

THE RETAINER
by
Anthony Boyle

FADE IN:

INT. CHRYSLER AUTOMOBILE - NIGHT

MARK CELESTE, 17 years old, sits in the passenger seat, whereas KATO CEVILLE, 28 years old, sits next to him in the driver seat.

Mark is a very handsome young man. Kato, on the other hand, looks rougher around the edges. His eyes are bloodshot and glossed over.

The car is parked on the side of the street. In general, the area seems fairly desolate and quiet.

KATO

You owe me...fifteen-hundred dollars. And it's my fault. It's always my fault when someone owes me money. There was a guy who, I can't remember what his name was but anyway, he was a loan shark and sometimes, he used to give money to people that he knew weren't gonna be able to pay him back. Now that's kind of crazy, right? I mean, why would someone do that?

Kato leans over in his seat and sniffs a brown tinted, powdery substance. Judging from his sluggish demeanor, it's probably heroin.

KATO

(continuing)

Well, it gave him justification. He'd bring them down to his basement, tie them up, and have his way for as long as he felt like it. He was a sadist.

Mark stares at Kato for a moment, who glares back at him with his piercing blue eyes. Mark then nervously looks away for a moment. He's slightly intimidated.

MARK

I'm gonna pay you, Kato. You just have to give me a little time.

KATO

You've been saying that for quite a while now, Marcus. Your word is like a bad line of credit. I mean, I wish I was fucking stupid because then, I'd believe you and wouldn't have all this animosity on the inside. I'm running out of patience though, and that could turn into a tragic situation for people like you.

MARK

At least give me another week. I should have it by then.

Kato leans back, scratches his neck, and thinks about this for a moment.

He then reaches into the center console and pulls out a bundle of tiny plastic bags of dope wrapped in a rubber band.

He tosses the bundle on Mark's lap.

KATO

It's the last time, friend. I don't know how many times I've said that either but I can guarantee you, I ain't gonna say it again. If I don't hear from you sometime next week, we're gonna have a problem. That much, I could promise you.

Kato nods and smiles at Mark, who stares back at him for a moment.

He then opens up the passenger side door and exits the vehicle.

Kato watches through the windshield as Mark cuts across the front of the car and walks toward a car parked on the other side of the street.

INT. CELESTE FAMILY MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

DANNY CELESTE, 45 years old, clean-cut and handsome, stands in front of a mirror and puts on cufflinks. He wears a three-piece suit and tie.

ALLISON CELESTE, 44 years old, sits up in bed and reads a magazine. She looks much younger than her age. She's beautiful.

Danny looks at her in the reflection of the mirror as he works on a cufflink.

DANNY

What are we doing tonight?
Anything?

ALLISON

I'd rather stay home, but Lou and Diane absolutely insist on going to that new Italian restaurant.

DANNY

You feel like going out with them?

ALLISON

I don't know. Do you?

DANNY

I might be able to tolerate them.

Allison smiles.

DANNY

(continuing)

Are they gonna make reservations?

ALLISON

I don't know if we'll have to.

Danny makes a final adjustment on his tie and then walks toward Allison.

DANNY

All right. I'll call you later.

He leans over and kisses her cheek. He then grabs a briefcase off the floor and walks out of the bedroom.

INT. CELESTE FAMILY LIVING ROOM - DAY

Danny stares at Mark, who lies asleep on the couch in front of the television. A program in black and white is on, which appears to be about Nazi Germany.

Danny grabs the remote control from the table in front of Mark and shuts off the television. He then stares at Mark for another brief moment while he sleeps.

EXT. CELESTE FAMILY HOME - DAY

It's a beautiful day outside. The sun shines bright and there's not a cloud in the sky.

Danny backs a silver Lexus out of the garage and onto the street. He then drives down the road.

The Celeste home is gigantic, and all the other homes in their subdivision, within the surrounding area, are similar in size. Clearly, it's an affluent neighborhood.

INT. TRIAL COURTROOM - DAY

Danny paces back and forth in front of a jury of twelve people.

JOE BARRETT, 37 years old, the defendant, is rough looking but presentable. It's a minor contrast between his physical appearance and the expensive suit he wears.

He sits at a table next to another defense counsel, TOM KEEPS, 42 years old.

DANNY

It's my duty to remind you ladies and gentleman that, we cannot provide you with the murderer. That's not our job.

Barrett leans in closer to Tom and whispers something into his ear. Tom listens, and then nods approvingly.

Danny points at BILL CUTLER, 46 years old, who sits on the prosecution side with a couple other members of his team.

DANNY

(continuing)

The State has failed to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that my client is guilty. That in itself is one of the only facts in this case. When you go back for deliberations, I ask that each and every one of you think long and hard about this, and really digest what it means to not have even the slightest bit of physical evidence in a case. I want you to consider the many different circumstances in which this victim could've been murdered. I also want you realize that you're talking about a man's life, a family man, and his entire future. Ultimately, I ask that you all do what's in your hearts, and come back with a verdict of not guilty. Thank you.

Danny turns and walks toward his defense table. As he walks, Cutler gives him a cocky glance and slightly shakes his head.

INT. COURTHOUSE HALLWAY - DAY

Danny and Tom walks side by side in a high-powered manner.

DANNY

What'd you think?

TOM

It was good, but I think I saw it on television once before.

Tom smiles and looks over at Danny, who looks over at him and smiles back.

INT. CELESTE FAMILY BATHROOM - DAY

Mark walks in and locks the door behind him.

He sits down on the toilet seat and pulls out a spoon, a syringe, a lighter, and a bag of heroin from his pocket.

He cooks the heroin with the lighter. He draws some into the syringe and puts the needle in his arm.

He injects, and then closes his eyes and leans back on the toilet seat.

The sun rays shine in through the bathroom window, and bird CHIRPS can be heard from outside.

INT. DANNY'S OFFICE - DAY

The office is located on one of the higher floors of a building, and through the windows behind Danny's desk, there's a beautiful view of downtown Chicago.

Danny sits in a chair at his desk and flips through some files.

Tom sits in a chair across from him. He repeatedly tosses a stress ball in the air and plays catch with himself.

They both seem to be in particularly good moods.

TOM

You know, I've been thinking about having an affair.

DANNY

Yeah? With who?

TOM

I don't know yet. There's this girl who works at the deli over by my house. She's about seventeen years old.

Danny smiles and laughs a little.

TOM

(continuing)

I think I'm gonna ask her for her number.

DANNY

Yeah, and maybe she'll invite you to the prom next year.

Tom laughs.

TOM

How's everything over by you, Danny? How's your home life?

DANNY

You know, Tom, I ain't got too much to complain about these days.

TOM

It seems like that's my ultimate goal in life, you know? Just get through a single day without finding something to piss me off. It'd actually be kind of nice to even string a few of those together.

DANNY

Hey, now. Let's not get ahead of ourselves.

TOM

It's like, I clean one spot of the window, and another spot's dirty. I clean that spot, and find another spot that's dirty. And just when I think it's a hundred percent clean, I find something.

DANNY

Maybe you should buy a log cabin out in Montana and become a hermit then.

TOM

Well, that's actually the problem. I can't stand myself.

Danny grins and so does Tom.

TOM

(continuing)

When you wake up in the morning, what's the first thing that pops in your head?

DANNY

I don't know. Hope it's a good one, I guess.

TOM

When I wake up, I think to myself, "My God, is this ever gonna end."

DANNY

C'mon, now. You must get some enjoyment outta life, Tom.

TOM

Yeah, I need other people around. I get a lot of energy from criticizing their lives.

DANNY

(laughing)

You and Sherry feel like coming out to dinner tonight?

TOM

No, kid's ballgame.

Tom stops playing catch with the stress ball and begins to pull himself up and out from the chair. He sighs heavily.

TOM

(continuing)

You have fun though.

DANNY
I'll try.

TOM
Give Allison my best.

Tom extends his hand and Danny shakes it. He then nods and points at the giant stack of files and papers on Danny's desk.

TOM
(continuing)
And get on that, partner. But hey,
listen to me though. You did good
today. I'm proud of you.

Danny shakes his head and snickers, as he catches the playful sarcasm.

Tom winks at him and then walks toward the door to exit. He opens it and he's just about to leave.

DANNY
Tom?

He turns back.

DANNY
(continuing)
How are your kids doing?

TOM
(shrugging)
You know, they're teenagers. Kind
of smart asses. Think they know
everything.

DANNY
You ever get the idea they're up to
something?

TOM
No, I know they're up to no good.

Danny smiles and nods his head.

DANNY
Okay, at least I'm not the only one
then.

INT. LEXUS AUTOMOBILE - NIGHT

Danny drives down the road with a cellular phone held up to his ear.

His tie is now loosened and his suits coat rests on the passenger seat.

He seems slightly irritated.

DANNY

Listen, I can't talk about this right now. Why? Because Jerry, it's Friday and I'm fucking tired. Call me on Monday at the office and I'll see what I can do.

He flips the cellular phone closed and shakes his head a little in frustration.

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

There are tables set in a circle, with twenty or thirty people who sit in the chairs around it.

There are various cups filled with candy and coffee on top of the table.

The GROUP is mostly middle-aged men and women, but more men than women.

Danny closes his eyes and CHANTS with the rest.

DANNY

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

FRANK, 45 years old, sits next to Danny at the focal point of the circle.

FRANK

Welcome, everyone. My name's Frank and I'm an alcoholic.

GROUP

Hi, Frank.

FRANK

I've asked Danny to start us off tonight. I've sponsored Danny for many years, and I believe he sets a great example. He's been positive inspiration for many people in their quest for sobriety, and I'm grateful that we've had the opportunity to become such good friends over the years. So...here's Danny.

DANNY

Thank you, Frank. Hello, everyone. My name's Danny and I'm an alcoholic.

GROUP

Hi, Danny.

DANNY

I live a pretty good life today. I think that started when I finally just gave up and stopped trying to convince myself that I'm not an alcoholic.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

There are various bottles of beer and drug paraphernalia throughout the room.

Mark is with three other teenagers. He leans over a nightstand and sniffs a line of cocaine.

The other guys also break up lines and sniff them and socialize.

DANNY (O.S.)

But my life is still far from perfect. I always used to think that money, a big house, and nice cars would make me happy, when the truth is, I'm not happy unless I'm okay with how I feel on the inside.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Mark leans over the sink and runs his hands under the faucet. He splashes water on his face and rubs it off with a towel.

He looks at himself in the mirror and swallows hard. He's pale white, with a general expression of introspection.

DANNY (O.S.)

We all have problems. Sometimes, things happen that I'd rather not deal with. But I don't have to drink anymore because of them. And for the person I was ten years ago, that's nothing short of a miracle.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mark walks in and takes a seat on the floor next to JOHN FAXEL, 17 years old, and RYAN, 17 years old.

NATE, 18 years old, paces back and forth and holds his cellular phone up to his ear.

FAXEL

So yeah, he killed like fucking, ten million Jews.

RYAN

See, I never understood that. If there were ten million of them, why didn't they just fight back?

FAXEL

Well, let's see. They didn't have food. They didn't have guns.

RYAN

No, that's bullshit. If I was there, I would've fought back.

FAXEL

No, you would've shit your pants like everyone else.

MARK

Hey, fucking Einstein.

Faxel looks over at Mark.

MARK

(continuing)

Here's a fun fact. You need to shut the fuck up.

Ryan points at Mark.

RYAN

Thank you, Mark. It's about time someone told Faxel to shut his fucking face for once. It's like, he never stops. You can't bring this kid anywhere.

FAXEL

All right. You could both get fucked.

They all look over at Nate, who talks obnoxiously into his cellular phone. He seems irritated.

NATE

All right. All right, I don't give a fuck. Shut the fuck up.

RYAN

And who's he talking to?

FAXEL

Let's see. Probably that dumb cunt he likes to call his girlfriend.

RYAN

This kid's always on his phone. He should either just strap it to his head or invest in Bluetooth.

FAXEL

Hey, faggot. Get off your fucking phone.

Nate sticks up his middle finger and continues into his cellular phone.

NATE

All right. I said that's fine. I gotta go.

Nate flips the cellular phone closed and shakes his head in irritation for a moment. He then looks over at Mark, Fixel, and Ryan.

Fixel bites his lower lip and tries to hold in his laughter. Nate grabs a bottle top and throws it at him.

NATE

(continuing)

Fuck you, Fixel.

They all burst out into laughter and smiles.

INT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The restaurant is fancy and filled with people. Most everybody wears nice attire.

Danny and Allison sit at a table with LOU, 44 years old, and DIANE, 43 years old.

While Allison, Lou, and Diane socialize, Danny seems somewhat disinterested in the conversation. For a moment, he stares at a glass of red wine on the table.

Lou laughs and takes another sip. He seems to be mildly intoxicated. Danny then looks up and becomes a little more engaged.

DIANE

Well, it's true.

LOU

No, I don't agree with that. What do you think about that, Danny? Let's see what the big shot lawyer thinks.

DANNY

Lou, I haven't listened to a word you've said all night. If it's about religion or politics, count me out.

LOU

Good, because we were talking about famous singers.

DANNY

Well, I don't like music either.

Lou laughs.

DIANE

By the way, Danny, how's work?

LOU
Oh, God bless his little heart.
I'll never know how he does it.

DANNY
What's that supposed to mean?

LOU
I would never defend those
scumbags.

DANNY
Well, to you they're scumbags.
They're my clients.

LOU
Hey, you couldn't pay me all the
money in the world to even sit in
the same room as those fucking
animals, let alone stand next to
them.

DANNY
Everyone makes mistakes, Lou.
You're not perfect either.

DIANE
(mocking)
Yeah, Mr. Driving Under the
Influence.

Allison starts to laugh and Diane joins in. Danny and Lou
also crack smiles.

DIANE
(continuing)
It takes the Jaws of Life to pry
the car keys outta his hands. And
did you ever notice that?

ALLISON
Notice what?

DIANE
Getting a drunk person to
voluntarily hand over their car
keys is nearly impossible.

ALLISON
Danny was usually pretty good about
that.

Lou tilts his head back and thinks about this for a moment.

LOU
All right, I got a DUI. I drink
and drive every once in a while,
I'll admit that. But there's a
huge difference between doing that
and going around raping children.

DANNY

It's a matter of there being a balance in the justice system. You can't just have people locked up because you think they might've done something. It has nothing to do with guilt or innocence. It has to do with proof.

LOU

So, then you think if a guy is guilty and I mean like, guilty as sin, but the police fucked up and made a bad arrest or whatever, maybe fucked up the evidence somehow, then he should be let off?

DANNY

Yes. If the police botched the case then yeah, he should be let off.

LOU

O.J. should've been let off?

DANNY

If the police tried to plant evidence, then yes.

Lou takes another sip of his wine and playfully draws back a little.

LOU

Wow, Danny. You're a bigger scumbag than I always thought you were.

Danny smiles and nods his head jokingly. The rest of them also smile.

INT. AUDI AUTOMOBILE - NIGHT

Mark drives. Nate sits in the passenger's seat. Faxel and Ryan sit in the backseat.

RYAN

How do you figure that all girls are whores? I just wanna hear this new theory of yours.

FAXEL

There's only two women I know of who aren't.

MARK

Who's that?

FAXEL

My mother and the Virgin Mary.

NATE
Are you kidding, Faxel? Your
mother's the biggest whore of them
all.

RYAN
(laughing)
Yeah, Faxel. Sure enough, it's the
one guy in this car who doesn't
have a girlfriend who thinks
they're all whores.

FAXEL
Wait a minute, Ryan. That creature
you've been bringing around is a
girl?

Mark smiles and Nate tries to hold in his laughter.

FAXEL
(continuing)
What's her name again?

RYAN
Jenny.

FAXEL
Dude, I thought it was Johnny. Are
you fucking serious? I thought it
was a guy with long hair.

RYAN
At least I could get a girl.

FAXEL
Ryan, I'd rather fuck your mom than
go anywhere near that fucking
tranny.

MARK
All right, both of you knock it
off. You're both a couple homos.
Ryan, since you're my friend and I
love you, I'll be honest, that girl
is the most disgusting thing I ever
laid eyes on.

Faxel laughs and so does Nate.

Mark then looks in the rearview mirror at Faxel and
snickers.

MARK
(continuing)
And what the fuck are you giggling
about, Faxel? The fact that you're
uncomfortable with your sexuality
is so painfully obvious, you might
as well just wear a sign that says,
"I'm fucking gay."

FAXEL

Mark, your head's so far up Molly's ass, I'm surprised you don't have shit all over your face.

MARK

I'm not pussy whipped at all.

FAXEL

Yeah, and Nate doesn't like to suck dick either.

NATE

Only your mother's, Faxel.

MARK

Oh, shit.

Mark puts his fist up in the air and Nate gives him a fist bump.

Ryan laughs and Faxel smiles.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT

There are various apartment buildings in a cul-de-sac.

The Audi automobile pulls into the area and stops in front of one of the buildings.

INT. AUDI AUTOMOBILE - NIGHT

Mark looks in the rearview mirror at Faxel.

MARK

Does he know I'm with you?

FAXEL

No, he just said to stop over.
Why?

MARK

All right. I'm gonna give you the money and you go up. Do not tell him I'm with you.

NATE

Why does that matter?

MARK

Because I owe him a shit ton of money and if he knows I'm here, he's probably gonna come down and murder every one of us.

NATE

Yeah, I'm not one of his biggest fans either.

Mark hands a roll of bills back to Faxel.

MARK
You came here by yourself.

FAXEL
All right.

Faxel gets out of the car and walks toward the front door of the apartment building.

INT. KATO'S APARTMENT LIVING AREA - NIGHT

The sound of rap music comes out from speakers somewhere.

There are three KNOCKS on the door. A moment later, Kato opens the door and Faxel enters the apartment.

There are a few guys and girls that hang out on the couches. There are beer cans, a bong, and other drugs on the table.

The people that hang out appear to be in their late 20s and early 30s, white trash at best.

KATO
Hey, friend. What's going on?
Faxel nods.

KATO
(continuing)
Come in, man. Come here. I gotta show you something real quick.

Kato walks past everybody in the apartment and Faxel follows him into another room.

INT. KATO'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Kato opens a long, rectangular box that sits on his bed.

KATO
Check this fucker out.
He pulls out an AR-15 semi-automatic rifle.

FAXEL
Holy shit.

KATO
Yeah, you like that?

He inserts a clip and then points the gun right at Faxel's face. Faxel covers up and frantically turns away.

FAXEL
Dude, what the fuck? C'mon, man.

KATO
(laughing)
I'm gonna use this one day. I already feel bad for that guy.

FAXEL

Jesus.

Kato tosses the weapon on his bed. He then walks over to his window and peeks out for a moment.

He then looks back over at Foxel.

KATO

Who you here with?

FAXEL

I came by myself.

KATO

Yeah? I don't have to go downstairs and look now, do I? You wouldn't lie to me now, would you?

FAXEL

Why would I lie about that?

KATO

What about Mark Celeste? Where's he?

FAXEL

(shrugging)

I don't know. Probably just hanging out with his girlfriend.

KATO

You know why I'm asking, right?

FAXEL

No, why?

KATO

I don't know. I don't think he respects me.

FAXEL

What do you mean?

KATO

He's like, one of those typical suburbanite white kids who doesn't mind buying drugs off a guy like me, doesn't mind when I'm helping him out, but at the end of the day I'm just a piece of shit to him. And you know what? It hurts on the inside.

FAXEL

I don't think he feels that way.

KATO

See, that's what I like about you, Johnny Boy. You're more my type.

Kato reaches into the rectangular box and fiddles through a couple bundles of cash and a large bag filled with dope.

KATO
(continuing)
I'd like to be friends with Marcus too, but I don't think he likes me. Do me a favor, will you?

John nods.

KATO
(continuing)
Next time you talk to Mark, could you find out why he doesn't like me?

INT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Danny, Allison, Lou, and Diane continue to socialize.

In the background, an orchestra of men, who all wear tuxedos, play violins.

LOU
You know, you make it so obvious that you're a lawyer.

DANNY
How's that?

LOU
Because if there's one thing in this world that you hate the most, it's when you're proved wrong.

DANNY
No...I just don't like when people always think they're right.

LOU
You just can't handle the fact that I've taken your argument and turned it into confetti.

DIANE
Lou, have another drink.

LOU
I'll go back and forth with you all night, Danny.

DANNY
Maybe you should've went to law school.

DIANE
Are you kidding? He barely graduated college.

Allison laughs.

DIANE
(continuing)
Too many bong rips.

LOU
Where did you rank in law school
anyway? Bottom five percent?

DIANE
Lou...

LOU
C'mon, I'm fucking around.

DANNY
(smiling)
Actually, I was number one in my
class.

DIANE
Get outta here.

ALLISON
He was.

LOU
Geez, how'd a degenerate like you
pull that off?

DANNY
I actually went to class.

DIANE
Well, there's a concept. That
might've worked out to your
benefit.

LOU
I didn't need to.

ALLISON
How come?

LOU
Because I was smarter than all my
teachers.

They all laugh in unison.

INT. LEXUS AUTOMOBILE - NIGHT

Danny drives and Allison sits in the passenger seat. They
both seem rather happy and lighthearted.

Allison laughs a little bit. Danny smiles.

ALLISON
God, he's so funny.

DANNY
I don't know how she puts up with
him. The guy never shuts up.

ALLISON
He's hysterical.

DANNY
He's obnoxious.

Allison smiles and stares out the window. Danny keeps his eyes on the road for another moment and suddenly, his cellular phone RINGS.

He reaches into his pocket, pulls it out, and looks at the caller identification.

ALLISON
Who's that?

DANNY
I'm not sure.

Danny flips the cellular phone open and puts it up to his ear.

DANNY
(continuing)
Hello?

INT. CHICAGO POLICE STATION HOLDING ROOM - NIGHT

Mark sits in a chair in front of a table and holds a phone up to his ear. Two other police officers, dressed in full uniform, stand nearby.

MARK
Dad?

INT. CHICAGO POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Danny sits in a chair across from SERGEANT BUCHANAN, 45 years old, who sips a cup of coffee.

He's dressed in full uniform, but opposed to the other officers who wear blue, his shirt is white. His name is indicated on a silver nametag attached to his shirt.

Danny leans forward in his chair. The general look on his face is that of worry. Sergeant Buchanan leans back in his seat, rather nonchalant.

BUCHANAN
They pulled him over on Archer for
not signaling. That's when the
officer noticed the car smelled
like alcohol.

DANNY
Did they field sobriety test him?

BUCHANAN
No, he refused it.

DANNY
Then I'm assuming he didn't
breathalyze either, right?

BUCHANAN
Right.

DANNY
Did he sign anything?

BUCHANAN
No. He told us he was gonna wait
for you.

Danny shakes his head in frustration.

BUCHANAN
(continuing)
He gave the officer permission to
search him and the vehicle. That's
when he found the narcotics. They
were tucked in his shoe.

Danny continues to shake his head in frustration. He looks
over and sees Mark through the holding room glass window.

INT. CHICAGO POLICE STATION HOLDING ROOM - NIGHT

Mark sits in a chair and sits down across from OFFICER
HEALY, 42 years old.

His name is indicated on a nametag attached to his uniform.

HEALY
How come you're afraid to give me a
name?

MARK
I'm not afraid. I just don't see
what the point is.

HEALY
You'd be helping us out.

MARK
Yeah, but how's that supposed to
benefit me?

HEALY
Don't you wanna stop the guy that's
getting people hooked on this shit?

Mark shakes his head in disbelief.

MARK
What the fuck do you think I am?
I'm not a cop.

HEALY

You help us, we'll help you. We let the judge know you were cooperative, and he'll probably give you leniency.

MARK

Look, I might be a retard but I'm not fucking stupid.

HEALY

What's stupid about it?

MARK

C'mon, man. You got what you wanted. I'm not mad at you guys. It's my fault. Just let me suffer the consequences and leave it at that.

INT. CHICAGO POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Danny looks at his wristwatch, and then back at Sergeant Buchanan. He then seems to gain composure.

DANNY

Look, could we just work this thing out ourselves? I mean, he's seventeen years old. You know, I don't think it's necessary we put him through the whole process over this. The DUI is one thing, but this other stuff. It gets put on his record then. It's just a big mess, especially when I'm gonna personally make sure he gets the help he needs. You know what I'm talking about?

Sergeant Buchanan sighs.

He then shakes his head slowly, and leans forward in his chair.

BUCHANAN

Lookit. Ten years ago, I would've probably sent the kid home myself. Believe me, I don't wanna fuck up his life. But the politics have changed. They don't care who you are anymore. They'll get rid of us for misconduct. Nobody's gonna risk losing their job over something like this. Plus, it's not like he was caught with a little half a joint or something. I mean, it's twenty bags of heroin.

Danny reluctantly nods.

BUCHANAN
(continuing)
I know it ain't Pablo Escobar, but
it's certainly enough.

Danny looks over at Mark again through the holding room glass window and frustratingly shakes his head again.

INT. BOND COURTROOM - DAY

Mark stands in front of a podium before JUDGE OFFREY, 57 years old.

Danny stands next to him and Allison sits in the audience area.

OFFREY
Okay...ten thousand dollar I-bond.
Next court date is set for the
21st, by agreement.

DANNY
Thank you, Judge.

Mark is led to another room with one of the bailiffs, and Danny walks toward the normal exit. Allison follows him out.

EXT. COURTHOUSE PARKING LOT - DAY

Danny walks alongside Allison and holds his cellular phone up to his ear.

DANNY
Hey, Mike. Sorry I'm running late.
Something came up. I'll see you
there in an hour.

Danny flips the cellular phone closed.

ALLISON
What's gonna happen now?

DANNY
They're gonna release him in a
couple hours. Bring him home and
don't let him leave. I'm gonna
meet with this guy real quick and
we'll get this straightened out
when I get home.

Danny presses the button on his key chain to unlock his Lexus automobile. They stop in front of the car.

Danny looks over and notices the worried look on Allison's face.

He walks closer to her and reassuringly grabs both of her shoulders with his hands.

DANNY
(continuing)
Hey...he's gonna be fine. We'll
get this straightened out. Okay?

Allison slowly nods her head and watches as Danny opens the door to the Lexus automobile, steps inside, starts the engine, and drives off.

INT. BAR AND GRILL RESTAURANT - DAY

Danny enters. He looks around for a moment and then sees MIKE, 44 years old, who sits at a table by himself.

A bottle of beer sits on the table in front of him.

As Danny approaches, Mike then stands up and shakes his hand.

MIKE
Hey, Danny.

DANNY
How you doing, Mike?

MIKE
What do you want? You want a beer?

They both sit down. The waitress then walks over. Danny looks up at her.

DANNY
Just a water's fine. Thanks.

MIKE
Is everything all right?

DANNY
Yeah, sorry I'm late. I'm just going through something with my kid right now. It's a nightmare to say the least.

MIKE
Yeah, I know that look. What is it? Drugs?

DANNY
Yeah, I don't know what's going on with him.

MIKE
Hey, you could tell me, Danny. I've been through it myself. Why me, right? I had the same problem with Chris, my youngest. I got him into rehab. He's been clean ever since. That was like, five years ago.

DANNY

Mark has some problems right now.
I'll leave it at that.

MIKE

Get him in one of the programs. If
it could work for my kid, God knows
it could work for yours.

DANNY

Yeah, we'll see.

Danny sits back in his chair and looks around the place for a moment. The waitress comes around and puts his glass of water on the table. He then takes a sip.

DANNY

(continuing)

Now, tell me exactly what happened
with your brother.

MIKE

Well, I'll start off and tell you
right off the bat, he has a
gambling problem. He goes in and
out of GA. It's bad. So,
apparently he's in like, ten or
twelve grand to this guy. And the
guy keeps calling and calling.
He's not picking up. Finally, the
guy goes to his house and he's not
home, so he tells his wife that if
he doesn't get his money by so and
so date, he's gonna kill the whole
family. Kids and everything.

EXT. SOUTHSIDE CHICAGO NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY - (FLASHBACK)

MIKE'S BROTHER, 39 years old, carries a wooden baseball bat
and walks across the street toward the BOOKIE, 42 years old.
He doesn't see Mike's brother approach.

The bookie just gets done locking up the door to his
vehicle, and then starts to walk toward the front door of
his home.

The bookie waves to another man across the street, who
tosses a baseball back and forth with his young son. The
man waves back.

BOOKIE

Hey, how you doing?

He continues forward and walks across his front lawn toward
the front door of his home.

Mike's brother approaches closer and closer.

MIKE (O.S.)

So, what does he do?

Mike's brother raises the bat above his head.

MIKE'S BROTHER
Hey, fuckface!

Just as the bookie slightly turns around, he's CRACKED in the side of the head with the bat.

He immediately falls to the ground.

Mike's brother raises the bat again and CRACKS him.

MIKE'S BROTHER
(continuing)
Huh? You wanna fuck with me?

He beats him multiple times with the bat. His face is completely red. He's completely enraged.

MIKE'S BROTHER
(continuing)
I'll fucking kill you!

Across the street, the neighbors look on in absolute horror and shock.

The sounds of various SCREAMS can be heard, along with the sound of flesh being POUNDED.

INT. BAR AND GRILL RESTAURANT - DAY

Mike stakes a sip of his beer.

MIKE
He's completely fucking vegetated.

DANNY
What do you want me to do?

MIKE
He needs a lawyer. A good lawyer.

DANNY
How does he expect to pay me? I mean, if he couldn't pay this guy then-

MIKE
I'll take care of that.

Danny thinks about this for a moment.

DANNY
For a case like this, Mike, I charge a ten-thousand dollar retainer fee, and additional fees based upon the amount of time I have to spend on the case. Did he make bond?

MIKE

No, I can't afford that right now.

DANNY

Well, I take cash or credit. I'm gonna tell you though, friendship aside, I won't even look at his file until I get the initial payment. Okay? If you wanna shop around-

MIKE

Look, you don't have to sell me on it, all right? I know you're the best. Just do what you have to do and you'll get your money.

DANNY

(nodding)

Fair enough.

Danny takes a sip of his water.

DANNY

(continuing)

What's going on with you? Are they still trying to take your badge away?

MIKE

I don't know, Danny. I don't know half the shit that's going on in my own life right now.

Mike shakes his head in frustration.

INT. LEXUS AUTOMOBILE - DAY

Danny drives and holds his cellular phone up to his ear.

DANNY

What do you think I should do?

EXT. GOLF COURSE - DAY

Frank stands on the tee box with three other guys, who tee up their balls and get ready to swing away.

Frank holds his cellular phone up to his ear.

FRANK

If you think it's serious, I'd say to get him in rehab.

INTERCUT BETWEEN DANNY AND FRANK

DANNY

It's heroin. I never heard of a recreational heroin user.

FRANK
Send him then. Send him tomorrow.
It couldn't hurt, right?

INT. LEXUS AUTOMOBILE - DAY

Danny nods.

DANNY
All right. I'll keep you posted.
Thanks, Frank.

FRANK (O.S.)
(filtered)
Hang in there, guy.

Danny flips the cellular phone closed and stays focused on the road ahead of him.

INT. CELESTE FAMILY LIVING ROOM - DAY

Danny and Allison sit on a couch next to one another. Mark sits on a couch across the way from them.

Mark doesn't look too good.

ALLISON
Mark, how long?

MARK
I don't know. Probably a year.

DANNY
You're going to a twenty-eight day
program starting tomorrow,
understood?

Mark nods. His eyes are barely open.

DANNY
(continuing)
They'll help you.

Suddenly, Danny's cellular phone RINGS. He reaches into his pocket, flips it open, and puts it up to his ear.

DANNY
(continuing)
Hello? Yeah?

He then stands up and walks into another room. Allison stays seated and looks at Mark with pity in her eyes.

ALLISON
I love you, Mark. You know that,
right?

Mark just stares at the ground. He's in no condition. They just sit together in silence for a moment.

INT. CELESTE FAMILY MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Danny and Allison both lie in bed. They both have their eyes open and stare at the ceiling.

They sit in silence together for a moment.

DANNY

If anything, it's my side of the family. Why do you think I don't talk to half of them?

ALLISON

I feel like it's my fault somehow.

DANNY

That's a typical reaction.

ALLISON

How do you feel?

DANNY

I feel like it's my fault somehow. But it's really nobody's fault. And you have to remember, people get through this stuff. I see people that are much worse off than Mark completely turn it around. I see it all the time.

Danny then turns over on his side, whereas Allison keeps staring at the ceiling.

INT. MARK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mark lies in bed with his cellular phone up to his ear. On the other end of the line is MOLLY, 17 years old.

MOLLY (O.S.)

(filtered)

When are you leaving?

MARK

Tomorrow morning.

MOLLY (O.S.)

(filtered)

Are you gonna be okay?

MARK

I don't know yet. It's hard to say.

INT. MOLLY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Molly lies on her stomach in her bed and holds her cellular phone up to her ear.

She's a brunette, wears glasses, and is very attractive.

MOLLY

You have to stop hanging out with Fixel and them. They don't care about you. They just wanna bring you down with them. I mean, we used to hang out pretty much everyday, and then all of the sudden, they became more important to you.

INTERCUT BETWEEN MARK AND MOLLY

MARK

Well, when I get back, would it be okay if you and I start all over again?

MOLLY

Mark, that's mostly up to you. But you're gonna be the one who has to make changes. I'll talk to you later though, okay?

INT. MARK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mark pauses for a moment.

MARK

Molly...I'm really sorry.

MOLLY (O.S.)

(filtered)

Call me later.

Mark flips the cellular phone closed. He then turns over in his bed and lies on his side.

INT. CELESTE FAMILY BATHROOM - DAY

Mark is on his hands and knees, hunched over the toilet seat. He vomits violently.

Danny and Allison stand in the doorway and watch. They both have distraught looks on their faces.

INT. DETOX CENTER ROOM - DAY

Mark lies in a hospital bed with an IV stuck in his arm. He looks doped up and ill.

Danny stands near a male DOCTOR, 40 years old.

DOCTOR

We detox him first. After this, he'll be sent to the rehabilitation center.

DANNY

How long's he gonna be here for?

DOCTOR
Probably four or five days.

Danny takes another look over at Mark. He slowly shakes his head.

The doctor looks over and notices this.

DOCTOR
(continuing)
I know it looks bad now, but we make it so the detox is relatively quick and painless. This is actually the easy part.

DANNY
And then he has to deal with life, right?

DOCTOR
Now that's never easy.

Danny looks over at Mark one last time. He then pats the doctor on the shoulder.

DANNY
Doc...thanks for everything.

The doctor nods.

Danny walks toward the exit of the detox room and into the hallway area, where Allison stands near the doorway.

He signals at her with his head, indicating that it's time to leave.

INT. LEXUS AUTOMOBILE - NIGHT

Danny drives and Allison sits in the passenger's seat. Danny looks over at her and sees that tears have welled up in her eyes.

He reaches over and puts his hand on her shoulder. She grabs his hand with one of hers and continues to cry softly.

INT. TRIAL COURTROOM - DAY

There is a general sense of calm.

The courtroom is filled with various people, which includes lawyers, family members, friends, and the media.

Danny, Tom, and Barrett are all on their feet in front of a male JUDGE, 59 years old.

There is a female JURY MEMBER, 38 years old, who also stands.

JUDGE
Have you reached a verdict?

JURY MEMBER

We have, Your Honor. In the case of the People of the State of Illinois versus Joseph Edward Barrett, we the jury, in the above-entitled case, find the defendant not guilty of the crime of murder in the first-degree.

There is a sudden UPROAR in the courtroom. Barrett pumps his fist and slaps both Danny and Tom on their backs.

INT. COURTHOUSE HALLWAY - DAY

Barrett walks alongside Danny and Tom.

News reporters and other members of the media surround them as they walk.

All of their faces are lit up by flash photography.

MEDIA MEMBER #1, 27 years old, carries a video camera on his shoulder and walks alongside them.

MEDIA MEMBER #1

Mr. Barrett, how does it feel to be a free man?

BARRETT

It's one less thing to worry about. I got a family to take care of.

A female MEDIA MEMBER #2, 33 years old, chimes in.

MEDIA MEMBER #2

What are your plans for the future?

BARRETT

My wife's in the hospital right now. We got a new baby on the way. The first thing I'm gonna do is go say, "Hello."

Barrett grabs the shoulders of Danny and Tom.

JOE

(continuing)

I don't know if it'd be possible without these two.

The entire GROUP OF MEDIA, various men and women, all fire comments at once in a disorganized fashion.

GROUP OF MEDIA

Mr. Barrett! Mr. Celeste! Mr. Keeps!

As they pass, Cutler stands off to the side with another female MEDIA MEMBER #3, and a cameraman.

She holds up a microphone.

MEDIA MEMBER #3

Mr. Cutler, how do you feel about the verdict?

CUTLER

My prosecution team and I did everything in our power to try and bring Mr. Barrett to justice. Overall, the witnesses showed great resolve in this case. But that's really all I got time for right now. Thank you.

Cutler turns away and walks off. She follows him down the hall as he ignores her.

MEDIA MEMBER #3

Mr. Cutler?

INT. DANNY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

A bottle of champagne POPS open and fizz pours out from the top.

Danny sits with his feet up on his desk. He watches the large, flat screen television propped on the wall.

TOM

This is what it's all about, my friend.

He pours himself a glass.

TOM

(continuing)

Saving lives and not even having to cut people open.

DANNY

I wouldn't go that far, Tom. Something gives me the impression that Mr. Barrett wouldn't have too much trouble surviving prison. It'd probably be good for him.

TOM

Man, you really think he did it, don't you?

DANNY

Why? Don't you?

TOM

I don't know and quite frankly, I don't wanna know. I'm certainly not gonna lose any sleep at night over it.

DANNY

Well, I never said he did it either. As usual, you just took what I said outta context.

TOM

But you implied it, and as far as I'm concerned, you might as well have just come out and said it.

Tom takes a sip of his champagne.

TOM

(continuing)

And I thought we agreed a long time ago to never have this conversation when a client gets an acquittal.

DANNY

You know what? To be honest, I don't give two shits if he did do it.

Danny turns the television off with a remote control. He then brings his feet down from off his desk.

He then stands up.

DANNY

(continuing)

As long as he gives me the money he owes me, he could murder my sister-in-law for all I care.

TOM

(laughing)

What about your mother-in-law?

DANNY

Her too. In fact, the whole side of that family, and most of mine. I'd be okay with it.

They both crack smiles and laughs. Danny walks toward the door.

DANNY

(continuing)

I'm going home. Lock it when you leave and stay outta my desk.

He shuts the door behind him, as Tom stands in the office by himself and takes another sip of champagne.

INT. LEXUS AUTOMOBILE - NIGHT

Danny drives down the road. His face illuminates and darkens again simultaneously as he passes under the streetlights.

In the distance, the headlights of a car that travels in the opposite direction on the other side of the road approaches.

EXT. ROADWAY - NIGHT

In a moment, the car zoom by Danny's Lexus automobile, and it's noticeable that it's a yellow cab automobile.

INT. YELLOW CAB AUTOMOBILE - NIGHT

Mark sits in the passenger's seat and leans his head against the window. He stares out with a blank expression on his face.

He watches the streetlights pass by as the cab moves forward.

EXT. CELESTE FAMILY BACKYARD PATIO - NIGHT

Allison stands outside and smokes a cigarette. The big patio door is open, and the screen is closed.

She hears a noise from inside the home, which sounds like a door opens.

She quickly throws the cigarette to the ground and dies it out with her foot. She then blows out her last puff of smoke and walks into the home.

INT. CELESTE FAMILY KITCHEN - NIGHT

Allison grabs a wine glass and a plate off the kitchen table, and then goes over to the sink. She begins to wash some dishes.

While she washes, Danny enters the kitchen. He comes up from behind her and puts his hands on her shoulders and rubs them. He then leans in and gives her a kiss on the cheek.

INT. REHAB CENTER MEETING ROOM - NIGHT

Mark sits in a chair, along with about ten other people. Most appear to be in their 20s. All of the chairs where the people sit are positioned in a half circle.

The therapist, ANNE, 33 years old, stands in front of a dry erase chalkboard, where her name is written.

ANNE

I would like to discuss the ways that your addiction to drugs and alcohol has negatively affected your lives.

INT. CELESTE FAMILY MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Allison has her eyes closed and breathes deeply, as if she's in a deep sleep.

Danny is wide awake. He stares at the ceiling.

INT. REHAB SLEEPING UNIT - NIGHT

Mark sits up in his bed and across the way, his ROOMMATE, 20 years old, sits on the bed across from him.

ROOMMATE
You're not suicidal, are you?

MARK
No, why?

ROOMMATE
Well, even if you are, don't ever tell your counselor. They make such a big deal out of it.

Mark slowly looks over at him and just stares for a moment.

EXT. DOWNTOWN CHICAGO - DAY/NIGHT - (TIME LAPSE)

Day becomes night and repeats multiple times.

INT. CELESTE FAMILY MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Danny stares at the ceiling. He listens to the BUZZ sound as his alarm clock goes off.

INT. REHAB CENTER MEETING ROOM - DAY

Once again, Anne stands in front of the group.

ANNE
One of the most important things is to learn new healthy, sober ways of utilizing your time.

She then looks over at Mark and points at him.

ANNE
(continuing)
Mark, what do you enjoy?

MARK
What do you mean?

ANNE
What do you like to do for fun?

He thinks about this for a moment.

MARK
I don't really know. I can't even remember the last time I was sober.

Anne just looks at him and smiles a bit.

INT. CELESTE FAMILY MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Danny is on both knees at the edge of the bed. He prays silently.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM BATHROOM - DAY

Danny stands in the shower as water jets out and beads off his face. He runs his hand through his hair and slicks it back.

EXT. REHAB CENTER COURTYARD - DAY

It's overcast outside. Mark walks with Anne.

ANNE
How do you feel now?

MARK
(shrugging)
It is what it is.

ANNE
I always wondered why kids like you end up in this place.

MARK
Why? What's that supposed to mean?

ANNE
Well, I know it doesn't mean anything per se, and pretty much anybody could develop a drug problem. But seriously, what's so bad about your life that you had to get so heavy into it to the point where you end up in rehab?

MARK
I can't think of anything.

ANNE
See, you have no excuse.

Mark smiles.

ANNE
(continuing)
But seriously, Mark. Do the right thing. I know you know what that is.

MARK
Yeah, I think I do.

ANNE
Come here.

She puts her arm around him and playfully pulls him closer to her. He clumsily falls into her and smiles once again.

ANNE
(continuing)
You're really not a bad kid. You just have to grow up.

MARK

I think I arrested my development.

ANNE

You could do so many good things in your life. If you only learned one thing here, that's what I'd like for it to be. Don't ever forget that.

Mark nods as they continue forward toward a line of trees. They pass by a gorgeous bed of flowers surrounded by colorful rocks.

It seems peaceful.

INT. KATO'S APARTMENT LIVING AREA - DAY

Kato has his shirt off. He is muscular, and his body is covered with various tattoos.

His face is rough looking, and he has a five o'clock shadow. He wears a backwards hat, and has earrings in both of his ears.

On the table in front of him, there is a small pile of cocaine. He cuts a line with an identification card, and then uses a rolled up bill to snort the line.

EXT. KATO'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Faxel stands in front of the building and presses one of the buttons that's on the right side of the entrance door.

INT. KATO'S APARTMENT LIVING AREA - DAY

The buzzer to the apartment RINGS. Kato hits the entrance button on the wall and stands up to unlock the door.

A moment later, Faxel enters the apartment. He nods at him, demeanor a little cocky as usual.

Kato seems slightly agitated.

FAXEL

What up, Kato?

KATO

You tell me, man. What the fuck?
Where the fuck you been?

FAXEL

What are you talking about?

KATO

You and all your little fucking friends. You guys don't mind when I'm doing you favors but when you owe me money, all your phones mysteriously don't work no more.

Faxel just stands there and bites his lower lip. He tries to not laugh.

KATO
(continuing)
It's like magic. How come you didn't bring Marcus here with you, huh?

FAXEL
I don't know. He's in like, rehab or something.

KATO
Oh, okay. I get it. So, he thinks just because he stops doing drugs the world stops and he doesn't owe me fifteen-hundred no more. Is that it?

FAXEL
I don't know, man. Like I said, I haven't talked to him lately.

KATO
Oh, is that right? Well, when you do talk to him, you tell him I don't give a fuck who he has to rob to get it. But if he thinks he's just gonna fuck me and nothing's gonna happen, he's in for a rude awakening.

FAXEL
I'm sure he'll come through for you. His parents are pretty wealthy.

KATO
Johnny Boy...that's exactly the reason I don't trust him.

FAXEL
That doesn't make sense.

KATO
It makes perfect sense. It's not a matter of whether or not he could get the money. It's a matter of whether or not he will get the money.

Kato leans over and sniffs a line.

KATO
(continuing)
See, he comes back and doesn't need me anymore, so why the fuck would he waste his time even thinking about me?

Kato reaches into his pocket and pulls out a small grouping of tiny blue plastic bags wrapped in a rubber band.

KATO

(continuing)

It's fucking beyond me. It's baffling. I have an easier time dealing with niggers than with rich little fucking white kids who still probably get allowance from mommy and daddy. And don't even lie about it, Johnny.

Kato tosses the group of plastic bags and Fixel, and then looks back down at the ground and shakes his head in disgust.

Fixel just stands there with a little smirk on his face, as he tries not to laugh again.

INT. JUDGE OFFREY'S CHAMBERS - DAY

The room is older looking, with a wooden desk that has an antique lime green desk lamp on top of it.

Behind the desk, there is a library shelf with various law books stacked next to one another.

Danny sits in a chair across from Judge Offrey, who sits behind his desk. In front of him, there is a glass filled with ice and a yellow tinted drink, which is probably Scotch.

Judge Offrey takes a sip.

DANNY

The main reason I'm here, Judge Offrey, is because I wanted to thank you for allowing the continuance on my son's court date...among other things.

OFFREY

C'mon, Danny. You don't have to thank me for that. You did the right thing by getting him in there right away. You don't need my permission for that. And shit, God knows half the judges and lawyers in this place got their own problems that need to be addressed. Look at Sullivan, for Christ's sake. The fucking guy's been hearing DUI cases since the cops decided to actually arrest people for them, and what happens? He gets pulled over two weeks ago and can't even talk. What does that tell you? You should see the report.

DANNY
I know. I just had to tell you
that personally.

OFFREY
When you get home, look up the word
hypocrisy and a giant eight by ten
photo of Sullivan should pop up.
Unbelievable.

Danny smiles. Judge Offrey takes another sip of his drink.

OFFREY
(continuing)
This other thing...it's a lot more
common than you would think. These
kids now, they're drinking and
doing drugs at younger ages.
They're having sex now real young.
It's a whole counterculture of
whatever you wanna call it.

DANNY
What do you think about his case?

OFFREY
Lookit. I'll talk to Kennedy for
you. He'll talk to Cutler and
believe me, he ain't gonna try and
debate with Kennedy.

DANNY
Cutler's deputy of the office now,
right?

OFFREY
Yeah. Whoever's balls are in his
mouth, I don't know, but they're
there.

Danny smiles

OFFREY
(continuing)
Cutler will talk to whoever's on
the case and make sure they
recommend drug school. Trust me,
he'll be fine with it.

Danny heavily breathes in and out. He now seems relieved.
He then leans over the desk and reaches out with his hand,
which Judge Offrey shakes.

DANNY
You're a good man, Judge. You have
this...way with words. I can't
thank you enough.

OFFREY
Oh, stop.

DANNY
I'm serious. I can't express how
much this means to me.

OFFREY
Danny, I'm just another grain of
sand. There's a million out there
just like me.

INT. CELESTE FAMILY LIVING ROOM - DAY

Allison sits on the floor, watches television, and folds
laundry.

The program that's on the television is a show about dogs.
The female TELEVISION HOST, 35 years old, holds a white
puppy.

TELEVISION HOST
The Westie-poo is such a wonderful
hybrid. They're a great mix of
intelligence and little balls of
energy.

Suddenly, the telephone RINGS.

Allison grabs the portable phone that sits next to her on
the floor. She looks at the caller identification, and then
puts the phone to her ear.

ALLISON
Hello?

She waits a moment. No response.

ALLISON
(continuing)
Hello?

KATO (O.S.)
(filtered)
Let me talk to Mark.

ALLISON
Excuse me? Who is this?

KATO (O.S.)
(filtered)
Oh, I'm sorry. Could I talk to
Mark please?

ALLISON
He's not here right now. Who's
calling?

Click. Kato hung up.

ALLISON
(continuing)
Hello? Hello?

Allison presses the button on the telephone to get off the line.

She then sits there for a moment with a slightly confused look on her face.

INT. CELESTE FAMILY KITCHEN - NIGHT

Danny and Allison sit at the table and eat dinner. Allison sips on a glass of red wine.

ALLISON
Some guy called here today from a private number and asked for Mark. I have no idea who it was.

Danny continues to chew his food and doesn't say anything for a moment. He generally doesn't seem overly interested.

DANNY
He didn't leave a name?

ALLISON
No, he hung up.

DANNY
(shrugging)
That makes perfect sense then, doesn't it? He obviously didn't want us to know who it was.

ALLISON
But why would that matter? I don't care if one of his friends wants to talk to him.

DANNY
Well, it shouldn't matter. Not to someone who's not a drug addict, at least. And if they're one of his friends, chances are they're a drug addict too. Truthfully, I'm surprised any of his friends would even think about calling the house.

Danny takes a sip of the soda in front of him, and uses his fork to play with his food.

DANNY
(continuing)
See, most addicts think everyone's as stupid as they are, which ultimately makes it a paradox because usually, they're right. Just think about all these years you thought Mark was a little angel.

Allison takes another sip of her wine and ponders this thought for a moment.

ALLISON
Do you think we should've had
another kid?

DANNY
I don't know. Do you?

INT. DANNY'S OFFICE - DAY

Danny sits at his desk and looks at some files that sit on top of it.

Tom walks over and drops a file on top of the stack.

TOM
Another drug case. What else is
new, right?

Danny opens it and browses through for a moment.

TOM
(continuing)
We need a nice, well-planned murder
or like, just a real nasty sexual
assault. Either of those would be
a huge turn-on for me.

DANNY
Wow...five-hundred and fifty grams.
How much is that?

TOM
I don't know the numbers. I'm not
good at math, but that's a lot. I
do know that much.

DANNY
Wow...he's gonna need a good
lawyer. You know any?

TOM
I actually meant to ask you
before...what's going on with
Mark's case?

DANNY
Yet to be determined. Offrey said
he's gonna see what he can do.
He'll get supervision for the DUI
and we're hoping for drug school on
this other matter.

TOM
(nodding)
Good. That's good. You know, he's
a good kid. If anything, you
probably passed on some bad
genetic. It's most likely all your
fault.

Danny smiles and nods.

TOM
(continuing)
No, but seriously. He's a good kid.

DANNY
Yeah, he has some redeeming qualities. Even when he was younger, like a little kid, he always had this sharp, probing mind. I don't know. I can't explain it but the point is, I always thought he was a lot smarter than me.

TOM
You don't have to worry about that, Danny. I can assure you, he is.

Danny smiles and laughs in an aw-shucks, touché kind of fashion. Tom smiles, nods, and points at Danny to indicate that he got him. He got him good.

EXT. CELESTE FAMILY HOME - DAY

A cab pulls up in front of the home. Mark gets out from the back seat, and the trunk of the cab pops open.

He pulls a piece of luggage from it and then walks to the driver's side window. He hands the driver a few bills and walks toward the front door of the home.

INT. CELESTE FAMILY FOYER - DAY

Mark opens the front door and sets the piece of luggage down next to him.

MARK
(shouting)
Hello?

In a brief moment, Allison comes into view from a different area in the home and immediately, a smile comes across her face.

She quickly walks over to Mark and he smiles at her. She gives him a hug. Mark lets out a nervous laugh.

MARK
(continuing)
Hey, Mom.

She then releases him and grabs his cheeks with both hands. She leans in and kisses him on the forehead.

INT. CELESTE FAMILY KITCHEN - NIGHT

Danny, Allison, and Mark sit at the table and eat.

DANNY

You look good. You got some color in your face. A lot better than the last time I saw you hugging that toilet.

MARK

Yeah, I feel okay.

ALLISON

You sure? You actually came down to eat dinner with us. That's not like you.

Mark smiles.

DANNY

Everything all right?

MARK

Yeah...just a little weird right now, but that's normal.

Danny stares at Mark for a moment.

DANNY

I wanna let you know that I'm really happy to have you back home. I'm glad to see you again. I mean that.

ALLISON

Me too, Mark.

Mark nods and bites his lower lip. He pauses for a brief moment.

MARK

Thanks.

INT. MARK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The lights are dimmed. Mark lies on his bed with Molly, and they kiss one another.

In a moment, they stop and just face one another. They both seem rather happy.

MOLLY

What was it like there?

MARK

I don't know. I know it's a cliché, but the food really was terrible.

They both laugh.

MOLLY

I bet.

MARK

But no, there was a lot of really fucked up people there. Compared to most of them, it seemed like I was a fucking poster child.

MOLLY

And we both know that's not true.

MARK

Hey, I'm trying to be a good boy.

MOLLY

I'm kidding!

She pulls Mark closer to her and kisses him on the mouth again.

As they kisses, Mark's cellular phone RINGS.

He leans up from his lying position and grabs the cellular phone from his nightstand. He looks at the caller identification.

He then sighs and looks over at Molly.

MARK

It's Foxel.

MOLLY

Already? Seriously, Mark. Don't answer it.

Mark hesitates for a moment. He then presses a button on the cellular phone and sets it back on his nightstand.

Molly looks over at Mark with a serious expression on her face.

MOLLY

(continuing)

That kid...is bad news. He's nothing but trouble.

INT. BASEMENT AREA - NIGHT

The basement is relatively unfinished. However, it's furnished with couches, a big screen television, a stereo system, and a pool table.

There are a couple fandom guys that shoot pool and drink beer.

Foxel sits on a couch and presses a button on his cellular phone. He then starts to dial another number.

Ryan sits next to Foxel. Nate sits in a recliner across from both of them.

Nate flicks a bottle top at Foxel.

NATE

Dude, why are you calling him?

RYAN

Yeah, don't you think he would've called us?

FAXEL

What? I'm not allowed to call my friend now? Fucking homos.

NATE

No, I'm sure you're probably the last person he wants to talk to right now.

FAXEL

Shut the fuck up, Nate. I'm just calling to see what he's up to.

RYAN

You're an asshole.

FAXEL

Why?

RYAN

Because...he just got back from rehab and now, you're gonna try and get him to come out and party the same day.

FAXEL

I don't give a fuck. He's a big boy. He could make his own decisions.

Nate stares at Fixel and shakes his head in disgust at him. Fixel notices this.

FAXEL

(continuing)

What the fuck are you looking at? Fucking faggot.

NATE

What did you just call me?

FAXEL

You need a hearing aid?

Nate stands up and immediately, goes after Fixel. Ryan gets in-between them.

RYAN

Hey, c'mon.

NATE

Don't ever talk shit again, Fixel. I'll fucking destroy you.

FAXEL
All right, tough guy. All right.

RYAN
Settle down, man.

NATE
Fucking bitch.

Faxel looks up at Nate and smiles at him.

INT. MARK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Molly holds one of Mark's hands with one of her hands. They both smile.

MOLLY
There's an expression, "Misery loves company." You ever hear that one?

MARK
Yeah, I think so.

MOLLY
That basically sums up Faxel. And really, who cares if you don't hang out with those guys anymore? I don't have any friends either.

MARK
You know what? That doesn't surprise me one bit.

Molly playfully smacks Mark and then jumps on top of him. He laughs.

MOLLY
Wow, that was mean!

She then leans in to kiss him and right before they touch lips, Mark's cellular phone RINGS again.

Molly sighs.

MOLLY
(continuing)
My God, get a new number. Who is it this time?

Mark grabs his cellular phone and looks at the caller identification. He then flips it open and puts it up to his ear.

MARK
Hello?

KATO (O.S.)
(filtered)
Hey, Sunshine.

MARK

Hello?

KATO (O.S.)

(filtered)

I thought you were trying to avoid me for a second there.

MARK

Who is this?

KATO (O.S.)

(filtered)

What happened? That place give you amnesia? Or maybe, it's because you haven't heard my voice in a while. Is that it?

MARK

Kato?

INT. KATO'S APARTMENT KITCHEN AREA - NIGHT

Kato pours himself a glass of whiskey. He seems drunk already.

KATO

Ding ding. So, you do you remember? See, I noticed myself how easy it is to forget about things or people I either don't need to remember, or just don't care about. I mean, I probably couldn't tell you what I had for breakfast this morning unless I thought really hard about it. But I'm starting to think you just don't care about me, and it hurts my feelings.

There is a moment of silence. Kato takes a sip of his whiskey drink.

INTERCUT BETWEEN MARK AND KATO

MARK

Listen, I have to-

KATO

Eggs...eggs and pancakes.

MARK

What?

KATO

That's what I had for breakfast.

MARK

Look, I can't-

KATO

You know, just because a person lives in the suburbs, that doesn't make him impervious. And I'm not particularly happy with you right now, but I don't wanna make a big deal out of either, friend, so why don't you just pay me the fucking money before I do something irrational?

MARK

Could you call me back later? I can't talk right this minute.

KATO

Call you back? I'm not a fucking salesman. I wanna hear from you tomorrow, Sunshine. You better keep in touch with me.

INT. MARK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mark brings the cellular phone down from his ear and slowly flips it closed.

He looks over at Molly who just lies on his bed and stares at the ceiling. She shakes her head, slightly upset.

INT. LEXUS AUTOMOBILE - DAY

Danny drives and Mark sits in the passenger's seat. Danny wears a three-piece suit. Mark wears khaki pants, a dress shirt, and a tie.

They sit together in silence for a moment.

DANNY

You got any plans?

MARK

Plans for what?

DANNY

For life.

MARK

I don't really know how to answer that right now.

DANNY

My father told me a long time ago, and it was probably one of the only things I ever listened to, but he told me that if I ever wanna get anywhere in life, I better have a plan. Things aren't just gonna fall into your lap. You have to make it happen. You know what I'm talking about?

MARK

I don't know what I wanna do yet.

DANNY

That's something you might wanna start thinking about.

Danny pauses for a moment. He then looks over at Mark for a second and then looks back at the road.

DANNY

(continuing)

How about staying on the straight and narrow? You wanna start there?

MARK

I'm gonna do my best.

DANNY

Maybe you don't realize it, but this whole mess you got yourself into ain't gonna hurt you if you do the right thing from this point forward. You leave your past behind and learn from it. Now I don't know everything, but I know for a fact that when people do the right thing, good things happen. It's real simple. Everyday, I see people that consistently do the wrong thing. I see it all the time. It's always the same fucking people. They keep repeating the same behavior and then wonder why their lives are so fucked up. They wanna blame everybody else. It's the cop's fault. It's their parent's fault. Meanwhile, they hurt every person that ever cared about them. It's like they're walking through a jungle with a machete and just chopping down everything in their path. They leave behind nothing but disappointment and disgust. You wanna live your life that way?

Mark looks over and shakes his head. Danny then looks back toward the road.

INT. COURTHOUSE HALLWAY - DAY

Danny and Mark walk out from a courthouse and begin to walk down the hallway. The hallway is fairly desolate compared to most days.

Danny looks over and sees Cutler, who talks to another MALE ASSOCIATE, 43 years old, and a FEMALE ASSOCIATE, 44 years old.

Danny then extends his hand over toward Mark with his car keys in his hand. Mark grabs them.

DANNY
Go wait in the car. I'll be out in
a minute.

Danny smiles and walks toward Cutler, who doesn't notice at first that Danny approaches. He carries on with the two people that he's engaged in a conversation with.

CUTLER
And I don't even know how they
decided that verdict. The whole
case was a disaster if you ask-

DANNY
Hey, Bill.

Cutler looks over. He immediately acts very condescending and indifferent toward Danny, who seems genuine.

Danny extends his hand and Cutler shakes it.

CUTLER
Oh...hey Danny.

DANNY
You got a minute?

CUTLER
No, not really. Can't you see I'm
in the middle of something?

FEMALE ASSOCIATE
You know, we actually have to get
going now, Bill.

The male associate looks at his watch.

MALE ASSOCIATE
Oh, geez. We're late already.
We'll give you a call later and let
you know how everything went, okay?

CUTLER
Oh, okay. Well, give me a call and
let me know how it turns out.

Cutler shakes both of their hands. He then nods at them as they begin to walk off.

He then looks back over at Danny and seems slightly agitated.

CUTLER
(continuing)
Do me a favor, Counsel. Don't ever
interrupt me.

DANNY

Bill, I'm just curious. What exactly is it about me that you don't like? You make it very clear that you got a problem with me.

CUTLER

I don't have a problem with you, Danny. I just don't need another friend.

DANNY

Who were those people? Were they your friends or your cronies? They must've been pretty important though, huh?

Cutler snickers and shakes his head.

DANNY

(continuing)

Is that what you do when you're trying to impress people? Talk down to others?

CUTLER

I don't need to impress anyone. You're delusional.

DANNY

Oh, that's right. Mr. Deputy all of the sudden. I'm sorry for addressing you by your first name.

CUTLER

Is this what you came over for?

DANNY

No, I actually came over to thank you for not getting a hard on over my son's case, but now I'm starting to regret that.

Cutler pauses for a moment.

CUTLER

(snickering)

Man, you really are delusional. You think I was happy to have to change the way I run a case in my office just because your son's a fuck up? Let me tell you something, Danny. When Kennedy tells me to do something, I don't ask questions. I just do it. I don't always agree with it, but I'm not stupid either. But don't think for a second that I would've treated your son any different than any other junkie who gets caught.

DANNY
What'd you just say?

CUTLER
You really think I care about your
son's future?

Danny noticeably becomes angry. He takes a step toward
Cutler.

DANNY
Guilty or not, Counsel, you don't
ever talk about a member of my
family that way. You got that?
The only reason I don't break your
fucking face right now is because
you don't have children, or a wife.
I'm not gonna hit you for being
ignorant. But now, since you know
where I stand, call him a fuck up
again and see what happens.

Danny stands his ground and gives Cutler a real hard stare.
Cutler stares back at him, this time on the defensive. He
knows that Danny means business.

After a moment, Danny turns to walk away.

DANNY
(continuing)
Have a nice day, Deputy.

INT. OAK LAWN POLICE STATION - DAY

Mike sits at a desk and thumbs through some paperwork. He
is approached by a FEMALE OFFICER, 33 years old, who taps
him on the shoulder.

FEMALE OFFICER
Mike...Bailey wants to see you.

Mike then gets out of his chair.

INT. BAILEY'S OFFICE - DAY

CAPTAIN BAILEY, 53 years old, sits at his desk. A moment
later, Mike stands in the doorway.

MIKE
Captain?

BAILEY
Sit down, Mike.

Mike walks over toward his desk and takes a seat across the
way.

A moment later, Captain Bailey leans back in his chair and
crosses his arms against his chest.

BAILEY
(continuing)
You know, I'm not gonna sit here
and pretend that everything's okay.
You got some problems.

MIKE
(shrugging)
I'm aware of that.

BAILEY
Internal Affairs thinks it'd be
best for you to take a leave of
absence while they continue their
investigation.

MIKE
Is that an order?

BAILEY
It could be.

MIKE
Depending on what?

BAILEY
Whether or not you're gonna comply.

MIKE
Is this a paid leave, or is it just
some kind of way to try and ease me
outta here?

BAILEY
You're gonna get paid.

MIKE
How long?

BAILEY
Who knows? Depends on how long the
investigation lasts. But you know
something, Mike? You're asking a
hell of a lot of questions for a
guy in the position you're in.

Mike thinks about this for a moment.

MIKE
What do you think about all this?

BAILEY
My opinion doesn't matter much but
if it did, you want the truth?

MIKE
Of course.

BAILEY
I'd just as soon fire you.

MIKE

So, you think I did it?

BAILEY

For some reason, in this profession, if a guy fucks up you gotta jump through hoops to get rid of them. And something tells me you did what everybody thinks you did. But...then again, I'm a cynic and frankly, my opinion isn't what you have to worry about.

INT. MARK'S BEDROOM - DAY

Mark holds his cellular phone up to his ear.

INT. STRIP CLUB - DAY

Kato sits at a table in the club.

A bottle of beer, a pack of cigarettes, a cellular phone, and an ashtray sit on the table in front of him.

The place is relatively dark and empty, aside for the various light FLASHES and strippers that scrawl the place.

Music plays in the background, but it's not extremely loud.

Kato takes a sip of his beer, and then hears his cellular phone RING. He looks at the caller identification, and then flips it open and puts it up to his ear.

KATO

My, oh my. What a surprise. I didn't think you were actually gonna call me back, Marcus. I thought I was gonna have to come out to that little gated community and kick down your front door.

MARK (O.S.)

(filtered)

I'm not trying to duck you, Kato, all right? I'm trying to make that clear as possible.

KATO

Well, you're not doing a very good job of it.

MARK (O.S.)

(filtered)

I need a little more time. I don't know what else to say.

KATO

I'm sorry to say it, friend, but you're timed out. I don't know what else to say.

This STRIPPER, 21 years old, approaches Kato and runs her hand across his shoulder.

STRIPPER
Hey, baby. You wanna dance?

KATO
Get the fuck away from me.

INTERCUT BETWEEN MARK AND KATO

MARK
Just trust me...I'll figure out a way to get it.

KATO
Yeah? What are you gonna do? Save up your allowance for the next three months? And it's funny you're telling me to trust you. I don't even trust the people I owe money to, and there you are trying to be a comedian.

MARK
Kato, I'm not trying to fuck you. I'm trying to work with you here.

KATO
You see, Marcus, I don't like to get violent when a guy owes me a shit ton of money because, for all practical purposes, I wanna at least get my fucking money first. That's usually when you have to threaten a family member.

INT. MARK'S BEDROOM - DAY

Mark listens into his cellular phone.

KATO (O.S.)
(filtered)
But you...you owe me nickels and dimes, friend, so you might have something to worry about.

MARK
I'm gonna do everything in my power to try and put it together.

KATO (O.S.)
(filtered)
When the fuck's that gonna be?

MARK
I'm gonna need at least a couple more days. That should give me enough time to figure it out.

KATO (O.S.)
(filtered)
Well, I'll make sure the ringer's
on. I better get a call in two
days.

Kato hangs up. Mark flips the cellular phone closed, and
thinks for a moment.

Suddenly, there's a small KNOCK on his bedroom door and a
moment later, Allison opens it and enters.

She also has a peculiar look on her face, like she's afraid
to tell him something.

ALLISON
Mark?

MARK
What's up, Mom?

ALLISON
Did you hear about your friend?

INT. CELESTE FAMILY LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mark sits on the couch with Molly in front of the
television.

Mark has an apathetic stare on his face. He seems lost.

MOLLY
Can I ask you something?

MARK
Yeah, go ahead.

MOLLY
I don't want you to get upset
though.

MARK
I don't really care right now,
Molly. There's nothing you could
say that's gonna cause me to have a
meltdown all of the sudden.

MOLLY
Then, could you honestly say you
didn't expect something like this
to happen sooner or later?

MARK
I don't know. I'd rather it be
later than sooner.

MOLLY
You know what though? Even after
this, I bet nothing's gonna change.

Molly uses the remote to turn down the volume on the television.

MOLLY

(continuing)

Those guys are still probably just gonna keep doing what they're doing and not even think twice about it. They're nothing like you. They don't have what you have.

MARK

What are you talking about?

Molly puts her hand on Mark's chest, over his heart.

MOLLY

This. You know as well as I do that you're better than that.

MARK

They're still my friends though.

MOLLY

I'm your friend.

She stares into his eyes for a moment. She then leans in, kisses him on the lips, and wraps her arms around him for a hug.

INT. FUNERAL HOME - NIGHT

Mark wears a black suit and tie. He stands over Ryan's coffin and stares at his dead body.

He doesn't cry. He just has a blank expression on his face.

He looks around the funeral home and sees various family members and friends. He watches as other people cry.

He then looks across the room and sees Fixel, Nate, and a couple other young guys. They all just huddle around one another. Other than slightly morose expressions on their faces, they don't cry or seem overly emotional.

Mark then walks away from the coffin and walks right past them. They watch as he passes by. He just glances over at them real fast and continues forward.

EXT. SUBDIVISION - NIGHT

It rains outside. Mark walks down the side of the street by himself.

His tie is loosened, and his suit is almost completely soaked from the rain. Water drips down his face and hair.

His face is illuminated periodically by the FLASHES of lightning. The CRACKLES of thunder is loud.

INT. MARK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mark sits upright on his bed and cries for a moment.

He then looks over toward his window and watches the rain drip down.

INT. CELESTE FAMILY KITCHEN - DAY

Danny sits at the kitchen table with a cup of coffee on the table in front of him. He reads the newspaper.

A moment later, Mark walks into the kitchen. He wears pajama pants and a t-shirt.

He takes a carton of milk out of the refrigerator, pours himself a glass, and starts to walk out.

DANNY

Hey...sit down for a minute.

Mark turns around and walks toward the table. He then takes a seat.

Danny pauses for a moment.

DANNY

(continuing)

I'm sorry about your friend, Mark. He was much too young. I know what that feels like. I know it's not easy. I know that being your age isn't easy. When I was in high school, my best friend shot himself in the head. He got into a fight with his girlfriend one day, got drunk, and that was it. I loved this kid. We did everything together and then all of the sudden, he's gone.

Mark nods.

MARK

Thanks. I appreciate it.

DANNY

But I want you to understand that friends are gonna come and go. Some are gonna die and some, you're just gonna part ways. I'm sure Ryan wasn't a bad kid but now, everybody else suffers because he made poor decisions. His family will never be the same. I want you to understand that family, this family, will always be there. You and your mother are the most important people in my life. I'll never turn my back on you two.

Danny leans forward and taps his finger on the table.

DANNY
(continuing)
A real man understands that family
is the most important thing is his
life, so he never does anything to
hurt those people. You got that?

Danny stares at Mark, who stares back.

INT. DANNY'S OFFICE - DAY

Danny sits at his desk and holds a telephone up to his ear.
He listens through the telephone as it RINGS.

Barrett answers on the other end.

BARRETT (O.S.)
(filtered)
Hello?

DANNY
Joe...Danny Celeste.

BARRETT (O.S.)
(filtered)
Danny, what's going on?

DANNY
Nothing much. Listen, Joe. Real
quick, I'm calling about the fee
you still owe me. I don't wanna
sound like a bill collector here,
but we're a little past due.

INT. BARRETT FAMILY KITCHEN - DAY

Barrett sits at the kitchen table and holds his cellular
phone up to his ear. He's with his wife, who sits in a
chair across from him. She holds an infant baby boy.

BARRETT
No? Then what are you trying to
sound like, Danny? Better yet, let
me ask you something. How long
have I been a client of yours?

INTERCUT BETWEEN DANNY AND BARRETT

DANNY
I'm just calling to remind you.
It's not urgent.

BARRETT
If you think I'm an asshole, you
might as well just come out and say
it. Believe me, I won't be
offended.

DANNY
C'mon, Joe. I'm not-

BARRETT
How many times have I fucked you
over?

DANNY
That's what I'm trying to say. You
never-

BARRETT
Okay then. How about you wait for
me to call you and stop calling me
every week like a fucking
telemarketer, huh? How does that
sound?

INT. DANNY'S OFFICE - DAY

Danny sits in his seat with the telephone up to his ear for
another moment. He then slowly hangs it up.

INT. BARRETT FAMILY KITCHEN - DAY

Barrett flips his cellular phone closed.

He then reaches over and pinches the baby's cheeks. The
baby smiles, and so does his wife.

He talks in a high-pitched, baby talk voice.

BARRETT
Oh, look at you! Look at you!

INT. DANNY'S OFFICE - DAY

Danny puts his elbows on his desk, leans his head forward,
and rubs his temples in a stressed out manner.

INT. CELESTE FAMILY LIVING ROOM - DAY

Mark sits on the couch and holds his cellular phone up to
his ear.

MARK
Look, man. You're being
unreasonable right now.

INT. KATO'S APARTMENT LIVING AREA - DAY

Kato holds his cellular phone up to his ear and paces back
and forth. He seems pissed off.

KATO
Is that right? How about I just
bash your fucking face in, huh?
Then we'll see how much you wanna
reason with me then.

MARK (O.S.)
(filtered)
What do you want me to do, Kato?
Rob a bank?

KATO
I don't care if you have to go down
Halsted and turn tricks like the
little faggot you are. But if you
don't wanna eat through a straw for
the next month, you're gonna pay
me.

INTERCUT BETWEEN MARK AND KATO

MARK
You could threaten me all you want.
It ain't gonna change anything.

KATO
Oh, and now you're gonna try and
get smart, is that it?

MARK
No...I'm just saying, coming after
me ain't gonna help you get your
money any quicker, so it's
pointless.

KATO
It's not about the money anymore,
Sunshine. We made a deal.

MARK
Can't I just call you when I get
it?

KATO
I already told you, Marcus. That
clock melted a long time ago. Now,
I'm gonna find you. It may be
tomorrow, it may be a year from
now. But...when that day comes, if
you don't have every fucking penny,
I'm gonna show you a side of you'll
wish you never seen.

MARK
C'mon, man. I'm not-

KATO
No, you left yourself two options,
friend. You're either gonna pay me
or pay consequences. I'm through
fucking around with you.

INT. CELESTE FAMILY LIVING ROOM - DAY

Kato hangs up. Mark holds the cellular phone up to his ear
for a moment. He then slowly flips it closed.

He sits on the couch with a worried look on his face.

INT. LOUNGE - NIGHT

The room is quite large, and rather crowded. There are various people, mostly men in suits.

Danny sits at a table with Tom, who takes a sip of a martini.

TOM

It's like, we're always trying to control things. You ever notice that? I mean, what do you normally think about on a daily basis?

DANNY

I don't know. Just keeping my sanity, I guess.

TOM

See, we're enslaved by time. That's the problem. Nothing's ever enough. We think there's something out there in the future that's gonna satisfy us but the truth is, the real treasure's inside us right now.

DANNY

What are you trying to say?

TOM

What I'm trying to say is, we're already holding the key and don't even know it.

DANNY

Maybe you're holding the key, Tom. I'm certainly not. You don't wanna know what goes through my head.

TOM

Okay, maybe you're right. Spare me the details.

They both smile and laugh a little. Tom takes another sip of his martini.

TOM

(continuing)

What's on the agenda for your friend's case?

DANNY

Who's that?

TOM

The cop's brother.

DANNY

He's actually a soon to be ex-cop.

TOM

Really? Why's that?

DANNY

I don't know. He's not giving me the full story but apparently, he broke the law somehow.

TOM

Well, that's irony at its worst.

Danny shrugs.

TOM

(continuing)

See, that's the thing about being a defense attorney. If guys like us break the law, it's not really that ironic. In fact, I probably spend more time talking to criminals than I do with my own family.

DANNY

They charged him with attempted murder to which, I'm thinking not guilty by reason of insanity.

TOM

Technically, aren't most people who try to kill another person at least partially insane?

DANNY

This guy threatened to kill his family over a gambling debt. So, he put the guy in a position where that could never happen. I mean, who's the victim here?

TOM

You know what's funny? One of the psychologists in the Dahmer trial said that a person who fucks dead bodies isn't necessarily insane. Now, that's news to me.

DANNY

I think everyone's crazy.

TOM

Yeah, it's just a matter of how good you are at hiding it.

DANNY

I don't know. Who knows?

Danny takes a sip of his water.

DANNY

(continuing)

Cutler wants to fuck the air I breathe, so he'd probably rather lose the case altogether than strike a deal.

TOM

I wonder what he thinks about me.

DANNY

Put it this way. If you like me, he doesn't like you.

TOM

Well, he must love me then.

Danny laughs a little and shakes his head.

TOM

(continuing)

He reminds me of one of those kids who got picked on a lot in high school. You know who I'm talking about, right? I hope you're not one of them. Anyway, they get older, and to compensate for the inferiority complex they developed, they need to figure out a way for themselves to justifiably be an asshole. And so, what better way to do that than to become a prosecutor, right? That way, you really don't have to have compassion for anybody. In that world, it's actually looked down upon.

DANNY

Put it this way. I wanna win every case because it's my job and it's what I'm paid to do, but I always keep it in perspective that most of these guys are scum. And I'm not talking about the Thomas Jefferson, "Better a thousand guilty men go free," concept or anything like that.

TOM

I thought it was Thomas Paine.

DANNY

I don't know. It's in the Bible. It's everywhere. But that's not what I'm talking about.

TOM

Shoot.

DANNY

I'm talking about the look on the faces of those victim's families...that fucking look in their eyes when they hear that verdict and find out the person who murdered their loved one is free. I mean, how do you deal with that?

TOM

(shrugging)

Me? I just don't look in that direction.

DANNY

Let me ask you something. What would you do?

TOM

If what? If someone did something to a family member?

DANNY

Yeah...what would you if some sick bastard did something to little Tommy?

Tom laughs a little and takes a sip of his martini.

TOM

Well, I'd do what any other person in their right mind would do. I'd call the police and hope for the best.

DANNY

What if it went to trial and the guy was let off?

TOM

Then...I guess I'd just have to live with it.

DANNY

You'd live with it?

TOM

It's what I just said. Yes.

INT. MARK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mark and Molly lie on his bed with one another. They both lie on their backs and stare at the ceiling.

Music plays softly in the background.

MOLLY

Who is this guy anyway? Do I know him?

MARK

No...he's probably twenty-seven or twenty-eight years old. And trust me, I would never bring you around this dude. He's a fucking scumbag.

MOLLY

Is he gonna do anything?

MARK

I don't know. He's kind of a psycho so...

MOLLY

Maybe you should ask your dad to give you the money.

MARK

No, that's not a good idea.

MOLLY

Why? He'd give it to you.

MARK

No, I already put him through enough with all the money and everything else I stole off him. What would I say anyway? I'm not gonna tell him I need fifteen-hundred dollars to pay back a drug dealer.

MOLLY

I'm just saying, if the guy's a total lunatic then you should probably try and do something because if you don't, he might try to hurt you.

MARK

I know. I'm just gonna wait and when I get the money somehow, I'm gonna give it to him. I'll get a job. I'll figure it out.

Molly pauses for a moment.

MOLLY

What's the stuff like anyway?

MARK

What's that?

MOLLY

The stuff you were doing.

MARK

What are you talking about? Heroin?

MOLLY

Yeah...what's so great about it that you owe a person that much money for it?

MARK

(shrugging)

Nothing's so great about it.

MOLLY

Well, why did you keep doing it then? I mean, obviously it did something for you. It couldn't have sucked that bad.

MARK

I don't know. You start out and for a while, you get high off it and it feels good. It helps you deal with reality. It seems to make life more worthwhile, or meaningful. Then, it's like all you ever think about and you'll pretty much do anything to get it. And so, somewhere along the line, you find out that all it really does is make everything else in life...meaningless.

MOLLY

But why though? What's so bad that you felt like you had to do drugs everyday? You have pretty much everything going for you. I mean, your parents aren't divorced.

Mark laughs a little.

MARK

Nothing happened. It's just, they're addictive.

They lie together in silence for a moment. Molly then turns over and puts her arm across Mark's chest.

MOLLY

Well, I wanna let you know that I love you. I know you're gonna do the right thing.

Mark looks over and stares into her eyes for a moment. She stares back.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

Through the window, Danny sits at a table by himself. A moment later, Frank walks in.

He walks over by Danny, shakes his hand, and takes a seat across from him.

FRANK

What's going on in the hamster wheel? You haven't been the same lately.

DANNY

What do you mean?

FRANK

You haven't been calling me, so I'm assuming you got something on your mind. You see the disparity?

DANNY

Disparity in what?

FRANK

You don't call me and talk to me about your problems, and that's how I know something's wrong.

DANNY

What if I told you everything's okay?

FRANK

Then I'd call you a liar.

Danny smiles and nods his head.

FRANK

(continuing)

You been going to your meetings?

DANNY

I'm trying to. I'm so fucking busy lately.

FRANK

Okay, do we really have to talk about you making excuses?

Danny leans forward.

DANNY

You know what I wanna do? I wanna get a bottle of whiskey and fucking drown myself in it.

FRANK

Hey, join the club. At least you're being honest now.

DANNY

I really don't know who I'm trying to kid with this sobriety thing.

FRANK

You think drinking will solve the problem?

DANNY
Temporarily, yeah.

FRANK
You know something? I wanna drink too. I'll always love alcohol. I don't think that ever goes away. But you know what? Thank God for that because the moment I forget the power alcohol has over me, I might as well put a gun to my head and blow my fucking brains out. That way, at least my death would be quick and painless. I'd rather be dead than live another moment the way I was living twenty years ago.

Frank leans forward.

FRANK
(continuing)
It's real simple, Danny. Today, you have the knowledge. If you learned one thing, remember there ain't a problem in the world a drink wouldn't make worse.

Danny stares at Frank for a moment, who stares back.

INT. CELESTE FAMILY MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Danny walks in and puts his briefcase on the floor. He loosens his tie and then takes it off, along with the rest of his clothes except for his undershirt and boxer shorts.

He lies in bed next to Allison, who faces him with her eyes closed.

She then leans over and puts her arm around him. He stares at the ceiling.

INT. CELESTE FAMILY BATHROOM - DAY

Mark stands in the shower and water beads bounce off his face. He runs his hand through his hair.

INT. CELESTE FAMILY KITCHEN - DAY

Molly sits at the kitchen table with Danny.

MOLLY
I'm not really sure what grade yet. I don't know if I wanna deal with high school kids.

DANNY
At least you have a plan. Most kids your age can't see that far ahead.

MOLLY
I was wish my parents would just
give me money. Life would be a lot
easier that way.

DANNY
(laughing)
Enjoy it while you don't have to
work.

Mark enters the kitchen and nods at Molly.

MARK
You ready?

MOLLY
Yeah. Well, it was nice talking to
you.

Molly gets up and walks with Mark toward the front door.

DANNY
All right. Drive careful.

INT. PONTIAC AUTOMOBILE - NIGHT

Molly drives and Mark sits in the passenger's seat. The sun
shines in through the windows. It's very clear outside.

MOLLY
Your dad doesn't seem like he's mad
at you at all.

MARK
He's not. He's a lawyer, so he
knows people make mistakes. Plus,
he used to do a lot of drinking
himself so he knows what it's like.

MOLLY
I think my dad's an alcoholic.

MARK
Why do you say that? I haven't
seen him drink once.

MOLLY
That's because he hides it. He
doesn't want anybody to know, so he
doesn't drink at the house. My mom
keeps telling him that he has a
problem but...he just doesn't see
it that way I guess.

MARK
Do you think he does?

MOLLY
I don't know. We hardly talk, so I
can't say.

Mark looks over at her and nods. They sit in silence together for a moment.

MOLLY
(continuing)
Wow...it's such a nice day. I wish
it was always like this.

Mark just stares out the window for a moment. He then looks back over at Molly.

MARK
Did you ever think-

Suddenly, a blue Chrysler automobile ZOOMS by on the left side of Molly's car.

Mark quickly looks over to his left and watches as the car passes by.

It then makes a sharp right turn and recklessly cuts right in front of Molly's car.

MARK
(continuing)
Look out!

She slams on the brakes and they SCREECH.

She quickly veers off to the right.

She slams into an embankment on the side of the road and slams her head on the steering wheel.

Mark looks up and sees the Chrysler automobile idle and sideways on the road.

Mark looks over at Molly, who holds her head in her hands.

They're both pretty shook up.

MARK
(continuing)
Fuck...are you all right?

MOLLY
Ow...fuck.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD ROADWAY - DAY

Mark opens the passenger side door and almost falls out.

MARK
Goddamnit, man. What the fuck?

He looks in front of him at the Chrysler automobile.

He then watches as Kato get out of the passenger side and Kato's FRIEND, 25 years old, gets out from the driver side.

Kato carries a wooden baseball bat in his hand. Kato's friend carries a pistol.

KATO
Man, oh man. I hope that car's insured.

They slowly walk toward Mark, who looks scared.

KATO
(continuing)
How you doing, Marcus? Seen better days I bet, huh?

MARK
What the fuck is your problem, Kato? You trying to kill both of us?

KATO
That's too bad, friend. Didn't I tell you this was gonna happen? If you were smart, you wouldn't have went out in public.

MARK
I was fucked up then, all right?

KATO
I don't care either way. Did you really think I was never gonna find you?

Mark stares at Kato and doesn't say anything. Molly then gets out of the car.

Kato shakes his head.

KATO
(continuing)
Yeah, I...didn't really want it to come down to this.

MOLLY
What are you guys doing? Mark?

FRIEND
Shut the fuck up, bitch.

MOLLY
Mark?

KATO
Sorry. Your little boyfriend here got himself in some trouble.

MOLLY
Mark, just get in the car. Please, leave us alone.

Kato stares at her for a moment.

KATO

Okay.

He pauses for a moment. He then raises the bat and CRACKS Mark on his collar bone.

MOLLY

No!

Mark falls to the ground and immediately, grabs his neck and covers up his face.

Kato raises the bat again.

KATO

Motherfucker!

He brings the bat down on Mark's ribs.

MOLLY

Stop!

Kato's friend points the gun at Molly.

FRIEND

Shut the fuck up!

Molly cries and SOBS.

Kato repeatedly raises the bat and brings it down on Mark anywhere he can.

KATO

I'll fucking kill you!

Mark tries to crawl away from Kato and out of nowhere, Kato's friend boots him in the face.

Mark continues to try and crawl away, and Kato raises the bat one last time and CRACKS him in the head.

Kato then stomps on his face.

He leans down and grabs Mark by the collar of his shirt. He punches him twice in the face as Mark lies unconscious. His face is completely covered in blood and bruises.

KATO

(continuing)

I warned you, Sunshine. Didn't I?
Didn't I tell you what was gonna
happen?

Kato then pulls his head back and head butts Mark in the face. Blood squirts from his nose. He then spits on him.

Kato's friend smiles as he and Kato walk back toward the Chrysler automobile, enter the vehicle, and PEEL away.

Molly then runs over to Mark and kneels next to him.
She tries to shake him a little back to consciousness.

MOLLY
Mark? Mark?

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Mark lies unconscious in a hospital bed connected to a heart monitor and has an IV running through his arm.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY

Molly sits with a male POLICE OFFICER, 34 years old, and another officer.

From down the hall, Danny and Allison quickly walk toward them.

They both have frantic, worried looks on their faces.

Molly gets up from the bench she sits on and walks toward them. She begins to cry as she throws her arms around both of them.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - DAY

Danny sits and walks with the police officer.

OFFICER
The girl says she doesn't know who the guys were. From what she told me, I couldn't imagine he doesn't know. I couldn't imagine this being a random attack. We'll talk to him and try to get the guy.

DANNY
Well, it'd be kind of difficult for him to say anything now, wouldn't it?

Danny becomes irritated, and the police officer just looks on with sympathy.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - NIGHT

DOCTOR SWEISS, 47 years old, stands in his office with Danny. He talks in a sympathetic manner.

SWEISS
Right now, he's in critical condition.

DANNY
How critical?

Doctor Sweiss shrugs and shakes his head.

SWEISS

It's hard to say exactly. He's completely unconscious. From what we can tell, he suffered some serious head injuries. We can't tell yet if he has any kind of brain damage, permanent or otherwise. He has three broken ribs, a broken collar bone, and both hands are broke. Many of the bones in his face are shattered, and he may have a punctured lung.

DANNY

Is he gonna live?

SWEISS

We don't know yet. We can't make that determination.

Danny slowly breathes in heavily and breathes out.

DANNY

Thank you, Doctor Sweiss.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Mark still lies unconscious. Allison stands over his bed and holds his hand. She cries.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Danny sits on a bench with Molly. He keeps his voice low while he speaks.

DANNY

When you talked to the police, what exactly did you tell them?

MOLLY

I just told them what happened.

DANNY

But what exactly? Did you get specific about the relationship you think Mark might've had with this guy?

MOLLY

No. I didn't wanna say anything about that because I thought it might get him in trouble with the police somehow.

Danny becomes more curious.

DANNY

Really? Why did you think he might've got in trouble with the police?

MOLLY

I don't know. Like, when Mark told me the guy was threatening him, I got the impression that he couldn't tell the police about it because they would probably wanna know why. He thought it would make it worse. It just seemed like one of those things that he'd rather the police not know about.

Danny pauses for a moment and nods.

DANNY

Yeah.

He then rubs Molly's back for a moment and stands up.

DANNY

(continuing)

C'mon...I'm gonna give you a ride home.

EXT. MOLLY'S HOME - NIGHT

Danny's Lexus automobile pulls up in front of the home and parks.

INT. LEXUS AUTOMOBILE - NIGHT

Danny sits in the driver seat and Molly sits in the passenger seat.

They sit in silence together for a moment.

DANNY

Mark told you his name was Kato Ceville?

MOLLY

I'm pretty sure that's what he said, yeah.

DANNY

What else did he say about him?

MOLLY

He told me that's the guy he bought drugs from and that he's like, white trash.

DANNY

How much money did he owe him?

MOLLY

Fifteen-hundred dollars.

DANNY

Did he tell you why he wouldn't ask me for the money?

MOLLY
Yeah.

DANNY
Why?

MOLLY
He said he thought you were gonna
be mad at him.

Danny looks straight ahead. This breaks his heart.

DANNY
All right, Molly. Thanks.

Molly opens up the passenger side door and gets out. She's
just about to close the door behind her.

DANNY
(continuing)
Molly, do me a favor. I don't know
if the police are gonna wanna talk
to you again, but if they do, stick
to your original story. Don't say
a word about anything we talked
about, okay?

Molly nods and then turns to walk toward her front door.
Danny shifts gears and then drives off.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Allison and Danny stand over Mark.

DANNY
Do you have his phone?

ALLISON
Yeah.

DANNY
Give it to me.

Allison reaches in her purse, pulls out Mark's cellular
phone, and hands it to Danny.

Danny pauses for a moment.

DANNY
(continuing)
I gotta go.

ALLISON
Where are you going?

DANNY
I'll be back later. I gotta take
care of something.

Danny reaches over and rubs her back.

DANNY
(continuing)
Call me if you need anything.

Allison nods and looks back down at Mark. Danny exits the room.

INT. LOCAL BAR - NIGHT

The place is relatively empty. There's only a few patrons who sit at the bar area.

There is a baseball game on one of the television sets that hangs upon the wall.

The place is dark and rather quiet. Danny walks through and approaches the bar area.

The female BARTENDER, 41 years old, sees Danny and approaches him.

BARTENDER
What can I get you?

DANNY
I'll take a Jack Daniel's on the rocks please.

The bartender nods at him and starts to make his drink. Danny puts a twenty dollar bill in front of him on the bar.

He turns and then looks around at some of the other patrons who sit in the tables scattered throughout.

He looks back and listens to a male PATRON, 38 years old, who sits at one of the tables with a female.

PATRON
I think her best bet would be to get a restraining order.

He then looks over at a group of people who sit at a different table which consists of two males and two females, probably couples. They drink, laugh, and enjoy one another's companionship.

The bartender then puts his drink on the table in front of him.

He stares at it for a moment and then reaches to grab it.

He picks it up and holds it in front of him for a moment. He hesitates. Then, he brings the glass toward his mouth.

He's just about to put the glass up to his lips and take a drink but suddenly, the sound of a man's voice comes from his left, which interrupts him.

It's BOB, 46 years old.

BOB

Danny?

Danny looks over and lowers his drink.

BOB

(continuing)

Holy shit. Danny Celeste?

DANNY

Bob?

BOB

Yeah, man. What's going on?

Bob extends his hand and Danny shakes it.

BOB

(continuing)

Where you been?

Danny shakes his head, surprised.

DANNY

Bob...wow. What's going on with you?

BOB

You're looking at it. Just working. Hanging out here. The usual. How about you?

DANNY

Nothing. Just...you know.

BOB

Yeah, I know.

Bob takes a sip of his drink. They're silent for a moment.

BOB

(continuing)

What's going on with you, Danny? How's everything.

DANNY

Listen...Bob. I'm actually gonna take off. I just wanted to stop in for a minute, see if they changed this place around since the last time.

BOB

Nope. Faces haven't changed either.

DANNY

Well, it was good to see you, Bob. Take care of yourself.

BOB
You too.

Danny heads toward the exit.

BOB
(continuing)
Hey...

Danny turns back. Bob points at the drink on the bar.

BOB
(continuing)
You left a drink there.

Danny waves it off.

DANNY
Have it.

INT. LEXUS AUTOMOBILE - NIGHT

Danny opens the driver side door and enters. He pulls down the visor and stares at himself in the mirror for a moment.

Suddenly, he puts his face in his hands and begins to WEEP. He then starts to punch the passenger seat with his right hand.

He gets into a fit of rage.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Danny stands over Mark, who still remains unconscious.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY

Danny sits on a bench with Allison, who rests her head on his shoulder and sleeps.

Doctor Sweiss then approaches them, whereas they then both stand up.

Doctor Sweiss holds a file in his hand and talks to them, which appears as if he's explaining something to them.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Danny sits in a chair and stares at Mark. He has an expression on his face which could be any number of things.

Worry. Sadness. Anger. Rage.

He nervously rubs his hands together.

INT. DANNY'S OFFICE BUILDING HALLWAY - DAY

Danny appears disheveled. He sees Tom in the hallway walking the opposite way, who seems surprised to see him.

Tom stops in his tracks.

TOM
Danny...what the hell are you doing
here?

Danny hardly acknowledges him. He just walks right past.

INT. DANNY'S OFFICE - DAY

Danny stares off into nothing. Suddenly, the telephone on his desk RINGS.

He grabs it off the receiver and puts it up to his ear.

DANNY
Hello? Yeah, send him in.

He then puts the telephone back on the receiver.

A moment later, his door swings open and Mike enters. He seems slightly irritated.

Danny stands up.

DANNY
(continuing)
Hey, Mike. Take a seat. You all
right?

MIKE
Well, these last few days, I've
just been trying to contemplate all
the what ifs. You know what I'm
talking about? What if there was
something I could've done so my
brother wouldn't be in this
situation right now?

DANNY
Some things in life are out of our
control. Unless you're a mind
reader, how were you supposed to
know this was gonna happen?

MIKE
He should've came to me. I don't
know why he didn't.

DANNY
Like I said, all we have control
over is this point forward. I'm
gonna do everything in my power to
make sure he gets the best possible
defense but for now, you gotta stay
positive.

MIKE
I would've fucking done it myself.
He should've came to me.

DANNY

Mike-

MIKE

No, Danny. I could've made it so there wouldn't be any of this trial, guilty, not-guilty bullshit. There wouldn't be none of that. In the line of duty, you know what I'm talking about? He'd be the one on trial if I didn't kill him. I'm on my way out anyway. It'd be my one last good deed before I'm gone.

Mike breathes in and out. He clenches his teeth and one of his fists.

MIKE

(continuing)

That motherfucker. He wants to threaten the people in my family? I don't give a fuck who you think you are. You do that, and you just crossed the line.

Danny just sits there while Mike vents. After a moment, Mike calms down a little and looks back up at Danny.

MIKE

(continuing)

What's gonna happen, Danny?

DANNY

First, I'm gonna see what the State has to offer. In all reality, I'm thinking it's not gonna be good. If we do have to go to trial, obviously Tom and I are gonna try and build the best possible case. Given the circumstances, I think there's a number of avenues we'll be able to take. We'll evaluate the witness testimonies and find out who's actually gonna testify, if anyone. If it comes down it, we might have to call your brother's wife to the stand. That would establish motive, but it could also play into your brother's favor.

MIKE

How's that?

DANNY

The victim has a violent history. He's a two-time felon that's been arrested multiple times for violent crime. It would show likelihood that the guy would follow through on a threat.

MIKE

All right. Well, here's a check.

Mike puts an envelope on the Danny's desk and slides it across. Danny looks at it for a moment and slides it back.

DANNY

I wanna talk to you about something, Mike. It's about me this time.

MIKE

What's that?

Danny pauses again for a moment.

DANNY

My son's in the hospital. He might not live. We don't know yet.

MIKE

No shit, Danny. What happened?

DANNY

He owed money to a drug dealer. Fifteen-hundred dollars, and the guy beat him to an inch of his life.

Danny chokes up a little. Mike listens intently.

DANNY

(continuing)

We don't know yet. The cops don't know who it was, but I do. And I'm sitting here, and I'm thinking about all these guilty men I've been able to get off, when I knew. I don't know if prison is good enough for some people.

MIKE

What do you want me to do, Danny? I'll do whatever I can.

Danny starts to write on a piece of paper. He then slides the piece of paper over to Mike.

Mike picks it up off the desk and looks at it.

DANNY

His name's Kato Ceville. I wanna know everything there is to know about this guy. This is between me and you. Consider your brother's case paid for. Where did they set his bond?

MIKE

Two-hundred thousand.

Danny opens his checkbook and starts to fill out a check. He then slides it over to Mike.

DANNY
Here's a check for twenty-thousand.
Cash it and bond him out.

Mike nods. He then looks at the check for a moment and grabs it from the desk, and puts it in his pocket.

INT. LEXUS AUTOMOBILE - DAY

Danny drives down the road. He holds his cellular phone up to his ear.

INT. COURTHOUSE HALLWAY- DAY

Tom walks through and hears his cellular phone RING. He looks at the caller identification and puts it up to his ear.

TOM
Danny...

INTERCUT BETWEEN DANNY AND TOM

DANNY
Tom, listen. I have to take the
rest of this week off.

TOM
You should take the month off, Dan.

INT. LEXUS AUTOMOBILE - NIGHT

Danny makes a right turn into the hospital parking lot.

DANNY
If anyone calls, tell them I went
on vacation. I'll be back Monday.

Danny flips the cellular phone closed and looks for a parking space.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Danny and Allison stand over Mark's unconscious body. Allison holds his hand.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Danny and Allison watch as Lou and Diane approach them. Diane walks over to Allison and hugs her.

Lou walks up to Danny and hugs him.

LOU
Hey...how's he doing?

Danny shakes his head.

DANNY
We don't know yet.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Danny and Allison sit next to one another.

ALLISON
Why would someone do this?

DANNY
Some people are sick.

ALLISON
He's only a kid.

DANNY
I'm gonna find the guy who did
this.

ALLISON
I don't care about that right now.

She looks over at Danny and starts to weep.

ALLISON
(continuing)
I just want him back.

Danny puts his arm around her and rubs her back.

INT. OAK LAWN POLICE STATION - NIGHT

The police station is relatively empty. Mike is dressed in plain clothes. He sits in front of a computer screen.

He then grabs a bunch of papers that come out from a printer.

INT. OAK LAWN POLICE STORAGE ROOM - NIGHT

Mike opens up a file cabinet and starts to sift through some of the files.

He pulls one out and then opens it up. The first page in the file is a mug shot of Kato.

INT. OAK LAWN POLICE SUPPLY ROOM - NIGHT

Mike stands in front of a copy machine and waits as a stack of papers gets copied.

Mike then grabs the papers out from the copy machine, stacks them together, and puts them in a file.

INT. DINER - DAY

Danny sits in a booth across from Mike. Mike slides a file across the table.

MIKE
He's twenty-eight years old and
lives in Cicero.

DANNY
Currently?

MIKE
It's his last known address.

DANNY
He could be anywhere then.

Mike shrugs in agreement.

MIKE
His aliases are Kenny Ceville and
Caddy.

Danny opens the file and on the first page, he sees a mug
shot of Kato.

MIKE
(continuing)
He's been arrested multiple times
on drug charges since he was
fourteen. At seventeen, he was
arrested for battery. At nineteen,
a sexual assault on a fifteen year
old girl but it looks like the
charges were dropped.

DANNY
She wouldn't testify.

MIKE
How do you know that?

DANNY
It's normal.

Danny flips to another page. He comes across another mug
shot picture of Kato.

MIKE
He was sentenced to five years in
Stateville for burglary and
intimidation of a witness. He
served three. He got off parole a
couple years back and has been
clean since.

DANNY
Man, I wonder why this guy never
called me.

MIKE
Look at him. He probably had to
use a public defender.

DANNY
Is this everything?

MIKE
Not quite. I was actually able to find a file on him because five years ago, he lived in Oak Lawn.

DANNY
What does that mean?

MIKE
Well, our Narcotics Unit had him under investigation for a little while. Apparently, they were working with an undercover informant and were trying to trace his phone calls, but these guys now just use prepaid phones. They probably have a million of them.

DANNY
How long ago was this?

MIKE
And that's another thing. This investigation is five years old. He gets locked up and it just goes to the wayside.

Danny flips to another page.

MIKE
(continuing)
What do you got planned for this guy anyhow?

DANNY
First thing I'm gonna do is give this piece of shit his money. After that...I wouldn't wanna be him.

INT. DANNY'S OFFICE - DAY

Danny wears plain clothes. He sits behind his desk and thumbs through the file that Mike gave him. He looks at some of the paperwork on the inside.

As he goes through the file, he looks at each piece of paper for a moment, and then puts the piece of paper into the shredder next to his desk.

INT. RETAIL STORE - DAY

Danny approaches a female employee.

DANNY
Where can I get a prepaid phone?

The employee points down an aisle and Danny nods at her.

DANNY
(continuing)
Thanks.

INT. LEXUS AUTOMOBILE - DAY

Danny looks through Mark's cellular phone. In a moment, he comes across Kato's name and number.

He then flips the phone closed and puts it back in his pocket.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Danny sits in a chair and looks at Mark. He then leans over in the chair and cups his hands together, as if he's praying.

EXT. DOWNTOWN CHICAGO SIDEWALK - DAY

Danny stands outside of his office building. He watches as cars pass by.

He then pulls a piece of paper and the prepaid cellular phone out of his pocket. He looks back and forth at the piece of paper as he dials a number.

INT. KATO'S BEDROOM - DAY

Kato has sexual intercourse with his GIRL, 21 years old.

GIRL
(moaning)
Oh, God! Oh, God! Fuck me!

A cellular phone RINGS.

KATO
Fuck.

He looks on his nightstand at one of the two cellular phones and grabs the one that lights up.

He rolls over to the side. He then looks at the caller identification, flips the phone open, and puts it up to his ear.

KATO
(continuing)
Hello?

EXT. DOWNTOWN CHICAGO SIDEWALK - DAY

Danny puts his hand up to his other ear to block out the noise of traffic.

DANNY
Is this Kato?

KATO
(filtered)
Who the fuck is this?

DANNY
It's Danny Celeste. Mark's father.

INT. KATO'S BEDROOM - DAY

Kato puts on a pair of boxer shorts.

KATO
Who is this?

DANNY
(filtered)
Mark's father...Danny Celeste.

KATO
You know what? I don't know anyone
named Mark, but let me give you a
piece of advice...don't ever
fucking call this number again.

INTERCUT BETWEEN DANNY AND KATO

DANNY
Listen to me. I wanna give you the
money.

KATO
Now I got parents calling me. What
the fuck do you think I am? A
daycare center?

DANNY
I wanna put an end to this. I'm
not a cop. I just wanna make sure
this is over.

KATO
Put an end to what, friend?

DANNY
Look, I don't care whether or not
you want the money my son owes you.
But if you don't, I want your word
that it's over.

KATO
Oh...Mark. Yeah, that's right. I
think I know who you're talking
about. I heard something happened
to him. Is he all right?

DANNY
He's fine now, yeah.

KATO
Good...I'm glad.

DANNY
Do I have your word?

KATO
Well, that depends.

DANNY
On what?

KATO
You don't happen to be sitting at a police station right now with a couple cops listening in on this conversation, do you?

DANNY
No...I prefer to settle things outta court. Besides, I want the cops to know I'm talking to you about as much you want them to know you're talking to me. You know exactly what I'm asking of you.

KATO
Twenty-five hundred dollars.

DANNY
What?

KATO
Twenty-five hundred. That's how much he owes me.

DANNY
Wait...I thought it was fifteen.

KATO
It's twenty-five now because gas prices went up.

DANNY
Fine...what do I have to do?

KATO
There's a bar in Cicero I'll meet you at later tonight. Call me in a few hours.

EXT. DOWNTOWN CHICAGO SIDEWALK - DAY

Danny flips the cellular phone closed. He then walks toward the edge of the sidewalk and flags down a cab.

The cab pulls up to the curb, Danny enters the backseat, and the cab drives off.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

Danny sits in a crowd with about a hundred people.

In front of a podium, a male AA MEMBER, 37 years old, speaks into a microphone.

AA MEMBER

Some of the resentments that I've built toward people have just eaten me alive over the years. One thing I've been working on lately is just learning how to forgive people. If I carry around anger and hatred, I'm eventually gonna snap.

Danny just stares at his feet. He doesn't really listen.

The sound of the AA member's voice soon starts to drown out, as if he speaks while underwater.

INT. CELESTE FAMILY MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

The lights in the bedroom are very dim, almost to the point of complete darkness.

Danny wears a lightweight black coat, jeans, and a baseball cap.

He opens the top drawer on his dresser and pulls out a wooden box, which has a lock on it.

He uses a key to unlock it and opens the box. A nickel-plated revolver, .38 pistol is revealed, along with six rounds.

He takes it out of the box. He then starts to insert the rounds into the chambers.

He puts the loaded gun into the pocket of his coat, and then walks out of the room.

INT. LEXUS - NIGHT

Danny drives down the road. As he passes under streetlights, his face illuminates and then goes dark again.

He pulls his prepaid cellular phone from his pocket. He dials a number and puts the phone up to his ear.

EXT. CICERO TAVERN - NIGHT

The area seems rather seedy.

Danny pulls up to the parking area. He parks his car, and then gets out and walks toward the tavern's entrance.

INT. CICERO TAVERN - NIGHT

Kato sits in a booth with two other Hispanic men.

KATO

I'll tell you something right now...

He takes a shot of whiskey. He then TAPS on the table with his finger.

KATO
(continuing)
If that fucking spic...sorry...but
if that motherfucker doesn't come
through for me, I'm gonna have to
hurt him.

Danny walks through the entrance door. He stops in his tracks and looks around.

He then looks toward the booth and sees Kato, who also sees him.

He then starts to walk toward Kato.

KATO
(continuing)
Here's my friend.

They all look up at Danny as he approaches.

DANNY
You're Kato?

KATO
(snickering)
I'm the only white guy in this
place besides you, right?

Danny looks around. He sees that every other patron is Hispanic.

KATO
(continuing)
Guess that pretty much narrows down
the options, doesn't it?

Danny reaches into his pocket and starts to pull out an envelope.

Kato starts to get up from his seat.

KATO
(continuing)
No, no. Come with me to my office.

Kato starts to walk toward an area in the back of the tavern. Danny follows.

He opens up the door to the men's room and enters. Danny follows him in.

INT. CICERO TAVERN MEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Kato turns on the sink and splashes water on his face. He then snorts, grabs a paper towel from the dispenser, and pats his face dry.

Danny pulls the envelope from his pocket and puts it out for Kato to grab.

DANNY

Here.

Kato looks, but doesn't grab it.

KATO

Let me ask you something first.

DANNY

What?

KATO

What would you do if you were in my position?

DANNY

What do you mean by that?

KATO

You know, I have a three-year-old son. That fucking cunt doesn't ever wanna let me see him but sure enough, she doesn't mind when I pay her bills every month.

Kato pauses for a moment.

DANNY

I don't understand.

KATO

A guy like you...you're probably not used to talking to people like me, huh? You'd probably rather go out with your friends from Burr Ridge to fancy restaurants and congratulate one another on having perfect lives, right?

Danny puts the envelope back down to his side.

DANNY

Why would you think my life's perfect? You don't even know who the fuck I am.

KATO

No, I don't. But let me tell you, some people...they're just dealt a shitty hand. You know, it's just one of those difficult realities. I do what I gotta do and you do the same. I guess that means we got a lot in common.

Kato breathes in deeply, breathes out, and then shakes his head.

KATO
(continuing)
Look, I don't wanna hurt nobody. I really don't. For the most part, I'm a pacifist. But...how would you react if you couldn't feed your loved ones because a person indebted to you refused to pay?

DANNY
Maybe it's one thing you don't know about me, Mr. Ceville. In my profession, I deal with people like you everyday. This is nothing new to me and for the most part, I think you're untreatable.

Danny extends the envelope one more time and becomes firm in his demeanor.

DANNY
(continuing)
Take it.

Kato looks at the envelope for another moment. He then grabs it.

DANNY
(continuing)
Before I leave here tonight, I wanna make two things clear.

KATO
Yeah...

DANNY
First, there's twenty-five hundred dollars in that envelope. Now, you stay the fuck away from my family. Is that understood?

KATO
(smiling)
What's the second thing?

Danny pauses. He then points at Kato and then back at himself while he speaks.

DANNY
You...and I...are nothing alike.

Danny gives Kato a very hard stare. Kato looks back at him and defensively smirks a little.

Danny turns around and walks out of the men's room. Kato looks down and stares at the envelope in his hands.

INT. CICERO TAVERN - NIGHT

Kato stands at the bar. He talks at the female bartender.

KATO
Yo, one more and I'm finished.

The bartender pours him a double shot of whiskey. He grabs it off the bar, puts it to his lips, and takes it.

He then throws a bill down and walks toward the exit.

EXT. CICERO TAVERN - NIGHT

Kato walks toward his Chevrolet automobile. He presses the button to unlock the doors, and the car CHIRPS.

He then enters the vehicle and starts the engine.

INT. CHEVROLET AUTOMOBILE - NIGHT

Kato rolls down his window and holds his arm out from it.

He looks in the rearview mirror and sees the lights from a Honda automobile pulling up to his left.

The windows are tinted on the Honda automobile.

The passenger side window rolls down, and it's apparent who the driver is. It's Faxel.

KATO
Hop in here. We gotta take a quick ride first.

Faxel rolls up the window and shuts off the engine.

EXT. CICERO TAVERN - NIGHT

Faxel walks over to the passenger side of Kato's car, opens the door, and enters.

Kato backs the Chevrolet automobile out of the parking spot and starts to cruise down the street.

INT. CHEVROLET AUTOMOBILE - NIGHT

Rap music comes out from the radio as Kato drives. Faxel smokes a cigarette.

KATO
You talk to your friend Mark lately?

FAXEL
No, he pretty much fell off the face of the earth.

KATO
Geez, I'm starting to wonder if he's okay.

FAXEL
You know what? I think he's doing
better than ever.

They approach a red light. Kato stops, and takes a quick
glance at himself in the rearview mirror.

KATO
Wow...I'm glad.

A car pulls up to his left side. A moment later, that car
HONKS.

Kato looks over to his left and then presses the button to
roll down the driver's side window.

INT. CADILLAC AUTOMOBILE - NIGHT

Barrett sits in the driver's seat of the vehicle.

In an instant, he raises a pistol and FIRES two shots at
Kato.

The first shot hits Kato in his neck. The second shot hits
him in the elbow as he tries to cover up.

INT. CHEVROLET AUTOMOBILE - NIGHT

Faxel tries to cover up.

Two more shots are FIRED. One shot hits Faxel in the
shoulder, and the other one hits his head.

Blood squirts out.

EXT. DESOLATE CICERO STREET - NIGHT

Barrett FIRES three more shots.

Three FLASHES of light can be seen in his Cadillac, followed
by the BLAST of the shots.

Barrett's Cadillac automobile then SCREECHES as he steps on
the gas and PEELS away.

A smoke trail is left behind.

INT. CHEVROLET AUTOMOBILE - NIGHT

Kato and Faxel are both completely covered in blood, along
with the rest of the car.

They're both dead.

INT. CADILLAC AUTOMOBILE - NIGHT

Barrett holds his cellular phone up to his ear as he drives.

INT. LEXUS AUTOMOBILE - NIGHT

Danny drives down the road and hears his cellular phone RING.

He flips it open and puts it up to his ear.

INT. CADILLAC AUTOMOBILE - NIGHT

Barrett wipes the sweat off his forehead.

BARRETT
We're good.

INT. LEXUS AUTOMOBILE - NIGHT

Danny flips his cellular phone closed and keeps driving.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Danny stands over Mark. He's dressed in a suit. He holds Mark's hand.

DANNY
You know, I'm really proud of you. I remember when I was in high school, this girl broke up with me, and I thought for sure this was the girl I was gonna marry. And then...it was all over. Just like that. I didn't think I was ever gonna find a person that could even come close to her. But then I met your mother and you came along. It turned out to be the best thing that ever happened to me.

Danny starts to choke up a little.

DANNY
(continuing)
So, I learned that good things come out of situations even when at the time, it seems like a tragedy. Maybe one day, you'll know what I'm talking about.

Danny stares at Mark for another moment.

Suddenly, Mark squeezes Danny's hand and opens his eyes. Danny can't believe it.

DANNY
(continuing)
Mark? Mark? Can you hear me? Get a doctor in here! Doctor! Mark? Can you hear me, buddy? Can you hear me? Oh my God...

Danny leans over and wraps his arms around Mark. A moment later, a couple nurses and doctors rush in the room to check on what's happening.

INT. MIKE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Mike sits at the kitchen table and eats a sandwich. He watches the television that's stationed on the counter.

A news program is on which features a female REPORTER, 36 years old.

She stands on the side of a street.

REPORTER

Last night, on this block in Cicero, two men were brutally murdered.

Mike turns up the volume.

REPORTER

(continuing)

Twenty-eight year old, Kato Ceville, and seventeen year old, Johnathan Fixel were found this morning with fatal injuries suffered from gunshot wounds.

Mike drops his glass of orange juice on the floor, and it SHATTERS.

INT. DANNY'S OFFICE - DAY

Danny sits at his desk and watches the television. He watches the same news program.

REPORTER

The police haven't conducted a complete investigation yet, but they do believe the murders were gang related. Overall, there has been a general upward trend of violent crime in the city-

Danny turns off the television. He sits at his desk with a disturbed look on his face.

He has one elbow on his desk and holds his head up with his hand.

He then rises from his seat, looks through the giant glass window behind him, and looks at all the skyscrapers in downtown Chicago.

He looks down at the street as all the cars drive by.

TOM

Danny?

Danny quickly turns around. He sees that Tom silently entered his office, and stands at the door.

Tom nods at him and points at his watch.

TOM
(continuing)
C'mon, Danny. We gotta get to
court.

Danny shakes his head, and then looks back out the window.

EXT. DOWNTOWN CHICAGO - DAY

Through the glass of his building, Danny could be seen
looking out at the world.

FADE OUT:

THE END