FADE IN:

EXT. TEXAS HIGHWAY - DUSK

An orange-tinted full moon just breaking the horizon above a desolate, two-lane Texas highway.

A silver, luxury sedan is the only car on the road.

INT. LUXURY SEDAN (TRAVELLING) - DUSK

Petite, perfectly manicured, female hands grip the steering wheel - ten and two.

FEMALE REPORTER (V.O.)
(through car radio)

...Barring any intervention by the Governor, Kimberly Mansfield will be executed at midnight, tonight - just six hours from now. Mansfield was convicted of the murder of William Peterson, an investment banker from the Dallas-Fort Worth area in 2012. Mansfield, William’s mistress at the time, shot him to death in the driveway of his estate. William’s wife was by his side at the time of the shooting --

The female hand presses the RADIO OFF button.

A moment passes - silence.

Then WEEPING.

EXT. PRISON COMPLEX - DUSK

An expansive array of fortified brick buildings encircled by a barbed-wire security fence.

High powered lights from security towers FLASH on throwing light on the barren landscape surrounding the complex.

SUPER: MOUNTAIN VIEW PRISON - GATESVILLE, TEXAS

The Luxury Sedan pulls up to a GUARD'S BOOTH adjacent to the security gate.

The gate opens. The sedan enters the complex.

INT. PRISONER CORRIDOR - NIGHT

 Sterile, brick walls with white faded paint.
A dysfunctional fluorescent light flickers creating an eerie glow. Beneath that light, a middle-aged woman sits on a metal bench bolted to the floor - waiting.

Her clothes are expensive and perfectly tailored. She clasps a Louis Vuitton purse in one hand as she nervously twists a bead on a white pearl necklace with her other hand. This is JOAN PETERSON (45).

A female, STAFFER approaches - shakes her head.

STAFFER
Sorry. The answer is still no.

Joan removes a small notepad and a pen from her purse. She writes something, folds the note and hands it to the Staffer.

JOAN
Please.

The Staffer rolls her eyes, takes the note and walks away.

INT. PRISON/DEATH ROW CELL BLOCK - NIGHT

A female CUSTODY OFFICER (40), obese, lumbers down the corridor past several empty cells. The echo of her heavy footsteps is the only sound. She arrives at the last CELL.

And wraps her meaty hands around two of the metal bars. She takes a deep breath, pathetically exhausted by the short twenty foot walk.

She peers in at a FEMALE PRISONER prisoner dressed in a white prison jumpsuit sitting on a cot in the corner of the cell. Her head is bowed as she stares at the concrete floor.

CUSTODY OFFICER
She’s still here.

No response.

CUSTODY OFFICER
Hey!

The prisoner looks up. Despite her disheveled hair and the dark circles under her sleep deprived eyes, it’s easy to tell that this was an attractive woman. She is KIMBERLY, (35).

KIMBERLY
I told you. I don't want to see her.
CUSTODY OFFICER
Look, sister, I don’t give a good shit whether you want to or not.

The Custody Officer turns her head and looks at a large clock affixed above the cell block exit door. The time: “11:00.”

CUSTODY OFFICER
You’re dead in an hour anyway.

The Custody Officer removes a folded note from her pocket. Tosses it into the cell.

CUSTODY OFFICER
She wanted to give you that.

Kimberly stares at the folded piece of paper on the concrete floor as the Custody Officer lumbers away.

She rises, walks over and picks up the note. It reads: “Please see me. I’ll make sure your son is provided for.”

INT. PRISONER VISITING STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Joan sits on a metal stool staring through a fortified glass window into a small, vacant cage-like room.

A CLANK signals that a metal door is opening. Joan takes a deep breath – shakes her hands by her side in an effort to calm her nerves.

The Custody Officer escorts Kimberly, arms cuffed behind her back, into the caged room.

CUSTODY OFFICER
Twenty minutes – max.

Kimberly glowers at Joan through the fortified glass window.

KIMBERLY
It won’t be that long.

CUSTODY OFFICER
(as she removes cuffs)
Whatever.

The Custody Officer points at a BLACK CALL BUTTON embedded in the wall by the fortified glass window.

CUSTODY OFFICER
Just hit the buzzer when you’re done.

The Custody Officer exits. Kimberly stands in place – rigid.
JOAN
(mouthing)
Please.

Kimberly bites her lower lip - thinks. Finally, she walks towards the glass window and takes a seat.

JOAN
Thank you. I know that it’s a difficult time.

KIMBERLY
(terse)
Why would you take care of my son?

JOAN
I’ve, um - established a trust that will --

KIMBERLY
Why?!

JOAN
Because he is William’s son, too.

KIMBERLY
Then why not just do it? Why this?
(beat)
You came to watch me die.

Kimberly reaches to press the black call button.

JOAN
No - no. I wouldn’t do that. I couldn’t. Please - please, give me a moment.
(deep breath)
You’re the only person left who can give me an answer.

KIMBERLY
To what question?

JOAN
How much of my life was a lie?

The question hangs there. Kimberly looks away for a moment. Then directly back at Joan’s eyes.

KIMBERLY
All of it. Every minute.

Joan’s face reddens, her eyes grow moist with tears.
KIMBERLY
Not the answer you were looking for?

Joan, head down, fumbles through her purse for a tissue.

JOAN
I’m sorry. I probably shouldn’t have come. My daughter told me that this was a mistake.

KIMBERLY
Melanie.

Joan freezes - then looks up.

KIMBERLY
Of course I know her name. I know that she finished in the top ten percent on her SATS. I know that she wants to be a Doctor one day. I know that she got engaged and then changed her mind. I know that -

JOAN
Stop!

KIMBERLY
You didn’t really think that all we did was just fuck a few times - that there was nothing more to it?

JOAN
I don’t know what to think. How could I? That’s why I’m here.

KIMBERLY
We did more than just fuck.
(leaning forward)
We talked, we had dinners, saw shows. We even took vacations.
(leaning back)
You know - his business trips.

JOAN
How long did it go on?

Kimberly drags her fingers through her hair, closes her eyes - she’s exhausted.

KIMBERLY
God, you really want to do this?
JOAN

How long?

KIMBERLY

Five years.

Joan cups her hand over her mouth.

JOAN

Did he start it or...?

KIMBERLY

Is it really ever any other way?

JOAN

I was just hoping that...hoping that he --

KIMBERLY

Just had a moment of weakness?

Joan nods.

KIMBERLY

I worked at a bar by his office. Sometimes he came there for lunch. Sometimes for a quick drink after work. The thought of sleeping with him didn’t cross my mind at first. Too old. Too married. I never intended to be with him.

JOAN

What changed? Was it the money?

KIMBERLY

Would that somehow make it easier for you?

JOAN

I don’t know. Perhaps.

KIMBERLY

It wasn’t the money. He was charming. He was smart. He made me laugh. Made me feel alive -- engaged. You know that. You know how addicting he was.

JOAN

I did.
KIMBERLY
So, he finally wore me down. But it was only going to be one night.

JOAN
Until?

Kimberly looks away - stares off at nothing - remembering.

KIMBERLY
Until it wasn’t.

Kimberly points at the pearl necklace on Joan’s neck.

KIMBERLY
You know, he bought me a set exactly like those.

Joan clutches her hand around her necklace - defensive.

JOAN
That’s impossible.

KIMBERLY
New Year’s day, 2011.

Joan’s eyes widen.

KIMBERLY
Same day?

Joan nods.

KIMBERLY
Well, he was efficient, wasn’t he? (voice cracking) They were supposed to be special. Something just for me.

Kimberly reaches for the button again.

KIMBERLY
I really don’t want to talk anymore.

JOAN
Please. Finish.

KIMBERLY
What could you possibly gain by this?

JOAN
What could you possibly lose?
Kimberly sucks in her lip – doesn’t want to go on. She does.

KIMBERLY
One night turned into weeks. Weeks turned into months – then years. On our third anniversary he told me –

JOAN
(hurt)
You had anniversaries?

KIMBERLY
Of course we did. I told you --

JOAN
I’m sorry. I just never imagined that. Please, go on.

KIMBERLY
He told me that he was leaving you. That he just needed to get the finances in order. But then you got breast cancer. He couldn’t leave you then – could he? But I still had hope anyway.

JOAN
Hope?

KIMBERLY
That you would just die.

Joan swallows hard.

KIMBERLY
But you didn’t.
(off Joan’s look)
Still want to hear more?

Joan nods – meekly. This is taking its toll.

KIMBERLY
I got pregnant. That changed everything. He promised – fucking promised – that we would start our own family. Finally start a life together. That was New Year’s day, 2011.

Kimberly lips quiver as she points at Joan’s pearls.

KIMBERLY
Those were to celebrate that.
Joan instinctively pulls the lapels of her coat together in an attempt to conceal the pearls.

**KIMBERLY**
We bought baby furniture – a crib. Clothes. And then....after the baby was born.
(weepy)
He changed his mind.
(sobbing)
And I lost mine.

Kimberly’s shoulders heave up and down as she sobs, her head in her hands.

**KIMBERLY**
Why did that have to happen? How did I fucking end up here? I was just serving him drinks one day...

Joan’s eyes tear as she watches Kimberly wretch. There is no satisfaction in it. Kimberly finally raises her head.

**KIMBERLY**
How did you not find out? All you had to do was catch him, just once. And then all this wouldn’t have happened. How did you not see?

**JOAN**
I don’t know. I hate that I didn’t.

A silence. Kimberly wipes tears from her eyes with the sleeve of her prison jumpsuit.

**KIMBERLY**
Enough?

**JOAN**
Enough.

Kimberly reaches for the call button. Let’s her finger rest on it.

**KIMBERLY**
There’s one last thing. (beat) I didn’t mean to kill him.

**JOAN**
I don’t understand...
KIMBERLY
The bullet wasn’t meant for him.
It was meant for you. Do you remember the day? I mean all of it?
Every moment.

JOAN
William opened my car door. I got out, reached for the house keys in my purse and then --

KIMBERLY
When William opened your car door. He saw me. With my finger on a gun. Pointed directly at you. He made a decision.
(beat)
He stepped in front of the bullet.

Joan’s chest rises up and down – there’s an ache inside her.

KIMBERLY
Maybe for you, Joan.

Kimberly stands up and hits the black call button – BUZZ.

KIMBERLY
Maybe for him.
(clears throat)
Just not for me.
(almost childlike)
I am sorry.

Tears well in Joan’s eyes as she stares at Kimberly.

The Custody Officer enters the cage. Kimberly puts her hands behind her back for cuffing.

KIMBERLY
Can you forgive me?

Joan, tears streaming down her face, nods.

The Custody Officer turns Kimberly around and escorts her away. Joan buries her face in her hands.

EXT. TEXAS HIGHWAY - NIGHT

A full moon hangs like a lantern in the black sky above a desolate, two-lane Texas highway.

A silver, luxury sedan is the only car on the road.
INT. LUXURY SEDAN (TRAVELLING) - NIGHT

One petite, female hand grasps the steering wheel.

The other hand is balled up into a fist on her lap.

FEMALE REPORTER (V.O.)
(through car radio)
...Kimberly Mansfield was executed by the State of Texas at 12:02 This morning. Mansfield, convicted for the murder of --

Joan presses the RADIO BUTTON off.

She looks in the rear view mirror - no one’s behind her.

Joan rolls down the driver side window and extends her close fisted hand out into the night air. She slowly opens it revealing a pile of pearls.

A peaceful smile crosses her face as she gently tilts her hand and lets the pearls hit the highway pavement below.

They bounce in the air like fireflies.

FADE OUT.