KIRBY

Consider that a signing bonus.

MIRANDA

Thanks, but that don't prove-

KIRBY

Here.

Kirby hands her a small piece of wrinkled paper.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

That's an ATM receipt. If you look at the bottom, you'll see my account balance.

Miranda glances down at the receipt. Her jaw drops.

MIRANDA

Holy shit. You're rich.

KIRBY

We got a deal?

Miranda nods, still in a bit of shock.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Great. We leave in two weeks.

INT. LAUNDROMAT - NIGHT

Kirby enters, toting his wagon. There are several CUSTOMERS throughout the place, washing and folding clothes.

Kirby wheels to a washing machine and begins to load it with laundry.

He hears a GUTTURAL SOB coming from the direction of the office.

Kirby presses start on the washing machine, then turns toward the office, curiously.

The door is open a crack. Kirby peers in and sees Vayda sitting behind her desk, crying.

KIRBY
Vayda, are you alright?

Kirby opens the door. She wipes the tears and nods. Kirby steps inside.

OFFICE

Vayda looks up and gives Kirby a wet-faced smile.

VAYDA
Sorry. I'm kind of a mess.

KIRBY
That's okay. I didn't mean to intrude.

Vayda stands.

VAYDA
I know it was you.

KIRBY
I'm not sure I under-

Vayda steps around the desk, towards Kirby, almost accusing.

VAYDA
You're the one who paid to have those new washers and dryers delivered. You're my Santa Claus.

Kirby looks down at the ground, a bit embarrassed.

VAYDA (CONT'D)

I called the company. Asked about the warranty. They said it could only be claimed by the purchaser.

KIRBY

Is that so?

Vayda leans forward and whispers.

VAYDA

Then, they gave me your name.

Kirby shrugs sheepishly.

KIRBY

I guess the cat is out of the bag.

VAYDA

I was on the verge of closing, did you know that?

KIRBY

Wouldn't take a detective to see you weren't making much of a profit on two working dryers.

Vayda hugs Kirby. He pats her on the back.

VAYDA

Thank you. I don't know how I can return the favor. But if there's anything-

KIRBY

You don't owe me anything. Honestly.

Kirby sighs and sits in a plastic chair against the wall. After a silent moment, he speaks.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

I've got all this money, Vayda. But the reason I have it is because the two most important people in my life are dead. And it's my fault.

A single tear rolls down Kirby's cheek.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

I looked away from the road for half a second. That's all. HALF A SECOND. And they were ripped away.

Vayda sits down beside Kirby. He doesn't look at her, but stares straight ahead, talking.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Now, I'm rich. But it's an anchor,
holding me under. I'm drowning.
I can't spend it on me because it
takes me right back to that moment.

Kirby finally looks over at Vayda.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

It's like I died that day and I'm
in Hell. The only time I'm not in
Hell is when I give it away. I
didn't give you a gift, Vayda. You
gave me one.

EXT. TRAILER PARK - NIGHT

Miranda paces back and forth in front of Kirby's trailer.

MIRANDA

(to herself)

Fuck. Fuck fuck fuck.

She sits on the front step and holds her head in her hands while tapping her feet nervously. She stands up and paces back and forth before sitting back down on the step and repeating the pattern.

Kirby appears from around the corner, pulling his wagon of laundry.

He notices Miranda and is surprised, but glad to see her.

KIRBY

Hey, there!

Miranda tries to speak, but can't find the words. Her jaw quivers and she fights back tears.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Miranda, what is it?

MIRANDA

I did something.

INT. MIRANDA'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Her furniture is old, but cared for. The couch is one of those mid-80s models with a pattern of a stagecoach on the cushions.

Kirby and Miranda stare down at the body of Rudy, which lies facedown in the center of Miranda's living room. A large blood stain spreads out from the center of his back.

KIRBY

Holy shit.

MIRANDA

What do I do?

Kirby looks from the corpse to Miranda. Her hand is shaking.

KIRBY

What happened?

MIRANDA

Shot him.

Kirby stares back down at the corpse.

KIRBY

Self defense?

MIRANDA

Not exactly, but, kind-of.

Miranda lights a cigarette and sits on the edge of the couch.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

It was Rudy's gun. I don't think it was registered. He left it here one time. Said I should have it in case of a burglar.

KIRBY

Okay.

MIRANDA

I kept it above a board in the ceiling.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. MIRANDA'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Miranda sits on the couch, smoking a cigarette and watching TV. Rudy enters the trailer, carrying a twelve pack of Miller High Life and a greasy bag of burgers.

MIRANDA (V.O.)

Rudy came over. He brought dinner.
Everything was nice.

Rudy sits next to Miranda. They both laugh. She pulls a burger out of the bag as he cracks open a beer.

MIRANDA (V.O.)

Then, I told him about the job you
offered me. He got real mad.

Rudy stands and glares at Miranda. He's pissed.

RUDY

You know he's just tryin' to fuck
you, right?

MIRANDA

He's nice. He's not like that.

RUDY

How stupid are you? Of course he's
nice now. He'll wait 'till you're
out on the road. Get you drunk. Pop
a Viagra.

Miranda stands and goes to Rudy, hurt and offended.

MIRANDA

Are you too much of a dumbass to
know I love you? Even if he wanted
to, I wouldn't let it happen. But,
he doesn't want to. He's nice.

Rudy shakes his head in disbelief and turns away from her.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

Besides, I need the money. I'm
pregnant.

Rudy stops. His shoulders relax. He turns around, suddenly calm. A smile spreads across his face. Miranda smiles back.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

We're having a baby.

Rudy's smile vanishes in an instant as he rears back and backhands Miranda across the face, knocking her to the ground.

Miranda pulls her hand away from her face and sees that she's bleeding. She begins to hyperventilate.

RUDY

You're already fuckin' him. Is that it? Old man got you pregnant. Now you're tryin' to trap me into raising it. Goddamn whore.

Rudy stalks over to the refrigerator, opens it, and pulls out a can of beer, ignoring Miranda as she crawls into the bedroom and shuts the door.

INT. MIRANDA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Miranda stands on her bed, lifts a ceiling tile and reaches a hand in.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Rudy stands, facing the fridge, taking a long pull off of a can of beer.

A hole appears in the beer can. Foamy liquid pours out.. He looks down and sees a hole in his own chest before dropping to his knees and falling forward.

Miranda stands in the doorway, holding the pistol, stunned.

END FLASHBACK

INT. MIRANDA'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Kirby stares at Rudy's corpse, then back to Miranda. She bites her nails.

MIRANDA

What am I gonna do?

Kirby, a bit weak in the knees, sits in an old armchair. He thinks for a moment, then looks up at Miranda.

KIRBY

You shot him in the back. No jury's gonna believe that's self defense.

MIRANDA

What if we turn him over so it looks like he's facing me?

KIRBY

They'll know you moved the body due to the blood spatter. Plus, they can tell the difference between the entrance and exit wounds.

MIRANDA

How'd you learn all this shit?

Kirby laughs.

KIRBY

My wife loved all those crime procedurals. *NCIS*, *Law & Order*, *Criminal Minds* - you name it, we watched it.

MIRANDA

So, I guess I'm fucked then.

Kirby nods in agreement. She's fucked alright. He ponders the situation, looking from Rudy's corpse to Miranda's tear-stained face down to her shaking hands and her worn down fingernails. He comes to a decision.

KIRBY

Do you trust me?

MIRANDA

I don't know. I mean, I showed you the dude I killed, so yeah, I guess.

KIRBY

Let me take care of this.

MIRANDA

How?

Kirby stands and walks over to the window. He looks out at Rudy's truck in the driveway.

KIRBY

I think probably the less you know the better.

Kirby holds a hand up to his forehead, concentrating hard.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Did Rudy have family nearby? A job?

Miranda shakes her head.

MIRANDA

His family disowned him a long time ago. He's been on disability for two years. Forklift drove over his foot.

KIRBY

Seemed like he walked fine to me.

MIRANDA

When he wasn't stumbling drunk.

Kirby reaches into his back pocket, pulls out his wallet, and removes a roll of cash.

KIRBY

When do you work next?

MIRANDA

Lunch shift. Monday afternoon.

Kirby hands the cash to Miranda. She pockets it.

KIRBY

Take Ninety-Five North. Drive for at least an hour. Find a motel where nobody knows you.

Miranda walks to the kitchen table and grabs her purse.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Pay cash. Use a fake name. Come back Monday. Go to work like nothing happened.

MIRANDA

What are you gonna do?

KIRBY

Take care of it. Now, go.

Miranda nods and heads to the door. Before walking out, she stops and turns back to Kirby. Their eyes lock for a tense, silent moment.

MIRANDA

Thank you.

Kirby nods to her. She steps out of the trailer, closing the door behind her. Kirby sighs and runs a hand through his hair.

KIRBY
(to himself)
What the hell did you just get
yourself into, old man?

EXT. TRAILER PARK - NIGHT

The street is silent. The moon shines down as Kirby exits his R.V. wearing a dark jacket with a baseball cap pulled low. He wears a pair of gardening gloves. A set of keys jingle in his hand.

INT. RUDY'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Kirby sits in the cab of the truck. Hesitation spreads across his face as he slides the key into the ignition.

Quickly, like he's ripping of a Band-Aid, Kirby turns the key and the truck starts up.

Kirby inhales deeply and closes his eyes as he shifts the vehicle into reverse.

KIRBY
(to himself)
Breathe. You can do this.

Kirby backs the truck out of the driveway. He switches the gear to "drive" and heads down the road out of the trailer park.

An involuntary chuckle escapes him and he can't suppress a grin.

KIRBY (CONT'D)
(to himself)
What a fucked up time to have a
moment of personal growth.

EXT. IRON HORSE SALOON - NIGHT

Rudy's truck pulls into the parking lot of a seedy dive bar. The building is covered in rusty tin siding, and a faded sign above the structure reads "IRON HORSE SALOON."

There are a handful of scattered vehicles in the lot. Rudy's truck stops towards the rear entrance, near a tree line.

INT. RUDY'S TRUCK - NIGHT

The clock on the dash reads "2:30." Kirby turns the truck off, opens the door and slides out quietly, exiting into the nearby tree line.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Kirby walks on the right shoulder of a two lane highway. He veers off into the grass as the bright lights of a semi truck roll past.

EXT. BRIDGE - NIGHT

Kirby stands on a bridge overlooking the intracoastal. He reaches into his jacket and pulls out Rudy's pistol. He tosses it, along with the keys to the truck, over the side, into the water.

EXT. TRAILER PARK - DAY

The sun rises as Kirby ambles, exhausted, down the path towards his R.V.

Kirby's phone vibrates. He looks down and sees a notification on the screen stating "Your Amazon package has arrived."

Kirby sees a large cardboard box sitting by his front door.

INT. KIRBY'S R.V. - DAY

Kirby stands inside his R.V. and opens the Amazon package, pulling out a family sized camping tent, a box of industrial strength garbage bags, and a fresh roll of duct tape.

Kirby pulls the large tent out of its packaging and uses a utility knife to remove the tent's flooring.

EXT. TRAILER PARK - DAY

Kirby slowly wheels his wagon from behind Miranda's trailer. The contents of the wagon are covered in black plastic garbage bags and taped down.

Kirby looks left and right as he pulls out in plain sight, cautiously wheeling the wagon to the side of his R.V.

The family sized tent has been set-up. It's tall enough for a man to stand in. Kirby opens a flap and wheels the wagon inside.

INT. FAMILY SIZED TENT - DAY

Kirby stands in the tent, which has been set-up over the top of one of the sections of his box garden.

Kirby puts on a pair of gardening gloves and grunts as he slides one of the garden boxes over, revealing a rectangular patch of earth. Kirby picks up a shovel, stands over the patch, and begins to dig.

INT. FAMILY SIZED TENT - LATER

There is a deep hole where the patch of earth used to be. Next to it is a large mound of loose dirt. Kirby's hands reach up from inside the hole and he pulls himself up and out.

Kirby stands, exhausted and shirtless, covered in dirt. He approaches the wagon and rips the plastic bag off, revealing Rudy's corpse.

INT. R.V. SHOWER - NIGHT

Water runs down onto Kirby's soiled face as he lathers up and scrubs beneath his fingernails.

EXT. TRAILER PARK - NIGHT

Kirby, now wearing a clean t-shirt and sweatpants, stands next to his box garden. The box has been moved back into place, and it looks just like it did before he buried Rudy.

Next to the garden is a medium-sized grill. Kirby squirts lighter fluid over a set of coals.

Kirby places a pile of soiled clothing, the gardening gloves, and the folded-up family sized tent onto the grill.

He squirts more lighter fluid onto the pile before lighting a wooden match and tossing it on top. The clothes and tent go up in flames.

INT. R.V. - DAY

Kirby collapses onto his bed, and begins snoring almost immediately as the very beginning of the sunrise begins.

INT. R.V. - NIGHT

Kirby hasn't moved. He sleeps soundly in the exact same position. Outside the window, the sun begins to set.

The sound of KNOCKING on his front door brings him out of his slumber. His eyes open and he sits up slowly before standing. He GROANS in pain and grabs his lower back.

KIRBY
(to himself)
Oh, hell. What time is it?

Kirby looks down at his phone and sees it is 6:36pm.

KIRBY (CONT'D)
(to himself)
Jesus.

Kirby pads out of the bedroom area and walks over to the front door. He opens it, and Miranda stands, holding a bag of takeout.

MIRANDA
Hey.

KIRBY
Come in.

Miranda enters the R.V.

MIRANDA
I brought chicken fried steak.
Thought you might be hungry
after... whatever you did.

Kirby grabs the bag of takeout from her. He sets it on the table and walks over to the counter. He gets a couple sets of silverware and rips some paper towels off of a roll.

KIRBY
Thirsty? I have filtered water.
There's also a probiotic root beer.
My wife turned me onto it. It's
actually pretty good.

MIRANDA
Okay. Sure.

Kirby reaches into the fridge and pulls out a couple cans of root beer and sits across the table from Miranda.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

I looked inside my trailer. Looks like nothin' happened.

KIRBY

After this conversation, we probably shouldn't talk about this ever again. Okay?

Miranda nods solemnly. Kirby opens his can of root beer.

MIRANDA

So, what did you do?

KIRBY

Took care of it. Like I said, the less you know, the less you could have to lie about if it ever came down to it.

Miranda reaches into the bag and pulls out a styrofoam container. She slides it over to Kirby.

MIRANDA

I'm not really hungry.

KIRBY

I'm starving.

Kirby opens the container, revealing chicken fried steak smothered in gravy, french fries, and coleslaw. He digs into the food.

MIRANDA

Why did you help me?

Kirby chews his food and thinks for a moment before setting his fork down and looking Miranda in the eye.

KIRBY

I guess because I know what it's like to do something and have your entire world change in an instant.

MIRANDA

I don't know how I can-

KIRBY

Listen to me. He would have killed YOU. Slowly. Through abuse and cruelty. People like that never go away.

Miranda nods in agreement.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

The law might not see what you did as self-defense, but I do.

Miranda holds back tears. Kirby reaches out and squeezes her hand.

There is a KNOCK at the door. Both Miranda and Kirby jump. Kirby holds a hand up and peeks out the window. He sees Lou's car.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

It's just my lawyer.

MIRANDA

You hired a lawyer?!

Kirby laughs.

KIRBY

He's my best friend. He just happens to also be my lawyer. Nothing to worry about.

Kirby answers the door. Lou walks in and sniffs the air.

LOU

I thought we were going to lunch? You forget?

Lou peers in and sees Miranda. She waves at him.

KIRBY

Lou, this is Miranda. My neighbor.

MIRANDA

It's nice to meet you.

Miranda stands and shakes Lou's hand.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

I was actually just on my way out.

LOU

Nice to meet you, too.

Miranda heads toward the door. Lou eyes her as she exits, then looks back to Kirby with a mischievous grin.

LOU (CONT'D)

Who's the dirty dog now?! She's young enough to be your granddaughter.

KIRBY

Why is that ALWAYS where your mind goes?

LOU

Guess I'm turning into a dirty old man.

KIRBY

You're right. I did forget about our lunch. To be honest, I just ate.

LOU

That's alright. Hey, you want to play mini golf?

KIRBY

Mini golf?

LOU

My doctor says regular golf's too stressful, but I think I can do mini golf. C'mon. It'll be fun.

KIRBY

As long as you bend down to get the balls out of the holes. My back is killing me.

EXT. MINI GOLF COURSE - NIGHT

The course is lit up brightly. COUPLES and FAMILIES, all carrying pastel-colored putters play at various holes. Behind the golf course, a go-kart track buzzes with TEENS racing by.

Lou putts. His ball bounces off a barrier and lands right next to the hole.

KIRBY

I could use your help with something.

Kirby sets a golf ball down and gets ready to putt.

LOU

Oh yeah?

KIRBY

Just a little paperwork. Before I
leave on my trip.

LOU

What do you have in mind?

A MOTHER and her TWO CHILDREN walk up behind them, waiting for their turn to play the hole. She reaches into a tote bag and pulls out two pouches of fruit snacks and hands them to the kids.

KIRBY

I know you're retired, but I was
hoping you could you help me to set
up a trust?

LOU

Sure.

Kirby putts a little too hard. His ball knocks into Lou's ball, sending it off course and into a small pond.

LOU (CONT'D)

You asshole.

The mother glares at Lou incredulously.

INT. R.V. - DAY

Kirby stands, admiring a map of the United States that he's mounted to the wall of the kitchen area. The entire R.V. looks clean and organized.

On the map, he has laid out a route, going from Florida up to New York, across through to Cleveland, Ohio to South Dakota into the Rocky Mountains and then the Grand Canyon.

He checks the cabinets. They have been stocked with boxes and cans of food. He opens the fridge, it is full of bottled water.

Kirby looks down at a legal pad that has a list of other items, such as "do laundry, check fluids and tire pressure, test backup generator, etc.

There is a KNOCK at the door. Kirby answers and Miranda stands there. She gives a nervous smile.

KIRBY

Come on in.

Miranda steps inside and looks around.

MIRANDA

Just wanted to make sure we were set for Monday. I got the restaurant to give me a couple weeks off.

Kirby gets a sullen look and Miranda's face sinks.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

I knew it. You don't want me to go anymore.

KIRBY

It's not that.

MIRANDA

I'm not a psycho. You don't have to be scared of me.

KIRBY

That's not it at all.

Kirby sits down and takes a deep breath.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Have a seat.

Miranda stiffens. She's hurt.

MIRANDA

I'm good.

KIRBY

Suit yourself.

Miranda folds her arms across her chest and fights back tears.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

I hired you because I've had this fear of driving. And in helping you with your. . . situation, I think I overcame that.

MIRANDA

(facetious)

Good for you.

KIRBY

This trip is something I was going to take with my wife. It's emotional. If I can drive, I think I should go alone.

Miranda thinks and nods.

MIRANDA

I understand.

Kirby reaches into a bag on the kitchen table and pulls out an envelope.

KIRBY

I know you took time off, and I promised you that money. So, here's what you would've made, with a little extra.

Miranda reaches out and takes the envelope. She is surprised at this gesture. Some of her iciness melts and she sits across from Kirby.

MIRAND

You don't owe me-

KIRBY

Just take it.

Kirby nods and reaches out instinctively to squeeze Miranda's hand. She is surprised at this tender gesture.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

Miranda, what would you do, if you could do anything?

MIRANDA

What do you mean?

KIRBY

If money wasn't an issue. If you could just do whatever you wanted with your life...

Miranda thinks for a moment, truly searching for an answer.

MIRANDA

Shit, I don't know. I've been in survival mode so long I never really had a chance to breathe.

KIRBY

You were in the foster system,
right?

Miranda nods.

MIRANDA

On my eighteenth birthday they
kicked my ass to the curb. Spent
every day since tryin' to keep my
head above water.

KIRBY

When you were younger, you must
have had a dream. Something you
wanted to be when you grew up.

Miranda shrugs.

MIRANDA

Never really saw the point of
havin' a dream. Never knew anybody
that had one come true.

KIRBY

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to drudge
up old-

Miranda puts the envelope into a pocket.

MIRANDA

I appreciate you still paying me.
And for, well, everything.

Miranda walks toward the door. Before she exits, a thought
strikes her and she turns back to Kirby.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

Honestly, if I could *DO* anything, I
wouldn't do anything. For like, a
year. I'd just exist - maybe
somewhere else, where pieces of
shit don't know where I live - try
to figure out who the hell I really
am.

She steps out, closing the door behind her.

INT. R.V. - DAY

Kirby sits in the driver's seat. He sets a travel coffee mug
into the cup rest.

Samantha's photo has been taped to the dash. The urn containing Claire's ashes sits buckled into the passenger seat.

Kirby sighs deeply, inserts the key into the ignition, and the engine comes to life. He LAUGHS in excited anticipation.

KIRBY
(to the photo and urn)
Alright, everybody. You ready?

Kirby looks down at his lap.

KIRBY (CONT'D)
(to himself)
Oh, right. Better buckle up.

He fastens the seatbelt across his chest, puts the vehicle into "drive," and hits the gas.

EXT. LOU'S HOUSE - DAY

Kirby's R.V. pulls up in front of Lou's home. A realtor's sign that says "SOLD" sits in the front yard.

Lou opens the front door and steps out, wearing a bathrobe and pajamas.

The door to the R.V. opens. Kirby hops down, holding a large manila folder.

LOU
You're getting an early start.

KIRBY
I couldn't sleep.

Kirby nods toward the realtor's sign.

KIRBY (CONT'D)
Looks like the house sold.

LOU
If the closing goes through, I'll be in Costa Rica by springtime.

Lou puts a hand on Kirby's shoulder.

LOU (CONT'D)
You sure you're okay to drive that thing?

Kirby nods and takes a deep breath.

KIRBY
I've decided I'm not coming back.

LOU
Really? So, you're just gonna. . .
what?

KIRBY
Go where life takes me.

LOU
Where to first?

KIRBY
Statue of Liberty.

LOU
Sure. Yeah. That's good. Gotta hit
the classics. I'm proud of you.

Kirby hands Lou the manila folder.

KIRBY
Thanks. I appreciate you taking
care of all this.

LOU
You know, I'm retired.

KIRBY
You mentioned it.

LOU
This'll be my last act as your
attorney. As *anybody's* attorney.
Feels kind of weird to say.

Lou sighs and looks Kirby in the eye.

LOU (CONT'D)
I guess this is goodbye.

KIRBY
Thanks, Lou. You got me through the
hardest part of my life.

LOU
Yeah, well, what're friends for?

The two men stare at each other for a moment. Then, Lou pulls Kirby into the kind of tight hug that men of their generation reserve for only a handful of life's moments. After several seconds, they both let go.

Kirby nods to Lou, then turns and walks back into the R.V.

Lou gives a single wave as Kirby drives away.

INT. R.V. - MOVING - DAY

Kirby snacks on beef jerky and cranks up the radio. A classic rock tune, like "Funk #49" by James Gang plays.

Kirby drives past a sign that says "Welcome to New York - The Empire State."

EXT. NIAGARA FALLS - DAY

Kirby stands, looking over the falls, a little misty-eyed.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

EXT. NIAGARA FALLS - DAY

YOUNG KIRBY, 23 - a little thinner with a head full of brown hair stands next to YOUNG CLAIRE, 21 - wearing a backpack, full of excitement.

YOUNG KIRBY
You were right, Claire. It's really something.

Young Claire takes Young Kirby by the hand and they stare out over the falls as she rests her head on his shoulder.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. ROCK AND ROLL HALL OF FAME

Kirby's R.V. drives into the parking lot.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. STADIUM - NIGHT

THIRTY-SOMETHING KIRBY, 38 - with a mustache, wearing a Rolling Stones t-shirt stands among a crowd of CONCERT GOERS next to THIRTY-SOMETHING CLAIRE, 36 - short haircut, wearing an identical Rolling Stones t-shirt.

A BEER GUY, 25 - fit and cheery - walks down the bleachers. He holds a cooler of beer attached to a shoulder strap.

BEER GUY
Beer! Ice cold beer!

Kirby waves the Beer Guy down.

BEER GUY (CONT'D)
How many?

THIRTY-SOMETHING KIRBY
Two, please.

Kirby pulls out his wallet and hands some cash to the beer guy.

THIRTY-SOMETHING CLAIRE
Actually, can you make it one?

The Beer Guy hands a tall can of beer to Kirby, who turns to Claire, surprised.

THIRTY-SOMETHING KIRBY
You sure?

THIRTY-SOMETHING CLAIRE
I was waiting to tell you. I'm pregnant!

THIRTY-SOMETHING KIRBY
You're kidding. I thought the doctor said we couldn't-

THIRTY-SOMETHING CLAIRE
He was wrong!

Kirby's jaw drops, then he grins in excitement. He and Claire begin jumping up and down, excitedly. Foam billows out of Kirby's beer and onto his shirt.

BEER GUY
Congratulations!

Kirby gives the Beer Guy a high five, then turns around and wraps his arms around Claire.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. TRAILER PARK - DAY

A police cruiser pulls up to Miranda's trailer. The car parks, and a POLICE OFFICER, 35 - confident and cheerful - steps out, approaches her door, and knocks.

INT. MIRANDA'S TRAILER - DAY

Miranda peeks through her blinds, sees the cop car and the officer standing outside her door.

MIRANDA
(whisper-yelling)
Shit, shit, shit!

There is another KNOCK on the door. Miranda takes a deep breath and opens it.

EXT. MIRANDA'S TRAILER - DAY

Miranda stands in the doorway and smiles at the officer.

MIRANDA
Can I help you?

OFFICER CORNEJO
You're Miranda Clark, is that right?

MIRANDA
Uh huh.

OFFICER CORNEJO
Good afternoon. I'm Officer Cornejo.

The officer looks down at a notepad.

OFFICER CORNEJO (CONT'D)
Do you happen to know Rudy Shaddix?

Miranda nods.

MIRANDA
Mm hmm.

OFFICER CORNEJO
I stopped by his place, and his landlord said he might be over here. Have you seen him in the past few days?

MIRANDA
Sure haven't. But, that's kind of typical for Rudy.

OFFICER CORNEJO
How so?

MIRANDA

He's the kind of guy who's in and out of your life. Sometimes you can't get rid of him. Other times, he's gone for months. Then he pops right back up.

OFFICER CORNEJO

I see.

MIRANDA

What did he do this time?

OFFICER CORNEJO

Oh, nothing. Well, not that I know of. His vehicle was left abandoned behind the Iron Horse Saloon. A drunk driver crashed into it, and we wanted to get in touch.

MIRANDA

If he pops up, I can have him give you a call.

The officer pulls a card out of his pocket and hands it to Miranda.

OFFICER CORNEJO

I'd really appreciate that. If we don't hear from him in the next five days, the truck will be considered abandoned.

Miranda takes the card.

OFFICER CORNEJO (CONT'D)

Have a nice day.

Miranda nods and closes the door.

INT. MIRANDA'S TRAILER - DAY

Miranda stands with her back against the door, taking deep breaths.

She pulls her cell phone out of her back pocket and dials.

INT. R.V. - MOVING - DAY

Kirby drives up a mountain highway. He marvels at the majestic view and turns the radio down. He smiles at the urn in the passenger seat.

KIRBY
(to the urn)
Well, I promised you the Rockies.
What do you think?

His phone rings. Without looking at the screen, he pulls the phone out of his pocket, rolls down the window, and tosses it out of the R.V.

INT. MIRANDA'S TRAILER - DAY

Miranda sits on the arm of her couch, in a daze, smoking a cigarette.

There is a KNOCK at the door. She jumps, startled. She puts her cigarette out and walks to the door. Her hands shake as she twists the knob and opens it to reveal Lou standing there, holding a large manila envelope.

LOU
Hello, Miranda. I'm Lou. Kirby's
lawyer.

MIRANDA
I remember.

LOU
May I come in?

EXT. MULLEN'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Kirby's R.V. takes up two spaces in the parking lot. The front door opens and he steps out, dressed in a nice suit. He walks down the sidewalk to the front of the restaurant and opens the door.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. MCMULLEN'S RESTAURANT

Chandeliers decorate the ceiling and a PIANIST, 31 - debonair in a tuxedo - sits at a grand piano in the center of the dining area, playing an instrumental version of a rat pack-era classic. The restaurant buzzes with HIGH CLASS DINERS.

Young Kirby and Young Claire sit at a booth, sipping champagne. They are dressed up, but their clothing is modest in comparison to the other patrons.

Claire giggles.

YOUNG CLAIRE
The bubbles tickle my throat.

Kirby smiles and reaches across the table to take her hand.

YOUNG KIRBY
You are stunning tonight, do you
know that?

Claire blushes a little.

YOUNG CLAIRE
I think the champagne's going to
your head.

YOUNG KIRBY
It's not the champagne.

CLAIRE
Wasn't that canyon something? Thank
you for bringing me here, I'll
never forget it.

Kirby reaches a hand down into his pocket.

YOUNG KIRBY
Me either.

YOUNG CLAIRE
I can't stop thinking about it.
Have you ever seen anything so
beautiful?

Kirby stares at Claire, beaming love.

YOUNG KIRBY
Yes.

He drops to a knee.

CLAIRE
You drop something?

Kirby looks up and locks eyes with Claire. The table next to
them quiets their conversation and looks over.

KIRBY
Claire Hargrove, you are the most
incredible person I've ever known.
I can't imagine going through the
rest of my life without you.

Claire begins to realize what's happening. Her hands go to her chest as she breathes in Kirby's words. She looks down and notices the ring in his hand.

KIRBY (CONT'D)

If you let me, I promise I'll spend
the rest of my life doing
everything I can to make you happy.
Will you marry me?

Claire's face radiates with joy and surprise as she nods. Kirby slides the ring onto her finger. He stands, and she pops up from her chair, kissing and hugging him as the restaurant explodes into applause.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. MCMULLEN'S RESTAURANT - DAY

Kirby sits at the same table, nearly finished with his meal.

A WAITER, 35 - prim and proper in formal attire - approaches his table.

WAITER

How is everything?

KIRBY

Wonderful.

WAITER

Did we save room for dessert?

KIRBY

No dessert, but I'd like a bottle
of Dom Perignon.

The waiter nods and walks away. Kirby wipes his chin with a napkin and looks around, wistfully.

INT. MIRANDA'S TRAILER - DAY

Lou and Miranda sit across from each other at her dining table. He slides the envelope over to her

LOU

Kirby put something together for
you. It's a trust. There's a
hundred thousand dollars in the
account.

Miranda looks at Lou confused.

LOU (CONT'D)

He wanted you to have it to take a year off. To figure out who you are. He said you'd know what I meant.

Miranda nods in somber disbelief.

LOU (CONT'D)

A year from now, an annual trust will go into the account. It'll be yours for college or to raise the baby or really whatever you want to do with it.

Miranda opens the envelope and pulls out legal documents detailing the trust. She scans the papers and her jaw drops.

MIRANDA

Is this for real?

Lou nods.

LOU

I understand if you're overwhelmed. It's a lot of money.

MIRANDA

I don't understand. Is... is Kirby dead?

Lou shakes his head.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

I tried to call and he didn't-

LOU

All I know is that he's not coming back.

Tears begin to fall down Miranda's face.

EXT. GRAND CANYON - DAY

Kirby's R.V. is pulled over next to a scenic overlook. He sits in a lawn chair, staring out at the canyon. Claire's urn rests in his lap.

LOU (V.O.)

He also wanted me to let you know that I've got a letter he gave me. It's in a safety deposit box.

(MORE)

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

A full confession. Does that make sense?

MIRANDA (V.O.)

I think so.

Kirby stands and walks, holding the urn, over to the railing. He pulls the lid off and sets it on the ground. Then, with two hands, he shakes the ashes out. They create a small cloud that dissipates with the wind, like an escaping soul.

LOU (V.O.)

He wouldn't tell me what it's about. But, if you ever get in trouble, you get in touch with me, and I'll hand it over to the police.

INT. R.V. - DAY

Kirby sits in the driver's seat, flipping the pages of a large road atlas. Through the windshield, Claire's urn lays empty by the side of the road.

MIRANDA (V.O.)

Why would he do all this... for me?

LOU (V.O.)

To tell you the truth, Miranda, I don't think he did do it for you.

Kirby reaches into the console and pulls out a marker, circling a few points on his atlas, then drawing a large line that leads northeast into Canada.

LOU (V.O.)

Sometimes, something happens that alters our lives completely. We don't get a reason why, because there isn't one. The road doesn't fork. It just ceases to exist.

Kirby sets the atlas down on the passenger seat, turns the keys and the starts the ignition.

LOU (V.O.)

When that happens, we can stop moving forward. Or, if we're brave enough, we can forge a brand new path.

Kirby pulls out and drives down the highway, smiling wistfully as he heads toward the unknown.

FADE OUT.

THE END.