

K I L L I N G C L A R E

By

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EXT. SUNSHINE MOTEL - MORNING

Dogshit Hollywood.

A block lined with gloomy motels, an L.A.P.D. black and white parked outside one.

INT. ROOM 104, SUNSHINE MOTEL - MORNING

3rd class L.A.P.D. Officer JOSEPH COSGROVE is sitting on the edge of a bed in full uniform but with a face like he spent all night in a casino and lost.

He is facing another man, NATE.

The only thing Nate is wearing is a towel around his waist.

Joseph finally spills, a glint of anxiety in his tone--

JOSEPH

--I... I want you to kill my wife.

NATE

I need my fuckin' head examined talking to a badge man about this but it's too fucked up to be about anything else.

A child of the Vietnam era, Nate's accent hails from tough guy town somewhere on the east coast.

NATE

Why?

JOSEPH

Clare... and I... we're fighting-- all the time. My first wife, Emma, took everything. House. Cash. Cars. Ruined my credit, ruined me...

(beat)

One of my brothers, Rick, recently died in a diving accident. He was smart. Had a bunch of high value tech stocks...

NATE

So what you're really saying... is that you're not starting again over another fucking bitch.

Joseph swallows down the large glass of reality like it's a pint of venom.

NATE

Hope I didn't offend you, otherwise you're in the wrong place pal.

JOSEPH

You didn't.

NATE

Good. Does she have an insurance policy?

JOSEPH

No.

NATE

Even better. No smoking gun.

Nate picks up a pack of gum and offers Joseph a stick.

JOSEPH

No... thanks.

NATE

Did you know the military supply gum to soldiers because it helps to soothe nerves and relieve stress?

JOSEPH

Yeah, actually. Old man's a jarhead.

NATE

I like him already.

Nate offers again. Joseph takes one, fiddles with it.

NATE

Did you bring the cheese?

JOSEPH

It's... it's in the car.

NATE

Why is it in the car?

JOSEPH

How-- how do I know... you're not a cop? I don't even know your real name.

Nate waves a hand over his bare chest.

NATE

Do you see a wire? Or do you think I take a shower at the start of every meeting?

JOSEPH

This whole room could be filled with hidden cameras.

NATE

You're the one wearing the body-cam'.

JOSEPH

It's not switched on.

NATE

I know, otherwise I wouldn't be sitting here about to become the next YouTube star/fuckhead.

(beat)

They're only recording for callouts.

The leather in Joseph's uniform creaks as he adjusts himself.

NATE

I'm too smart to be a cop because I do my homework. If I was a cop I probably wouldn't know that you bought a microwave dinner from Ralphs last night. That's after you stopped at the Shell on third to fill up and buy a Coke.

(beat)

Regular... in a can, not a bottle.

Nate suddenly commands a little more respect than Joseph was giving.

NATE

Do you trust the person who vouched for me, Joseph?

But Joseph's mind has gone numb for a minute...

NATE

I sincerely hope you did, considering who he is...

EXT. POLICE DEPARTMENT, WEST L.A. DIVISION - MORNING

Cruisers lined up like 900lb dominos.

EXT. ELECTRONIC GATE - MORNING

SECURITY CAMERA POV - As it catches Joseph's unit crawl into the secure parking facility.

INT. REPORT ROOM, POLICE DEPARTMENT - MORNING

An open floor plan office, a clusterfuck of desks.

DANIEL COSGROVE is slouched behind the visitor side of one desk in particular. Scruffy, with two dead eyes, looks like he could use a self help book or two.

A photo on the desk shows Joseph and a woman who must be Clare. *Happier times on a yacht.*

Joseph arrives and sits down with two Cokes dumping one in front of Daniel.

Gets comfortable, but what he wants to say isn't forthcoming and it peeves Daniel--

DANIEL

--What?

JOSEPH

I... I need to find someone...
experienced...

(beat)

...ret-- retiring people.

It's either taking Daniel a very long time to process - or it's something else...

DANIEL

You... can't... be...

He sits up glancing around the hornet's nest, DETECTIVES, D.E.A AGENTS, TRAFFIC COPS...

DANIEL

Your office don't even have walls.

JOSEPH

Relax. Safest place in the world.
Who's listening here?

And he is right. Everyone else is in their own little orbit.

JOSEPH

You're a convicted felon, here on
official police business. Tipping
me off about some bad guys.

DANIEL

This another one of your Mexican circus jobs that's gonna get me pinched again?

Joseph lets it go but we can tell there is history here.

DANIEL

You must know your own people, in your line...

JOSEPH

One word. Trust. I know people, but they ain't my brother.

(beat)

Most people in my world... wouldn't trust 'em further than I can spit.

Daniel takes a breath and Joseph takes a gamble. He opens a drawer and removes an envelope - slides it across to Daniel.

JOSEPH

But let me be clear.

(beat)

After today, I don't owe you shit.

If you deliver, this is what you get, nothing more, nothing less.

Daniel glances into the envelope. Happy eyes.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. ROOM 104, SUNSHINE MOTEL - MORNING

Joseph scratches his nose, Nate still waiting for an answer.

JOSEPH

--Ye..yes. Yes. I trust him.

NATE

Good. Then you know I'm not a cop.

(beat)

I certainly trust the motherfucker.

Can you imagine how much fucking

trust I have in him... to be

sitting here... in front of a

Federalli?

JOSEPH

A lot.

NATE

You bet your dick and balls a lot.
I trust him more than I trusted my
old Ma' God bless her soul, and she
never missed a day of church in
sixty years.

He eases off the gas.

NATE

Did you bring a copy of the front
door key and a layout of the house
like I asked?

Joseph plucks a key and piece of paper out of his top pocket,
shows Nate. The key has a little, yellow, 'Smiley face',
chain dangling from it.

Nate hands him a clear sandwich bag.

NATE

Put 'em in.

Joseph takes the bag, drops the items in and hands them over.

NATE

You got any pets, I don't wanna
roll up and start doing the tango
with a ninety pound Rottweiler?

JOSEPH

Just a goldfish.

NATE

I can handle a fish. Any guns in
the house?

JOSEPH

No.

NATE

Security alarm?

JOSEPH

No. I'm a cop. Deterrent enough.

NATE

Well after this... get one anyway.
(beat)
There are over six hundred home
invasions in Los Angeles County
every month, don't be an asshole.
Safety first.

Nate leans to a bedside table and opens a drawer taking out a sandwich bag containing a cell phone and charger.

NATE

This is an unregistered burner I bought from a Seven Eleven.

Throws it into Joseph's lap.

NATE

I have another.

(beat)

I've programmed my number into yours, it's the only one there. Double check it by calling me now.

Joseph takes the phone out of the bag, a cheap flip phone.

Flips it and navigates the menu hitting "call".

A cell phone on Nate's bed starts RINGING.

NATE

Good.

Joseph hangs up.

NATE

On the day of the job, I'll call you one hour before you go to work, to confirm. Make sure your phone is switched on, charged, and that you're somewhere you can take the call.

(beat)

Immediately after we've spoken, destroy the phone. I'm sure you already know but some cells still triangulate even when they're switched off, so get rid of it.

(beat)

Did you pick a time you know she'll be home?

JOSEPH

Next Wednesday. Between ten and eleven. Works mornings in an accountant's office, but Wednesdays are her day off.

NATE

I hate Wednesdays too, fucking hump day. Good choice.

(beat)

(MORE)

NATE (cont'd)

I'll aim to be there at ten thirty,
you'll be at the bacon house,
correct?

Joseph nods... and overlooks Nate's choice of word--

JOSEPH

--Yeah.

NATE

Good. While you're there, ensure
you act normal. Laugh at people's
jokes, dribble over the hot rookie,
don't let nerves give you away.

(beat)

After the deed, I'll be long gone
but you're the one who has to
maintain face. Remember, the
husband is always the first
suspect. Standard protocol. Just
let the dust settle and after today
we'll never meet again. Questions?

Joseph shifts his weight...

JOSEPH

How-- how you gonna--

NATE

--Well, if I pop her between the
eyes it'll look exactly like a hit,
you'd know that, law-man, so that's
out.

(beat)

She drowned. By slipping in the
tub and hitting her head. Happens
all the time. Bathtubs should come
with a fuckin' safety warning.

Joseph in the mouth of the wolf now.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM, JOSEPH AND CLARE'S HOUSE - MORNING

CLARE COSGROVE sits up in her bed. She is petite. From
behind you'd think she was just a school girl.

The other side of the bed hasn't been slept in.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Clare topples against a sink and violently VOMITS into it.

INT. REPORT ROOM, POLICE DEPARTMENT - MORNING

Joseph is sitting behind his desk toying with the flip-phone.

Gazes at the photo of Clare on the yacht. Somehow, she's watching him from another dimension.

OFFICER DEAKINS sweeps up to Joseph's desk. Young and hungry, Deakins hasn't had his teeth kicked out yet and still belches enthusiasm about wearing the uniform--

DEAKINS

--Sir? Sarg' just told me you recommended me?

Joseph puts the flip down and gets to his feet with a hand out.

JOSEPH

Yeah, congratulations. Time to step up.

They shake. It means the world to Deakins.

DEAKINS

Thanks, man...

JOSEPH

(ignoring)

--You'll go far Deakins, I just hope you stay there.

DEAKINS

(not laughing)

Ha, funny...

EXT. NORTH HOLLYWOOD HIGH SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

The end of a school day. We favor a parked Saab.

INT. CLARE'S SAAB, STATIONARY - AFTERNOON

Clare is sitting at the wheel watching kids flood out of the school gates with tears streaming down her cheeks. She battles to find her composure.

EXT. DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES - EVENING

Neon and skyscrapers.

INT. BURRITO PALACE - EVENING

A Mexican hole in the wall. Nate is sitting eating a \$5 heart attack, first time we've seen him in clothes, but nothing fancy because he's not in it for the fucking Jimmy Choo loafers.

Daniel mooches into the joint and slides into a booth opposite Nate.

A SERVER offers Daniel a menu but Nate swats it away--

NATE

--He ain't stopping.

(to Daniel)

I eat alone, no offense.

(beat)

So... did your cop brother tell you who the mark is?

DANIEL

No. And I don't wanna know that shit.

NATE

I think you do. It's his wife, Clare.

(beat)

Your sister in law.

A shot of adrenaline surges through Daniel.

NATE

It's all about his dead bro's tech stock. Guess Rick was your bro' too.

(beat)

Question is, are we still good with this?

But Daniel's mind is elsewhere.

Nate reads Daniel's face like a machine.

NATE

You didn't know about the tech stock...

Daniel stares back at him with powerful eyes.

INT. WELLS FARGO BANK - EVENING

Clare is the last customer of the day and is standing at a window in front of a TELLER looking puzzled.

CLARE

No... something isn't right...

TELLER

It's the correct amount Mrs. Cosgrove.

CLARE

It can't be...

TELLER

It's a joint account, Mr. Cosgrove has been making withdrawals every month for over half a year now...

Clare stares at a statement again desperately trying to find an error with it.

CLARE

Cash withdrawals?

TELLER

Correct.

She shakes her head, a titanic knot in her chest.

EXT. DRIVEWAY, JOSEPH AND CLARE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Joseph parks his own SUV next to Clare's Saab.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Joseph closes the front door. Leans down to a phone table and grabs an old notepad, opening it.

Picks up a pen and slips the phone Nate gave him from his pocket, flipping it to display Nate's number.

In the note pad he scribbles down the words, TACTICAL UNIT, followed by Nate's digits.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Joseph shuffles into the room to find Clare laying on the sofa with a mask over her eyes.

JOSEPH
Another headache?

CLARE
No, eye masks are all the rage.

He shrugs her off and sits down at a laptop.

CLARE
I know you're hiding money.

Her bulldozer approach stuns him...

JOSEPH
What?

CLARE
You have been for months...

JOSEPH
I've been making investments.

CLARE
Oh, good. And I thought you were gonna try and tell me you were sending it to poor African kids.

JOSEPH
I'm not talking to you when your like this.

He turns back to the laptop.

JOSEPH
You fed the fish today?

CLARE
Thought you weren't talking to me?

JOSEPH
I'm just asking about the fish!

She slips her mask off to catch him curiously gawking around a goldfish bowl looking for a sign of food...

CLARE
Seriously!?

JOSEPH

What happened to buying the bigger bowl I asked you about?

CLARE

I will. I haven't had time yet.

JOSEPH

I'd get it myself but I'm working as much O.T. as I can get righ--

CLARE

I've had more migraines--

JOSEPH

--So go to the doctor!

CLARE

I've been to the doctor!

JOSEPH

So go again, Jesus, I feel like a broken record--

--Retreats back to his screen but she just can't let it go--

CLARE

--And to think... you wanted to start sharing the same bed again.

JOSEPH

--Goddamn it!

He suddenly scoops the laptop up with both hands and SLAMS it down onto the table top, BAM, cracking the screen--

CLARE

--Great! Nice work...

JOSEPH

(ignoring)

Yes, three weeks ago I wanted to start sleeping together - but now... fuck it, I'm better off in the other room!

Clare springs to her feet--

CLARE

--Fuck the other room, lets just do each other a favor and get on with a fucking divorce, I'd rather be dead than married to you--

JOSEPH

--Agreed!

CLARE

And you're only working so much overtime to avoid me!

The volcano has well and truly erupted--

CLARE

--You know what else!?

She charges over to the fish bowl and violently grabs it--

CLARE

--I'll fix this... RIGHT, NOW!

--She storms over to a patio door that overlooks a backyard and fiercely slides it open...

JOSEPH

What are you--

EXT. BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

--Clare marches toward a swimming pool and as she nears it, throws the entire goldfish bowl into it --

-- *SPLOOOOSH* -- Joseph racing out behind her--

CLARE

Big enough!?

JOSEPH

No!!

She barrels back inside, Joseph grabbing a net and trying to scoop the fish out.

FADE OUT:

SUPER:

wednesday

INT. GUEST BEDROOM, JOSEPH AND CLARE'S HOUSE - MORNING

Joseph is laying in bed wide awake. An alarm clock starts BLARING OUT: 4:50am

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

Joseph vigorously brushing his teeth.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Clare, wearing a bathrobe, is standing with her back to us while doing some ironing.

Joseph saunters into the room wearing his uniform, Clare spotting his reflection in a window.

JOSEPH
You're up early.

CLARE
So are you.

JOSEPH
Catching up on some paperwork.

He considers something.

JOSEPH
Look. Uhm-- I've said some things lately that I'm not proud of. I'm... I'm sorry.
(testing)
I-- love you.

But it's not enough.

JOSEPH
Sometimes I wonder how we got here.

CLARE
You deceived me... that's how.
(beat)
How did you ever expect this marriage to work when it was built on deceit?

Her words sting.

EXT. PORCH - MORNING

Joseph closes the front door. Hard to believe she'll be dead by lunchtime.

EXT. CANYON PARK - MORNING

Joseph, holding the flip phone, is standing on the edge of a lake.

The phone starts RINGING - he flips it, puts it to ear--

JOSEPH

--Hello?

NATE (V.O.)

Are we good?

Joseph, with the kind of face you never forget.

JOSEPH

We're good.

NATE (V.O.)

10.30am.

CLICK.

INT. HONDA, STATIONARY - MORNING

Nate lowers his own flip phone and bends it backwards, SNAPPING it. He is sitting in a Honda where the passenger window has been smashed out.

EXT. CANYON PARK - MORNING

Joseph takes a deep breath then swings his arm back and hurls the flip phone out into the lake - PLOP.

INT. ELEVATOR, POLICE DEPARTMENT - MORNING

Disney music as Joseph rides an elevator.

Eyes the time on his phone -- 8:09am

INT. REPORT ROOM - MORNING

Joseph is sitting at his desk. Looks down from a clock that reads 8:29am and ticking...

Trainees, Detectives, a few S.W.A.T. guys hustling around.

Act normal.

Act normal.

Act normal.

Pretends to fill out some paperwork until Deakins interrupts him--

DEAKINS

--Joe?

Deakins points at a new stripe on his shoulder...

DEAKINS

They bumped me... after your write up.

Slips an envelope out of his pocket.

DEAKINS

Springsteens playing the Hollywood bowl next Thursday. I got two tickets... for you and your wife--

JOSEPH

--No, no, that's not--

DEAKINS

--Please, I insist, don't be such an ass, just take 'em...

Joseph smirks and considers it, *not really a possibility, but-*

--Something suddenly dawns on him--

JOSEPH

--Okay, thanks. I'll surprise her.

Gets to his feet and takes the tickets.

Fist bump.

INT. BRIEFING ROOM - MORNING

Twenty UNIFORMS sitting behind desks as the WATCH COMMANDER dishes out roll call.

Joseph is one of the Uniforms but he isn't actually listening to the Watch Commander's instructions...

WE HEAR WHAT JOSEPH HEARS: The Watch Commander's voice is a deep, dull drone...

Joseph checks his watch: 08:56am

INT. ARMOURY - MORNING

Joseph racks a pump action. Gazes up at a clock - 9:12am.

Wipes his brow before the sweat gives him away...

INT. RESTROOM - MORNING

Inside a stall, SOUND of someone vomiting.

INT. WAITING ROOM, DOCTOR CONNOR'S OFFICE - MORNING

Clare is sitting with a magazine.

INT. DOCTOR CONNOR'S OFFICE - MORNING

DOCTOR CONNOR takes a seat behind his desk, Clare sitting the other side.

DOCTOR CONNOR

So, Clare. How have you been?

EXT. L.A.P.D PARKING FACILITY - MORNING

Joseph is walking through the secure parking lot lugging the pump. His partner for the day - a female Latino bruiser, OFFICER ALVAREZ tags along behind him gabbing into a cell phone.

As Joseph walks, his own cell starts RINGING. Slips it out - screen says: HOME

He freezes...

And answers...

JOSEPH

Clare?

CLARE (V.O.)

Joe?

She sounds tearful.

INTERCUT CONVERSATION: With Clare, who is sitting in her bedroom, on the edge of the bed - tears streaming--

JOSEPH

--What's wrong?

CLARE

I... I was up early... because I had an appointment with Doctor Connor and I couldn't sleep.

(beat)

I have a... tumor.

JOSEPH

What!? W-- where?

CLARE

In my head. It's been causing the migraines.

JOSEPH

Wh-- what... I mean... they can do something, right?

CLARE

They think they caught it early enough, but I probably have to have an operation. There is a risk.

Joseph is floored.

CLARE

I... I love you too. I'm sorry I ignored you this morning. I don't wanna get a divorce, I wanna make this work, I wanna try and make this work again.

JOSEPH GOES RIGID.

CLARE

I think we should adopt, Joe. If I get through this, I think that's what we should do.

(beat)

Can you come home, I really need to be with you right now.

Joseph falls back into his step for a moment until--

--The situation comes rocketing back to him--

JOSEPH

--I'm on my way!

Hangs up and navigates through his contacts to -- DAN.

Hit's call... but--

--It just rings.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - MORNING

Noise, dust and machinery. Daniel is pushing a shitload of bricks, he doesn't have a hand free to eat with let alone answer a phone.

EXT. L.A.P.D. PARKING FACILITY - MORNING

Joseph hangs up--

JOSEPH

--Fuck!!

Dials again, but it goes to messages--

DANIEL'S VOICE (V.O.)

Hey, this is Dan, you know what to do--

JOSEPH

--Fuck!!

Hangs up and quickly scrolls to CLARE'S NUMBER, hits CALL...

INT. BATHROOM, JOSEPH AND CLARE'S HOUSE - MORNING

SOUND of the land-line RINGING--

--But Clare is facing a mirror toweling tears...

EXT. L.A.P.D PARKING FACILITY - MORNING

Joseph gawks at the time on his phone. INSERT: 10:10am

His sudden sense of panic draws a gaze from Officer Alvarez, she visually gropes his flip out--

JOSEPH

--Fuck-- fuck!!

He suddenly hot foots through the lot dialing another number--

INT. HALLWAY, JOSEPH AND CLARE'S HOUSE - MORNING

Clare's purse is on the bottom step of the stairs. Inside, her iPhone is VIBRATING...

EXT. L.A.P.D PARKING FACILITY - MORNING

Joseph hangs up, starts sprinting towards a parked cruiser...

INT. PATROL CAR - CONTINUOUS

Joseph rips the driver's door open and leaps in slinging the shotgun onto the passenger seat.

Urgently jams a key into the ignition, fires the engine up--

--*A high speed reverse and a wheel spin towards the gate*--

--Lowers his window yelling at Alvarez--

JOSEPH

--Wait for me, I'll be back!

ALVAREZ

What the...

INT. SPEEDING PATROL CAR - MORNING

Joseph blasts through a stop sign, phone glued to ear--

JOSEPH

--Danny, where the fuck are you, answer the phone!

(beat)

--I need you to call Nate and call him off, something came up, I've lost his number, just call him off--

--FISHTAILS, almost hitting a WOMAN pushing s stroller...

JOSEPH

Fuck!!!

Hits a button and lights the rollers up, SIRENS SCREAMING--

INT. HALLWAY, JOSEPH AND CLARE'S HOUSE - MORNING

Inside Clare's purse -- her iPhone is VIBRATING again.

INT. SPEEDING PATROL CAR - MORNING

Joseph HAMMERS THE GAS through traffic, phone to ear--

JOSEPH
 --Clare, it's me, I need the number
 for the "tactical unit", it's in
 the pad by the--

--Suddenly swerves, ERRCCHHHHH, almost SPINNING OUT--

JOSEPH
 --JESUS, FUCK!!

INT. KITCHEN, JOSEPH AND CLARE'S HOUSE - MORNING

CLOSE ON: An answer machine - as Joseph's voice crackles--

JOSEPH'S VOICE (V.O.)
 --It's me, pick up, you gotta get
 out of the house, you gotta get out
 of the house, go next door, go to
 work, you gotta get out...

INT. SPEEDING PATROL CAR - MORNING

Joseph angles the phone directly over his mouth--

JOSEPH
 --Call me as soon as you can!

EXT. STREETS - MORNING

Joseph's black and white rampages through the neighborhood...

INT. SPEEDING PATROL CAR - MORNING

The engine howls as the cruiser eats up the asphalt...

CLOSE ON CLOCK: 10:28am

JOSEPH
 --Come on, come on!

Taps his phone screen again...

INT. MASTER BEDROOM, JOSEPH AND CLARE'S HOUSE - MORNING

The land-line is RINGING again. This time, puffy eyed Clare crosses into the room and picks up the handset--

CLARE
--Hello.

JOSEPH (V.O.)
Clare!

CLARE
Joe?

--But... Clare hears the floor CREAK behind her.

She turns... to find a MAN dressed in black with a stocking over his head-- SCREAMS...

INT. SPEEDING PATROL CAR - MORNING

Joseph hears her--

JOSEPH
--No!

But the line goes dead...

EXT. DRIVEWAY, JOSEPH AND CLARE'S HOUSE - MORNING

Joseph's patrol car SCREECHES up outside the house--

--The white Honda with the smashed window is parked next to Clare's Saab...

INT. PATROL CAR - MORNING

Joseph grabs the pump action and...

INT. HALLWAY, JOSEPH AND CLARE'S HOUSE - MORNING

Erupts through the front door--

JOSEPH
--Clare!

SOUND of RUNNING WATER... FROM UPSTAIRS...

He double times up the steps and rushes for the bathroom door KICKING it open, WHAM...

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Clare is naked -- in the tub -- floating on her back -- a bloody head wound -- bath taps running at full speed--

JOSEPH

Noooooooo!!

(beat)

Nate!!!

Joseph spins around as Nate steps out from the bedroom still wearing the stocking mask--

NATE

--Joe!? What are you doing here!?

But Joseph levels the pump action and--

KER--BOOOOOMMMMM...

Swiss cheeses Nate...

Nate's chest eats buckshot, his body launched backwards and CRASHING to the floor as if he's as light as a stuffed toy, WUMPPPPPPP!

Joseph pivots back to Clare--

--Dumps the shotgun and plunges his arms into the tub, but--

--Before he can pull her out, SOUND of a revolver BARKING--

BLAM, BLAM, BLAM...

Three slugs SLAM into Joseph's back, the force propelling him into the bathtub--

--Desperately turns back, his L.A.P.D. vest his savior, only to see--

--Nate crawling on his belly and going for the pump action, his shoulder a bloody mess, snub nose revolver in his fist.

Nate lines up another shot-- BLAM... hits the wall by Joseph's head... KWAK--

--Joseph leaps out of the bath and throws himself on top of Nate whacking the revolver out of his hand--

--They wrestle, but Joseph claws his PEPPER SPRAY out of his utility belt and pumps it into Nate's face, point blank--

Nate YELLS and REELS... burns like a forest fire eating into his eyelids--

JOSEPH

--What have you done!

As they struggle, Clare suddenly HEAVES for breath... fingers scratching at the rim of the tub--

Manages to HAUL herself out and lands on the floor with a THUD while Joseph and Nate grapple--

Crawls away on her hands and knees...

Joseph lifts Nate upright and SLAMS his head into the wall tiles... FWUMPPPP!!

Overpowered and half blind, Nate flails as Joseph wraps both hands around his neck driving his head into the bath water--

--Nate THRASHES -- but Joseph is heavier and probably stronger when it comes to the crunch.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - MORNING

Clare, holding a phone, punches in those three famous digits.

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

DESPERATE bubbles from Nate's mouth...

Joseph holds him under finding the strength of a thousand men.

JOSEPH

I... tried... to... stop... you...

Nate's hands flap around for something -- anything --

--But Joseph has the upper hand.

Nate's eye's BULGE through his mask... and then...

His arms suddenly weaken and--

--He breaks his grip on Joseph's sleeves...

A final kick...

A GASP. A GURGLE. SOME BUBBLES.

And then... stillness.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - MORNING

Joseph rushes in, spots Clare and drops to his knees--

JOSEPH
--Oh, God, oh, God!

She is barely conscious... a bloody mess in her hair--

--Still has the phone in her hand, 911 OPERATOR'S VOICE crackling through--

911 OPERATOR (V.O.)
--Ma'am? Police and ambulance are on route...

Joseph grabs the phone.

JOSEPH
Please! My wife, come quick...

But he suddenly stalls -- as something haunts him.

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

Joseph scrambles back in and rips Nate's body out of the tub, dumping it onto the ground...

JOSEPH
Fuck-- fuck-- fuck...

Frantically stuffs his hands into Nate's pockets, looking for something...

JOSEPH
Where is it!!

But--

--SIRENS...

EXT. PORCH - MORNING

LOUDER SIRENS...

Joseph races out of the house flagging down the cavalry...

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. PATROL UNIT, STATIONARY - AFTERNOON

Joseph is sitting in the back of a cruiser opposite his house.

JOSEPH'S POV: More cop cars and an ambulance.

Alvarez traces over to his window...

ALVAREZ

E.M.T's still with her. Gonna move her any minute, I'll keep you posted.

INT. BATHROOM, JOSEPH AND CLARE'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

DETECTIVE BILL WESTBAY is in his late fifties and the type of guy whose mind never sleeps, even when it's time to sleep.

Tall and thin, he is built like a chopstick but as he absorbs the crime scene we can tell he is a man who cares deeply about the little things.

He kneels at the Nate's corpse snapping some latex gloves on.

Runs a hand over Nate's clothing.

He was wearing a Kevlar vest too, it caught the shotgun flak.

INT. PATROL CAR, STATIONARY - AFTERNOON

Joseph's phone starts RINGING. Grabs it and eyes the screen:

DAN

Lets it RING until it stops...

But SUDDENLY --

-- He jolts upright - a cold sweat striking him.

Raises his phone and stabs in a number--

INT. KITCHEN, JOSEPH AND CLARE'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

--Westbay edges through the kitchen.

On a counter, a red light on an answer-phone is blinking.

INT. PATROL CAR - AFTERNOON

Joseph urgently taps a four digit code into his phone.

AUTOMATED VOICE (V.O.)
Messages erased.

INT. KITCHEN, JOSEPH AND CLARE'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Beside Westbay, the answer-phone light stops blinking.

INT. PATROL CAR - AFTERNOON

Joseph glances out as Clare is carried to the ambulance on a stretcher, Westbay following while talking to another cop.

But ALMOST IMMEDIATELY--

--Another mental alarm bell goes off...

EXT. JOSEPH AND CLARE'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Joseph hustles toward the house and approaches a cop on the front door, OFFICER EDWARDS, who blocks him--

EDWARDS
Joe, there's still a body in there--

JOSEPH
--I'm going to the hospital, I need to get some shit.

EDWARDS
I understand, but--

JOSEPH
--Come on Edwards, I left my phone in there. I'm not gonna contaminate anything, I need to talk to Clare's family--

--Edwards knows he won't win this battle, meets him halfway.

EDWARDS
Okay. I'll get it, tell me where?

Past Edwards, Joseph spots Clare's purse on the bottom stair.

JOSEPH
I dropped it upstairs somewhere.

Edwards heads upward and as soon as he is out of sight, Joseph pokes a foot into the house -- reaches inside Clare's purse and plucks her iPhone out--

--Enters her passcode and thumbs the voicemail icon deleting the latest one - from himself. Drops it back into the purse.

EXT. LAKE COUNTY HOSPITAL - NIGHT

A Station Wagon with three adults inside SCREECHES up.

INT. CLARE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Clare is asleep and hooked up to a heart monitor. A patch of hair has been shaved and replaced by a bandage.

Joseph is sitting at the foot of the bed, still in uniform.

EXT. HALLWAY, CLARE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Two Women and a Man are standing before DOCTOR WILLIAMS.

One of the women is FIONA, Clare's younger sister.

Bearing up next to her is MARTIN, Clare's father. HILLARY is Clare's well-to-do-mother but is currently living every well-to-do-mother's worst nightmare.

DOCTOR WILLIAMS

She suffered a nasty bump but the damage is probably going to be more psychological than physical.

The family breathe easy.

DOCTOR WILLIAMS

This does change things regarding her tumor though. It's benign, but we'll need to expedite surgery to avoid a build up of any extra pressure caused by the trauma.

HILLARY

--Wait, what? What, tumor?

Doctor Williams exhales. Big news.

EXT. JOSEPH AND CLARE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A news truck is parked up, a REPORTER yapping into camera.

REPORTER
 ...but this burglar picked the
 wrong house to...

An old BLACK MUSTANG with dark windows inches past.

EXT. LAKE COUNTY HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Opposite the E.R., the BLACK MUSTANG is parked up.

Joseph suddenly bowls out of the hospital entrance clutching his cell phone as Daniel slides out of the Mustang--

JOSEPH
 --Are you outta your mind--

DANIEL
 --You wanna start explaining shit?
 (beat)
 I switch the tube on to find Nate's
 been iced and they're calling you a
 fuckin' hero cop--

JOSEPH
 --I tried to call him off, and I
 don't have to tell you shit--

DANIEL
 --Me and Nate did a five stretch,
 asshole! Even took heat for me,
 helped me make parole, and now you
 put him in the fuckin' bone yard.
 (beat)
 Think you're just gonna carry on,
 eh?

Joseph tightens as Daniel leans closer.

DANIEL
 Worse. He owed me. So guess what?
 (beat)
 You rubbed him out, you're paying
 his dues. Seventy five--

JOSEPH
 --Seventy five grand! Don't make
 me laugh, you never had more than a
 dime to your name, let alone--

DANIEL

--Way I see it, don't got much
choice--

--Daniel slips his cell phone out. Taps the voicemail and
Joseph's message crackles--

JOSEPH'S VOICEMAIL

--Danny, it's me, where the fuck
are you. I need you to call Nate
and call him off, something's come
up and I've lost his number, just
call him off--

--The blood drains from Joseph's face.

JOSEPH

So much for the fuckin' trust!

DANIEL

Fuck your trust! I trusted you
when you tipped me off about that
job and I ended up in the fuckin'
slammer--

JOSEPH

--Jesus, how many fuckin' times, I
was trying to help you make some--

DANIEL

--Yeah well... thanks for that.
(beat)
You can help me now. Seventy five.

A standoff.

Until--

DANIEL

--How much you getting then? For
Rick's shares?

Joseph, momentarily lost for words--

DANIEL

--Surprised I know? Well, I know.
(beat)
And I know... I ain't inheriting
shit. Why would my two, righteous
brothers wanna reward the family
fuck up?

Daniel steps toe to toe.

DANIEL
Maybe its time people know who the
real fuckin' bad guy is.

Joseph swallows his angst.

Satisfied, Daniel turns back toward his car yelling over his
shoulder--

DANIEL
--You're the reason I went away,
asshole, that shit ain't free.
Time starts now! You got 48 hours!

Jumps into his Mustang and ROARS away, VROOMMMMMMMMMM.

EXT. HOLIDAY INN - NIGHT

Martin's Station Wagon is parked in the hotel lot.

INT. JOSEPH'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Joseph is sitting on a bed in the same way he conspired with
Nate, but this time he is facing Martin, Hillary and Fiona.

JOSEPH
She called about the tumor, but
when I got home she was out cold...

EXT. BALCONY, HOLIDAY INN - NIGHT

Through a window - Joseph continues explaining to his family.

INT. JOSEPH'S ROOM - NIGHT

A digital clock reads: 3:02am. Joseph is wide awake.

INT. CLARE'S HOSPITAL ROOM, LAKE COUNTY HOSPITAL - MORNING

Clare is laying in bed with her eyes open.

On one side, Hillary, Fiona and Martin, and on the other
side, Joseph is holding her hand.

CLARE
(to Fiona)
How do I look, sis?

FIONA
 (re: bald patch)
 I like your new haircut.

Clare smiles. Twists her head to Joseph.

CLARE
 My hero.

She tightens her grip on his hand.

INT. WAITING ROOM - MORNING

Fiona sits down in a chair with a newspaper.

Unfolds it to find a photo of Joseph on the front page followed by the headline: HERO COP

INT. DOCTOR WILLIAM'S OFFICE - MORNING

Doctor Williams is sitting behind his desk, Joseph, Martin and Hillary on the other side.

MARTIN
 Please, just level with us. What's the risk here?

DOCTOR WILLIAMS
 Clare's tumor is still young. The procedure won't need to be overly invasive...

Doctor Williams slides a paper laden clipboard to them--

DOCTOR WILLIAMS
 --But surgery near the brain is risky. Clare has signed the form but it requires dual signatures... ensuring absolute clarity in the authorization of the procedure.
 (beat)
 A parent or spouse would be legally acceptable.

Martin and Joseph eye the clipboard like it's some sort of death warrant until--

--Joseph grabs it and signs on the dotted line.

JOSEPH
 Anything to get her better.

EXT. JOSEPH AND CLARE'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

A CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATOR SLAMS a truck door shut.

The truck pulls away as an unmarked Lincoln rolls up and parks. Westbay gets out.

INT. CAFE, LAKE COUNTY HOSPITAL - AFTERNOON

Joseph, Martin, Hillary and Fiona are sat around a table.

JOSEPH

If only I'd have got home sooner...

HILLARY

But how could you have known, Joe?
The good Lord'll see us through.

MARTIN

You saved her life.

Glum, Joseph gazes past Martin... to Fiona... but what he sees unsettles him.

Fiona is staring the life out of him, hostile, as if she knows something.

Joseph deflects.

JOSEPH

There are over six hundred home
invasions in L.A every month.

(beat)

I'm gonna get an alarm system.
When she comes home, I want her to
feel as safe as possible.

But the family are suddenly distracted by a MAN in his early sixties who steps up to their table. Starvation skinny - not because he smokes though, because he leads a super fit life.

His name is SCOTT.

SCOTT

(to Joseph)

Son.

Joseph gets to his feet and hugs his father. Scott has an eagle tattoo on his sagging bicep, the mark of a U.S Ranger.

SCOTT

Took the first flight I could.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM, JOSEPH AND CLARE'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Westbay has a cell to his ear--

WESTBAY

--Inform Joe and his family they
can return home. Thank you.

He hangs up and steps out of the room.

INT. LANDING - CONTINUOUS

Westbay takes one last poke around. Turns to a guest bedroom
and pushes the door open peering inside...

Those eyes. Something stirs them...

The room has been occupied. Bed is messed up - L.A.P.D.
issue pants and shoes strewn around.

INT. CLARE'S HOSPITAL ROOM, LAKE COUNTY - EVENING

Clare is sipping water.

Martin, Hillary and Fiona are sitting in chairs on one side
of the bed, Fiona holding Clare's hand.

Joseph is sitting on the other side, Scott sitting at the
foot of the bed.

Clare hands the water to Joseph who takes it--

JOSEPH

--That's it. You gotta go dry now.

CLARE

(to Scott)

Thank you for coming. Alice
would've been proud of him.

SCOTT

Just wish both my sons were as
admirable.

Scott stands up taking a ring sized box out of his pocket.

SCOTT

Here, I brought you something.

Flips the lid to show her a military medal.

CLARE
Your bronze star?

SCOTT
You wanted to see it, but you can
keep it. I'm giving it to you.

He walks around and places it on Clare's bedside table.

CLARE
I can't keep that.

SCOTT
It's awarded for bravery. You most
certainly can.

Joseph smiles. Nicely done.

INT. MARTIN'S STATION WAGON, MOVING - NIGHT

Martin is driving, Hillary next to him.

In the back, Fiona is squeezed between Scott and Joseph,
visibly uncomfortable. Scott drapes a comforting arm around
her.

INT. LIVING ROOM, JOSEPH AND CLARE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Joseph is sitting at the dining table with his father.

JOSEPH
I drowned a man with my bare hands.

SCOTT
Not a man. A twisted, fucking
monster.

Joseph nods. Feels better.

SCOTT
Don't worry about the surgery.
We've been here before, remember?

JOSEPH
Mom had liver cancer... this is on
the brain.

SCOTT
But look how many surgeries she
went through? Clare has one,
she'll make it.

Joseph gets to his feet.

JOSEPH
Sure you're okay on the sofa?

SCOTT
I love the sofa. Reminds me of
when your mother was around.

Joseph snickers.

INT. LANDING - NIGHT

Joseph, holding a glass of water, reaches the top step.

Pauses to watch Martin who is on his hands and knees in the master bedroom scrubbing Clare's blood off the carpet with a bucket and sponge.

Clare's makeup table has been moved, drawers strewn across the bed--

--And it's this that jacks Joseph's attention.

He stares at something with a growing heat in his neck.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Joseph steps in and pokes his hand into a drawer taking out the front door key that he gave to Nate. The keychain with the yellow smiley face.

He gawks at it, his mind in a whirlpool until Martin pushes to his feet--

MARTIN
--You okay?

JOSEPH
Yeah... I-- I been looking for
this. The spare front door key.
(beat)
You find it on the floor?

Martin shrugs.

MARTIN
I didn't touch it.

Joseph nods. Flustered, he pockets it and heads out.

INT. OPERATING THEATRE, LAKE COUNTY HOSPITAL - MORNING

MONTAGE;

Clare having a cat-scan

CLOSE UP of the tumor on an X-RAY

Clare with an oxygen mask over her mouth - anesthesia pumped in...

Clare's eyes closing

The bright lights of an operating room

Two SURGEONS behind Clare

SOUND of CRANIUM DRILLS boring holes into Clare's skull

Joseph, Scott, Martin, Hillary and Fiona in the waiting room

A Surgeon working a cutting tool inside Clare's head

Clare's E.C.G.

Concerned expressions on the Surgeon's faces - blood soaked gloves

EXT. WAITING ROOM - AFTERNOON

From a distance we see one of Clare's Surgeons push through a set of double doors and face a room full of family anxiety.

He says something -- and suddenly Fiona and Hillary hug each other.

Martin and Joseph back pat.

INT. CLARE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER

Clare is sitting up in bed with a bandage around her head.

Joseph, Scott, Martin, Hillary and Fiona sitting around her.

CLARE
(to Joseph)
I just wanna go home.

JOSEPH
Slow down baby. Soon.

Despite the pain, she smiles.

DOCTOR RUBEN(V.O.)
Mr. Cosgrove, I'm a therapist and I
work with victims of violent crime
on behalf of the L.A.P.D.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Joseph is walking alongside a woman who looks like she'd wear
a suit to Disneyland. She is DOCTOR RUBEN--

DOCTOR RUBEN
--As you'll know from being a
police officer, often we find
victims of violent crime pay a
mental price.

Joseph listens.

DOCTOR RUBEN
As Clare's husband, you'll play the
biggest part in her rehabilitation.

JOSEPH
Of course.

DOCTOR RUBEN
To help you both deal with it, I'd
like you to come to my office,
together, twice a week, for what we
call some aftermath sessions.

Joseph stops walking.

JOSEPH
Sounds like a plan. Thank you.

His cell starts RINGING and he glances at the screen; WESTBAY

JOSEPH
Excuse me.

INT. DET. WESTBAY'S OFFICE, POLICE DEPARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Clinical clean. No post-its, no files and no pictures on the
walls because a cluttered room means a cluttered mind.

A glass topped table and a laptop mark everything. Westbay
is sitting on the business side, Joseph opposite.

JOSEPH
She can't wait to go home.

WESTBAY

Women and hospitals go together
like broccoli and ice cream.
My own wife was hit by a car, both
legs broken, but even then... she
wanted out.

JOSEPH

Woah. Hope... she was okay.

WESTBAY

She suffered, and... eventually...

Joseph is unhinged.

WESTBAY

She was an officer too. I like to
think I work twice as hard now.
For myself... and for Karen.

A cop with a hard-on for justice, last thing Joseph needs...

Westbay turns to his laptop and starts reading out-loud--

WESTBAY

*--Wayne Warner. Ex military, did
six years for misconduct. Punched
a woman so hard a tooth had to be
removed from her lung.*

(beat)

A man with a temper and no job
since release, the obvious theory
suggests he was probably short on
cash and resorted to a burglary
lifestyle...

JOSEPH

But obvious theories don't sit well
with cops, right?

WESTBAY

Right. Not only was Wayne armed,
but he was wearing a Kevlar vest.

(beat)

I'm working on a theory he was
actually targeting you... Joe.

A rush of blood surges to Joseph's head. *The perfect cover.*

WESTBAY

I've been going through your recent
arrest records. Gonna take a
while, but do you know anyone who
might be holding a grudge?

JOSEPH
Nothing comes to mind.

WESTBAY
Are you involved in any high
profile investigations?

JOSEPH
Not that... I know of...

Joseph shakes his head...

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Joseph and Westbay are walking through the precinct. Passing OFFICERS pat Joseph on the back. A few fist bumps. To them, he is now *law-enforcement-legend*.

WESTBAY
I'm curious about the status of
your marriage. How is it?

JOSEPH
It's.. it's fine.

WESTBAY
But you've been sleeping
separately?

Joseph tiptoes...

JOSEPH
Well-- we've-- had a few issues.
Type of relationship where you have
to schedule sex, if you know what I
mean...

WESTBAY
So... it isn't really fine? At
least, not a hundred percent?

JOSEPH
Ninety nine. She likes sleeping on
her own, complains I snore, minor
crap, nothing we can't deal with...

Curious eyes from the Detective...

EXT. LAKE COUNTY HOSPITAL - EVENING

Joseph parks his SUV next to Martin's Station Wagon.

INT. JOSEPH'S SUV, STATIONARY - CONTINUOUS

Joseph stares at the foreboding hospital building, the weight of the world on his shoulders.

His phone starts RINGING. Takes it out and checks the screen: DAN

He rejects it.

A text buzzes through:

DAN// MONEY !!!!!

INT. CLARE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Clare is sleeping. Joseph sitting one side of her - Fiona the other, an obvious elephant in the room, until--

FIONA

--Clare never wants to cause mom any stress, you know... since her epilepsy got worse.

(beat)

She talks to me though.

Fiona's eyes roast Joseph...

FIONA

I'm grateful for what you did... but I know that you two are having problems.

JOSEPH

Everyone has problems.

FIONA

She told me the other day... that you smashed her laptop screen?

JOSEPH

She exaggerated, I dropped it. It was an accident.

FIONA

So she lied to me?

JOSEPH

--She exaggerated... Jesus... yes we have some problems but we're getting over 'em... even had a date to the Springsteen concert--

FIONA

--I also know that you're the one who caused the problems.

Joseph battles to suppress his voice in front of his sleeping wife--

JOSEPH

--What is this? Hardly the person to start criticizing our marriage--

FIONA

--It's because I'm divorced that I'm bringing this up. I see the signs.

He suddenly feels her sincerity.

FIONA

You didn't tell Clare before you got married that you couldn't have kids. The 'real' reason your first marriage broke down.

Might as well have just kicked him in the balls.

JOSEPH

She never even wanted kids when we--

FIONA

--But she changed her mind... she's allowed to do that--

JOSEPH

--No thanks to you, she was fine until you started pushing them out and bringing them over--

FIONA

--You're infertile! And you hid it from her because you already got burned by it before--

JOSEPH

--She had no right discussing tha--

FIONA

--She had every right, she's my si--

JOSEPH

--We... we could've adopted--

FIONA

--Adoption isn't for everyone.

Joseph desperately looking for a counter, but--

FIONA

--Did you know she drives to schools sometimes... just to watch other peoples kids coming out?

From the look on his face, no... he didn't know...

FIONA

How long did you pretend... trying for a baby... until you told her the truth?

Her question bites into him like an electric shock--

FIONA

--You left her... to think that she was the one who had the problem... right up until you went to the doctor... even though you knew--

JOSEPH

I made a mistake, we're getting through it!

FIONA

Good. I just hope that when she recovers from all this, she'll be able to explain her, 'exaggerations' in more detail.

Joseph smolders.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM, JOSEPH AND CLARE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Joseph is laying in bed. Wide awake but drunk with fatigue.

Rolls over and opens a drawer taking out the key on the smiley face chain.

His eyes dance all over it.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM, LAKE COUNTY - MORNING

Clare is sitting upright and sipping from a cup of soup, Martin and Hillary standing at the foot of the bed.

CLARE

I've been craving soup.

HILARY
 (light hearted)
 Maybe you're pregnant!

Clare smiles it off. Poor choice of joke...

She turns to Joseph and Fiona who are sitting beside her... also smiling the joke off. Wayyyy off.

CLARE
 (to Joseph)
 Where's your dad?

JOSEPH
 Fixing the bathroom up.

CLARE
 Always the soldier.

But before she can take another sip, the door is abruptly opened and Daniel steps in holding a bunch of flowers--

--Joseph springs to his feet.

Clare's gut twists like a corkscrew - maybe even a little frightened...

JOSEPH
 What the Hell do you want!?

DANIEL
 Family's, family. Saw it on the news.

(beat)
 I know we've had our differences brother, but just wanted to wish you and my sister-in-law well.

Awkwardly places the flowers on the end of Clare's bed...

MARTIN
 And you are... Joe's other brother--

DANIEL
 That's right. Probably told ya'll I'm the bad apple...
 (to Joseph)
 People need to get their facts straight.

We can almost see the vein in Joseph's neck about to burst.

CLARE
Thank you for the flowers Daniel,
you can go now.

But with his point made, he lurks just a little bit longer--

DANIEL
(to Clare)
Lucky Joe got back when he did.

HILLARY
We're extremely thankful.

Daniel stares Joseph dead in the face.

DANIEL
If it wasn't for Joe, who knows
what could'a happened. Heard the
guy was a bad motherfucker...
(to Clare)
You're very lucky to have him.

Joseph wants to gouge his eyes out.

DANIEL
(to Joseph)
Cell not working? Been calling.

He lingers, enjoying the power trip...

EXT. JOSEPH AND CLARE'S HOUSE - EVENING

Crickets.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

A banner draped across a clean and tidy living room:

WELCOME HOME

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

Flowers.

INT. HALLWAY - EVENING

A new alarm panel is bolted to the wall - a blinking red light.

EXT. JOSEPH AND CLARE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Martin's Station Wagon sweeps up onto the driveway.

Joseph hops out of the front and opens the rear door - gently guiding Clare out, a bandage still around her head.

Clare gazes at her house. Her eyes well up.

JOSEPH

It's okay.

But as Joseph assists her he spots Daniel's black Mustang pull out from a space and slip into the night.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Joseph, Clare, Hillary, Martin, Scott and Fiona are sitting around the dining table. Everyone has some cake but Clare hasn't touched hers.

FIONA

(to Clare, re: cake)

Surprised you didn't inhale that after three days of prison food.

Clare grins... but eyes a bigger goldfish bowl.

CLARE

Mr. Stevens got a bigger bowl.

JOSEPH

Yes he did.

CLARE

I'm sorry I didn't get--

JOSEPH

--Don't... even go there...

CLARE

Is everyone staying here then? Is there room?

MARTIN

Just relax honey, plenty of room.

SCOTT

Even if you had a bed I'd still be on the sofa. I prefer 'em.

Clare giggles. Hillary gently clasps her daughter's hand.

EXT. L.A.P.D. PARKING FACILITY - NIGHT

Westbay's car pulls towards the gate as it clatters open.

INT. DETECTIVE WESTBAY'S SQUAD CAR - NIGHT

Westbay yawns at the wheel, another sixteen hours in the bag... but before he can exit, a cruiser SCREAMS past in all its WAILING red and blue glory.

Westbay watches it whizz into the distance-- until SUDDENLY --

-- It triggers something.

WESTBAY

Son of a...

He throws his car into reverse and SCREECHES back into a parking space...

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Joseph carries Clare into the bedroom. New carpet.

Carefully places her on the bed and sits down next to her.

CLARE

New carpet?

JOSEPH

The other one was--

(beat)

--I never liked it. I'll get you some water.

But Clare grabs Joseph's hand--

CLARE

--Don't leave me.

JOSEPH

I'm not going nowhere.

She squeezes his hand and whispers--

CLARE

--I want us to start sleeping together. Can we be together now?

She shifts... placing her head into Joseph's lap.

He peers at the bandage around her head. *This is his doing.*

INT. DETECTIVE WESTBAY'S OFFICE, POLICE DEPARTMENT - NIGHT

Westbay is facing his computer watching a video file.

CLOSE ON SCREEN: DASHCAM FOOTAGE, of a speeding patrol unit.

EXT. JOSEPH AND CLARE'S HOUSE - MORNING

A MAIL MAN stuffs envelopes into the box.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - MORNING

Clare is asleep. Groggy, she opens her eyes...

Turns and gazes across the bed... but --

-- Suddenly panics.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Martin, Hillary and Fiona are eating breakfast at the table until Clare BUSRTS into the room still in pajamas--

CLARE

--Joe!

HILLARY

He had to check in at work, honey.

MARTIN

Didn't wanna wake you.

Clare's face sinks.

EXT. LITTLE ARMENIA - MORNING

Graffiti.

Trash and homeless tents littering the sidewalk.

CRACKLE OF A POLICE RADIO as--

--A black and white glides up opposite a shitty, rundown house, parks...

INT. PATROL CAR, STATIONARY - CONTINUOUS

Alvarez behind the wheel, Joseph next to her.

ALVAREZ

You're supposed to be grounded, I better not eat shit for this.

JOSEPH

Relax, it's family. I'll be back.

INT. LIVING ROOM, SHITTY HOUSE - MORNING

A pregnant southern belle, BRITNEY, once the proprietor of a lucrative stripper body, is balancing a baby in one hand and a phone to her ear in the other--

BRITNEY

--Yes, your brother, Joe, he's here... and wants to speak to you.

(beat)

Why is he here Danny, are you in trouble?

INTERCUT WITH DANIEL - WHO IS;

INT. MUSTANG, STATIONARY - MORNING

Parked across the street from Joseph's own house... and he is Pissed, with a capital P--

DANIEL

--Put him on.

INT. LIVING ROOM, DANIEL'S SHITTY HOUSE - MORNING

Britney turns toward the kitchen and hands Joseph the handset.

Joseph takes it while admiring a ten year old girl, CHLOE, as she bites into a sandwich that's almost bigger than her.

He veers towards a back door.

EXT. BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Broken toys. Joseph paces with the phone to his ear.

JOSEPH

Chloe's grown--

DANIEL

--Get the fuck out of my house!

JOSEPH

I see why you need that cash now, I wouldn't want my family to live in a dump like this either.

DANIEL

Get. The. Fuck--

JOSEPH

--Listen to me, asshole! I'm not your fuckin' sugar daddy, I'm a cop... and I can bring you a world of shit if I want to...

He changes ears--

JOSEPH

--Here's what's gonna happen. I'm gonna drop you an extra ten g's, and you're gonna fuck off forever. I know you're playing me--

DANIEL

--Eat shit, I need a bankroll and it's time you fuckin' paid for something.
(beat)
You're forgetting the issue of your little voicemail... worth way more than ten--

JOSEPH

--I don't think it is. See...

He pulls the rug out--

JOSEPH

--With you out scavenging for work and Britney home with another bun in the oven it must be tough knowing Chloe has to walk to school... on her own... in a neighborhood like this...

Joseph takes the deepest breath of his life.

JOSEPH

Anything could happen...

Daniel grips the phone so hard his knuckles whiten.

JOSEPH
 I take it by the silence we got a
 deal.
 (beat)
 And stay the fuck away from my
 house.

He hangs up. *Eat that, fucker.*

INT. REPORT ROOM, POLICE DEPARTMENT - MORNING

Joseph is at his desk. His eyes are glued to the smiley face
 keychain that is laying next to his coffee cup.

It's haunting him like some sort of voodoo curse - until
 Westbay slithers up and breaks it's spell--

WESTBAY
 Joe. Do you have a second?

Joseph sits up preparing for battle--

JOSEPH
 --Sure...

But his hardline buzzes...

JOSEPH
 Excuse me--

--He picks up.

JOSEPH
 --Cosgrove.
 (beat)
 She, what?

INT. FRONT DESK, POLICE DEPARTMENT - MORNING

Joseph buzzes out from a secure door to find Clare standing
 with Fiona.

Clare torpedos straight into Joseph's arms, alarming him--

JOSEPH
 --What's wrong?

She WEEPS...

CLARE
 I woke up and you were gone.

JOSEPH

I just came in for a few hours...

Throws Fiona a glance... she doesn't like it either.

INT. DENNY'S - MORNING

Daniel, Britney and Chloe are raiding the dollar menu.

Their server, LISA, pulls up with a twinkle in her eye--

LISA

(to Britney)

--Well done, the new guy loves you.
Gonna offer you the job, but you
didn't hear it from me.

She takes off. Britney shoots Daniel a happy face but he isn't exactly Sammy Sunshine about it--

BRITNEY

--Baby, don't look like that.

(beat)

It's gonna help pay for me to go
back to school.

DANIEL

I just know how much you hated this
job. And you're pregnant now.

She grasps his hand reassuring, but--

DANIEL

--I'm gonna get the money for
school.

(beat)

God damn it, I know I messed up in
the past... but I'm gonna get it.

She smiles at him with that look of love.

DANIEL

I'm gonna get it.

INT. DOCTOR RUBEN'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Joseph, back in civilian clothes, is sitting in a chair holding Clare's hand. Doctor Ruben is sitting opposite.

DOCTOR RUBEN

You are indeed a victim too Joseph, but it's important you take to heart that what happened that day wasn't your fault. You simply don't control time.

Joseph gulps down the lump in his throat.

DOCTOR RUBEN

Clare. Since this happened, how do you feel about being at home now?

CLARE

Afraid. Never knowing who might come through the door.

DOCTOR RUBEN

Who do you think might come through the door?

CLARE

Someone who -- wants to hurt me.

DOCTOR RUBEN

Why would someone want to hurt you?

She cranes her neck to Joseph looking for support.

CLARE

I don't know.

DOCTOR RUBEN

Joseph?

He loosens his collar.

JOSEPH

I don't know either. Just... one of those... horrible, unfortunate-- things...

It's getting hotter and hotter in here.

EXT. PATIO, JOSEPH AND CLARE'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Martin, Hillary and Fiona are sitting by the pool.

Scott brings a tray of coffee out and sits down beside them.

MARTIN

(to Scott)

Hillary and I were talking and we're gonna buy Joe and Clare a cruise. I know Joe's always wanted to go on one.

SCOTT

Always with the boat fascination. Growing up, he was hooked on little model ones.

HILLARY

Maybe he'll pass it onto their kids and we'll have a sailor in the family--

FIONA

--Joseph doesn't want kids, Mom.

Everyone is taken aback. Especially Scott.

SCOTT

What?

FIONA

(to Scott)

I thought you'd have known that?

SCOTT

Guys always say that.

MARTIN

Heck, I did. Four years later, two screaming pie holes to feed.

HILLARY

That's your own fault. After Clare, you had expansion on the brain.

FIONA

(to Hillary)

It's been seven years. They're hardly newly weds.

Everyone reflects, but Scott has a flea in his ear.

INT. JOSEPH'S SUV, MOVING - EVENING

Outside their house, Joseph pulls into the driveway spotting Daniel's Mustang parked a little way down the street.

Leaving the engine running he twists to Clare--

JOSEPH

--Sweetheart. I gotta go finish a report, you'll be just fine--

--His RINGING cell phone cuts him off and he slaps it straight to his ear without even checking the screen--

JOSEPH

--Talk.

DANIEL (V.O.)

We need to straighten shit. I suggest you let Cinderella go inside, then you're gonna hit the road and buy me a beer at the Red Room to apologize for the little house call.

(beat)

Don't let me down, hero, or my next stop'll be your front door.

CLICK. Joseph is spooked but fakes a goodbye--

JOSEPH

--Yeah, okay, got it. On my way.

He hangs up and steals a glance into his side mirror.

JOSEPH'S POV: Daniel's Mustang pulls away...

Faces Clare again--

JOSEPH

--I gotta go. Just remember, baby-steps.

She nods... but--

CLARE

--Joe? What did you mean back in the session? When you said, '*Just one of those unfortunate things*'...

He trips over her question for a moment--

JOSEPH

--I meant... like-- one of those things you only see on the news. Never expect it to happen to you... but then it does. It's... unfortunate--

He throws it back at her with a hint of irritation--

JOSEPH

--What did you think I meant?

CLARE

Ugh... nothing-- I-- I don't know what I thought.

She shakes it off and pecks him on the cheek.

CLARE

Go to work, I'll be okay.

She slips out of the car and slams the door.

EXT. PARKING LOT, THE RED ROOM BAR AND GRILL - NIGHT

Daniel's Mustang swings into a space and parks. Joseph follows in his SUV, but--

INT. JOSEPH'S SUV - CONTINUOUS

--As he parks - he spots Daniel get out of the Mustang holding a BASEBALL BAT, a THUG joining him from the bar--

JOSEPH

--What the...

He shifts into reverse -- but a pickup SCREECHES behind, BLOCKING him...

Locks his door and goes for his cell but --

-- Daniel stabs the end of the bat through the driver's window, SMASHING it--

--Joseph YELLS as Daniel and his Thug haul him out through the hole, dropping him to the ground with a THUD!

EXT. PARKING LOT, THE RED ROOM BAR AND GRILL - CONTINUOUS

The end of Daniel's baseball bat smacks Joseph in the face -
WUMP--

DANIEL
--Surprise, mother fucker!
(beat)
Come near my girls again, I'll
subtract your ass for good.

Kicks Joseph in the face, KWAP!

DANIEL
I'll meet you halfway. Lets call
it fifty. And I want it tomorrow!
(beat)
Ten don't even come close.

Daniel spits on him and then heads off to his car...

INT. KITCHEN, JOSEPH AND CLARE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Hillary slides a tray of freshly baked cookies out of an
oven, places them on a work top in front of Clare.

CLARE
Cinnamon cookies?

HILLARY
Correct, for three points.

Clare beams, but she is here for a reason.

CLARE
Mom?
(beat)
I never asked you. Was I
planned... or was I an accident?

Hillary pinches Clare's cheek with a twinkle in her eye.

CLARE
It's okay, you can tell me the
truth.

HILLARY
You were a wonderful accident. So
wonderful, we had another accident.

CLARE
When you married... did you both
want a family?

HILLARY

Honey. If you really love each other... you'll find a way.

CLARE

I just... see how you are with Fiona's boys. I don't want you to be disappointed if--

HILLARY

--Clare -- your father bought a Porsche and drove it into a tree. That's something to be disappointed about.

Clare nods, really trying to feel better.

HILLARY

We love Fiona but look what happened to her marriage.

(beat)

At least one of our daughters got it right.

She smiles and gets back to her cookies.

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM, POLICE DEPARTMENT - NIGHT

OFFICER TAPIA is sitting behind a desk filling out a report -- Joseph facing him with a fat lip and clasping an icepack to his cheek.

TAPIA

How many of 'em?

JOSEPH

Four. All Asian...

A tap on the door and Westbay pokes his head in--

WESTBAY

--Joe. I just heard...

TAPIA

(to Westbay)

Yeah, talk about unlucky. First his wife, now this shit...

WESTBAY

Indeed...

Joseph shoots Westbay a scattered gaze. Same type of move a schoolboy might pull when trying to avoid a prying teacher.

INT. KITCHEN, JOSEPH AND CLARE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Joseph lumbers in and grabs a bottle of water downing it like he's been lost in the desert.

On a worktop, he notices the laptop wallpaper now displays a shot from his wedding day.

Unimaginable bliss - except for the crack in the screen that 'virtually' separates them.

VOICES outside divert his attention...

Edges to the kitchen window and glimpses out.

JOSEPH'S POV - Clare and Fiona are sitting talking.

He quietly pushes the window open and listens--

FIONA

--I spoke to him... but he denied most of it.

CLARE

Joe's a good man underneath it all. We've had our ups and downs, but he doesn't mean any harm.

FIONA

Clare -- he avoided telling you something to cover up his own, selfish--

CLARE

--But look at what he did. He saved my life--

FIONA

--That's not the point. I just hope there isn't anything else he's hiding.

(beat)

He also denied breaking your laptop. Said it was an accident.

Clare stoops her head like a shamed schoolgirl.

CLARE

Yeah. I'm sorry I told you that.

(beat)

It was an accident. It just slipped out of his hand.

Fiona's disappointment is obvious.

CLARE
I was just... I was upset and--

FIONA
--It doesn't matter.

But clearly it does...

FIONA
I'm probably gonna go home soon.
The kids and all. I'll start
looking for a flight.

Fiona heads inside prompting Joseph to clear the window.

EXT. THE RED ROOM BAR AND GRILL - NIGHT

Westbay is looking at some broken glass on the ground.

He pivots back to the bar, his focal point - a SECURITY CAMERA overlooking the parking lot.

INT. THE RED ROOM BAR AND GRILL - NIGHT

The bar owner, a Harley Davidson mongrel named DUKE leans over the oak counter facing Westbay--

DUKE
--It ain't working. Ain't worked
for years. It's just for show now.

WESTBAY
Shame. I could have tipped good
money for that footage.

He turns away and heads for the door...

DUKE
(to himself)
Yeah, you ain't the only one.

The bar manager, KURT, an even older dude, is standing nearby drying a beer glass--

KURT
--What you tell him that for?

Duke grabs an envelope next to the register slipping some Benjamins out and slapping them into one of Kurt's hands--

DUKE
--Don't ask...

INT. BATHROOM, JOSEPH AND CLARE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Joseph, with a towel around his waist, is sitting on the edge of the toilet holding a frozen packet of peas over his lip.

Scott is balanced on the bathtub.

JOSEPH

Just some punks. I was out of uniform. Caught 'em trying to jack the drivers door--

SCOTT

--You gotta be more careful. Next time wait for backup. First your mom, then your brother, then we almost lose Clare and now this...

JOSEPH

Yeah...

SCOTT

I have a flight out tomorrow. If you don't feel up to it I'll get Martin to take me to the airport.

JOSEPH

I'm okay.

SCOTT

Mind if we go a little early? Get some chow?

JOSEPH

Fine. But please... no lectures...

Scott lingers. His son knows him well.

SCOTT

I went to your brother's house earlier.

Joseph pricks his ears up.

JOSEPH

Lucky you.

SCOTT

You're going to be an uncle again.

JOSEPH

I thought you said you were done with him?

SCOTT

I am. I went to see Chloe and the baby. Still their grandfather. Chloe's a doll.

(beat)

And you're still their uncle.

Joseph hides behind his packet of frozen peas.

SCOTT

He said things are on the up and he's getting a bonus. Maybe he's finally turning things around.

JOSEPH

I'll believe it when I see it.

Joseph's thoughts going off like bombs...

INT. DOCTOR RUBEN'S OFFICE - MORNING

Joseph and Clare are sitting before Doctor Ruben. The night has been cruel to his face.

DOCTOR RUBEN

Joe, how do you feel about Clare being alone now?

JOSEPH

I worry.

DOCTOR RUBEN

How do you think you could try and get back to a normal way of life?

JOSEPH

I don't know. Living alone maybe. Gotta houseful at the moment.

He faces Clare.

JOSEPH

Maybe... going out, a little...

DOCTOR RUBEN

Clare, Joseph tells me that you don't like leaving any doors unlocked or any windows open. How do you think you can start feeling more secure?

INT. HALLWAY, JOSEPH AND CLARE'S HOUSE - MORNING

CLOSE ON ALARM PANEL: A finger double taps the number '2'.

Scott turns away to face Clare who is watching him.

SCOTT

Double tap it fast and it'll
trigger. It's the panic code.

CLARE

Feeling safer already.

Scott nods, but clears his throat, awkward--

SCOTT

--I'm... sorry I'm leaving. It's
just, I've been called back.

Clare affectionately touches his forearm.

CLARE

Don't apologize, you've done so
much.

Clare hugs him.

SCOTT

I've been a P.O.W. and fought in
two wars but you're the toughest
gal I ever met.

EXT. JOSEPH'S SUV, DRIVEWAY, STATIONARY - AFTERNOON

Scott throws a sports bag into the back and SLAMS the door.

INT. JOSEPH'S SUV - DRIVEWAY - AFTERNOON

Joseph is waiting in the front as his phone BEEPS--

ON SCREEN: DANIEL// Green. Today. Last chance, asshole.

JOSEPH

Goddamn it!

Scott gets into the passenger side and slams his door.

INT. JERRY'S DELI - AFTERNOON - LATER

Scott and Joseph in a booth finishing lunch.

SCOTT

Son? Fiona said something that's been riding me.

JOSEPH

She does that.

SCOTT

Said you didn't want kids. Kind'a hoping it wasn't true.

Sincere, Joseph puts his fork down.

JOSEPH

There is something I should've told you...

Scott is eager to hear.

JOSEPH

Clare... can't have kids. Had an infection when she was younger. Damaged her ovaries.

(beat)

Nobody knows. Not even her sister. She's insecure. Thinks-- she's-- less of a woman and all...

Scott is setback.

JOSEPH

I tell people that I don't want kids, you know... to protect her.

SCOTT

You could always adopt.

JOSEPH

We've been talking about it.

SCOTT

You knew this before you married?

JOSEPH

Of course. But what you gonna do?

SCOTT

I admire her for telling you. At least she didn't hide it.

Joseph's poker face is first class. If this were Vegas he just cleaned house.

EXT. DEPARTURES, L.A. INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - AFTERNOON

Joseph hugs Scott goodbye. Heartfelt from both.

INT. JOSEPH'S SUV, MOVING - EVENING

Alone, Joseph bumps onto his drive and kills the engine. Reaches for some fast food bags, but before he unbuckles-- -- Daniel pops the passenger door and slips inside--

JOSEPH

--What the fuck, you can't come here!

Daniel eyes Joseph's bruises...

DANIEL

Ouch. I should see the other guy, right?

JOSEPH

You can't be here, I can't explain it if she sees you!

DANIEL

--Chill, hero cop. Just here for my pay day. Figured you wouldn't wanna do it in the cop shop and al--

JOSEPH

--There is no pay day! You lost that shit after your little baseball game! Fuck you, you're not gonna do shit--

--Daniel nods to himself as if finally accepting it, but we can tell a storm is coming.

JOSEPH

You send that voicemail out, you're just gonna fuck yourself.

DANIEL

Maybe. But I can roll on you. I'm just the middle man, plus I been in the clink before, I can handle ten pounds of state jewelry around my ankles.

(beat)

Question is... can you?

He gets out of the car but holds for a moment--

DANIEL

--Oh... and... happy anniversary. Saw it on her Facebook page. Might wanna enjoy this one, never know, could be the last...

He slams the door and makes into the night leaving Joseph with a stew of rage in his gut.

INT. LIVING ROOM, JOSEPH AND CLARE'S HOUSE - EVENING

Cosy lighting.

Clare at the dining table -- two places set.

Joseph, doing a first class job concealing the strain of everything, steps in holding a posh serving platter, a silver lid over the top of it.

JOSEPH

Dinner is served.

CLARE

How have you been cooking, I can't smell anything?

But Joseph lowers the platter like a butler, places his hand on the lid and whips it off to reveal --

-- Four McDonald's cheeseburgers, french fries and two cans of coke.

CLARE

Oh, my...

JOSEPH

Thought I'd repeat our wedding meal.

He sits down, cracks a coke and toasts.

JOSEPH
Happy anniversary.

CLARE
Happy anniversary.

They clink tin.

JOSEPH
We'll do something proper. Just
thought you'd find this funny.

She smiles... but not all the way.

CLARE
Joe?

She reaches into her pocket taking out the small box
containing Scott's bronze star.

CLARE
I want you to have this. An
anniversary gift.

JOSEPH
What, I can't. Dad gave it to you.

CLARE
Yes. It's mine. But I want to
give it to you.
(beat)
I'd be dead without you.

Joseph is touched. Forces a smile and takes it.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Joseph and Clare strolling arm in arm.

JOSEPH
How'd you get rid of them?

CLARE
I sent them all to a movie.

The walk is a refreshing pleasantry for both of them. *Old
times...*

CLARE
Remember how hot our wedding day
was?

JOSEPH
Nothing like Vegas in a tux'.

CLARE
I was thinking of us... before all
this.

(beat)
I think that... I'm probably to
blame... for a lot of the
situation. I've had my share of
mood swings--

JOSEPH
It was probably the tumor...

Clare beams. They close in on their house.

JOSEPH
You eh, wanna try and stay home
alone now. Ship Ren and Stimpy
back to Sacramento?

CLARE
My sister goes home tomorrow.

JOSEPH
They could all go together?

INT. LIVING ROOM, JOSEPH AND CLARE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Martin, Hillary, Fiona, Joseph, Clare and left over popcorn.

CLARE
Daddy, we didn't mean you had to go
now.

MARTIN
Fiona has to be back in the
morning, if we drive tonight she'll
get a refund on her airfare.

HILLARY
(to Clare)
You know what he's like in traffic,
if we leave now it'll save our ears
from all his creative language...

Joseph gets to his feet.

JOSEPH
I'll bring the bags down.

But first he holds up two cruise line tickets.

JOSEPH
And thanks again for these.

MARTIN
Happy anniversary. It couldn't be
a more special one.

JOSEPH
You got that right.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT

Fiona is packing her bag. Joseph lurks...

JOSEPH
I come in peace.
(knowing)
Had your little chat with Clare?

Fiona zips her bag up and turns to him--

FIONA
--I owe you an apology.

JOSEPH
It's okay.

FIONA
No. It isn't. I'm sorry I pointed
a finger at you.

JOSEPH
Forget it. What do you say we just
bury the hatchet, right here, right
now?

Fiona smiles. Joseph moves in for a hug. Lukewarm at best.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Joseph slams the Station Wagon's back door after Fiona.
Martin and Hillary are already sitting up front.

MARTIN
Take care of my little girl.

JOSEPH
Thanks again for the boat ride.

MARTIN
Just one of the perks of running
your own travel company.
(MORE)

MARTIN (cont'd)
(to Clare)
You're in safe hands here.

CLARE
I know, Daddy.

She blows him a kiss as he reverses and pulls away.

INT. BATHROOM, JOSEPH AND CLARE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Joseph splashes water into his eyes. Studies his reflection.

The bathroom door is ajar casting a shadow over half of his face.

Half cop. Half criminal.

EXT. JOSEPH AND CLARE'S HOUSE - MORNING

Squawking crows announce another day in L.A.

Westbay's Lincoln is parked in the driveway.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Joseph and Clare are sitting on the sofa facing Westbay who is seated opposite with a plate of Hillary's cookies.

WESTBAY
Joe, I looked at your unit's dash-cam video on the morning of Clare's attack. You were traveling at some pretty high speeds. Over a hundred on some streets?

JOSEPH
Well, I'd heard Clare's scream--

WESTBAY
--As your statement says... but her scream was later.

(beat)
Within thirty seconds of leaving you were doing 93. Forgive my crudeness, but-- she wasn't about to drop dead--

JOSEPH
--No, but... she was upset about the tumor... and I was panicking...

Joseph's gut coils like a rattlesnake.

WESTBAY

Did you make any other calls on your way home?

JOSEPH

To Clare, she was hysterical.

WESTBAY

Anyone else?

JOSEPH

Not... that I--

CLARE

--Why are you asking him this?

WESTBAY

(to Joseph)

What about to your brother, Daniel?

A nuclear bomb detonates behind Joseph's eyelids--

JOSEPH

--Yeah I-- ugh-- did speak to him.

CLARE

But they don't really talk, the family doesn't get on with him.

WESTBAY

Because of his criminal background?

Clare nods. Joseph pales.

WESTBAY

On that morning, Joe's cell records indicate he called Daniel's cell and spoke for 28 seconds. A call at those speeds must have been pretty important...

Fuck!

JOSEPH

Yeah, I-- I was cancelling him. He sometimes snitches about things... we were supposed to talk-- but I was calling him to cancel--

WESTBAY

You use your brother as an informant? And he'll confirm that?

JOSEPH

Of course--

CLARE

--What, what has this got to do with anything, Joe killed the guy who did it, right?

WESTBAY

Right. And probably nothing, but I'm investigating another avenue. A hunch... if you like.

JOSEPH

What happened to the hunch he was after me?

WESTBAY

Still an open road.

Joseph feels a terrible coldness...

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - MORNING

Looking through a window down onto the street, Joseph watches Clare as she talks to Westbay through the window of his car.

He hands her something and she takes it then waves him off.

As soon as Westbay's car is out of sight Joseph bolts from the window and grabs some keys...

EXT. DANIEL'S SHITTY HOUSE - MORNING

The ROAR of an angry engine as Joseph's SUV howls up... but--

--Westbay beat him and is already knocking on the front door--

INT. JOSEPH'S SUV - MORNING

--Joseph hits the gas again...

JOSEPH

FUCK--

--And rounds a corner - stopping... just out of sight.

He watches Westbay step down from the porch, no bueno...

EXT. DANIEL'S SHITTY HOUSE - MORNING

As Westbay's car rolls away Joseph skids up in his SUV.

He jumps out and races towards the house but as he hammers on the door--

--We recognize another familiar car tucked around a corner.

INT. CLARE'S SAAB, STATIONARY - MORNING

Clare watches Joseph as he hustles around the edge of Daniel's house looking in through glass.

CLARE'S POV: On Joseph, as he yells through an open window. He lingers for a moment - then pounds back to his car.

Clare is clearly fighting her thoughts.

Glances down into her lap... she is holding a business card.

Detective Westbay's card. Grabs her cell phone...

INT. DETECTIVE WESTBAY'S OFFICE, POLICE DEPT. - AFTERNOON

The same, clinical clean office, but this time Clare is in the hot seat facing Westbay.

CLARE

He thinks I took a taxi to see the therapist.

WESTBAY

You're fine. If he shows, the desk officer knows to call me.

CLARE

Thank you.

(beat)

I'm... I'm here because I want to know why you're looking at my husband's phone records?

WESTBAY

We have to be thorough.

CLARE

You... you don't actually think--

WESTBAY

--In your statement, you said that Joe got up extra early that day.

CLARE

Yes.

WESTBAY

Why?

Intriguing as it is scary.

CLARE

He-- he said he was coming to work early, to catch up--

WESTBAY

--So... if he woke up early... to come to work early, then, he should have arrived--

CLARE

--Early...

Westbay whips up a finger to silence the spit balling--

Grabs his landline and hits a button--

WESTBAY

Put me through to the front gate.

INT. JOSEPH'S SUV, STATIONARY - AFTERNOON

Joseph is parked outside a 7/11 and has a cheap burner phone plugged into the SUV's cigarette lighter. Frantically thumbs in a number from a contact in his real phone.

Hits call... but--

JOSEPH

--Answer your fucking phone!

(beat)

Call me back - but not on my cell, there's a detective looking at our phone records, use this number-- where the fuck are you!?

EXT. THE HOOD - AFTERNOON

You won't find this area in any of L.A.'s tourist guides.

Daniel's Mustang is parked on a corner.

INT. DANIEL'S MUSTANG, STATIONARY - AFTERNOON

On the passenger seat, Daniel's phone vibrates with an UNKNOWN NUMBER. He lets it ring and turns away...

He is sitting in the drivers seat waiting for something...

Outside, a Latino BANGER known as SPIDER steps out of a crack den and limps over holding a brown paper bag.

Daniel lowers his window as Spider stoops down, his face an orgy of gold teeth and prison tats--

--Hands the bag to Daniel, who takes it.

SPIDER
Motherfucker hittin' up another Wu
Tang Financial?

Daniel dips his hand into the bag and slips out a shooter.

DANIEL
Nah. This time I'm using it.

SPIDER
Woah... ese gettin' trigger heavy!
(beat)
Lookin' for work?

DANIEL
No. Shits personal. Thanks man.

Daniel throws the bag onto the passenger seat and fires up the muscle.

INT. REPORT ROOM, POLICE DEPARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Westbay leads Clare through the precinct.

WESTBAY
We'll go out the back way, just to
be sure.

CLARE
Thanks--

--But as Clare weaves through the room, she SUDDENLY FREEZES in her tracks... her eyes drawn to something on someones desk.

Joseph's desk.

Westbay back tracks...

WESTBAY

Clare?

She is staring at the smiley face keychain like her life depends on it.

It's right there next to Joseph's computer.

WESTBAY

What is it? You've seen Joseph's desk before, right?

But the smiley face curse has her by the balls.

EXT - CONSTRUCTION SITE - AFTERNOON

Cranes and concrete. Joseph is anxiously standing next to a huge pallet of timber.

The site FOREMAN steps down from a makeshift office putting a helmet on and approaching Joseph--

FOREMAN

--He ain't here today. Pulled a sickie.

JOSEPH

Fuck!

FOREMAN

Is it urgent?

JOSEPH

Yeah. It's... a family thing. My bro'. You his super?

FOREMAN

Sadly...

JOSEPH

Mind calling him, I can't get through.

FOREMAN

Sure.

INT. DANIEL'S MUSTANG, MOVING - AFTERNOON

Daniel is driving - his cell starts RINGING and he picks up--

DANIEL

--This is Danny.

INTERCUT: With Joseph on the construction site.

JOSEPH

It's me you little prick! Answer your God damn phone, we got a problem!

DANIEL

Sorry, I can't talk now, got an appointment with your wife. Time's up, asshole.

CLICK.

The hairs on Joseph's neck stand.

INT. SECURITY BOOTH, POLICE DEPARTMENT - AFTERNOON

CLOSE ON BLACK AND WHITE MONITOR: As Joseph's SUV is driven under a barrier and into the L.A.P.D. parking facility.

Westbay is eyeing security tape footage.

TIME STAMP on the video reads: 8:04am

INT. MASTER BEDROOM, JOSEPH AND CLARE'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

SOUND of the front door SLAM and STEPS up the stairs.

Clare darts into the room and goes straight for her makeup table ripping a drawer open and smashing everything around, looking for something.

Whatever it is - it's a fruitless search.

She steps back at a loss.

INT. JOSEPH'S SPEEDING SUV - AFTERNOON

Joseph is driving like a Demon as his phone starts RINGING.

Slows down and answers--

JOSEPH

--Hey, hon--

--Bad news.

JOSEPH

He, what! Put him on!!

But his phone PINGS with a text message. He looks at it.

CLOSE ON: A selfie of Daniel outside Joseph's house.

Joseph SCREECHES to side of the road, this needs his full attention...

INTERCUT WITH DANIEL - as...

EXT. JOSEPH AND CLARE'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Clare hands him the phone--

DANIEL
 (into phone)
 --See that picture I just sent.
 That's me on your doorstep--

JOSEPH
 --Get the Hell away from her--

DANIEL
 --What, you can make a house call
 but I can't?
 (beat)
 All I gotta do is hold my phone up,
 play that voicemail, and your ass
 is grass--

JOSEPH
 --Who the fuck do you think you
 are!?

DANIEL
 I'm the guy who knows your dirty
 little secret.

Joseph tenses.

DANIEL
 I want my money. All fifty.

Joseph's anger smolders like the heat in a furnace.

Needs to unfuck this, immediately--

JOSEPH
 --Tomorrow! I need a day to get it
 without raising eyebrows. There's
 a coffee shop at 3rd and La Brea,
 be there in twenty minutes and
 we'll talk.

Joseph hangs up. Jams the heels of his hands into his eyes trying to keep his sanity...

EXT. ROASTERS COFFEE - EVENING

Joseph hoofs it to an open air table, Daniel already sitting, cool as shit.

JOSEPH

You went to my fucking house--

DANIEL

--Not my problem, bro--

--Joseph's going to lose blood biting through his tongue--

--Pulls a chair out and sits--

JOSEPH

--But wanna know what is, bro?
She knows something... cos the
fucking detectives are talking.

DANIEL

I don't give a wet, rat's ass--

JOSEPH

--I don't think you understand.

(beat)

I'm not buying your '*I-can-handle-being-locked-up-bullshit*', not from a father of two - with another on the way. You really don't wanna get sent down now, but if Clare figures this shit out and I get busted, they're gonna wanna know where Nate... Wayne, whatever the fuck he went by, came from. And even if I don't talk, who you think they gonna come shake down first?

(beat)

Enjoy kissing your kids through glass for the next hundred years!

Daniel's face sinks, but Joseph is one step ahead.

JOSEPH

Look. I know what to do.

Takes a breath. A big one.

JOSEPH

Have... have you got a gun?

DANIEL
A gun? Gonna ice her yourself?
How's that gonna look, Einstein?

JOSEPH
Answer the question?

One perfectly timed question... considering Daniel's last purchase.

DANIEL
Yes, I've got a heater.

JOSEPH
Is it registered?

DANIEL
I'm a convicted felon, dumbass.

Joseph sits back, uneasy - but ready to spill...

JOSEPH
Clare and I... have been going to therapy.
(beat)
Sometimes... victims of violent crime are known to spiral into depression... and... end their lives-- themselves. Can't cope... with everything that's happened.

DANIEL
Survived a tumor and then shot herself?

JOSEPH
It's a tragedy.

Joseph's callus disregard is enough to send chills through every nerve in Daniel's body.

DANIEL
It's truly amazing to me that when we were kids-- no one in the family ever noticed that I was the one who built the sandcastles and you were the one who knocked 'em down, yet--

Joseph tunes into him with extra focus--

DANIEL
--You're the one with the badge. Mom and pop should have just called you, 'Blackheart'.

JOSEPH

There's a space in Hell for both of us, you ain't exactly Goldilocks.

(beat)

I gotta be quick with Clare, she's asking questions she was never supposed to be asking.

(beat)

I'll text you a place tomorrow and I'll have your dough. All fifty. Make sure you bring the steel.

Now they're finally talking.

EXT. LOS ANGELES SKYLINE - MORNING

Sirens, the heartbeat of this city.

INT. KITCHEN - JOSEPH AND CLARE'S HOUSE - MORNING

A pancake SIZZLES on a grill. Joseph walks in to find Clare at the stove. She faces him.

CLARE

Your favorite breakfast. Coffee and blueberry pancakes.

He smiles.

JOSEPH

They put me back on the street. Captain called to let me know.

Clare steps in for a hug.

CLARE

I'm happy... but be careful. I don't know what I'd do if anything happened to you.

He looks her right in the blues--

JOSEPH

--Don't worry. Nothing's gonna happen to me.

Her eyes are doing the tango - but his are hollow.

INT. POLICE PATROL UNIT, MOVING - AFTERNOON

Joseph is back in the driver's seat, Alvarez next to him.

ALVAREZ
How does it feel, partner?

JOSEPH
How do you think? Better than
punching up tickets all day.

But Alvarez drags something up, deep down from her depths.

ALVAREZ
Joe-- I need to say something...
(beat)
Rumors are flying around...

He senses her mood change.

ALVAREZ
That-- you know more about your
situation than you're letting on.

The look on Joseph's face compels her to keep going...

ALVAREZ
The dash-cam thing? Driving so
fast? I saw you leave with my own
eyes, you were acting like she was
having a fucking heart attack--

JOSEPH
--What the fuck, I heard Clare
scream, I explained this.

ALVAREZ
There's something else...

Joseph pulls into a parking lot and switches the car off--

ALVAREZ
--I saw Clare at the station
yesterday. Said hi, but-- she
asked me not to mention I'd seen
her. She was with Westbay. Why
would she say that to me?

He genuinely can't answer. A real sucker punch.

ALVAREZ

Look, when shit hit the fan after the Juno pursuit, you had my back, I'm just doing the same, but something's fucking weird here...

Joseph shakes his head. Doesn't even have to pretend to be confused here, because he is.

JOSEPH

Clare's been-- acting scared and confused, since it happened. Talks about death a lot. I don't know, but she probably just came in looking for reassurance and didn't want me to know.

Alvarez isn't convinced. She is tough as nails...

JOSEPH

Thanks for telling me. I gotta run to the bank...

He gets out and heads to a Wells Fargo...

Alvarez watches him, then suddenly cranes her neck downward, pulling her body cam up toward her face--

ALVAREZ

--You were right, he's fuckin' lying.

INT. DETECTIVE WESTBAY'S OFFICE, POLICE DEPARTMENT - EVENING

Westbay is sitting at his desk looking at his computer.

CLOSE ON SCREEN: Alvarez' body cam recording--

JOSEPH ON THE VIDEO

--Thanks for telling me. I gotta run to the bank.

Joseph gets out and Alvarez' face fills the FRAME;

ALVAREZ

You were right, he's fuckin' lying.

Westbay pauses the video and faces Alvarez who is sitting opposite him.

WESTBAY

Thank you, Mary. I wanted to see how he'd react.

INT. REPORT ROOM, POLICE DEPARTMENT - EVENING

Joseph, wearing civilian clothes, urgently crosses to his desk dumping a backpack down.

Takes a seat, opens the backpack and stuffs his hand inside inspecting the contents of a few, fat envelopes.

CASH

Wads of cash.

Suddenly diverts his attention as a figure looms at his desk--

WESTBAY

--Joe?

Joseph quickly zips the backpack up as Westbay invites himself to sit down.

JOSEPH

Sorry, I actually gotta be somewhe--

WESTBAY

--This won't take a minute.

Westbay crosses his legs - he's here to stay.

A duel of the eyes, both men unsure what the other actually knows...

WESTBAY

On the day of Clare's assault, you left the house early, to come to work early, right?

JOSEPH

Yeah. I was drowning in paperwork.

WESTBAY

Get everything done?

Joseph tightens at the bizarre question...

WESTBAY

I think you just lied to me. And I think you lied to Clare.

Joseph's blood runs cold.

WESTBAY

You didn't come to work early.

(beat)

(MORE)

WESTBAY (cont'd)

I checked the video over the parking facility. You arrived here at your usual time. 8.04am to be exact...

Joseph searches for an angle but this is a ball buster--

WESTBAY

--Your cellphone GPS puts you at Canyon Park. What were you doing there so early--

JOSEPH

--Feeding the ducks!

He lurches forward--

JOSEPH

--What... you think I'm involved!? That I hired some fuck-nut to kill my wife, but then went home and killed him myself--

WESTBAY

--You lied to your wife. You left for work early but went to Canyon Park, what were you doing there?

Joseph slumps back in his chair and loses the bravado...

JOSEPH

Okay. You were right, our marriage is in trouble. I was-- with a women. I've been seeing someone.

Westbay soaks it up, the pieces seemingly fitting together now.

WESTBAY

Her name?

JOSEPH

Isobel. Isobel Grace.

(beat)

You can't tell Clare... she'll... I don't know what she'll do...

Westbay uncrosses his legs and gets to his feet slipping his phone out.

WESTBAY

I need Isobel's number.

Joseph knows. Grabs his phone and pecks the screen--

JOSEPH
--323 327 5244.

Westbay punches it in and hits call, his eyes never leaving Joseph's--

WESTBAY
--Hi, is this Isobel Grace?
(beat)
Sorry, this is Detective Westbay,
West L.A. division, I was calling
to verify your name and number.
Would you mind if I called you back
shortly to explain this, it's
regarding your relationship with
Joseph Cosgrove.
(beat)
Many thanks, I'll be in touch.

He hangs up.

WESTBAY
I like Clare and I feel like an
asshole saying it, but this is a
good thing, Joe.

Joseph nods but Westbay splits, not bothering for a reply.

Alone, Joseph urgently whips a drawer open and pulls out the
cruise line tickets--

EXT. POLICE DEPARTMENT - NIGHT

Joseph pacing while on his cell phone, cruise tickets in his
other hand--

JOSEPH
(into phone)
--Okay, so what's the earliest
availability if I upgraded?
(beat)
I'll think about it, thank you.

He hangs up and grabs the backpack at his feet.

EXT. BILLY BOB'S BURGER BAR - NIGHT

A BUM with junkie eyes is hunched against a wall.

BUM
Spare change?

Joseph, holding a tray of food, shuffles past him to a table.

Daniel is sitting picking at some onion rings. Joseph plunks down opposite.

DANIEL
You're late.

JOSEPH
I was getting your money.

Joseph places an extra food bag onto Daniel's tray - only it isn't french fries in there.

Daniel returns the gesture by dumping a heavier bag onto Joseph's tray.

DANIEL
Slugs are loose.

Joseph takes a bite out of his burger.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT - LATER

Alone, Daniel saunters towards his car, but as he gets closer he notices the front tire is flat.

DANIEL
Mother...

INT. JOSEPH'S SUV, MOVING - NIGHT

Joseph is driving, heavy fast food bag on the passenger seat.

EXT. DANIEL'S SHITTY HOUSE - NIGHT

Daniel rolls up and parks. Gets out and kick-checks his newly inflated tire. Looks good.

INT. LIVING ROOM, DANIEL'S SHITTY HOUSE - NIGHT

Daniel hustles through the back door...

DANIEL
Brit'!

But suddenly, a muffled gunshot, TUNK, and a bullet SLAMS into his back knocking him to the floor--

--Joseph swaggers through the doorway holding a cushion over the gun, heart beating like a jack hammer.

Daniel GASPS like a beached carp--

DANIEL

--You were late... because you were
fucking up my tire...

Joseph advances, cushion still over the gun.

DANIEL

B--Brit'... what about Brit'...

JOSEPH

Nate didn't owe you money. You're
nothin' but a cheap... fuckin'...
opportunist...

Daniel sputters, desperately trying to say something...

DANIEL

Not, me. S-- sh... she... knows...

But Joseph leans closer, feeling really fucking superior...

JOSEPH

You think you can just threaten me?
You're nothing but a lowlife bottom
feeder.

(beat)

I should'a just dealt with all this
myself--

DANIEL

Y--you can't kill me, you're-- my--
big b-- bro'--

JOSEPH

--Should have thought about that--

--Joseph fires again, TUNK, the slug blasting into Daniel's chest, WUMP!

Daniel GROANS... TENSES... and then he is dead.

Joseph drops the cushion.

Kneels, taking the 50k out of Daniel's jacket and stuffing it into his own.

Pads Daniel's other pockets and finds his cell phone, BUT--

--Also finds -- A SECOND CELL PHONE. Weird.

Checks the first phone, the one he recognizes as Daniels:

CLOSE ON PHONE: Hits the VOICEMAIL menu, scans through it and deletes his own incriminating message.

But as he gazes at the second phone -- his heart stops.

An unread text--

--FROM A NAME SAVED AS - CLARE...

Joseph is GUT STRUCK.

SHOCKED...

Taps the screen to bring up the text window.

CLARE// DID U GET THE \$50k?

Joseph - stunned...

His world spinning.

Scrolls backward - to the previous SENT MESSAGE...

DANIEL// HE PLANNING TO KILL YOU. ASKED FOR GUN.

And her answer--

CLARE// PLAY ALONG. BOUGHT GUN TO PROTECT MYSELF. GET \$\$

Disbelief.

Frantically scrolls back to the very beginning--

CLARE// BIG PROBLEM. JOE KILLED UR GUY. NEED 2 TALK.

Joseph's mouth runs dry. Scrolls forward...

CLARE// COME TO HOSPITAL, PRESSURE HIM. HIDING \$\$\$, NEEDS TO PAY.

Joseph trying vainly to calm himself.

But more --

DANIEL// HE THREATENED MY FUCKING KID!!!

Joseph can't take it. Scrolls...

CLARE// LEAVE HOUSE. LEAVE WORK. COPS COMING.

Then...

CLARE// HE KNOWS SOMETHING. HAS KEY YOU GAVE ME.

Joseph lowers the phone. She played him.

Clare and Daniel together.

The pain feels like losing a limb.

He slips something out of his pocket. *The keychain with the smiley face.* It's clearer now.

He pulls up her last text; DID YOU GET THE \$50k?

Types in a reply as if it's from Daniel...

DANIEL// Y E S.

Hits send. A few seconds later it buzzes back;

CLARE// GOOD. BRING ME HALF.

Joseph grips the phone in a fist - face uglier than the devil's asshole.

EXT. BILLY BOB'S BURGER BAR - NIGHT

Joseph steps out of the burger joint with two food bags.

Turns to the Bum and hands him one.

JOSEPH
Merry Christmas.

BUM
Thanks, man.

Joseph heads away as the Bum opens the bag and looks inside.

Some cash -- a gun, and Daniel's original cell phone.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM, COUNTY HOSPITAL - NIGHT

A RECEPTION NURSE frantically shakes her head at Britney, who is standing at the front desk crying while cradling her SCREAMING daughter--

RECEPTION NURSE
--I'm sorry, there's no record of
your husband here--

BRITNEY

--God, damn-it!! I got a call from a cop telling saying my husband was in a car crash and I needed to get my ass here--

RECEPTION NURSE

--I'm sorry, are you sure you have the right hospital?

INT. HALLWAY, JOSEPH AND CLARE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Joseph unlocks the front door and steps inside holding a BILLY BOB'S BURGER BAG.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Joseph and Clare at the table, eating -- two people playing a game of human chess...

JOSEPH

I think Dan got himself into some more shit...

Clare's breath catches in her throat but she rolls with it--

CLARE

--Doesn't surprise me.

JOSEPH

Asked me for a hundred grand.

CLARE

What!?

Her surprise at the amount is actually bona fide--

JOSEPH

--That's what I said.

(toying)

Idiot got some loans from the wrong people again.

CLARE

He needs to be careful or he's gonna get himself killed.

Joseph throws her a faint smirk. *Well played.*

They eat in silence for a minute more, both keeping their guard up...

JOSEPH
 You thought about adopting anymore?
 Thought about a timeline?

CLARE
 Yes-- I mean... no. Not-- exactly.

Urgently needs to get her mind off Daniel--

CLARE
 --Maybe... sometime... next year.

JOSEPH
 A boy or a girl?

CLARE
 I don't know. Maybe... a girl?

She smiles sweetly at him.

He nods and bites into his burger knowing full well his previous words have rocked her.

EXT. GRACE HOUSEHOLD - CULVER CITY AREA - NIGHT

Westbay KNOCKS on a door.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Westbay is sitting at a breakfast bar as a woman in her 40's, ISOBEL GRACE, sets down a couple of iced teas.

WESTBAY
 Appreciate you seeing me so late.

ISOBEL
 Shoot. But I-- want to make sure this stays between us. I'm... married...

WESTBAY
 You have my word.
 (beat)
 Firstly, forgive my abruptness, but how long has your affair with Joseph been going on for?

Isobel doesn't even get a chance to sit down--

ISOBEL
 --Been going on for?
 (beat)
 (MORE)

ISOBEL (cont'd)
 It's finished. A long time ago.
 Maybe... ten years...

Westbay - as confused as a bee trying to get nectar from the sun.

 WESTBAY
 You-- you finished ten years ago?

 ISOBEL
 Haven't seen him since.

Westbay suddenly springs to his feet and heads towards the door.

 WESTBAY
 Sorry, there's been a
 misunderstanding...

The game is well and truly up.

INT. BATHROOM, JOSEPH AND CLARE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Joseph is brushing his teeth. Clare walks past the doorway in her pajamas.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Clare switches the light on.

Quickly taps a button on the coffee maker, grabs a mug.

Hangs for a moment, making sure the coast is clear. Then--

-- Goes for a cupboard under the sink. Opens the door and rummages around grabbing something from the back.

Straightens up holding a cell phone and switches it on.

Urgently types a message out...

But as she hits SEND --

-- AN INCOMING TEXT ALERT pings from the other side of the room--

--AND--

--Joseph steps out of the shadows in his boxers/T-shirt.

For an extensive minute he savors the moment-- Clare almost choking on surprise.

Then he--

--Hold's up DANIEL'S SECOND CELL PHONE.

Clare's heart skips a beat.

He reads the text she sent--

JOSEPH

*--100k? We agreed 50 you dumb
cunt, you better not be playing me!*

He lowers the phone and gives her a look reserved especially for her.

JOSEPH

He didn't ask me for 100k.
(beat)
I just needed to be sure of this.

CLARE

He told me what you did... you
fucking coward!

JOSEPH

--Yeah, but... after he told you,
you didn't go to the cops, did you,
you greedy bitch...
(beat)
You played them against me...

He slips the smiley face keychain out of his pocket inching towards her--

JOSEPH

--You couldn't possibly have
this... because I gave it to Nate,
unless... he gave it back to you.

As Joseph unravels her plan she eyes a KNIFE BLOCK...

JOSEPH

You just opened the door and let
him right in...
(beat)
I die, you split my brother's
shares--

CLARE

--You hired a hitman to kill me--

--But Joseph wags a curious finger--

JOSEPH

--Didn't expect me to kill Nate though... so you started punishing me, through Dan--

CLARE

--Dan saved my life, you tried to take it--

JOSEPH

All this time...

CLARE

YOU DID THIS, JOE! YOU!!

(beat)

You deceived me! I'm just sorry I survived the surgery, guess you hoped it'd do the job for you--

--Joseph's silence betrays him worse than any comeback.

CLARE

I married you because I loved you. I was committed, I wanted a baby with you, and what, you were going to kill me... over some fucking money!!

The rage flows through her like lava...

CLARE

You're such a failure, Joe. You fucked up your first marriage, then you got your brother locked up and then you fucked 'us' up.

Joseph's face starting to exude enough fury to feed a football team with...

CLARE

You'll never be half the man your father is...

(beat)

Infact, you're not even a man you--

--He SUDDENLY SNAPS but she whips the coffee pot up and throws boiling water into his eyes--

Joseph RAGES as--

--Clare throws the entire pot at him SMASHING it against a wall--

As Joseph claws at his eyes Clare sprints through the living room and--

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

--To the bottom of the stairs where she LEAPS up them two at a time, Joseph stumbling up behind her wiping his eyes...

INT. DETECTIVE WESTBAY'S SQUAD CAR, SPEEDING - NIGHT

Westbay weaving and tailgating, mobile siren blazing, a portable radio in his hand--

WESTBAY

I need a marked escort to meet me
at 4811 Hesby street in connection
with the attempted murder of Clare
Cosgrove, suspect one, Joseph, R
Cosgrove, active L.A.P.D., possibly
armed and dangerous...

INT. MASTER BEDROOM, JOSEPH AND CLARE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Clare bolts past the bed and drops to her knees at a set of drawers, ripping the bottom one open and rummaging until her desperate fingers find--

--A HANDGUN.

She jumps to her feet... *AND THEN --*

IT HAPPENS...

Her face hardens and she transforms into the woman Joseph has created...

We've never seen this Clare before. Gone is the frail little girl who needed her husband to help her through every day...

And in her place, a confident, determined, GUNHAND...

She raises the steel and points it at the bedroom doorway as Joseph stumbles in gripping a kitchen knife...

He FREEZES at the sight of her shooter--

--She thumbs the hammer back, CLICK...

Not an ounce of fear here - Joseph is a dead man.

JOSEPH

I wondered why you didn't run out the front door. Gotta kill me now, to hide your little scheme.

CLARE

Hope you enjoyed the '*scared little wife act*'. I can't decide if the therapy was my favorite part or giving you the bronze star...

He wavers as she holds him in her line of sight...

CLARE

I already knew the tumor was benign that day-- I just needed you to come home and fuckin' die.

(beat)

I cut my own head and screamed you idiot.

He wants to punch her through the wall but her gaze drops to the knife in his hand.

CLARE

Tell me something though. How would you have explained the knife?

JOSEPH

Self defense. You went crazy and attacked me with it.

(beat)

I've already set you up as a looney tune, it would've been believable.

She scoffs...

JOSEPH

How you gonna explain the gun?

CLARE

Self defense. For this exact moment. I bought and registered it, no further explanation needed.

JOSEPH

I know you bought it, I read your text. Guess you just gotta wrap this thing up then.

CLARE

Guess so. Just another one of those, 'Unfortunate things' I suppose...

Joseph sneers, unsure she'll actually go through with it, but-

CLARE
--Goodbye Joseph.

And without further delay, she pulls the trigger--

--CLICK.

Again... CLICK...

CLICK...

CLICK...

Joseph slowly puts a hand into his pocket and pulls out a handful of slugs--

--Holds them up and lets them rain down onto the carpet one by one...

JOSEPH
I said... *I read your text.* Should
have found a better hiding place.

Clare's body goes numb -- but suddenly--

Joseph CHARGES her...

She SCREAMS throwing the Glock at him, but--

--He sidesteps and punches her in the face, KWAP--

She lumbers backward - but just as she regains herself--

--SPLUT... the SQUELCH of steel piercing meat...

Clare GURGLES... and looks down-- eyes as wide as dinner plates--

--The kitchen knife is sticking out of her stomach, Joseph's fist still around the handle.

He retracts it and she crumples...

Joseph towers over her - blood seeping out of her stomach...

She GROANS, curling into the fetal position.

Joseph drops the knife.

CLARE'S POV -- The room is blurry, she can't focus--

--FOOTSTEPS... as Joseph pads out of the room...

She WAILS... that burning sensation of warm blood...

Manages to straighten out and reaches for the knife but far too weak to use it...

EXT. FREEWAY - NIGHT

The mechanical ROAR of an engine as the tires of Detective Westbay's squad car rip past at 100 mph...

INT. MASTER BEDROOM, JOSEPH AND CLARE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Joseph steps back inside holding a roll of duct tape.

Clare is still laying on the ground, the knife in front of her--

--Joseph kneels to her while she WEEPS--

JOSEPH

--Time for this story to end.

(beat)

Don't worry, I got a better one.

Frightfully calculated...

JOSEPH

Woman suffering depression after violent attack goes missing.

(beat)

Local police and distraught husband find body at bottom of cliff with self inflicted stab wound...

Clare WIMPERS and limply fights him as he grabs her blood covered wrists and duct tapes them together--

CLARE

--Please... pl-- please...

JOSEPH

Say hello to my shitty brothers.
Tell Rick he should check his diving equipment more carefully next time he wants to fuck with me.

Clare's face reads dilemma for a second-- and then HORROR as she realizes, but--

--Joseph grabs a fresh strip of tape and SLAPS it over her mouth.

Then coils it down her blood soaked body wrapping tape all the way around her chest -- pinning her arms to her sides.

Tapes her ankles together.

With her body secure, he gets to his feet and heads out.

INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

Joseph makes for a roll of old bedroom carpet.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Joseph dumps the old carpet down and unrolls it revealing the dried blood stain from Clare's fake head wound.

Grabs her ankles and drags her onto the flat of the carpet taking a knee as she struggles.

JOSEPH

You know... when Emma divorced me,
I even had to pay her fuckin'
attorney fees. Believe that!?

Clare WHINES something--

JOSEPH

--Why can't I have the woman back
who didn't want kids?

He grabs the edge of the carpet but looms over her with a breathtaking lack of remorse.

JOSEPH

You. Deceived. Me.

And with that, he rolls the carpet all the way over her and wraps her inside.

Grabs the duct tape and starts winding it around the carpet roll, sheathing her, but--

--As he gets to his feet -- BANGING from downstairs -- on the front door -- followed by a MALE VOICE--

VOICE (O.S.)

--OPEN UP!

Joseph is startled.

More DOOR BANGING and a VOICE in the unmistakable style of--

--Law enforcement.

VOICE (O.S.)
OPEN UP!

Joseph peers out of a window: A YELLOW FLASHING SIREN

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Joseph washes blood off his hands, throws a clean shirt on...

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Joseph pads down the stairs to the front door, unlocks it and opens up to face a NEIGHBORHOOD PATROL OFFICER.

JOSEPH
Hey.

The Patrol Officer has a hand on his gun holster.

PATROL OFFICER
Sir, I'm with A.D.F. Security, I need you to identify yourself.

JOSEPH
Joseph Cosgrove, I live here.

PATROL OFFICER
Is there a problem at this location?

JOSEPH
Not at all. Why?

PATROL OFFICER
I'm gonna need to see some I.D.

JOSEPH
Sure.

INT. CARPET ROLL - SAME

If only Clare could SCREAM louder, her stab wound sapping her strength.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Joseph flashes his badge to the Patrol Officer.

JOSEPH

I'm a cop. What's this about?

PATROL OFFICER

Got a code 4 from this location.
When someone cuts the alarm cable.
You got a secondary service that
sends a silent alert back to HQ.

Joseph stunts his surprise.

JOSEPH

Right. Must be faulty though.
Everything's good here.

PATROL OFFICER

Mind if I take a quick look around?

Joseph's stomach drops...

JOSEPH

Feel... feel free--

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The Patrol Officer skirts through the room. Seems in order.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

The Patrol Officer edges through, Joseph behind.

Broken coffee pot.

JOSEPH

I ugh... burnt myself.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

The Patrol Officer steps back into the hall with Joseph.

PATROL OFFICER

Can I take a look upstairs?

JOSEPH

Is that really necessary?

PATROL OFFICER
It's necessary.

The Patrol Officer's hand hovers around his gun hip.

JOSEPH
Be my guest.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT

The Patrol Officer hits a light and glances around.

No sign of disturbance.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

The light is already on.

The Patrol Officer walks in to find blood stains and the rolled up carpet -

--WITH A PERSON MOVING INSIDE IT--

PATROL OFFICER
--What the...

But before he can act, Joseph already has the kitchen knife in his hand and PLUNGES it into the Patrol Officer's back--

--SPLUT-- the Patrol Officer SCREAMS AND GURGLES-- collapsing with a THUMP!

His hands clench and his body spasms. Exhales for the last time...

Clare WAILS through the carpet--

Joseph leans down to some drawers, opens one and frantically pulls some clothes out - but as he does--

-- He spots something along the bottom of the wall.

A line of electrical cord has been cut - the alarm cable.

JOSEPH
Clever girl.

INT. DETECTIVE WESTBAY'S SQUAD CAR, SPEEDING - NIGHT

Vehicles clear a path as Westbay SCREECHES off the freeway closing in on Joseph's house...

INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

Joseph clicks the light on again. His boxers now replaced by jeans and shoes. Goes for the remaining roll of old carpet.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Joseph is wrapping duct tape around a second roll of carpet.

Eyes Clare's roll, a faint MOANING from inside.

He gets to his feet and reaches into a drawer removing a pair of leather gloves. Slips them on and heads out of the room...

FOOTSTEPS down the stairs. Clare wriggles harder.

Manages to push her head out of the top of the carpet roll.

GASPS and rolls herself over, wriggling and writhing in agony.

As she struggles, she KNOCKS a bedside table, CLUNK... and Scott's Bronze Star slips off landing next to her face.

It's shaped like a starfish with five sharp points.

A lifeline. Struggles to push her hands up past her face--

--Forces her hands out of the top of the carpet, wrists still bloody and bound, but grabs the Bronze Star.

Angles the tip of the star's sharp point onto the duct tape around her wrists, starts pushing it through the flimsy tape.

Makes a hole and starts hacking at the tape, splitting it.

Wriggles out of the carpet roll even further -- ONLY TO SEE--

The other carpet roll beside her...

EXT. DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Joseph is sitting in the Security Patrol Car.

Reverses it up the driveway - as close to the house as he can and pops the trunk open.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Joseph steps into the room, surveys the duct taped carpets.

Clare is back inside her carpet roll, but is GROANING.

Joseph steps up to her and kneels--

--Takes her roll into both arms... and then lifts...

Clare SCREAMS through tape but Joseph heads towards the door.

Angles the carpet sideways to get through the doorway, but as he steps through --

-- a gunshot -- BLAM!

Joseph wobbles.

A strange moment.

Looks down to find a smoking hole in the side of the carpet.

But even more disturbing -- a blood stain on his shirt.

Glances back to the bed - to the SECOND CARPET ROLL.

The Patrol Officer. He was armed.

Panic.

Joseph slowly turns to the stairs. A shaky step, then--

--He TUMBLES down, still with Clare's carpet roll.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Joseph and the carpet land at the bottom with a THUD!

Scrapes himself upright and leans against a wall - his breathing heavy and labored.

Clare wriggles herself out of the roll - wrists free of the duct tape, one hand clutching the PATROL OFFICER'S GUN, other plugging her stomach wound--

Rips the tape off, her mouth frantically filling her lungs with air --

Composes herself as best she can...

Talking equals pain, but she is going to say this if it's the last thing she says--

CLARE

--I-- I got a new story.

(beat)

(MORE)

CLARE (cont'd)

*"Wife exposes scheming husband.
Kills him in self defense after he
murders security patrol".*

Joseph struggles as his lungs fill with blood.

Brazen, Clare crawls to him and holds directly at eye level.

CLARE

Wanna know the kicker?

(beat)

They're-- all so pre-occupied with
why you were up so early that
morning, they're not even asking
about why I was up so early.

(beat)

It was me who couldn't sleep,
because I knew-- what was really
coming...

Joseph - with that sinking feeling - a thousand pound canon ball around his ankle.

Clare carefully leans forward and raises a bloody palm over his mouth--

Her face hardens, but her voice a gentle whisper now--

CLARE

--Happy anniversary, Joseph...

Bone chilling as she lightly kisses him on the cheek, then--

--Pinches his nose between finger and thumb.

Joseph convulses... legs kicking...

Lungs burning - eyes threatening to burst from sockets...

Pressure in his throat as she presses her hand over his lips even harder--

He can hear his own heartbeat--

--Until --

-- His head sags. And droops.

Dead.

Clare takes her hands away... her blood staining his face.

CLARE

Sweet dreams.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Clare staggers in and opens the microwave, putting Daniel's cell inside -- along with her own. *Nukes the evidence--*

--And then...

Collapses.

EXT. JOSEPH AND CLARE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Westbay's Lincoln pounces onto the driveway followed by an escort of black and whites...

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Clare is out cold.

SOUND of the front door being SMASHED in...

Cops pour into the house like an army of ants...

Gun drawn, Westbay finds Clare on the floor and drops to her.

Gets on the horn as more feet step into FRAME, more cops kneeling at Clare's body...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. AMBULANCE - STATIONARY - NIGHT

Clare is conscious and laying in the back on a stretcher, oxygen mask over her face.

Westbay regards her from the sidelines. They share a moment.

But when the PARAMEDICS close the doors and she is alone--

--Satisfied eyes.

A goal fulfilled.

THE END