

The Near Death Experience  
by  
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FADE IN:

INT./EXT. BLACK SEDAN - PARKED - NIGHT

An urban neighborhood lined with apartment buildings.

ED WAYNE (35), clean cut and handsome, sits in the driver's seat and peers out the window. Half of his face hidden beneath shadows.

He sits very still. Very quiet. His eyes focused on one apartment building in particular.

FOOTSTEPS echo from nearby. Ed turns slightly. Sees SOMEONE walking towards the apartment building.

Ed leans in close to the window, out of the shadows, revealing large scar lining his jaw. His eyes widen a bit. He recognizes who it is...

SAM CHANDLER, late thirties, slightly overweight, approaches the front door of the apartment building.

Ed slips into Latex gloves. Looks around. The coast clear. He fixates his eyes on Sam again while slipping into a ski mask. Never taking his eyes off of Sam. Like a predator stalking his prey.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Ed quietly approaches Sam from behind. Never breaking stride. No hesitation. He holds a hammer by his side, keeping it low. His grip around the handle tightens as he gets closer.

Just as Sam opens the front door...

ED (O.S.)

Sam?

Sam turns and WHAM! Ed bashes him across the jaw with the hammer and puts his lights out. Sam drops like a ton of bricks. He lies face first on the cement. Not moving.

Ed calmly checks his surroundings. No witnesses. He stands over Sam. Stares down at him.

A blood puddle expands from beneath Sam's face and travels close to Ed's foot. Ed sidesteps it. He lets the crimson puddle cascade over the stoop.

Ed searches Sam's pockets. Finds a cell phone.

INT. BLACK SEDAN - MOVING - LATER

Ed coasts through the city streets, on Sam's cell phone.

OPERATOR (V.O.)  
(filtered)  
What's the nature of your  
emergency?

ED  
I just witnessed an attack. He's  
hurt really bad.

OPERATOR (V.O.)  
(filtered)  
What's the location?

ED  
The address is 323 Wellington.  
Right outside.

OPERATOR (V.O.)  
(filtered)  
Do you know the victim?

ED  
No.

OPERATOR (V.O.)  
(filtered)  
Is he breathing? Conscious?

ED  
He's alive but... he needs help.

OPERATOR (V.O.)  
(filtered)  
And what's your name, sir?

Ed hangs up. He rolls down his window, chucks the cell phone onto the street. The cell phone shatters into pieces.

INT. ED'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - LATER

Spotless. A floor clean enough to eat off of. The counter and stove top sparkling. Everything very neat and organized.

Ed, still wearing Latex gloves, sets his hammer into the sink. Runs water over it, rinsing off blood.

He drops the gloves into a nearby trash bin.

Ed eyes a blood drop on his sleeve. Annoyed, he slips out of his shirt and drops it into the trash bin.

Ed dips into a cabinet beneath the sink. Grabs a bottle of bleach and washes the peen of his hammer.

INT. ED'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Ed smokes a cigarette while sitting on the couch. He stares off into space, deep in thought. His mind wandering.

He exhales a thick cloud of smoke which slowly rises into the air.

INT. TRAIN STATION - NIGHT - LATER

A dimly lit subway platform. The sounds of TRAINS RUMBLING from the distance echo throughout.

PAUL THOMPSON (30), every-man good looks, neatly groomed in a business suit, waits for the train with a briefcase by his side. Nobody else in sight.

Paul looks at his cell phone. He rolls his eyes and places it to his ear.

CELL PHONE (V.O.)

One new message. First unheard message...

The sounds of a RUMBLING TRAIN become louder.

STACY (V.O.)

Hey, honey, it's me. I was just checking in. Wanted to know what time you were coming home. Any way, give me a call when you get the message.

BEEP. Paul lets out a defeated sigh, shuts his phone.

He peers down the tracks. Headlights glow from within the tunnel.

FOOTSTEPS from behind Paul. He turns, sees a STRANGER approach the platform. In his early forties. Also in a suit.

They acknowledge each other with a nod. Paul looks down the tracks again, sees the train approaching.

STRANGER

Excuse me?

Paul turns to Stranger.

STRANGER (CONT'D)  
Do you have the time?

Paul checks his watch. The RUMBLING of the train grows louder as it accelerates down the tracks.

PAUL  
It's about seven.

Stranger nods.

STRANGER  
Thanks. Have a good night.

Paul forces a smile and nods. He leans forward to see the train just enter the station. He takes a few steps back.

But from the corner of his eye, he sees Stranger move to the edge of the platform with no signs of stopping.

Paul watches in horror as Stranger walks over the edge of the platform just as the train barrels through...

A LOUD THUD as the train smacks into Stranger, sweeps him away. Blood dots spatter onto Paul's cheek.

The train slows to a stop. Paul stands frozen in shock.

INT. PRECINCT - HALLWAY - LATER

DETECTIVE KERR (45), in a dull suit, walks through the narrow corridor. A significant limp in his step. Rough and rugged features. Five o'clock shadow stubble covers his face. He speaks with wry delivery.

He walks alongside DETECTIVE MERCER (40) who wears a sharp suit and clean shaven. Very slick. Cool and calm. A smooth talker.

MERCER  
They had to perform emergency reconstructive surgery just to reattach his fucking jaw.

KERR  
Sounds painful.

MERCER  
Well, one good thing about pain...

KERR  
(grins)  
Means you're alive.

His grin fades.

KERR (CONT'D)  
So they say.

MERCER  
In the meantime, until he comes to,  
I got nothing.

KERR  
No witnesses?

Mercer shrugs. Lacking confidence.

MERCER  
A voice.

KERR  
What do you mean, a voice?

MERCER  
An anonymous 911 call from the  
victim's cell phone. Which of  
course is nowhere to be found.

KERR  
Foul play I gather?

MERCER  
If that ain't foul play, I don't  
know what the fuck is.

KERR  
Lucky bastard. You get all the fun  
cases.

MERCER  
Why, what do you got?

KERR  
Some asshole jumped in front of a  
train... some other asshole had a  
front row seat.

MERCER  
Straight up suicide?

Kerr shakes his head in disappointment.

KERR  
Open and fucking shut.

INT. PRECINCT - KERR'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Paul sits in a chair at Kerr's desk. He wears a lost look of wonder. His eyes wandering the room. Still in a state of shock.

Paul sees Detective Kerr's nameplate upon the desk. He looks at photos and plaques on the wall.

One photo shows Kerr and Mercer on a fishing boat. Mercer holding up a big fish. All smiles. Another photo features Mercer and Kerr in cop uniforms posing for the camera.

Kerr enters and plops down behind his desk across from Paul.

KERR  
All right, then, Mr. Thompson.  
Sorry for the delay. Your story  
checks out fine. You're free to go.

Paul remains in a world of his own. Out of it.

KERR (CONT'D)  
Mr. Thompson?

Paul snaps out of it, stares at Kerr in bewilderment. Kerr seems slightly concerned.

KERR (CONT'D)  
We've reviewed the surveillance  
tape. You're free to go.

Paul nods with a sense of uneasiness. He slowly rises from his seat and leaves.

EXT. PAUL'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

A tall, fancy looking apartment building that overlooks a beautiful public park.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - SHOWER - CONTINUOUS

An immaculate bathroom. Clean and organized. Steam rises from the shower, enclosed in a glass sliding door.

Paul wears a faraway look while rinsing shampoo out of his hair. In deep thought.

Suddenly, thick steam emits from the shower head, the hot water scalding him.

Paul, startled, jumps to the side. Avoids the hot water. Annoyed, he slides the shower door open.

STACY THOMPSON (30), a natural beauty with fair skin, stands at the sink in her pajamas and washes up.

STACY  
Hey, honey.

PAUL  
Hey.

STACY  
How was work?

PAUL  
It was fine.

Stacy quickly kisses Paul on the cheek, returns to the sink.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
Stacy, honey? Do you think you can shut off the sink? I'm getting burned alive here.

STACY  
I'm almost done.

Stacy gets her toothbrush ready, grabs a tube of toothpaste.

STACY (CONT'D)  
How was AA?

PAUL  
Good. Getting close to four years.

STACY  
I'm proud of you.

PAUL  
(lacking enthusiasm)  
Thanks.

STACY  
Anything interesting happen?

PAUL  
Interesting is one way to put it --

STACY  
Paul?



PAUL

Yeah?

STACY

Tell me something.

Stacy shows Paul the tube of toothpaste, skinny at the top, fat at the bottom. Paul looks at the tube, puzzled.

STACY (CONT'D)

Notice anything?

Paul shrugs, clueless.

STACY (CONT'D)

The toothpaste. You're squeezing from the top again.

Paul just stares at Stacy wearing a blank look.

STACY

You're supposed to squeeze from the bottom. Remember? Like we've discussed only a about a hundred thousand times?

She turns back to the mirror and finishes brushing her teeth. Paul looks on. Speechless.

Stacy gurgles and spits, puts her toothbrush away and leaves the bathroom. Paul only stands there. Defeated.

PAUL

Sure thing, honey.

He slides the shower door closed.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - LATER

An awkward silence, the lights dimmed.

Paul lies in bed and stares at the ceiling fan as it whirs rapidly.

Stacy, in reading glasses, lies next to Paul and takes in a book. A lamp at her bedside keeps the room lit.

Paul rolls to his side. Stares at Stacy for a prolonged period. He reaches out and rubs Stacy's arm.

STACY

What are you doing?

PAUL  
I don't know. It's been a while.

Stacy keeps focus on her book.

STACY  
I'm tired, Paul.

Paul sighs. Rolls to his back again. He stares up at the ceiling fan spin.

Stacy shuts her book. Removes her glasses and sets them upon her night stand. She kisses Paul on the forehead and shuts off her lamp. She rolls to her side, faces away from Paul.

STACY  
Good night.

She shuts her eyes. Paul continues to stare at the whirring ceiling fan hypnotically.

PAUL  
Good night, honey.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Ambulances and police cruisers sit parked outside the emergency room.

INT. HOSPITAL - ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Medical equipment BEEPS rhythmically. A night light barely illuminates the room.

Sam lies unconscious in bed. Face heavily bandaged. Tubes sticking out from his body, attached to medical equipment.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Ed quietly stands outside of Sam's room and peers in at him through the window.

ED  
One day... you'll thank me.

Ed turns and leaves.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Paul continues to lie awake in bed and stare at the ceiling. He glances over at his night stand, sees the time on his clock - 2:30.

Paul quietly pulls off his covers. Rolls out of bed.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Paul sits on the sofa and flips through a phone book. He scrolls through listings with his index finger. Stops.

He ponders for a moment. Picks up the house phone and dials the number from the phone book.

OPERATOR (V.O.)

Thank you for calling the suicide prevention center hot line. Please hold as we transfer you to one of our counselors.

An upbeat song plays as Paul waits on hold - RAINDROPS KEEP FALLING ON MY HEAD by BJ Thomas.

Finally, the music stops.

ED (V.O.)

(filtered)

Thanks for calling the suicide prevention center hot line. How can I help you?

Paul remains silent. Reluctant to speak. He hangs up, sets the phone on the coffee table.

Paul escapes into deep thought again. Stressed.

The PHONE RINGS and alarms Paul. He stares at the phone as it continues to RING. He picks up apprehensively.

PAUL

Hello?

ED (V.O.)

(filtered)

Why did you hang up?

Dead air. Silence.

ED (V.O.)

(filtered)

You there?

Paul hesitates to speak.

PAUL  
I'm here.

ED (V.O.)  
(filtered)  
Why did you call?

PAUL  
I don't know.

ED (V.O.)  
(filtered)  
Are you calling in regards to  
yourself or a friend?

Paul doesn't respond.

ED (V.O.)  
(filtered)  
Do you feel that you're a danger to  
yourself right now?

PAUL  
How did you get my number?

ED (V.O.)  
(filtered)  
Someone calls here, it's either  
because they need somebody to talk  
to... or it's a prank call from  
some punk teenager. You're not some  
punk teenager, are you?

PAUL  
No.

ED (V.O.)  
(filtered)  
Well, then. You called us. We're  
only here to help. Now... why did  
you call here?

Paul thinks to himself. Apprehensive.

PAUL  
I hate my life.

Dead pause.

ED (V.O.)  
(filtered)  
What's your name?

PAUL

Paul.

INT. SUICIDE HOT LINE CALL CENTER - CONTINUOUS

Ed sits behind a desk in a small cubicle. A computer in front of him. He speaks to Paul through a headset.

Ed jots notes into a tablet. Underlining Paul's name several times with pencil.

ED

Okay, Paul. Tell me about yourself.

(beat)

Tell me everything.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

An alarms BUZZES. Stacy yawns, rolls over and feels around for Paul. She opens her eyes. He isn't there.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Stacy, still in her pajamas, peeks into the room from the kitchen. She sees Paul sound asleep on the couch.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - LATER

Steam rises from the shower, Stacy inside. She hears something, slides the shower door open and pokes her head out.

She watches Paul urinate into the toilet. His back to her.

STACY

Hey, honey.

Paul doesn't respond.

STACY (CONT'D)

Why did you sleep on the couch last night?

Paul shrugs. Stacy stares at him concerned and confused.

STACY (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

PAUL

Why wouldn't I be?

Paul finishes. Sets down the toilet seat.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
I'll flush when you're done.  
Wouldn't want to burn you.

Paul leaves without even looking at her, slamming the door shut behind him. She's left confounded. Wondering.

INT./EXT. BLACK SEDAN - CITY STREET - PARKED - DAY

Ed sits parked across the street from Paul's apartment building.

Paul, wearing a suit, leaves the building. Ed watches him like a hawk.

Stacy, in a nice dress, comes out of the building shortly after.

Ed's expression changes. His icy, business like disposition softens. He seems intrigued by her. Captivated.

Stacy chases after Paul but struggles in her high heels. She yells something out.

Paul stops. Turns around. Stacy catches up. Hands Paul his cell phone. Paul nods. Takes his phone. Acting distant. Stacy moves in for a kiss, but Paul turns his back to her coldly and walks off.

Stacy watches Paul walk away. Disappointed and upset.

Ed analyzes her. The glum expression on her face. Her slumped posture. He shakes his head -- *She deserves better.*

He returns his focus to Paul. He starts his car and follows after him.

EXT. TALL OFFICE BUILDING - LATER

The sidewalks flooded with PEDESTRIANS, Paul enters the building, ready for work. Heavy traffic on the streets.

Ed drives past in his black sedan. Watching Paul. A sense of hostility in his stare as he drives by.

INT. TALL OFFICE BUILDING - BOARD ROOM - LATER

At an oblong table, Paul sits among several of his well-dressed COLLEAGUES.

A PRESENTER stands at the front of the room and points out numbers on a pie chart projected onto a screen.

Paul slumps his shoulders and yawns.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

An upscale part of town. Expensive name brand stores and coffee shops on every corner.

Stacy peruses the sidewalk. She window shops while walking past several jewelry and clothing stores.

Stacy speaks on her cell phone.

STACY

Yes, I'd like to make a dinner reservation for two. Eight o'clock if possible.

Stacy listens. Appears frustrated as she stops in front of a LINGERIE STORE.

STACY (CONT'D)

(disappointed)

All booked, huh? Okay, then. Thanks anyway.

She hangs up. Eyes a display of sexy lingerie in the window.

INT. LINGERIE SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Expensive and sexy lingerie lines the walls and aisles, much of it displayed on mannequins with flawless bodies.

Stacy seems at odds as she looks over several items. An attractive SALES WOMAN approaches Stacy with a smile.

SALES WOMAN

Hello.

Stacy forces a smile, remains focused on the lingerie.

STACY

Hi.

SALES WOMAN

Do you need help finding anything?

STACY

Yes, actually. I'm looking for something sexy. For my husband.

SALES WOMAN

You came to the right place. What's the occasion? Anniversary?

STACY

No occasion.

SALES WOMAN

Just trying to spice things up, huh? Well, we have a few things that might interest your husband.

Stacy follows Sales Woman down an aisle.

SALES WOMAN (CONT'D)

He must be a lucky guy.

Stacy forces a guilt-stricken smile.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - LATER

Stacy, in an apron, hair done up nicely, slips into oven mitts. Pulls a roast from the oven. Sets it on top. She shuts the oven. Moves to a cutting board and slices tomatoes for a salad.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Stacy slides into a sexy dress. Applies makeup in front of the mirror on the wall.

She puts on red lipstick. Smacks her lips. She smiles at her reflection. Satisfied.

INT. TRAIN STATION - NIGHT

Empty and quiet. Paul stands alone. In a trance as he waits for the train.

Steady FOOTSTEPS approach from behind. Picking up in pace. Paul turns around.

Ed, in a ski mask, charges at Paul with the hammer and WHAM! Clocks him hard across the jaw.

Paul drops to his back. Dazed. But conscious. He wiggles gingerly while looking up at the ceiling. Barely able to move. His vision blurred.

Ed enters Paul's view, looking down at him.



Ed raises the hammer into the air and WHAM! He nails Paul again. Knocks him out cold.

Ed raises the hammer into the air again, in a frenzy. His eyes wild with rage. About to smash into Paul again but...

He stops himself. Lowers the hammer. Catches his breath. He stares down at Paul in disbelief - *What have I done?*

Paul lies motionless, blood leaking from his jaw, forming a puddle beneath his face.

The SOUND of a TRAIN RUMBLING grows louder. Getting close. Ed quickly surveys the area. The coast clear.

He frantically searches Paul's pockets. Finally, he finds a cell phone.

INT. ED'S CAR - MOVING - MOMENTS LATER

The hammer sits on the passenger's seat, a plastic bag wrapped around the top of it.

Ed, behind the wheel, speaks on Paul's cell phone. A nervous quiver in his voice.

OPERATOR (V.O.)  
What's the nature of your  
emergency?

ED  
I witnessed an attack.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - DINING ROOM - LATER

The table neatly set. Roast at the center. Everything perfect.

Stacy sits at the table. A feeling of unease. She checks her watch and sighs. Growing worried. She looks across the table to an empty spot where Paul would be sitting.

The PHONE RINGS. Stacy quickly answers.

STACY  
Paul?

POLICEMAN (V.O.)  
Am I speaking with Stacy Thompson?

STACY  
(delayed)  
Yes.

POLICEMAN (V.O.)  
This is Officer Gates from the  
Allentown Police Department. I'm  
calling in regards to your husband.

Stacy freezes.

STACY  
Yes?

POLICEMAN (V.O.)  
There's been an incident.

INT. HOSPITAL - ROOM - LATER

Paul lies unconscious in a hospital bed. Face heavily  
bandaged. Tubes from medical equipment attached to his body.

Stacy stands with a DOCTOR at the corner of the room. She  
eyes Paul nervously. Tears moistening her cheeks. A complete  
wreck.

She turns to Doctor. Desperation in her eyes.

STACY  
Is he... is he going to be okay?

Doctor, holding a clipboard, appears unsure.

DOCTOR  
Your husband is currently in a  
state of coma due to severe head  
trauma. Swelling of the brain. He  
also suffered linear fractures in  
his skull as well as depressed  
fractures in his jaw and orbital  
bones. Now the chances of him --

STACY  
Is he going to wake up?

Doctor struggles to look directly at Stacy. Her desperation  
heartbreaking.

DOCTOR  
Right now, it's day to day, Mrs.  
Thompson.

(MORE)

DOCTOR (cont'd)  
These types of head injuries take  
time to assess accurately. All we  
can do is be patient.

Stacy finds the answer hard to accept. But she wipes her eyes  
and nods.

INT. HOSPITAL - LOBBY - LATER

Mercer interviews Stacy, taking down information on his note  
pad. Stacy struggles to maintain her composure.

MERCER  
Does Paul have any enemies that you  
know of?

Stacy shakes her head.

MERCER (CONT'D)  
Notice anything different about his  
behavior? Has he been acting  
strangely?

Stacy thinks about it. Shakes her head.

MERCER (CONT'D)  
Are you sure? Nothing even slightly  
off?

Stacy shakes her head.

Mercer nods, jotting down a few notes. He looks to Stacy,  
sees tears in her eyes.

Mercer sets his hand on her shoulder.

MERCER  
We WILL find whoever did this to  
your husband.

Stacy nods while wiping tears.

MERCER (CONT'D)  
Go home. Get some rest. If anything  
develops, you'll be the first to  
know. Okay?

Stacy nods. Mercer gives her shoulder a gentle squeeze.

INT. ED'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Ed, still wearing Latex gloves, dumps his bloody hammer into the sink. Leaves it there.

INT. ED'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ed puffs on a cigarette while sitting on his couch. Thick smoke rises to the ceiling as he stares off into space. Deep in thought. In a state of meditation. There, but not there.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

SUPER: Three Weeks Later...

Ed pays a CASHIER, walks away from the counter with a coffee cup in his hand.

He looks across the room.

Sam Chandler sits at a table with TWO CHILDREN, both under the age of 10. Bandage over his chin. Jaw wired shut.

Ed goes to Sam's table. Stands over them. Sam looks up. Ed flashes a glowing smile.

ED  
How are you?

Sam wears a confused expression.

SAM  
I'm doing well. How are you?

ED  
Same old, same old.

Ed looks at Sam's children.

ED (CONT'D)  
So these are the little ones?

Sam stares up at Ed in confusion.

ED (CONT'D)  
You don't remember me, do you?

Sam thinks hard. Trying his best.

ED (CONT'D)

I'm Scott's friend. You know, from  
Hobbs and Goldman? We met at a  
function.

Sam pretends to remember.

SAM

What was your name again?

ED

Ed.

Sam nods, tries to be polite.

SAM

Of course, Ed.

ED

I heard what happened. You look  
good... considering.

SAM

Thanks.

ED

All small talk aside, how are you?

SAM

I'm hanging in there.

ED

Yeah? You must feel lucky to be  
alive. I mean, after what happened  
to you?

Sam nods. Looks at his kids. As if realizing how lucky he  
really is at that moment. He looks up at Ed.

SAM

I'm very fortunate.

Ed nods. Looks over Sam's children.

ED

It's good to see that you're doing  
well.

Ed turns back to Sam.

ED (CONT'D)

Maybe I'll see you around.

Sam nods with a forced smile as Ed leaves his table.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Stacy stands outside of Paul's room. Speaks with ANNE, slightly older than Stacy. Also with fair skin.

Paul lies unconscious in bed in the background.

STACY

I know that Mom and Dad had their... issues with Paul. And Anne, I know you weren't exactly thrilled about us either --

Anne rests a hand on Stacy's shoulder.

ANNE

That was a long time ago.

Stacy wipes a tear from her eye, smiles at Anne.

STACY

Thanks for being there for me.

Stacy glimpses sadly at Paul through the window. She turns back to Anne.

STACY (CONT'D)

What if he never wakes up?

ANNE

You can't think that way.

STACY

His condition hasn't improved. At all. And these doctors, these so called doctors don't seem to know anything. They keep telling me to be patient but...

Stacy stops. Struggles to speak. Growing emotional. Holding back tears.

Anne sees an elevator open across the hall.

ANNE (CONT'D)

Come on.

They board the elevator.

At the end of the hall, Ed peeks from around the corner. Waits for the elevator doors to close. He makes his way to Paul's room.

INT. HOSPITAL - ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ed sits at Paul's bedside and stares down at him with a hint of regret.

He eyes the floral arrangements surrounding the bed. Get well cards all around.

Ed sees a photo of Paul and Stacy together. Happier times. He snatches the photo and stares at it with a bizarre fascination.

INT. HOSPITAL - ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

The elevator moves to the ground floor. Stacy continues to vent.

STACY

I should've done more...

ANNE

Stop talking like that.

STACY

We've been growing apart. And it's all my fault. I took it all for granted. I took HIM for granted.

ANNE

(firmly)

Stacy. Listen.

Anne makes Stacy look her in the eye.

ANNE

It's not your fault. NONE of this is your fault.

Stacy nods, but can't shake the heartache. Tears leaking.

STACY

I'm just so lonely without him. I love him so much.

Anne hugs an arm around her. Stacy wipes her eyes and sniffles.

STACY (CONT'D)

Do you want to do lunch?

ANNE

I'll have to take a rain check. Kids. Maybe tomorrow?

Stacy nods as the elevator reaches the ground floor. The doors open but Stacy realizes something.

STACY  
I left my purse.

ANNE  
Call me, okay?

Stacy nods as Anne leaves the elevator.

INT. HOSPITAL - ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ed stashes the photo of Paul and Stacy into his pocket. Just as Stacy walks in.

Ed flinches, startled. He stares at Stacy, not prepared. Nervous.

STACY  
Hi.

Ed nods while gathering himself.

STACY (CONT'D)  
Are you a friend of Paul's?

Ed, at a loss for words, nods. Stacy approaches him.

STACY (CONT'D)  
I'm Stacy. Paul's wife.

Ed rises.

ED  
Ed.

They stare at each other briefly. An awkward silence. Ed notices her reddened eyes.

ED  
Are you okay?

Stacy shrugs. Glances down at Paul.

STACY  
As okay as I can be right now, I guess.

Ed spots a box of tissues nearby. He picks up the box and offers it to Stacy.



Stacy, grateful, takes a few tissues from the box. Dabs at her eyes.

STACY

Thanks.

Ed nods.

STACY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, how do you know Paul?

Ed is slow with an answer, thinking of a good lie.

ED

A mutual friend. Through work.

Stacy sees her purse at Ed's feet.

STACY

Sorry, I left my purse.

Ed just notices the purse by his feet. He lifts it from the floor and hands it to her. Their hands touch ever so slightly.

Stacy takes her purse, smiles at Ed while leaving the room. Ed watches her leave. Captivated. Bewitched.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Stacy sits at the dinner table. Gazing at Paul's empty spot. Poking at her food. Sad and restless.

She dials a number on her phone. The PHONE RINGS until reaching a voice mail.

SUSAN (V.O.)

This is Susan. I'm not available right now, but leave a message and I'll return your call.

BEEP.

STACY

Hey, Susan, it's Stacy. We haven't spoken in a while and I figured I'd give you a call. I thought it would be nice to catch up sometime. Maybe do lunch or something. Anyway, just give me a call when you get the chance. Bye.

Stacy hangs up. Morose. Lonely. She looks at Paul's empty spot at the table again. Sighs.

She leaves the table.

INT. COCKTAIL LOUNGE - CONTINUOUS

A quaint little bar. Slow night. Dim lighting. MUSIC plays softly in the background.

Stacy sits at the end of the bar. Stirring her drink. Bored.

She takes a look around the room at COUPLES sitting together at tables enjoying each other's company.

Stacy hangs her head. But something catches her eye.

She spots Ed sitting at the opposite end of the bar. Alone. A drink in front of him.

She cocks her eye at him. Suspicious. She rises, walks over and sits next to him. He pretends not to notice.

STACY

Hey.

Ed turns.

STACY (CONT'D)

Are you following me?

Ed immediately grows uncomfortable. Thrown for a loop.

ED

Beg your pardon?

Stacy smiles, looks down at the floor embarrassed.

STACY

I'm sorry. You don't remember me.

Ed feels bad.

ED

Stacy, right?

She looks up at him pleasantly surprised.

STACY

I'm sorry, I don't recall your name.

ED

Ed.

STACY

Small world, huh?

They share a brief, uncomfortable silence. Stacy awkwardly thinks of something to further the conversation.

STACY (CONT'D)

So... what's your story?

ED

My story?

STACY

What are you doing here?

Ed sips his drink. Stares at it. Delays his response.

ED

(hesitant)

I met my wife here. Today would have been our anniversary.

It takes Stacy a bit to catch on, but she eventually grasps the undertones of his response.

STACY

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to pry.

Ed shakes his head indignantly.

ED

It's fine. You didn't know.

A brief, awkward silence. Stacy tries to think of something to say. She turns to Ed. Hesitates.

STACY

So... is she...?

Ed nods sadly. Stacy feels for him.

STACY

What was her name?

ED

Amy.

Stacy seems uncomfortable. A touchy subject.

STACY

Sorry.

ED

There's no need to apologize. It was four years ago. I've had plenty of time to... deal. I mean, I'm fine now.

Stacy stares into Ed's eyes. Sympathetic. She nods in understanding.

STACY

How long have you known Paul?

The change of subject throws Ed off. He's slow to answer.

ED

For a while.

Another brief pause.

STACY

I can relate. I mean, Paul's not, you know...

Ed nods sadly.

STACY (CONT'D)

I'm trying to be optimistic. But it... it's been hard.

Stacy's voice quivers. Becoming emotional.

STACY (CONT'D)

I can't help but think, what if he doesn't wake up? It's already been three weeks.

She wipes tears. Avoiding eye contact. Ashamed to cry in front of Ed. She strains to hide her melancholia.

STACY (CONT'D)

How do you handle something like that? What do you do?

Ed shrugs.

ED

I don't know what to tell you.

STACY

Have you found someone else? Like another woman?

Ed shakes his head.

STACY  
Have you tried?

He shakes his head again.

STACY  
Why not?

Ed digs deep for answer, but comes up blank.

ED  
I don't know.

STACY  
Don't you get lonely?

ED  
Well, yeah. But, you know, Amy, she meant the world to me. It was hard. It's still hard sometimes. There was even a time when I... I wanted to kill myself.

STACY  
What stopped you?

ED  
Someone else almost made the decision for me.

FLASHBACK - EXT. SHADY NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Ed walks past a series of closed shops. Gates locked. All signs indicate a late night. Everything quiet. Too quiet.

Ed reaches the street corner.

WALTER, late twenties, in rags, approaches Ed with his hands out. Begging for change.

ED (V.O.)  
I was walking home one night and there was this homeless guy I used to see all the time. I never had any problems with him before. Once in a while, I'd give him some spare change. Probably did him more harm than good. For all I knew, I was probably supporting his habits.

Ed looks into Walter's eyes. Walter strung out. Eyes dilated. Shivering from side effects.

Ed shows Walter empty hands.

ED  
Sorry, Walter, nothing tonight.

WALTER  
Just a nickel? A dime?

Ed walks away from him.

ED  
I got nothing.

Walter glares at Ed.

WALTER  
No... you got everything. I got  
nothing.

ED  
I'd trade places with you any day  
of the week, my friend.

As Ed walks away, he hears RUNNING FOOTSTEPS behind him. He turns around. Walter comes at him with a hammer, nails him across the jaw.

Ed drops to his back. Dazed. He looks up to see Walter standing over him. Walter raises his hammer into the air and smashes Ed in the face.

Everything turns black.

BACK TO PRESENT - INT. COCKTAIL LOUNGE - NIGHT

Stacy looks at Ed, stunned.

ED  
I was clinically dead for three  
minutes. That's what they tell me  
anyway.

STACY  
Did the police find him?

ED  
I didn't tell them who it was.

STACY  
Why not?

ED  
I felt sorry for him.

STACY  
But what if he tries attacking  
somebody else?

Ed shakes his head confidently. Not the least bit worried.

ED  
He won't.

FLASHBACK - EXT. DARK ALLEY - NIGHT

Walter digs around through garbage cans for scraps. Moonlight  
peeks in through shadows. A blue hue.

A tall dark shadow approaches Walter from behind. Looms over  
him.

Walter turns and sees Ed standing behind him. Bad intentions  
in Ed's hostile gaze. Chest heaving in anger.

ED  
Remember me?

Walter looks down, sees a hammer in Ed's grip. Before Walter  
can react...

Ed cocks back with the hammer and WHAM! Lights out.

SMASH CUT TO:

BACK TO PRESENT - INT. COCKTAIL LOUNGE - NIGHT

A DRUNKEN PATRON from across the bar knocks over his glass  
and it SHATTERS on the floor.

Ed and Stacy look over, briefly distracted from their  
conversation. They watch DRUNKEN PATRON try to gather the  
glass, slicing his hands up. Blood trickling.

BARTENDER comes around with a broom. DRUNKEN PATRON insists  
on cleaning it up, but BARTENDER waves him off.

Ed and Stacy return to their conversation.

STACY  
So, it took a near death  
experience, huh?

Ed shrugs, raises his glass.

STACY (CONT'D)

Not sure if that's the route I want to go.

Ed smiles. Laughs lightly.

ED

Probably not. But it happened. And I like to think, by doing what he did... he helped me. And now, I'm trying to make the most out of my second chance.

STACY

And what exactly are you doing to make the most of it?

ED

I help people.

STACY

In what way?

Ed gives Stacy a business card. She reads it.

STACY (CONT'D)

The Suicide Prevention Center Hot line?

Ed nods.

STACY (CONT'D)

You talk people out of suicide?

Ed reflects for a moment.

ED

Something like that.

STACY

Doesn't that get depressing?

ED

Actually, it's therapeutic. It helps ME to know that I'm doing something to affect another person's life. In some way.

INT. SAM CHANDLER'S APARTMENT - KID'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sam tucks his TWO CHILDREN into bed. He stands back. Warmth in his heart as he watches them doze off.



He gives them another solemn glance as he leaves the bedroom.

INT. SAM CHANDLER'S APARTMENT - SAM'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sam cuddles with his wife BARBARA under the covers. She lies sound asleep.

Sam remains awake. He stares at her. Cherishing every moment. Finally, he shuts his eyes. At peace with himself.

INT. HOSPITAL - ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Paul lies motionless in bed. Unconscious. Medical equipment BEEPS rhythmically, periodically breaking the silence of the still night.

INT. COCKTAIL LOUNGE - LATER

Several empty glasses sit bunched together upon the bar.

Ed and Stacy share a good laugh. Both nicely buzzed. Ed glances over to the open area of the bar and sees an ELDERLY COUPLE slow dance.

Ed's smile fades while watching them. He turns to Stacy. She also watches the ELDERLY COUPLE. An inconceivable anguish as tears fill her eyes.

Ed stands up. Reaches his hand out to her.

STACY

What?

ED

Come on. Let's dance.

Stacy doesn't seem so sure. She glances at the ELDERLY COUPLE, turns back to Ed. Shakes her head.

STACY

I don't know.

ED

Yeah, you do. Come on.

Stacy remains in her seat. Mulling it over. Ambivalent. She looks up at Ed. He raises his eyebrows suggestively at her. Motions his head to the dance area.

ED

One dance won't kill you.

Stacy takes a moment. Makes her decision. She rises and takes Ed's hand.

INT. COCKTAIL LOUNGE - DANCE FLOOR - LATER

Ed and Stacy slow dance into view. Hands rested upon each other's shoulders. At a distance. Feeling each other out.

Stacy moves in close. Rests her head upon his shoulder.

Ed embraces her. Holds her tightly. Their faces touch. Cheek to cheek.

Stacy shuts her eyes. A moment of solace. Comfort. Warmth. She cherishes his care and sensitivity. Something she hasn't felt in a very long time.

But she opens her eyes. Her thoughts taking her out of the moment. Back to reality. A sudden guilt.

STACY

I have to go.

She gently breaks away from him. Ed nods in acceptance. Stacy turns and leaves.

Ed watches her walk out the door.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - LATER

Stacy cries while showering. Cleansing herself.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - LATER

Stacy lies in bed. She stares despondently at a photo of her and Paul that sits on her night stand.

INT. ED'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ed lies in bed. He holds the photo of Paul and Stacy that he took from the hospital. Stares at it in envy.

He covers Paul's face with his thumb.

EXT. CAFE - DAY

Stacy and Anne take in a cup of coffee at an outdoor cafe. Sitting across from each other. Stacy hangs her head. Staring blankly at her cup of coffee. Feeling down. Hopeless.

STACY

He was the only one who ever  
treated me like a person.

ANNE

You keep referring to him in the  
past tense.

Stacy looks to another table. Sees a HAPPY COUPLE conversing  
over lunch. She sighs. Hangs her head again.

STACY

It's been over a month and  
nothing's changed. I'm tired of  
hoping.

ANNE

I understand how you feel, Stacy,  
but you gotta keep a level head --

STACY

You have no idea how I feel.

Anne turns silent.

STACY (CONT'D)

Every time I visit him, it feels  
like a funeral service.

A long, saturnine pause. Anne tries to come up with something  
to say.

ANNE

You can't just... give up?

Stacy ponders to herself. Conflicted.

ANNE (CONT'D)

Can you?

INT. PRECINCT - MERCER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Detective Mercer downs a cup of coffee while shuffling  
through paperwork.

He reads over PAUL THOMPSON'S PHONE RECORDS. He runs through  
a list of numbers. But zeroes in on one in particular. THE  
SUICIDE PREVENTION CENTER HOT LINE.

Something dawns on him. He sets the phone records to the  
side, runs through a list of numbers on SAM CHANDLER'S PHONE  
RECORDS.

He sees THE SUICIDE PREVENTION CENTER HOT LINE.

Mercer stuffs the records into a file folder and leaves his desk.

INT. MERCER'S HOME - KITCHEN - LATER

Half of a roast sits at the center of the table. Kerr takes a forkful of meat, dips it into mashed potatoes and engulfs it. While chewing, he looks across to...

DEBORAH, an attractive woman in her late thirties. A significant bump in her belly. At least eight months pregnant.

KERR

It's delicious, Deborah.

She smiles, motions her head to Mercer, who pokes around at his food. Something else on his mind.

DEBORAH

Glad SOMEONE appreciates my cooking.

Mercer doesn't catch on. In his own world. Deborah and Kerr eyeball him concerned.

DEBORAH

Honey?

Mercer snaps out of it. Looks up at Deborah.

MERCER

Huh?

DEBORAH

How's dinner?

Mercer nods.

MERCER

It's good.

She analyzes him. Worried. But goes back to her food.

Kerr looks across the table to Mercer. Something on Kerr's mind. Curious.

KERR

So... how's this case of yours going?

MERCER  
I'm getting close.

Kerr waits for Mercer to explain further. But Mercer only continues to poke around at his food.

KERR  
Are you gonna give me some details  
or am I gonna have to interrogate  
you?

MERCER  
Still no witnesses. One victim's in  
a coma, the other doesn't remember  
anything.

KERR  
Sure ass hell doesn't sound like  
your getting close. You got no  
weapon, no witnesses. All you got  
is --

MERCER  
A voice.

KERR  
Without any suspects, what good is  
a voice gonna do you?

MERCER  
Well, being a detective and all, I  
decided to do some detecting.

Mercer ducks under the table. Brings up a file folder. As he  
digs through files:

MERCER  
Both victims suffered similar  
injuries, right? Blunt object to  
the jaw. Then you got the 911  
calls. Both made from the victim's  
phones...

KERR  
Sounds like a serial killer who  
sucks at killing.

Deborah seems turned off by the conversation.

DEBORAH  
You know I don't like it when you  
boys talk shop at the table.

KERR

I've been stuck behind a desk for six months, Deborah...

DEBORAH

You can live vicariously through my husband after dinner. Not at the table.

Silence. Kerr goes back to eating dinner. But Mercer continues to sift through paperwork obsessively.

Kerr glances up at Mercer. Still curious as he watches him.

KERR

You know, I'd hate to burst your bubble, but what if it's just a big coincidence?

Deborah rolls her eyes. Kerr shrugs at her, feigning innocence.

MERCER

I don't believe in coincidences.

Mercer finally finds the file he was looking for.

MERCER (CONT'D)

Check this out.

He hands Kerr a few papers. Kerr eagerly gives them a look. After reading, he looks up at Mercer.

KERR

Phone records?

MERCER

Tell me if anything jumps out at you.

Kerr reads further.

KERR

Suicide Prevention Center Hot Line?

MERCER

Both calls to that number were made a day before their attacks.

Kerr appears impressed.

MERCER (CONT'D)

How's that for coincidence?

INT. SUICIDE HOT LINE CALL CENTER - NIGHT

Ed sits in his cubicle, microphone headset on. He conducts research on his computer. We see a photo of Paul appear on the screen. His company web site.

He scrolls to a personal web page. A photo of Stacy appears. Suddenly...

The PHONE RINGS and interrupts Ed. He hits a button and answers.

ED  
Thank you for calling The Suicide  
Prevention Center Hot Line. How can  
I help you?

Silence on the other line. Then BREATHING. Someone CRIES softly. A WOMAN.

STACY (V.O.)  
(filtered)  
Ed?

Ed sits up straight. He knows who it is.

INT. ED'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Stacy and Ed sit on the couch in silence. A distance between them.

Ed looks over to Stacy. Her cheeks moist and eyes red after hours of crying. Ed awkwardly reaches over and sets a hand on her shoulder.

ED  
You okay?

She nods, trying to hide her emotions. Embarrassed.

STACY  
I was just having a Stacy moment.  
Didn't have anyone else to talk to.

Ed scrunches his brow perplexed.

ED  
What exactly is a Stacy moment?

Stacy shrugs. Smiles sadly.

STACY

When me and Paul first started dating, every time I would behave irrationally, he would say I was having a Stacy moment.

Ed scratches his head. He doesn't quite understand.

ED

You're going through a rough time right now. I wouldn't necessarily categorize your behavior as irrational.

Stacy sees a pack of cigarettes on the floor, sticking out from beneath the couch, by her feet.

She grabs the pack of cigarettes. Pulls a cigarette out.

STACY

You mind?

Ed just notices the cigarettes in her hand. Jumps out of his seat.

ED

No!

Stacy seems thrown off by his reaction. Ed catches himself acting strangely and quickly tries to cover it up.

ED (CONT'D)

I mean... not inside.

Stacy raises her eyebrow at Ed.

EXT. ED'S APARTMENT BUILDING - ROOFTOP - NIGHT

A beautiful night. Moon bright in the sky. Stars twinkling. A wonderful panoramic view of the town and surrounding buildings.

Stacy stands at the middle of the roof area. Far from the edge. She puffs on a cigarette while admiring the view.

STACY

I'm sort of afraid of heights.

Ed stands near the edge of the roof. He looks down and watches PEOPLE who appear like ants far below him.

Stacy looks at her cigarette while exhaling smoke.



STACY  
You know, I haven't smoked a  
cigarette in four years?

Ed glances back at Stacy, acknowledges her.

ED  
Yeah?

STACY  
I promised Paul that if he'd quit  
drinking, I'd quit smoking.

Ed nods. Faces the view in front of him again. He approaches the very edge of the roof and tight-ropes it. Tiptoeing along the ledge.

ED  
(while tiptoeing)  
How long were you married?

Stacy stares off into space, zoned out.

STACY  
About five years.

ED  
Were you happy?

Stacy hangs her head while thinking about it. She shrugs, tosses her cigarette butt.

STACY  
There's been some rough patches.

She looks up and just notices Ed pulling a high wire act along the ledge.

STACY  
Can you please not do that?

ED  
What?

STACY  
You could fall.

ED  
I'm aware of that.

STACY  
I wouldn't consider myself an  
expert in physics, but you could  
probably die.

Ed looks over to Stacy.

ED  
How can you appreciate life without  
knowing how close you are to dying?

STACY  
I appreciate my life just fine.

ED  
Do you?

Stacy considers it briefly. Momentarily confounded. Ed extends his hand to Stacy and waves her over.

ED  
Come on.

Stacy shakes her head.

STACY  
You're insane.

Ed turns and faces Stacy. His heels hanging off. He wobbles, loses his balance. About to fall backwards, off the roof.

ED  
Whoa!

STACY  
Ed!

Stacy hurries over and grabs Ed's hand. Helps him regain his balance. But he smiles, not letting go of her.

STACY  
You asshole!

Ed laughs it up. Pulls Stacy close to him. Their lips embrace. A long passionate kiss at the edge of the roof.

Stacy looks down.

STACY  
Oh, my God.

Ed holds her in front of him. Looks her dead in the eye.

ED  
Just look at me. Don't worry about  
what's down there.

She takes a breath. Swallows. Keeps her eyes on Ed.

ED (CONT'D)  
Are you still afraid?

Stacy laughs nervously.

STACY  
Yeah.

Ed kisses her. Long and passionate. Ed guides her down into sitting position. Their lips locked.

They look deep into each other's eyes. Lust taking over. Ed's hands feeling every part of her body. His hand on her thigh. Creeping up her leg.

Stacy clenches her eyes shut. Unfastens Ed's belt. Slides his pants down just enough. He slides her pants down.

Ed lies on top of her. Thrusts his midsection into her's. She moans insatiably. He thrusts into her again. Their lips break apart. Stacy moans in sheer ecstasy.

He thrusts into her sharply. Things getting intense. Harder and faster while gazing into each other's eyes.

The stars and moon shine bright in the background, glistening off the surrounding buildings.

EXT. HOBBS & GOLDMAN BUILDING - DAY

A tall office building. Hustle and bustle along the sidewalk out front, flooded with PEDESTRIANS. Heavy traffic in the street.

INT. HOBBS & GOLDMAN BUILDING - CAFETERIA - CONTINUOUS

Detective Mercer sits across from Sam Chandler. The scar on his chin healing nicely. Jaw no longer wired.

Sam enjoys a sandwich while Mercer jots down notes.

MERCER  
So, this suicide hot line... did it help at all?

Sam shrugs, wipes his mouth with a napkin.

SAM  
Not really. I don't remember much about it. You know, with the head injury and all. I'm still having trouble remembering things.

MERCER

How's everything going now, since the incident?

SAM

Great. I can't really complain.

MERCER

And I take it you don't recall who you spoke with when you called this hot line.

Sam shakes his head. Mercer nods. But seems disappointed.

MERCER (CONT'D)

Anything peculiar happen recently? Since leaving the hospital?

Sam shakes his head.

MERCER (CONT'D)

Nothing just a teensy bit off?

Sam thinks back for a moment.

SAM

Nothing really.

Mercer shuts his notebook.

MERCER

Thank you for your time, Mr. Chandler.

Mercer stands up and leaves.

INT. ED'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Stacy lies in Ed's bed. Naked. Eyes open. Staring at the ceiling in deep thought.

Ed lies naked next to her. Sheets covering them from the waist down.

STACY

He hit me once. When he was drunk.

Ed kisses her neck. Tries to comfort her.

STACY (CONT'D)

It was Christmas. Four years ago. My whole family was there.

ED

You don't have to talk about it.

Stacy remains in her own world.

STACY

That was the only time he ever hit me. And it was the last time he ever had a drink. I know it was a long time ago. But from time to time... I think about it.

A somber silence. Stacy rolls over. Faces Ed.

STACY

What about you?

ED

What about me?

STACY

Have you ever hit a woman before?

He shakes his head indignantly.

ED

Only men.

INT. HOBBS & GOLDMAN BUILDING - ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Sam waits as the elevator makes a stop. The doors slide open. SCOTT, early forties, boards the elevator. A fellow coworker.

SAM

How's it going, Scott?

SCOTT

It's going.

Scott checks Sam's face. Suddenly concerned.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

How are YOU doing?

SAM

Feeling much better.

Scott nods in approval.

SCOTT

Well, you look good.

SAM

Thanks.

The elevator doors slide shut. Moving again.

SAM (CONT'D)

Oh, yeah, I forgot to tell you. I ran into a friend of yours the other day.

SCOTT

Didn't know I had friends. Who was it?

SAM

Said his name was Ed?

Scott wears a blank expression.

SCOTT

Ed?

Scott thinks back but draws a blank.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

I don't even know anyone named Ed.

SAM

Really? He said he knew me through you.

SCOTT

Well, he must be mistaken.

Sam ponders to himself. Perplexed.

IMAGINARY SEQUENCE - EXT. ANYWHERE - NIGHT

Ed, wearing his ski mask, charges at us with his hammer ready to strike...

INT. HOSPITAL - ROOM - DAY

Sunlight shines onto Paul's face. Lying motionless in bed. Eyes shut. The sun peeking in through the blinds.

The BEEPING from his medical equipment echoes.

Suddenly, Paul's eyes slam open. He lets out a frightened gasp.

INT. ED'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Stacy lies down and stares up at the ceiling in meditation. Ed showers in the bathroom with the door slightly ajar.

A CELL PHONE RINGS and startles her. She sits up. It's her cell phone.

She checks the caller ID with a quizzical expression. Not sure who it is, she answers.

STACY

Hello?

DR. RYAN (V.O.)

(filtered)

May I please speak with a Mrs. Thompson?

STACY

This is her.

DR. RYAN (V.O.)

(filtered)

This is Dr. Ryan from Saint Luke's Hospital. I'm calling in regards to your husband, Paul.

She expects the worst. Bracing herself for bad news.

STACY

Yes?

DR. RYAN (V.O.)

He's awake.

INT. HOSPITAL - ELEVATOR - LATER

Stacy can't contain herself. Nervous, yet eager. The elevator can't move fast enough.

She taps her foot nervously. Growing impatient. Finally, the elevator stops. The doors slide open.

INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Stacy bolts out of the elevator like an Olympic sprinter. She dashes through the hallway, zigzagging her way around DOCTORS and NURSES.

INT. HOSPITAL - ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Stacy rushes into the room. But stops suddenly. Staring at Paul awake in bed.

She stands frozen stiff. A million thoughts running through her mind.

Paul wears a warm smile. His jaw wired shut. Slightly disfigured.

PAUL  
(weak)  
Hey, honey.

Stacy falls apart. Tears flood down her cheeks. She tiptoes towards him. Her conscience eating at her. But she soon becomes overcome with joy.

She hugs him tighter than she's ever hugged anyone. He embraces her as she sobs hysterically, her face buried into his chest.

Paul nearly falls into tears. Deeply touched.

EXT. PAUL'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

SUPER: One Week Later...

A VAN pulls to the front of the building. The side door slides open. DRIVER gets out, pulls out a handicap ramp. He guides Paul, in a wheelchair, down onto the sidewalk.

Stacy follows him out. Pushes Paul the rest of the way into the building.

INT./EXT. ED'S CAR - PARKED - ACROSS STREET - CONTINUOUS

Ed spies from the driver's seat. Face hidden beneath shadows.

As cars zoom by, shadows dance across his face. Only his eyes remain in constant view. A cold, unsettling gaze.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT BUILDING - ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Paul sits patiently in his wheelchair. In good spirits. Grateful to be alive. He glances up at Stacy. Sees a mischievous grin on her face.



PAUL  
There's a surprise party waiting  
for me, isn't there?

Stacy tries hard to hide her grin.

STACY  
I haven't the slightest idea what  
you're talking about.

Paul smiles.

PAUL  
I'll do my best to act surprised.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

The doorknob jiggles. Turns. Stacy opens the door and wheels Paul inside.

The lights flick on and a whole mess of PEOPLE jump out from hiding spots all over the apartment.

PARTY GUESTS  
(in unison)  
SURPRISE!!!

Paul does his best to appear surprised, but his act seems awfully labored.

PAUL  
Wow! I had no idea!

He looks up at Stacy and shares a good laugh.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATER

UPBEAT MUSIC plays in the background as GUESTS socialize with each other. Groups of them spread all over the room. Everyone having a good time.

Paul and Stacy appear inseparable. Paul looks around at all the guests.

PAUL  
Thanks, honey. I really appreciate  
this.

Stacy kisses him on the top of his head.

STACY  
It's the least I can do.

They look deep into each other's eyes. Sharing a warm moment.

PAUL  
I love you.

STACY  
I love you.

They give each other a big smooch. Anne butts in.

ANNE  
Get a room, you two.

Stacy laughs.

PAUL  
Where are your parents tonight?

Anne shares an awkward glance with Stacy. Keeps quiet. Stacy makes something up.

STACY  
They wanted to come but something else came up.

Paul's expression falls a bit. He knows they didn't want to come.

PAUL  
Well, give them my blessings.

ANNE  
I'll do that.

Stacy's CELL PHONE RINGS. She checks it. Freezes. Thrown off. Uneasy.

Paul raises an eyebrow.

STACY  
I'll be right back.

Stacy disappears into the kitchen. Paul watches her suspiciously. Studying her. She seems worried while talking on the phone.

ANNE  
So, Paul, when do you go back to work?

Paul continues to eyeball Stacy from across the room.

PAUL  
Aiming for next Monday.

ANNE  
And the wheelchair?

PAUL  
Just for a few days or so.

He keeps focus on Stacy.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
Excuse me.

Paul wheels his way to the kitchen.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Stacy huddles into the corner of the room. Whispers on her cell phone. She speaks fast. On edge.

STACY  
I can't talk right now.

ED (V.O.)  
(filtered)  
I haven't heard from you in a while. I'm worried.

STACY  
Paul's here. I'll call you tomorrow, okay?

ED (V.O.)  
(filtered)  
That's what you said a week ago.

STACY  
(firm)  
I'll call you tomorrow.

Stacy hangs up just as Paul wheels in from behind.

PAUL  
Who was that?

Stacy flinches, caught by surprise.

STACY  
(tense)  
Oh, hey honey.

PAUL  
You okay?

STACY  
Yeah, I'm fine.

PAUL  
Who were you talking to?

Stacy stalls for a few moments.

STACY  
It was Detective Mercer. I told him  
we were having a welcome home  
party. Told him to call back  
tomorrow.

Paul accepts her answer.

PAUL  
Your parents didn't want to come,  
did they?

Stacy looks down at the floor, back at Paul.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
I understand.

STACY  
They're stubborn.

Paul smiles sadly.

PAUL  
In time, I guess. At least your  
sister seems to have come around.

Stacy plants a big kiss on Paul's lips.

STACY  
Let's go back to the party.  
(more upbeat)  
Your people await.

Stacy spins Paul around in his chair, wheels him back into  
the living room.

Meanwhile, Stacy's cell phone sits on the counter. It lights  
up and VIBRATES.

INT./EXT. ED'S CAR - PARKED - ACROSS STREET - CONTINUOUS

Ed sits parked across the street from Paul's apartment  
building. He listens to Stacy's voice mail.

STACY (V.O.)  
 (filtered)  
 You've reached Stacy Thompson.  
 Sorry I'm unable to take your call.  
 Please leave a message and I'll get  
 back to you as soon as I can. Bye.

BEEP. Ed slams his cell phone shut. Drops it onto the passenger's seat. He exhales through his nostrils, glares up at Paul's apartment building.

INT. PRECINCT - MERCER'S OFFICE - DAY

Detective Mercer sits at his desk and munches on a bagel. Sam Chandler sits across from him.

MERCER  
 What's the word, Mr. Chandler?  
 How's the jaw?

Sam shrugs.

SAM  
 Still clicks when I eat.

MERCER  
 Yeah? My old man had the same  
 problem. Used to annoy the shit  
 outta my mom.

Sam forces a nervous laugh.

MERCER (CONT'D)  
 How can I help you today, Mr.  
 Chandler?

SAM  
 (reluctant)  
 Last time we spoke, you asked me if  
 anything strange happened recently.

MERCER  
 You told me no.

SAM  
 Well...

MERCER  
 Well?

SAM  
 I was at this coffee shop about a  
 month ago. Had my kids with me.  
 (MORE)

SAM (cont'd)

And this man came up to me. He struck up a conversation. Talked to me like he knew me.

MERCER

But you didn't know him?

SAM

I thought I didn't remember. You know, on account of the head injury.

Mercer wipes his mouth with a napkin, waits for Sam to finish.

SAM (CONT'D)

He seemed to know an awful lot about me. Told me he knew me through a mutual friend. Only problem is that this mutual friend doesn't seem to know him.

Sam now has Mercer's full attention. Mercer scratches his chin in deep thought.

MERCER

You remember what he looked like?

SAM

He looked normal enough. But there was one thing. He had this... scar.

MERCER

Scar?

SAM

On his chin.

Mercer eyes the scar on Sam's chin.

MERCER

Like you?

Sam nods.

MERCER

Catch his name?

Sam nods, leans in close to Mercer.

SAM

Ed.

INT. SUICIDE PREVENTION CENTER OFFICES - NIGHT

Ed sits in a cubicle. Down in the dumps. Dark circles under his eyes. His office space cluttered and messy.

Ed speaks with a sad, monotone voice on the phone.

ED  
Thanks for calling The Suicide  
Prevention Center Hot Line. How can  
I assist you?

The SUPERVISOR, late twenties, wearing thick-framed lenses, pokes his head into Ed's cubicle.

SUPERVISOR  
Ed?

Ed looks up at Supervisor while on the phone.

ED  
(on phone)  
Please, hold.

Ed puts the caller on hold, gives Supervisor his full attention.

SUPERVISOR  
There's someone here to see you.

ED  
Yeah?

SUPERVISOR  
A Detective Mercer?

Ed's expression falls. Sheer panic. A million thoughts flashing through his mind. Ed takes a deep breath. Tries to maintain his composure.

INT. SUICIDE PREVENTION CENTER - BREAK ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A small room with a coffee machine and a mini-fridge in the corner. Posters line the walls with positive messages.

Ed and Detective Mercer sit across from each other at an oblong table. A tense silence as Mercer observes Ed carefully. Focuses on the scar that covers Ed's chin.

MERCER  
What's with the beauty mark?

ED  
It was years ago.

MERCER  
What was years ago?

Ed grows uncomfortable very quickly. Constantly touching his face. Shifting around restlessly in his seat.

ED  
I was mugged. Almost died.

Mercer nods, continues to eyeball Ed.

ED (CONT'D)  
Did I do something wrong,  
Detective?

MERCER  
I don't know. Did you?

Ed freezes up. Mercer laughs jokingly.

MERCER (CONT'D)  
Just messing with you. Only here to  
ask you a few questions, Ed. You  
don't mind if I call you Ed, do  
you?

Ed shakes his head.

ED  
You mind if I call you  
Detective?

Mercer chuckles, but maintains a serious expression.

MERCER  
Feel free, Ed. Whatever makes you  
comfortable.

Mercer shuffles through papers.

MERCER (CONT'D)  
The night of March 27th, say around  
11 p.m. You wouldn't happen to  
remember your whereabouts, would  
you?

Ed pretends to think hard. Shrugs.

ED  
I don't know.



Mercer reads over his paperwork.

MERCER

What about the night of March 29th?  
Around seven o'clock?

Ed feigns concentration. Pretending to think back.

ED

That was so long ago. I was  
probably here, working. Like I  
should be doing now.

MERCER

So... you say that you were  
working?

ED

Probably, yeah.

Mercer scratches his chin. Acting ironically puzzled.

MERCER

Because your supervisor tells me  
you've been working graveyard shift  
for three years. Midnight to eight.

ED

I pick up a lot of over time.

Mercer nods, jots something down. He studies Ed's body language. A prolonged stare.

MERCER

What's your relationship with Sam  
Chandler?

Ed's eye twitches a bit. He clears his throat, fakes a cough.

ED

Never heard of him.

MERCER

What about Paul Thompson?

Ed shakes his head before Mercer finishes the question.

ED

I really need to get back to  
work...

MERCER

Just one more question. I understand a few years back you were a suspect in the murder of an Amy Conway?

Ed snaps, pounds his fist on the table.

ED

What the fuck does that have to do with anything?

An intense stare down. Mercer nods. Gathers his paperwork and stands up.

MERCER

Thank you for your time, Ed.

Mercer smirks at Ed on his way out of the room.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Paul and Stacy lie asleep in bed, huddled close under the covers. Paul opens his eyes. The first thing he sees is Stacy. He smiles. Cherishing her beauty.

Paul sits up, kisses Stacy on the forehead. Her eyes remain shut, but she smiles.

STACY

Back to work today?

Paul smiles. Kisses her again.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - LATER

Paul and Stacy shower together. Sharing an intimate moment. Caressing each other. Steam pouring from the shower.

She kisses Paul on the mouth, grabs a towel and steps out of the shower. Paul finishes his shower alone.

Stacy dries off, stands in front of the sink. She wraps the towel around her head. Wipes fog from the mirror.

She grabs her toothbrush and a tube of toothpaste. But she stops. Stares at the tube annoyed. Fat at the bottom, thin at the top.

STACY

Hey, honey?

PAUL (O.S.)

Yeah?

Stacy catches a glimpse of herself in the mirror. Holds back.

STACY

Nothing.

EXT. TALL OFFICE BUILDING - DAY - LATER

Paul, spruced up in a suit and tie, briefcase in hand, weaves around PEDESTRIANS on the crowded sidewalks out front. A bounce in his step. Refreshed.

He enters the building.

INT. TALL OFFICE BUILDING - TOP FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Paul steps out of the elevator, turns into a hallway.

As Paul walks through, COWORKERS greet him with welcoming smiles.

COWORKER #1

Hey, Paul, good to see you.

Paul nods and smiles.

COWORKER #2

Welcome back, Paul.

PAUL

Glad to be back.

Paul reaches his office at the end of the hallway.

INT. TALL OFFICE BUILDING - PAUL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Paul enters his office, flicks the light switch on. He comes to a sudden halt. Looks around. He smiles and shakes his head at a display of flowers and balloons surrounding his desk.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Stacy stands at the counter and flips through mail. She stops at one envelope in particular. Thrown off. Befuddled.

She opens the envelope. Reads the contents -- FIREARMS PERMIT.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - DINING ROOM - NIGHT - LATER

A steaming pot roast sits at the center of the perfectly set dinner table. Paul enjoys his meal. Looks across the table to Stacy.

PAUL  
Real good, honey.

Stacy forces a smile. Not very happy with Paul. She slides the FIREARMS PERMIT across to Paul.

He looks down at it. Up at Stacy. She crosses her arms. Waits for him to explain himself.

PAUL  
What?

STACY  
A gun license?

PAUL  
Yeah?

STACY  
You can't buy a gun, Paul.

PAUL  
What's the point of having a gun license if I don't own a gun?

STACY  
Why would you even apply for a gun license?

PAUL  
Well, for one, I was brutally attacked and unconscious for over a month --

STACY  
Promise me you won't bring a gun into this house.

Paul rolls his eyes while chewing his food. He looks up at her. Wipes his mouth while nodding.

PAUL  
Fine. I won't bring a gun into this house.

Stacy doesn't buy it at first. But she nods. Goes back to her food. But she freezes up for a moment. Stops eating.

She looks down into her pocket. Her CELL PHONE glows while BUZZING quietly. On vibrate.

Stacy sees Paul preoccupied. Quickly checks the call ID. Keeping her phone low, under the table. One eye on Paul, the other on the phone.

She shuts her phone, slips it into her pocket. Tries to act natural.

STACY  
So, how was work?

PAUL  
Great. It feels good to be out and about again.

The HOUSE PHONE RINGS and alarms Stacy. Paul raises his eyebrow. Perplexed by Stacy's strange reaction.

PAUL  
Want me to get that?

Stacy immediately stands up, wipes her mouth and tosses the napkin onto the table.

STACY  
No honey, you eat. I'll get it.

Stacy hurries out of the dining room. Paul watches her curiously.

PAUL  
You know, you can just let the machine get it?

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Stacy plucks the phone off the wall, answers it.

STACY  
Hello?

INT./EXT. ED'S CAR - PARKED - CONTINUOUS

Ed sits in the driver's seat of his car, stares up at Paul's apartment building across the street.

ED  
Hey there, stranger.

STACY (V.O.)  
(whispers)  
Not now, Ed.

ED  
Then when?

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Stacy looks into the living room. Paul watching her closely.

STACY  
I'm sorry, you have the wrong  
number.

Stacy hangs up.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Stacy sits back down. Avoiding eye contact with Paul. She pretends to be preoccupied with her food. Paul analyzing her.

PAUL  
Who was that?

STACY  
Wrong number.

Paul glows with cynicism. Eyeing her suspiciously.

PAUL  
A lot of wrong numbers lately.

Stacy stops eating for a moment. Her guilty eyes focused down on her plate. But she continues to eat.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - LATER

Paul lies on top of Stacy. Makes intimate love to her. Face to face. Very sensual. Bedsheets cover them waist down.

Paul breathes heavy into her ear. Suddenly, Stacy wraps her thigh tightly around Paul's waist. Whispers into his ear:

STACY  
Fuck me.

Paul's eyes widen. Surprised. But he's turned on. He goes harder into her. Grunts. Thrusting into her harder and harder. Growing more and more intense.

Stacy moans in ecstasy. Digs her fingernails into his back. Scratches him.

PAUL  
(whispers)  
Ouch...

Paul seems disturbed. This isn't the same woman.

Stacy rolls him to his back. Hops on top of him. Dominates him. She pins his shoulders to the bed. Rides him hard and fast.

STACY  
Fuck me! Fuck me!

Paul enjoys every second of it. An unexpected pleasure. He shuts his eyes tightly. Climaxing.

Stacy screams with pleasure. Her eyes also shut tightly. Their bodies glistening with sweat.

Stacy exhales. Catches her breath. She plops down on top of Paul.

Paul appears puzzled. Staring up at the whirring ceiling fan.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - LATER

A tranquil silence broken by Paul occasionally snoring. The room dark.

Stacy's CELL PHONE VIBRATES and glows. Stacy opens her eyes. Half asleep. She reaches for her phone. Tilts it to see the caller ID.

She sighs. Frustrated. She shuts her cell phone off. Stares up at the ceiling. Worried and annoyed.

The HOUSE PHONE RINGS from the next room. Stacy sits up. Alarmed. In disbelief. Panic hits her like a bucket of water.

She turns to Paul. Sees him sound asleep. The HOUSE PHONE continues to RING.

Stacy creeps out of bed. Tiptoes to the bedroom door while keeping a close eye on Paul.

She leaves the bedroom. The door slightly ajar. Light from the kitchen slivers into the bedroom. Shining onto Paul's face.

He opens his eyes.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Stacy grabs the house phone from the wall. She stands in the corner of the room, as far away from the bedroom as possible.

STACY  
(whispers)  
Do you have any idea what time it is?

ED (V.O.)  
(filtered)  
When exactly did you plan on returning my call?

STACY  
Ed, I can't --

ED (V.O.)  
(filtered)  
You can't what?

STACY  
Please, Ed, I'll call you tomorrow.

ED (V.O.)  
(filtered)  
What time?

STACY  
I don't know... three o'clock?

ED (V.O.)  
(filtered)  
If you don't call --

STACY  
Ed, I'll call you, okay? Bye.

She hangs up. Sighs in frustration.

PAUL (O.S.)  
Who's Ed?

Stacy jumps. Startled. Paul stands at the bedroom doorway. Arms crossed.

Stacy takes a deep breath. Regains composure. Thinks fast.

STACY (CONT'D)  
That was Dad.

PAUL  
Sounded to me like you said Ed.



Paul inspects Stacy suspiciously. But acts normal again.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Then again, I was in the bedroom with the door closed. Everything okay?

STACY

Yeah, he was just... he's not feeling well.

Paul nods.

PAUL

All right.

Paul disappears into the bedroom.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

The sun peeks through the blinds in the window. The glare awakens Stacy. She opens her eyes.

She shuts her eyes and rolls over. Feels around Paul's spot in bed. She turns to see that Paul isn't there.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Paul paces while on the phone. Dressed in a suit, ready for work.

PAUL

(on phone)

That's right, just for a few hours. Say, till around five o'clock?

Paul sees Stacy in the kitchen. Turns his back to her. A private phone call.

PAUL (CONT'D)

(on phone)

I'd rent a car myself, but this was last second.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - LATER

Stacy stands in the shower. Vulnerable. A lot on her mind. She hears the door open. Slides open the shower.

Paul stands at the toilet, urinates. His back to her. He whistles a tune, seems upbeat.

STACY  
Hey, honey.

PAUL  
(cheerful)  
Hey.

STACY  
You were up early.

PAUL  
Big day at work. Guess I was just  
excited. How's your father?

STACY  
(delayed)  
He's doing better.

PAUL  
Good.

Stacy seems confused by Paul's upbeat behavior. Something's not right.

Paul zips up and flushes the toilet. Washes his hands at the sink. Still whistling.

A thick steam generates from the shower head. The hot water sings Stacy.

STACY  
Ouch!

Stacy moves to the back of the shower, away from the hot water. Paul dries his hands. Leaves the bathroom in a hurry.

EXT. PUBLIC PARK - DAY - LATER

A bright sunny day. Perfect blue sky. A constantly moving wave of PEDESTRIANS crowd the park and flood the sidewalks.

SKATEBOARDERS and TEENS loiter corners and park benches. DOG WALKERS peruse the sidewalks.

Ed sits alone at a park bench. Checking his cell phone frequently. Losing his patience.

Finally, he sees Stacy emerge from the CROWD. Ed's eyes light up.

She spots Ed. Seems less than enthused. Slowing down as she nears him.

Ed rises from the bench with open arms. He hugs her tightly, but she doesn't return the warmth.

Ed moves in for a kiss, but she offers him only her cheek.

He pulls back. Senses something off.

ED  
I've missed you.

Stacy avoids his comment, struggles to look him in the eye.

STACY  
We can't see each other anymore.

Ed slouches in defeat. Crestfallen. He waits for her to say more, but she doesn't.

ED  
Why?

Stacy finds this increasingly difficult.

STACY  
I love my husband.

ED  
Do you?

Stacy, fighting tears of guilt, nods.

STACY  
Yes.

Ed doesn't know what to say or how to act. The wind taken out of his sails.

STACY (CONT'D)  
I didn't think he was going to make it, Ed --

ED  
So, what was I then? A back up plan? Something to fall back on, just in case?

Stacy stares gloomy-eyed down at the ground. Anything she says will be the wrong thing.

ED  
(firm)  
Look at me.

She hesitates. Afraid to look at him. But she does. Ed wears his heart on his sleeve. Desperation palpable.

ED (CONT'D)

Did any of it mean anything to you?

Stacy contemplates her response. On the fence. She holds back tears. Shakes her head.

STACY

No.

Ed takes a step back. Devastated. He runs his hands through his hair and smooths his brow in frustration. Either about to cry or explode. Staring off into space. His mind scattered.

He turns back to her. Gazes at her coldly.

ED

Did you love him when he hit you?

STACY

(delayed)

Yes.

Ed leans his face in close to Stacy's. Intimidating her.

ED

Did you love him when I was fucking your brains out on my roof?

Stacy stares at Ed. Appalled. Furious but afraid at the same time. A tense silence.

STACY

If I ever see you or hear from you again, I will have you arrested.

Stacy turns her back to Ed and walks away.

A BLACK CAR sits parked nearby. At the curb. SOMEONE watching Ed.

EXT. ED'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY - LATER

Ed walks into his building. Suddenly, the BLACK CAR pulls up to the curb. Across the street.

Paul exits the car. He looks up at Ed's building. Approaches the front door.

He reads off a list of TENANT NAMES listed beside APARTMENT NUMBERS and buzzers.

Paul scrolls down the list with his index finger.

PAUL  
Where are you, Ed?

Paul's finger stops at E. WAYNE. The only first initial with the letter E.

PAUL  
There you are.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT BUILDING - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Stacy enters the building while rummaging through her purse. She digs out her cell phone and checks for messages.

As she nears the elevator, she runs into Detective Mercer.

MERCER  
Miss Thompson?

STACY  
Oh... Detective Mercer. How are you?

MERCER  
Not bad, yourself?

STACY  
I'm doing okay.

MERCER (CONT'D)  
Sorry to pop in like this. I just tried contacting your husband, but he doesn't seem to be home.

STACY  
He's at work.

MERCER  
Wasn't there when I stopped by.

STACY  
He must be busy.

MERCER  
Well, while I'm here, I was wondering if YOU had a a few minutes to talk.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Detective Mercer makes himself comfortable. Sits down at the table. Hangs his jacket on the back of his chair.

Stacy brings him a cup of coffee. He takes a sip. Impressed. He smiles and raises his cup to her in thanks.

Stacy grins. Sits down across from Mercer.

MERCER

How's Paul doing, anyway? Getting around okay?

STACY

Like nothing ever happened.

MERCER

That's great news, Miss Thompson. Good to hear.

STACY

So, how can I help you, Detective?

MERCER

Call me Bob. People call me Detective so much, I'm beginning to think it's my Christian name.

Stacy humors him with a smile.

MERCER (CONT'D)

Anyway, down to brass tacks, here.

Mercer sets a file folder on the table, flips through paperwork.

MERCER (CONT'D)

What do you know about a suicide hot line?

Stacy immediately freezes. A delayed reaction.

MERCER (CONT'D)

Because I went through your phone records and found the number for a Suicide Prevention Center Hot Line. It was dialed from your land line the night before your husband was attacked.

STACY

The night before?

MERCER

Yeah. Paul ever mention anything?

Stacy shakes her head, puzzled.

MERCER (CONT'D)

Does the name Ed Wayne ring a bell?

Stacy grows speechless.

MERCER (CONT'D)

Miss Thompson?

STACY

That's MRS Thompson.

Mercer eyes her suspiciously.

MERCER

Sorry if I offended you. I tend to refer to all women as Miss. It's something I do.

A DOOR OPENS OS. Paul walks into the room. Stops when he sees Mercer and Stacy.

Mercer stands up, shakes Paul's hand.

MERCER

Mr. Thompson.

PAUL

Detective Mercer.

Mercer sits down again. Paul sets his briefcase to the side. Shares a tense glance with Stacy. Looks back to Mercer.

MERCER

Tried getting in touch with you. A few developments concerning your investigation.

Paul leans against the wall. Acts nonchalantly.

PAUL

Any suspects?

MERCER

We'll get there. I was just talking to your wife about a suicide hot line I found on your phone records.

PAUL

Yeah. That was me.

Stacy narrows her eyes up at Paul. Confused.

MERCER

You remember who you talked to?

Paul shakes his head. Unsure.

PAUL

It's fuzzy.

MERCER

Because there was an attack very similar to yours a few nights before. Same injury. Phone stolen. An anonymous 911 call.

Paul gives Mercer a blank look. Doesn't see a connection.

MERCER (CONT'D)

Found it curious because the other victim in question ALSO made a call to the same suicide hot line. A night before his attack.

PAUL

Awfully coincidental.

MERCER

I don't believe in coincidences. Ed Wayne. You recognize that name?

Paul glances at Stacy suspiciously. Stacy wears her guilt on her sleeve. Mercer senses an awkwardness between the couple.

MERCER (CONT'D)

Well?

Paul shakes his head.

PAUL

Never heard of him.

Mercer shuffles through papers, scans each page.

MERCER

He works the phones there. His supervisor says he tends to get a little personal with his callers.

Paul shrugs, gives Mercer his best poker face. Mercer looks to Stacy, analyzes her closely.

MERCER (CONT'D)

What about you... MRS Thompson?



Stacy's nerves begin to unravel. She tries her hardest to keep her cool.

STACY

I already told you, no.

Mercer exhales through his nose. Frustrated.

MERCER

I'm asking you in particular because the phone number shows up twice. Once on the night before your husband was attacked. Once again about a month ago.

Stacy's heart races. A lump in her throat. Unable to respond.

MERCER (CONT'D)

If I'm not mistaken, your husband here was still in a hospital bed, catching up on his beauty sleep.

Stacy looks around the room. All eyes on her. Paul looks down and sees her knee shake nervously.

Stacy avoids eye contact with Paul. Looks to Mercer with a blank expression. She shrugs and shakes her head.

Mercer nods in disappointment.

MERCER (CONT'D)

Okay.

Mercer collects his files. Stands up and throws on his jacket. He slides his business card across the table to Stacy.

MERCER (CONT'D)

Thanks for the coffee.

Paul shows Mercer to the door. Stacy lets out a sigh. Starting to crack.

Paul returns. A stern look pasted to his face. He stands above Stacy with his hands on his hips.

PAUL

Anything you'd like to tell me?

Stacy tears up a bit. As if she wanted to come clean. But she doesn't. Only responds with a puppy dog look. Paul shakes his head at her. Storms off and leaves the apartment.

Stacy bursts into tears. Sobbing hysterically.

EXT. PAUL'S APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Detective Mercer leaves the building. He crosses the street, walks to his car parked at the curb. A silver sedan with OFFICIAL POLICE FORCE stickers on the windows. Another one on the license plate.

INT./EXT. ED'S CAR - PARKED - CONTINUOUS

Ed sits parked only a few car lengths behind Mercer. He watches Mercer closely. Bad intentions behind his cold gaze.

INT. BAR - LATER

A true dive bar. Street signs and license plates hang on the walls. Graffiti everywhere as if encouraged. A trashy dump.

The place nearly empty. Paul sits at the bar alone with his shirt halfway tucked in. Tie loose around his neck. A drunken mess.

He downs a shot and chases it with a pint of beer. He zones out. Bad thoughts running through his mind. Anger slowly rising to the surface. Reaching his boiling point.

INT. CORNER BODEGA - CONTINUOUS

A small mom-and-pop type shop. Only a few aisles. Minimal goods. Just the basics.

Detective Mercer leans over the counter. He slides a few bucks across the counter to HERMAN, the elderly cashier.

MERCER

Hey, Herman. I'll take the usual.

Herman pours Mercer a cup.

HERMAN

Black, right?

MERCER

Yes, sir.

Herman hands Mercer his coffee.

MERCER

How's the wife?

HERMAN

Getting older every day.

Mercer laughs.

MERCER  
Aren't we all?

EXT. CORNER BODEGA - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Mercer leaves, approaching his car parked out front. He sips his coffee, but quickly moves his lips away from the cup. Too hot.

As he reaches his car, his CELL PHONE RINGS. Mercer checks the display while opening the door.

INT. MERCER'S CAR - PARKED - CONTINUOUS

Mercer answers his phone while sitting down. Shutting the door behind him.

MERCER  
Hey, baby.

He listens while setting his coffee in a cup holder.

MERCER (CONT'D)  
Yeah, fix him a plate. I just talked to him, he's on his way.

Mercer listens. Checks his watch.

MERCER (CONT'D)  
I don't know. Maybe about a half hour?

He chuckles.

MERCER (CONT'D)  
Okay, I'll see you soon, baby.  
(beat)  
Love you, too.

Mercer hangs up. About to start the car. But he sees something in his rearview. Freezes. He adjusts the mirror. Sees Ed sitting in the backseat. Mercer keeps still.

MERCER  
(careful)  
What's up, Ed?

ED  
From here on out, it's Mister Wayne. Got that... Detective?

Mercer grins.

MERCER

Okay, then. Mister Wayne. Mind  
telling me what you're doing in my  
car?

Ed just glares at Mercer through the mirror. His silence  
menacing.

MERCER (CONT'D)

Breaking into somebody's car is one  
thing, but breaking into a cop's  
car?

(shakes his head)

Not wise, Mister Wayne. In fact,  
it's pretty stupid of you --

Ed shows Mercer his hammer. Gripping it tightly.

ED

Don't talk to me like you're better  
than me. Because I WILL hurt you.

Mercer eyes the hammer through the mirror.

MERCER

(careful)

I believe it. And I apologize if I  
sounded condescending. But I'm just  
a little confused as to what you're  
doing here.

ED (CONT'D)

What did you tell her about me?

Mercer wrinkles his brow in confusion.

MERCER

Who?

ED

You KNOW who.

Mercer, confused at first, smiles ironically and shakes his  
head in realization.

MERCER

I fucking knew it.

Ed holds up a file folder with his free hand. Tosses it onto  
the front passenger's seat for Mercer to see.

ED  
Sam Chandler, huh? After everything  
I've done for him?

MERCER  
You re-configured his face. You  
tried to kill him.

ED  
I didn't try to kill anybody.

MERCER  
Oh, yeah? What would you call it?

ED  
Ask him how his life was before I  
opened his eyes.

Mercer eyes Ed with a confound expression. He tries to understand.

MERCER  
Is that what you were trying to  
accomplish when you beat Paul  
Thompson into a coma?

Ed delays in riposte. Rather thrown off by the question.

ED  
That was different.

MERCER  
What about Amy Conway?

Ed glares at Mercer, appalled and shocked.

ED  
I was cleared.

MERCER  
Sad to say, but every once in a  
while the system lets one slip  
through the cracks.

Ed, ready to explode, tries to keep it together. He takes a deep breath and exhales through his nostrils.

ED  
I loved her.

MERCER  
Is that why you killed her?

ED  
I didn't fucking kill her!

MERCER  
She's buried six feet underground  
in some cemetery right now, Ed.  
What do YOU think you were doing?  
Opening her eyes?

ED  
Shut the fuck up!

MERCER  
I'm trying to understand, Ed.  
Because the way I see it, whatever  
you've been doing, you seem to  
think that there's nothing wrong  
with it.

Ed breathes heavily. Face red as he glares up at Mercer.

MERCER (CONT'D)  
You're sick, Ed. You need help.

Ed fights tears. Frustrated. Falling apart.

MERCER (CONT'D)  
(gentle)  
How about this? You let me take you  
to the station. We talk this over --

ED  
(explodes)  
No more talking!

Mercer nods. Shrugs.

MERCER  
Fine. Have it your way.

In a flash, Mercer grabs his steaming cup of coffee and  
splashes it back onto Ed's face. Ed screams in agony,  
covering his eyes.

Mercer pulls his gun. Points it into the backseat and POP!  
POP! The gun flash illuminates the car.

Ed opens the door and falls out.

EXT. MERCER'S CAR - PARKED - CONTINUOUS

Ed hits the cement. Wincing in pain. He looks at his arm. Blood soaking through his sleeve from a bullet wound. The blood drips down his forearm to his wrist.

Mercer opens his door and steps out with his gun drawn. But in the blink of an eye, Ed snatches his hammer from the street, gets to his knee and swings it at Mercer.

He hits Mercer in the hand. Mercer drops his gun. As it clanks against the street POP! The gun goes off on its own. But doesn't hit anybody.

Mercer runs after his gun, but Ed bashes him in the back of the kneecap with his hammer. Causes Mercer to drop.

But Mercer keeps the gun in his sights. He reaches for it. His fingers within inches of the handle...

Ed gets to his feet. Stands above Mercer. Flips his hammer around in his palm. Switches positions. He raises it into the air and WHAM! Sticks Mercer in the back of the head with the claw of hammer.

Mercer gags. His eyes wide. Paralyzed. His hand goes limp. No longer reaching for the gun. He falls to the street with the hammer sticking out from the back of his head.

Mercer lies motionless. Dead.

Ed tries to pull the hammer out, but it's stuck. He steps on Mercer's back for leverage. Yanks the hammer out. Blood spurts into the air like a geyser.

Ed looks around. He sees HERMAN standing outside the bodega watching in shock. Ed makes a run for it. Flees the scene.

A huge puddle expands around Mercer.

EXT. SAM CHANDLER'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT - LATER

Sam hugs one arm around a bag of groceries as he unlocks the front door. He swings it open with his free arm and holds it open with his foot.

BARBARA, Sam's wife, middle-aged and attractive, trudges through the doorway, her hands full with several bags of groceries.

Sam grins and gives her a peck on the cheek as she passes through.

SAM  
Got all that?

BARBARA  
My personal trainer would be  
impressed right now.

Sam laughs.

SAM  
Hell, I'm impressed.

Their TWO CHILDREN mosey on in after Barbara.

SAM  
All right, chitlins. Your beds  
await.

The Two Children share a collective groan in disapproval.

SAM  
Don't "oh" me. It's already an hour  
past your bedtimes.

INT. SAM CHANDLER'S APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

The Two Children follow Barbara up the stairway. Sam releases the door, lags behind. But the door doesn't close.

A hand reaches in, keeps the door from closing. Ed swings the door open wide, flashes in quietly.

Sam glances back, does a double take. Panic hits Sam when he sees the hammer in Ed's grip. Sam drops his groceries and tries to run.

SAM  
Barbara!

Ed raises his hammer while chasing after Sam. Barbara looks down the stairs. Her eyes widen in horror.

BARBARA  
Sam!

She grabs the Two Children, hurries them up the stairs.

WHAM! Ed bashes Sam in the back of the head. Sam collapses at the bottom of the stairs. Slams his chin against the edge of one of the steps. Dazed.

Barbara belts out an horrific shriek. She cries desperately for help throughout the scene. Unhinged chaos.



Sam rolls to his back and clutches the back of his head.  
Gushing blood.

Sam frantically tries to escape. He slowly slides up a few stairs, leaving a trail of blood.

Ed easily keeps pace, stands above Sam with his hammer ready.

ED  
After all I did for you, you  
ungrateful piece of shit!

SAM  
(gasping)  
Please... don't...

ED  
I gave you a second chance! I gave  
you back your fucking life!

SAM  
I'm sorry... I'm so sorry...

ED  
Look what you're making me do!

SAM  
No... please... no...

Ed nails Sam in the face with full force. Silences him. In a frenzy, Ed hits him again. And again. And again. The hard punishing cracks sound MUSHIER with each blow.

Barbara's horrific shrieks sound like they can break glass as she watches in horror.

Blood splatters everywhere as Ed continues to hammer away. Finally, Ed stops. The whites of his eyes bright in contrast to the crimson blood covering his face.

A long silence as Ed backs away in disbelief -- *What have I done?*

He looks up the stairs and sees Barbara on her knees, weeping hysterically.

He looks away, ashamed. Leaves the building drenched in blood.

INT. ED'S CAR - MOVING - LATER

Ed weeps hysterically while behind the wheel. He tries to make himself stop. Straining to hold it in. But it only makes it worse.

His knuckles white around the steering wheel, Ed glances into the mirror above the dash. His reflection alarms him. But he forces himself to look. His reflection soon calms him.

Ed wipes his eyes and turns his focus back to the road.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Stacy paces back and forth, tears in her eyes. A worried mess. She checks the clock on the wall. Repeatedly checks her cell phone -- NO MISSED CALLS.

STACY

Where the hell are you, Paul?

Suddenly, her BUZZER sounds loudly, gives her a bit of a jolt. She hits a button on the wall.

STACY

Yes?

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT BUILDING - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Ed stands with his face close to a speaker on the wall. He holds down a button next to the name THOMPSON.

ED

Stacy?

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Stacy freezes. Speechless at first.

ED (V.O.)

(filtered)

Can you let me in?

The hairs on Stacy's arms stand up. Frightened.

STACY

What are you doing here?

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT BUILDING - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Ed struggles for words.

ED  
I need to see you.

STACY (V.O.)  
(filtered)  
Ed? I need you to leave. Please?

Ed almost falls into tears.

ED  
Whatever Detective Mercer told  
you... they're all lies. I would  
never hurt you.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Stacy doesn't know what to say. But she's scared.

STACY  
If you don't leave... I'm gonna  
call the police.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT BUILDING - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Ed hangs his head in sadness. Heartbroken. He leans in close to the speaker, about to say something. But no words escape.

Ed stands there for a moment. But turns and leaves.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Stacy sits down at a table. Panic on her face. Hands on her knees as she wheezes for air.

Stacy picks up the house phone, about to dial when...

The HOUSE PHONE RINGS and startles her. She drops the phone to the table. Unsure of whether or not to pick up. The loud RINGING wracks her nerves.

Finally, the answering machine picks it up.

ED (V.O.)  
(on answering machine)  
Stacy? Please pick up?

INT./EXT. ED'S CAR - PARKED - ACROSS STREET - CONTINUOUS

Ed sits in his car and leaves a message for Stacy.

ED  
I left, just like you asked. Please  
pick up?

No response. Ed fights tears.

ED (CONT'D)  
I might have to go away for a  
while. I just wanted to see you one  
last time.  
(beat)  
You might hear some bad things  
about me. I just wanted you to  
know...

Ed clears his throat, tries not to cry.

ED (CONT'D)  
Just know that I love you.

INT. PRECINCT - KERR'S OFFICE - LATER

Detective Kerr sits at his desk. Somber. Staring down at a bloody cell phone. Files covered in blood dots. Mercer's badge.

Kerr opens the folder. Shuffles through files. Drops of blood on every page. Kerr shakes his head. On the brink of tears.

Suddenly, a PHONE VIBRATES. Mercer's phone. Stuttering upon the table.

Kerr flinches from the sudden movement. He eyeballs the phone for a moment. Finally, he answers.

KERR  
Hello?

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Stacy, shaken, speaks on the phone while holding Mercer's business card in the air.

STACY  
Detective Mercer?

INT. PRECINCT - KERR'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Kerr doesn't respond right away.

KERR

This is Detective Kerr.

STACY (V.O.)

(filtered)

May I please speak with Detective  
Mercer?

Kerr clears his throat. Wipes his eye. This is difficult for him.

KERR

He can't come to the phone right  
now. Can I take a message?

STACY (V.O.)

(filtered)

This is Stacy Thompson.

Kerr glances down at Mercer's case file and catches something. Reads her name on one of the files.

KERR

Is this about your husband's case?

Stacy stalls. Hesitant.

STACY (V.O.)

(filtered)

I really need to speak with  
Detective Mercer.

Kerr tries to pull himself together. Trying to sound more business like. Professional.

KERR

I'll be filling in for Detective  
Mercer from here on out. Any  
questions you have about the case,  
any information you have, I'm the  
one you talk to.

Dead air. Kerr waits for a response.

KERR (CONT'D)

Hello?

STACY (V.O.)

(filtered)

I'm here.

KERR

Are you gonna tell my why you're calling?

Stacy sighs on the other end. Apprehensive.

STACY (V.O.)

(filtered)

Ed Wayne just stopped by my home.

Kerr flips frantically through the case files. Stops at a page. He rises to his feet, immediately intrigued.

KERR

Ed Wayne, did you say?

INT. ED'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Paul tears the room apart. He rummages through dresser drawers, pulling them open. Neatly folded clothes in most of them.

He stops at the middle drawer. Tosses out several wrinkled plastic bags. Finds a box of Latex gloves and chucks it to the side.

He pulls out a ski mask, looks at it while holding it into the air. He sets it atop the dresser.

But he grinds to a halt. Pulls out a photo of him and Stacy. He eyes it curiously. Baffled.

INT. ED'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The doorknob jiggles. Turns. The door opens. Ed enters covered in red. Hammer hanging from his grip. Blood cascading down his arm from his bullet wound.

His hammer drips blood from the peen and claw. Everything crimson colored.

Ed shuts the door. Turns. He freezes when he sees Paul sitting on his couch, smoking a cigarette.

A tense silence as they behold each other. Sizing each other up. Paul can't help but be obfuscated by Ed's appearance.

But Paul catches sight of the bloody hammer in Ed's hand. Paul's eyes widen in realization. It all comes together. He rises. Draws a gun from his waist and points it at Ed.

Ed sighs in defeat. He looks at Paul with regret. Nods. Accepts his fate. He knows he deserves it.

POP! Paul SHOOTS Ed in the face. Ed topples over instantly.

Silence.

Ed's motionless body holds the front door open. A pool of blood expands from under his face. Cheek first on the floor.

Paul walks over to him. Looks down. He spits on Ed and steps over his body, walking out the door.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - LATER

Stacy stands over the sink, splashes water onto her face. She looks at her reflection in the mirror. Repulsed by what she sees.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Stacy walks in but halts suddenly. Paul sits on the bed. Hunched over. Head down.

She lets out a sigh of relief, presses her hand to her heart.

STACY

Oh, my God, Paul! You scared me!

Paul doesn't answer. He only wears a lost, faraway look.

STACY (CONT'D)

Where were you?

Paul shrugs sluggishly. Stacy takes a few steps further into the room. She sniffs the air.

STACY

You've been drinking.

Paul remains in his own world.

She continues to approach him. But stops cold upon sight of the gun sitting on Paul's lap.

Paul slowly lifts his head. Looks up at Stacy. Fingers the handle of his gun.

Stacy slowly inches back. No sudden movements.

STACY  
(careful)  
What are you doing with a gun,  
honey?

PAUL  
Did you love him?

Stacy doesn't say anything. Staring down at Paul's gun.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
Huh?

STACY  
Paul? Please put the gun down?

PAUL  
How long has this been going on?

STACY  
Paul... please...

Paul rises with the gun in his hand. He takes a few steps towards her.

PAUL  
Months? Years?

Stacy continues to carefully back away. Terrified. Overcome with fear. Frightened tears filling her wells. Chest heaving.

STACY  
(desperate)  
Paul... honey... please put the gun  
down?

PAUL  
Did you put him up to it?

Stacy backs into the wall by the mirror.

STACY  
(crying uncontrollably)  
Honey... you're scaring me...

PAUL  
I broke into Ed Wayne's home  
tonight.

He glances down at his gun. Looks up at Stacy again.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
And I killed him.



Stacy can't move back any further. Cornered.

PAUL (CONT'D)

He used a hammer to do what he did to me. But see, I was smarter than him. I used a gun.

Paul stands almost nose to nose with her. He gestures with the gun. Points it at her face.

PAUL (CONT'D)

And I pointed it at his face. Just like this. And then... I pulled the trigger.

Paul grabs Stacy by the throat with one hand. Pins her to the wall while waving the gun into her face.

PAUL

Did you love him?

Stacy gags while fighting for air. Slapping at his wrist. But unable to break free. Overpowered.

He sticks the gun into her cheek with even more force.

PAUL (CONT'D)

(explodes)

Did you fucking love him?!

Stacy shakes her head adamantly. Fighting for air. Unable to speak. Gasping. Face red. Paul's thumb pressed hard against her windpipe.

PAUL

I changed for YOU! I wanted to be a better man! For YOU! I did everything for YOU!

Stacy's eyes grow heavy. Losing consciousness.

Paul looks up. Catches a glimpse of his reflection in the mirror.

His rage dissipates. Softening. Falling into despair. Guilt.

He releases Stacy. She slides down to the floor onto her rear. She wheezes desperately for air while sobbing loudly.

Paul backs away. In shock. Disturbed by his own behavior. He sits at the edge of the bed.

Stacy stares at him sadly while getting her breath back. A long and somber silence.

STACY  
 (crying)  
 Paul... I love you so much...

Paul fights tears. He gazes down at his gun.

PAUL  
 I love you too, honey.

Paul places the gun under his chin.

STACY  
 Paul... NO!!!

The whirring ceiling fan spins. POP! Blood projects up onto the center of the fan. A mist of blood spatter spits from the fan blade like a sprinkler as it spins around.

Stacy cries hysterically. Screaming as blood slowly drips from the center of the ceiling fan.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - DINING ROOM - LATER

Stacy sits at the dinner table. Staring at a cup of coffee as POLICE swarm through her home.

Detective Kerr sits across from her. Takes notes. Dejected. Low-spirited. His head not all there.

STACY  
 He told me his wife died four years ago. Said her name was Amy.

Kerr flips through files sitting on the table.

KERR  
 Sorry, I'm still trying to catch up here...

He stops at a page. Narrows his eyes.

KERR (CONT'D)  
 Amy, you say?

She nods. Dabbing at her moist eyes with a tissue.

KERR (CONT'D)  
 Amy Conway?

Stacy shrugs. Not sure.

KERR (CONT'D)  
 Did Ed ever tell you HOW she died?

Stacy shakes her head.

KERR (CONT'D)  
She was murdered.

Stacy can't believe it. Blown away.

KERR (CONT'D)  
Amy Conway was having an affair  
with Ed.

STACY  
He killed her?

KERR  
He was charged. Tried in court. But  
he was cleared. Turns out it was  
her husband who killed her.

Stacy sips her coffee. She struggles to hold the mug. Her hand trembling. She sets the coffee down. She looks down to hide her tears.

Kerr observes her. Touches her hand. She looks up at him.

KERR (CONT'D)  
Do you have some place else to stay  
tonight?

STACY  
My sister's.

KERR  
Is it safe?

STACY  
Why?

KERR  
We believe Ed Wayne may have killed  
two men tonight.

STACY  
But he's dead, right?

KERR  
Stacy... we've searched Ed's home.  
He's not there.

The hairs on the back of Stacy's neck stand up.

EXT. WALTER'S HOUSE - NIGHT - LATER

A quiet suburban neighborhood lined with humble townhouses. Walter exits his home hauling a garbage bag out to the curb.

Walter seems cleaned up in contrast to the homeless junkie he once was. A street light shines onto his face and accentuates a brutal scar along the lining of his jaw. The bottom of his face disfigured.

Walter dumps the garbage at the side of the curb and dusts his hands off. He turns around and walks back to his porch. But he stops. Eyes suddenly wide.

Ed sits on the stoop. Elbows on his knees. Hunched over.

Walter carefully moves towards him. Squinting his eyes while slowly getting closer. Trying to make out who it is.

WALTER

Ed?

Ed keeps his head down.

ED

(speech impaired)

Walter.

Ed lifts his head. Looks up at Walter. Revealing a blood covered face. Grotesque bullet wound to the jaw.

WALTER

What the hell happened to you?

ED

I did some pretty despicable things tonight, Walter.

WALTER

(urgent)

We need to get you to a hospital.

ED

Just stay here and talk to me?

Walter grimaces at the sight of Ed's grotesque condition.

WALTER

Geezus Christ...

Ed remains in deep thought as Walter continues to inspect him.

ED

It all started with you, Walter.  
Everything I've done... it all  
started with you.

WALTER

Who did this to you?

ED

I wanted to kill you for what you  
did to me. I TRIED to kill you.

Walter leans in closer to Ed for a better look.

WALTER

Did someone shoot you?

ED

But the weird thing is... I felt  
guilt. I called every hospital in  
the city trying to find out if you  
were alive or not.

WALTER

Look at you, you're drenched...

ED

Then I saw how good things were for  
you after. And I thought to myself  
that maybe I found my calling. I  
thought that maybe I found a way to  
make my mark in this world.

WALTER

You're losing a lot of blood...

ED

And up until tonight I never cared  
to wonder why you attacked me.

WALTER

I'm calling an ambulance --

ED

(explodes)  
Just listen to me!

Walter nods. Gives him his undivided attention.

WALTER

I was a crackhead. I didn't have my  
head straight. I was desperate. I  
was angry.

(MORE)

WALTER (cont'd)

But I'm a different person now. And  
I have YOU to thank for that.

ED

But why did you do it?

Walter thinks back but can't come up with a logical  
explanation.

WALTER

I don't know, Ed. I don't know.

Ed studies Walter. Slightly perturbed.

ED

Did you feel guilty?

Walter thinks. Comes up empty.

WALTER

I can't even remember.

Ed hangs his head. Tears in his eyes.

ED

I thought I was doing something  
good.

WALTER

I know you did, Ed.

They share a deep silence. Ed looks up at Walter.

ED

Your family, they're inside?

WALTER

Sleeping.

Ed nods. Thinking to himself.

ED

You have everything a man could  
ever want, Walter. But you don't  
deserve it. None of them do. Not  
even me.

Walter eyes Ed peculiarly. Confused and concerned all at  
once. He grimaces at the sight of Ed's jaw wound.

WALTER

You need to keep pressure on that  
or else you're going to bleed to  
death. I'll get you some rags.

Walter moves past Ed. Back into his house. Ed remains on the stoop.

ED

I'm a monster. I know that now.

He gazes down at a hammer lying on his lap. He tightens his grip on the handle.

INT. WALTER'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Walter stands at the sink and dampens a few rags under the faucet.

EXT. WALTER'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Walter comes outside with a handful of wet rags. He stops. Looks around confused. Ed no longer there.

Walter continues to survey the area in search of Ed. Moving further out onto the porch. But no sign of him anywhere.

He stands with his hands on his hips at the edge of the stoop. Stumped. But he glances down. Sees a blood-covered hammer sitting at his feet.

INT. FUNERAL HOME - DAY

The tune from the organ only adds to the somber tone. A small showing of MOURNERS talk amongst each other softly. Everyone in black.

The closed casket sits at the front of the room amid a display of flowers, photos and other memorabilia.

Stacy slowly walks down the aisle. Approaches the casket.

She kneels down in front of it. Her head down. In tears.

She breaks down while staring at the casket. Knowing that her husband is inside of it. Still finding it hard to accept. Mixed emotions. Sadness. Guilt. Regret.

Stacy rises to her feet and just stares at the coffin. She shakes her head in despair. Wiping tears from her eyes.

A hand gently sets upon her shoulder. Startles her. She turns.

Detective Kerr stands there. Looking at the coffin.

KERR

I was in the neighborhood.

Stacy peers down at the casket again.

KERR (CONT'D)

How are you?

Stacy doesn't respond. Her face says it all. Kerr nods in comprehension.

They share a moment of silence while looking down at Paul.

Stacy grows increasingly distraught. Her thoughts tormenting her. Tears trickle down her face. Unable to hold it in anymore. She breaks down.

STACY

It's all my fault. Everything that happened. If it wasn't for me, he'd still be alive.

Stacy lets it all out. Hysterical. Kerr puts an arm around her. She weeps into his shoulder.

She eventually stops. Lets out a deep sigh. Trying to regain her composure. She wipes her tears. Forces a smile.

STACY (CONT'D)

Sorry about that.

KERR

It's okay.

She looks down at the casket. Kerr understands how she feels.

KERR

I lost my wife six months ago. Car accident. I was behind the wheel. Now, the accident itself wasn't my fault. Some drunk driver ran a light.

(beat)

We were on our way home. But I took a detour. I wanted to stop for cigarettes.

Kerr pauses for a few moments. Reliving the tragedy. Playing it through his mind.

KERR (CONT'D)

I took responsibility for it. Blamed myself.

(MORE)



KERR (CONT'D)

If I had just gone straight home,  
my wife would still be alive.

Kerr grows emotional. Battles tears. Stacy stares at him sympathetically.

KERR (CONT'D)

A good friend of mine told me that  
some things are just meant to  
happen. For us to learn from.

Kerr wipes his eyes. Tries to toughen up.

KERR (CONT'D)

I'm not sure if I've really learned  
much from it though. I stopped  
smoking. But I find it hard to  
believe that my wife died for that  
reason.

Silence.

KERR (CONT'D)

That car accident put me out of  
work for a while. And I can't help  
but think that if it wasn't for  
that accident, I would have been  
assigned to your husband's case.  
And Mercer would still be alive.

Kerr sighs. Takes a deep breath.

KERR (CONT'D)

But he's not. And that's the  
reality. Things happen. No matter  
how unfair it may seem, there's  
nothing we can really do about it.  
We all get there. One day. Some of  
us just go sooner.

Stacy nods. Kerr's words sinking in.

STACY

Someone once told that being close  
to death makes us appreciate life  
more.

KERR

Yeah? Find any truth in that?

Stacy thinks about it.

STACY

I don't know.

Kerr nods. Looks down at the casket again.

Kerr's CELL PHONE VIBRATES. He checks his phone display.  
Turns to Stacy.

KERR  
Duty calls.

Stacy nods.

Kerr extends his hand to her. She shakes his hand. Looks him  
in the eye. Shares his grief. On common ground.

Kerr digs into his pocket. Hands her his card.

KERR  
If you ever feel like talking.

She looks at the card and nods.

STACY  
Thank you.

He smiles warmly at her. Pays his respects to Paul one last  
time and leaves.

Stacy turns back to the casket. Looks down. Calms a bit.  
Tears dissipating. Starting to find acceptance.

Something catches her eye. Lying at the edge of the casket. A  
piece of folded paper.

Stacy slowly reaches for it. Unfolds it. It's a photo of her  
and Paul. The one Ed took from the hospital. A bloody  
thumbprint on it.

Stacy holds the photo tightly in her hand.

FADE OUT:

THE END