Screenplay

FADE IN: 1

Snow-capped mountains merge seamlessly into the heavens. The nascent sun, barely bright, fairly small, but growing, burns off the final remnants of night.

The city of Glenwood Springs; resting, quiet, for now.

EXT. A TREE STAND- DAY 2

A MAN, 40’s, waiting, wearing camouflage hunting gear, his shotgun at the ready.

THE LANDSCAPE

Frozen, spreads out wide and far. Towering green pines overlooking dying fields of grass.

His TARGET enters frame. He stops, looks around cautiously, judges all safe, continues.

PAUL RAMSEY, a bit older, dressed identically, his eyes trained on the skittish hulk.

He looks over to Wade, nods, turns back.

WADE

Bears down, aims, squeezes the stiff metal trigger.

KAPOW!

Blood erupts from its SMOLDERING PUNCTURE WOUND

He jumps, stumbles; in an instant he’s out of sight.

ON THE GROUND

PAUL
Good shot. Got ’im in the ribs.

WADE
Better get to him before the coyotes beat us to it.

They hurriedly make off to find the wounded beast.

THE VICTIM

Hemorrhaging, his eyes wide with shock, fighting rigor mortis.

(CONTINUED)

PAUL
Another one for the wall, Sheriff? Sure is a beauty.

WADE
How long have we been friends, Paul?

PAUL
Ten, eleven years now, I guess, why do you ask?

WADE
The only people who call me that are criminals, and people who mean business.

PAUL
Ha, you got a point there. Hey, how about a nip? ... Celebrate your trophy.

WADE
That’s more like it.

Paul whips out a silver flask and uncaps it. He takes a mouthful, passes it.

WADE; HIS FACE CONTORTED

WADE
Wow! What’s in there?

PAUL
(a hearty laugh)
... Wild Turkey and a little of my own homemade hooch.

WADE
Man, how do you drink that stuff?

PAUL
Ever since I was knee high to my Grandpa he used to sneak it to me after dinner, when no one was lookin’, of course.

WADE
Now I know why they call it white lightening, must be the last thing you see right before you die.

PAUL
... Ah, glad you enjoyed it, Sheriff.

WADE
Make sure you tell my wife you forced me to drink it, okay?

PAUL
Just a shot.

WADE
Yeah ... Help me with this, will ya’?

The two men scoop up the dead deer and head for home.

INT. AN OFFICE- DAY 3

The name on the frosted glass window reads: "SHERIFF WADE BRISCOE".

INSIDE

Wade, recumbent, smiles as he talks on the phone. We’ve just been introduced; he’s the tough-but-fair Sheriff of GARFIELD COUNTY, COLORADO.

WADE
Honey... come on now, I know you. Just say it.

HONEY (O.S.)
No... I want it to be a surprise. I am not going to tell you.

WADE
(chuckles)
But, honey, I wanna make sure it’s perfect.

HONEY (O.S.)
Well, I already have your gift, and it’s -- very -- pink ...

WADE
Pink’s my favorite.

HONEY (O.S.)
(giggles)
I know... and it’s all yours... if, I get what I want, too.

WADE
(picks up the black box)
... What’s this ...? It’s sparkling, wait ... there’re two of them ...

HONEY (O.S.)
Babe... You weren’t supposed to tell me. But, I love them.

WADE
I love that little pink thing too, honey.

HONEY(O.S.)
... Why don’t you come home for lunch today ...? Suddenly I’m in the giving mood.

WADE
I’m on my way.

Wade calls out to his secretary:

WADE
Claire, I’m gonna be gone for a few hours ... Something just came up. Take my calls for me.

CLAIRE(O.S.)
... Have fun.

WADE
Were you --

CLAIRE(O.S.)
Every word.

INT. GARFIELD COUNTY COURTHOUSE- DAY 4

The courtroom is packed.

CHASE LAWSON, 28, wearing a gray suit, tall, well groomed, ruggedly handsome.

INTERCUT

Chase paces in front of the JURY BOX.

CHASE
My client is a family man. A man who works and lives in this town
(MORE)

CHASE (cont'd)
just like you and I. His only crime was loving his family, he never intended to harm anyone.

WITNESS STAND

TOM LOCK, 22, unkempt hair, head hung low. A man whom life has finally caught up with.

CHASE
We're don't dispute the fact that someone died, I am here to prove to you that Mr. Lock was not at fault.

THE JURY

6 women, 6 men, study the young barrister with rapt, undivided attention.

CHASE
The PROSECUTOR will try to paint a picture for you of a man who could not handle the stress of being a new father, and as a result, turned to drinking to cope ...

The prosecutor impatiently taps his pen against the dark wooden table.

... He wants you to believe that my client, somewhere along the line, lost his way. That he gave up hope, became the type of person that society despises. Tom Lock is not that person.

TOM

His head now up.

The JUDGE, old, listens quietly to the prosecutor.

PROSECUTOR
What the defense failed to mention is that the defendant failed every field sobriety test given to him. He was out of his mind on amphetamines. True, he may not have been inebriated, but he most certainly was under the influence.

The courtroom spectators speak in sidewards missives and clandestine palavers as Chase continues...

CHASE
If my client is guilty, then, we all are. This is a man who does not deserve to be punished for his actions ... his mistake.

EXT. A DOWNTOWN STREET- DAY 5

The street is abuzz.

One store in particular has a crowd out front. They're there because of the NEWS VAN parked out front and the REPORTER with the microphone.

KELLY LAWSON, 25, blonde, wearing a shearling jacket, a pink scarf slung around her neck, denim jeans, stylish boots.

An older WOMAN is standing next to her.

KELLY
... It's Christmas Eve, and as you can see, not everybody is done with shopping. Last minute gift items are flying off the shelves fast, according to LORETTA NORTH, owner of Gifts In A Jif.

Loretta waves at the CAMERA.

LORETTA
That's right, but we still have plenty left for everyone.

KELLY
Loretta will be here, the crowds will be out, and you might even see yours truly, too. Kelly Matthews 7 News, reporting.

Kelly thanks Loretta and she and her CAMERAMAN, RALPH, wrap things up.

RALPH
...Whassamatter, Kel? Run out of ideas already? You've only been married for a few months. Don't tell me the fire's gettin' cold already ...

KELLY
No. It's not. I've just been busy. I'm always running around place looking for the next big story ...

RALPH
Big story? In Glenwood Springs? Ha, I'll believe that when it happens.

KELLY
Oh, okay ... I'm a procrastinator. There, I said. Happy?

RALPH
(smug)
Yep.

KELLY
Come on. I could use a cup of coffee.

RALPH
Wait up, I need to go to the john.

KELLY
Ralph ... did ya havta ...? I mean really?

RALPH
What? I do. Anyway ... I'll --

KELLY
Just go. But, I'm not waiting on you, you can meet me inside.

RALPH
Cool. Be right there. Oh, hey, Kel ...?

KELLY
Yes, Ralphie.

RALPH
Extra foam ...

KELLY
Unbelievable ... Hurry up.

INT. GARFIELD COUNTY COURTHOUSE- WITNESS STAND- DAY 6

NATE WITHERS, 19, raw boned, wearing a ratty hooded sweatshirt, jeans. A rogue, a simpleton.

PROSECUTOR
How long have you known the defendant?

NATE
We played football together at Lewis.

PROSECUTOR
And, how would you characterize your relationship? Friendly, not the best ...?

NATE
He’s awesome, man. Anytime I ever needed something, he was always there for me. Sort of like a big brother.

TOM; SMILES WEAKLY

PROSECUTOR
You said he was like an older brother to you, willing to do anything for you. I’m curious, was it Tom who bought your drugs, too?

CHASE
Your honor, this witness is not on trial. The prosecutor is way out of line here, and I respectfully ask that he discontinue this line of questioning.

JUDGE
Overruled. I believe this question to be material to Mr. Lock’s character. I’ll allow it.

CHASE; FUMES IN QUIET DISCONTENT

PROSECUTOR
Thank you, your honor.

JUDGE
Let’s get on with it, counselor.

PROSECUTOR
Well, did he? The court would like to know.

NATE
I don’t fucking rat out my friends, you asshole.

THE JURY

Variously gasps, chuckles, doesn’t flinch.

JUDGE
Young man. You will exercise restraint in my courtroom. Is that understood?

NATE
(if looks could kill)
Sure ...

PROSECUTOR
(to the jury)
... Birds of a feather. Nothing further, your honor.

NATE
(sneers)
You’re a pussy, dude. Step outside and see how bad you are. I’ll put a hurtin’ on your ass. You won’t last one minute, man ...

Chase stands, walks to the front of the witness stand.

The prosecutor walks by: "Your witness, counselor".

INT. WADE’S LIVING ROOM- DAY 7

CANDACE BRISCOE, late 30’s, brunette, striking. Wearing a barely-to-there pink satin robe, a bun and a smile.

WADE
(black box in hand)
Do you love me?

CANDACE
No, I adore you?

WADE
You’re just saying that.

CANDACE
(close)
You’re just saying that ...

With that she lets her robe fall open revealing her naughty bits, and causing a growth in her husband’s pants. She lets a free hand linger there for a few seconds.

WADE
Oh, I’ve been really ... bad ...
This could take a while ...

CANDACE
Oh yeah ... Well it’s all yours ...
Merry Christmas, baby ...
(she lets her hair down)

WADE
I love it.

Then, right there on the couch, they go at it, fucking like two high overanxious school kids in the back of Chevy.

The tangle of moans and quick breaths slowly becomes ...

EXT. THE COURTHOUSE- DAY 8

The JUDGE speaks:

JUDGE
Mr. Foreman, you have your instructions.

FOREMAN
Yes, your honor.

He bangs his gavel.

JUDGE
This court stands in recess.

A BAILIFF, black, leads Tom out of the court through the judge’s exit.

A YOUNG REPORTER approaches Chase as he arranges the stack of papers in his hands.

REPORTER
Mr. Matthews, what do you expect the jury to decide?

CHASE
Obviously, it would be in the best interest of my client and myself to have the jury deliver a favorable verdict for my client.

REPORTER
Do you have any doubt that will happen?

CHASE
No.

REPORTER
You’re not all worried that he could spend the rest of his life in prison?

CHASE
Listen, Mr. Lock and I have discussed the numerous possibilities of this case, and we’re confident that the jurors will do their jobs and make the right decision.

TOM
... They can’t lock an innocent guy away like some common criminal. I didn’t break any laws ...

REPORTER
But, you killed a man ...

CHASE
That’s it, we will not answer anymore questions. My client has been through enough today. Thank you.

REPORTER
(stops)
Mr. Matthews, please, one more question ...?

CHASE
I said, that’s it.

Chase and Tom walk on.

The reporter stands pat.

REPORTER
(quietly)
... Thanks a million.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP- DAY 9

Kelly exits the shop with two giant steaming cups of java. Ralph then walks up.

KELLY
I thought you said you were gonna come in.

RALPH
Oh yeah, sorry, had an emergency. Number two ... Whoo, stay away.

KELLY
Geez.
(she hands him a cup)
Here, you're --

She walks towards the van.

RALPH
What? What did I do? Oh ... I get it. Hey if you gotta go too, I'll wait for ya.

KELLY
Let's go ... You're disgusting.

RALPH
Sure? I mean, hey we all gotta do it at some point, right?

INT. THE VAN- DAY 10

Kelly and Ralph drive in silence.

RALPH
Yeah, well I got my girlfriend the best gift. Wanna know what it is ...?

KELLY
Sure, why not, now that I know everything else about you.

RALPH
Sweet. I got her a gift certificate. Nice, eh?

KELLY
Really romantic, Ralphie.

RALPH
Ahh, come on, Kel, you could at least pretend that it's cool. Hey, it's not like I'm making chingos like you. Miss Kelly Matthews, reporting ...

KELLY
(cracks a smile)
Ralphie, god, how long have I known you?

RALPH
Since we dated in middle school.

KELLY
We kissed, once. We never dated.

RALPH
(two fingers up)
Twice, remember the trip to the Crest ...? Ahh, ahh ...

KELLY
Ok, fine, twice. My point is, you've never changed, Ralph. You've always been the same old Ralph. Happy-go-lucky, lettin' the world pass you by.

RALPH
What's the problem with that? I like the way I'm living. It suits me ...

KELLY
Ralphie, don't you want more? Don't you want to have nice things someday and travel and see new things and meet new people?

RALPH
(contemplates)
Nah, I'm cool. They probably wouldn't get me either.

KELLY
... I give up.

INT. WADE AND CANDACE'S HOUSE- THE SHOWER- DAY 11

Steamy. Candace, washing her hair.

THE SHOWER CURTAIN; PULLS BACK WITH A NOISE

CANDACE

Doesn't turn around, though.

CANDACE
What took you so long?

WADE
(admiring his wife’s form)
Merry Christmas ...
(he pulls the black box from behind his back)

CANDACE
Oh, baby ... they’re gorgeous. I love them.
(a kiss)

WADE
You deserve it, honey. I just wanna show you how much I appreciate you.

CANDACE
Well, why don’t you come in here and show ...

WADE
I can’t, just got a call from the court. Jury’s about ready to deliver a verdict.

CANDACE
I’ll make it quick then ...

Candace slowly sinks to her knees.

Wade’s head leans back.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. A NEWS STATION- DAY 12

Kelly and Ralph are talking with TWO NEWS ANCHORS.

MIKE- Early 40’s, handsome.

TERI, around the same age, a petite brunette with blonde bangs.

MIKE
You too, huh? Hell, I’m not so sure the missus even deserves a gift this year.

TERI
For putting up with you, she deserves a lot more than a gift. More like a medal.

RALPH
Hey, I’m right there with you, bro. Get her a gift certificate. That way, she can’t spend all your dough on something dumb like a diamond or a new car.

KELLY
... It’s our first Christmas as a couple, I just want to make it the perfect gift, you know?

MIKE
Listen, seriously, the best gift you can give is priceless.

RALPH
That’s what I’m talkin’ about. Gimme some.

The two men high five.

RALPH
You mean sex, right?

TERI
You guys are, such asses. If I were either of your wives I’d shoot you on sight if you even thought of coming home empty-handed.

RALPH
Guess that’s why you’re spending Christmas with your online date. Those are the only guys desperate enough to date you, Teri.

TERI
I’d rather be with a desperate man than a man who still thinks hittin’ the skins is all there is to a relationship any day.

RALPH
That’s so 1993 ... I mean come on, who still says that? You really need to leave the Geritol set.

MIKE/KELLY; LAUGHING

KELLY
I can’t take anymore of this, if something comes up you know where I’ll be.

MIKE
Sure thing, have fun.

RALPH
Hey, can you pick me up something?

KELLY
Why not ...? What do you want?

RALPH
A box of rubbers. I just used my last one.

Teri makes a disgusted face. Mike laughs. Kelly says:

KELLY
N-O.

RALPH
Aw, what? Come on, hook up a brotha’ up.

KELLY
This conversation is over ...

INT. THE COURTROOM- DAY 13

The courtroom is emptying out.

We go between the leaving onlookers. Chase’s voice is calm and even, yet it somehow makes us feel as though he is upset.

CHASE(O.C.)
This isn’t justice, this is small city politics at its worst.

TOM(O.C.)
What about my family, Mr. Matthews? What will wife do without me? Who’ll provide for them? You promised me this wouldn’t happen.

CHASE
We’ll keep fighting, Tom. It may not be tomorrow, or even next week. But, I will get you out and back
(MORE)

CHASE (cont'd)
with your family where you belong. You have my word.

TOM
Right now your word's worth shit to me. I'm the one who's going to jail, not you, me. I trusted you, and you let me down ...

CHASE
I -- I'm sorry.

Just then a BAILIFF walks up and takes Tom into custody.

Chase mesmerized; speechless.

In the b.g. Wade shakes hands with the prosecutor.

Wade, in uniform, looks over to Chase; gathering his papers, says a final word to the prosecutor and;

CHASE; A HAND ON HIS SHOULDER

Gets his attention, he turns to see;

WADE

WADE
Counselor ...

CHASE
Sheriff, didn't know you were here.

WADE
I'm always near, Glenwood's a small town.

CHASE
In more ways than one. If you'll excuse ...

WADE
Actually, I was hoping you had a minute. Come on, I'll walk you out.

They depart.

EXT. A HALLWAY- DAY 14

CHASE
So, what can I do for you, Sheriff Briscoe? If it’s a donation, I don’t do charity.

WADE
Ah, it’s good you’ve got a sense of humor about this whole thing.

CHASE
What’s thing is that?

WADE
They say you haven’t lost a case in Boulder. They love you down there ... sort of a living legend.

CHASE
Yeah, well, I could have used some of that magic today.

WADE
Now, don’t worry about that, you did your best, didn’t you?

Chase is mute.

Nate walks by, looks at the sullen lawyer, keeps walking.

CHASE
Listen, I’d like to chit chat with you, Sheriff, but, I’ve got a long drive ahead of me --

WADE
I was out hunting, earlier, before the crack of dawn. Sat there a long time, waiting, looking. Really tries your patience. Hell, sometimes you never see anything, that’s just part of the thrill ... Ever do any hunting, counselor?

CHASE
... No. Not a very good shot, I guess.

WADE
Well, maybe I can take you out sometime?

CHASE
Yeah ... maybe. It was nice meeting you, Sheriff Wade. Have a good one.

WADE
(nearly condescending)
I will ...

Chase departs.

EXT. THE COURTHOUSE- DAY 15

The prosecutor catches up with Chase.

PROSECUTOR
... Don’t tell me you’re actually feeling sorry for that guy. He’s just another lost cause. Let the system have him.

CHASE
Not every attorney is in it for the money, some of us do actually give a fuck about our clients.

PROSECUTOR
Yeah, well I used to feel the same way. I was fooling myself, just like you are. Look, I’m not saying all of them are guilty --

CHASE
Get out of my face, you son-of-a-bitch. You and I have nothing in common.

PROSECUTOR
(closer)
You think that kid’s gonna care in a year? He’ll go in, do his time, and forget you even exist. They all do.

CHASE
What a waste ...

Chase walks off. The prosecutor watches him until he exits the door.

INT. CHASE AND KELLY'S HOUSE- LIVING ROOM- DAY 16

Chase and Kelly are cuddled on the couch. Chase has a far away look in his eyes.

KELLY
Babe, don't let it worry you so much. You did your best.

CHASE
I just feel like I could have done more.

KELLY
What more could you have done? You can't save the world, babe. It only feels like you can.

CHASE
He has a wife and kid who need him. He's not one of those guys who deserves to be locked away in a prison... He deserves to live his life.

KELLY
(kisses Chase)
Look at you, you're so sexy when you're like this.

CHASE
You mean, pissed off at the system?

KELLY
No, I mean when you're being you. I love you, babe ...

Chase gets up from the couch. Kelly looks hurt by this, but she does not protest.

CHASE
And the sheriff ...

Chase pulls Kelly with him as he begins to walk backwards towards the stairs behind them.

KELLY
Is this my present?

CHASE
No, this is my present.

They stop underneath a sprig of mistletoe.

KELLY
I love it.

They kiss.

KELLY
I’ve been good a good girl all year, Santa, but, you can still spank me ...

CHASE
(a quick spank)
Would I do that?

KELLY
You’d better ...

They continue kissing and we pull out.

INT. BEDROOM- NIGHT 17

Chase is once again dressed, Kelly lying on the bed sleeping. He approaches and gently kisses her on the forehead and exits.

INT. WITHERS RESIDENCE- BASEMENT- NIGHT 18

Nate and JEREMY HUNDLEY, 19, eyes nearly shut from the heavy smoke filling the air. A rather tall water bong sits on the floor between Nate’s legs.

They’re playing John Madden Football, but they may as well be watching two other people play. They suck.

JEREMY
So, how long did they give him? Life?

NATE
Five to fifteen.

JEREMY
Man, he’s fucked. Got a new kid, his girl ...

NATE
You think those motherfuckers care about him or his family? I wish that punk ass prosecutor was right here, man.

JEREMY
Hey, he’ll get his one day.

NATE
Fuck that. I’ll fucking heat his ass up. Him, that fucking lawyer, and the dick head sheriff.

JEREMY
What’s the sheriff got to do with this?

NATE
He’s the law, and that makes him guilty by association. Got somethin’ for all of ’em.

JEREMY
Light ’em up, dude. And calm down ... you’re startin’ to creep me out, man.

Jeremy grabs the bong and sparks it back up.

He draws a lung-full of the altering smoke in deep, holds it, coughs.

JEREMY
Fuck me ... This shit, where’d you get this from?

NATE
Hydroponic. Tom scored it for me last week. Right before those fucking pigs came and arrested him.

JEREMY
This one’s for you, Tom, buddy.

JEREMY

Takes another hit. Sits back, exhales ...

Just then HELEN WITHERS enters the basement.

But, instead of bitching she, surprisingly, takes a couple of rips.

HELEN
That’s good. You guys got anymore?

THE BASEMENT DOOR; EASES OPEN

It’s MR. WITHERS.

MR. WITHERS(O.S.)
Helen, are you down there with those boys, again? I thought you were gonna give that shit up?

HELEN
I also said I was gunna lose ten pounds last New Year’s ...

NATE
Mom, get the fuck out of here. Go see what Dad wants. Shit. You’re always free loadin’ my weed. You wanna buy me some for a change?

HELEN
As soon as you start paying rent, you ungrateful --

MR. WITHERS(O.S.)
Helen...? Now.

JEREMY
(grabs the bong)
Better go, sounds like he means business.

NATE
Yeah Mom, get lost.

HELEN
Oh, fuck you both. Fuck ... I’m comin’. All he wants is sex, sex, sex ... Go fuck the dog!

JEREMY
Wow.

Helen steals another rip and blows the smoke in Nate’s face as she leaves.

NATE
Shit. This game sucks, this house sucks ... Hey, you wanna get high?

JEREMY
(a goofy smile;sits back)
I’m so high right now, feels like it’s snowing on my brain ... I see the mountains floating past my face ...

NATE
Not this shit, some crystal. I don’t even get a buzz from this shit anymore.

JEREMY
Nah, I’m okay, man. This is all I need to satisfy me. A little greenery and some Madden and I’m set. You oughta quit that shit too. Look at you, dude. Are you gonna graduate?

NATE
You sound like my fucking Dad.
(mocking)
... Are you gunna graduate ... Fuck off. Man, bein’ a cop has you all fucked up.

JEREMY
At least I have a job, Nate. Whadda you got? This game? Your parents’ basement? Yeah, you’re a real winner.

As if shot out of a cannon, Nate springs to his feet.

NATE
Better watch how you talk to me, motherfucker. I’m not little Nate that you guys used to pick on ... I’ll handle you and anybody else who fucks with me now.

He reaches under his seat cushion and pulls out a .45 semi-automatic.

JEREMY
What, you think you’re Doc Holliday? Gonna kill every outlaw in your path? You’re an idiot, Nate. Put that shit away before I take it.

NATE
Take it. I dare you.

Jeremy stands up.

NATE
Come on ... You think you’re fast enough?

JEREMY
You’re sick, man, you know that? Put that up and let’s finish the game.

NATE
(close)
That’s what I thought, you’re scared of it. You’re a pussy, dude.

JEREMY; STILL AS A ROCK, BEADS OF SWEAT FORMING

JEREMY
So, what, you gonna shoot me?

Nate holds the black weapon inches away from his friend’s face, his own nervousness evident.

NATE
Nah ... we’re friends, remember?
(he pulls the gun away)
We’re good friends.

JEREMY; CATHARTIC

NATE
Your ball.

JEREMY
(packing another bowl)
Fuck ... I need a hit. Fuck you, dude ...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LAW OFFICE- NIGHT 19

A soft lamp light illuminates the richly decorated office. An icy rain pounds against the large window behind Chase.

A framed law degree bearing: "THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO" hangs on a side wall.

More and we see Chase;

One hand holding his head, his eyes heavy, poring over a law book as thick as a porterhouse.

An average looking female paralegal knocks on the open door.

Chase barely notices. She knocks again; steps inside, walks to the front of his desk.

PARALEGAL
Mr. Lawson, would you like some coffee?

CHASE
(without looking up)
Don’t bother. I’m okay.

PARALEGAL
Well, it’s Christmas Eve, and --

CHASE
(looks up)
Oh, hey, yeah, sure. Merry Christmas, Viv. Sorry, I was just looking over some case laws.

PARALEGAL
The case today ...?

CHASE
Yeah, it’s buggin’ the hell out of me. First one I’ve lost.

PARALEGAL
Get used to it, no one wins ’em all. Don’t be so hard on yourself. It happens.

Chase pauses, leans back, sighs deep.

CHASE
You’re right. What’s wrong with me? One of the first things you learn in this business is to not get emotionally involved ...

Viv nods in agreement.

VIV
Come on, there’s a storm comin’ in anyway, you don’t wanna get caught in it.

Chase opens a desk drawer and pulls out a card.

CHASE
For you ...

VIV
Wow, third one today, this job is way better than my last job.

CHASE
What was your last job?

VIV
Stripper ... It paid the bills.

CHASE
What happened? You got more bills?

VIV
Sort of, I had a kid.

CHASE
(chuckles)
Good thing I didn’t get that fruit basket, then.

VIV
I don’t know, fruit’s a lot of fun too ...

Chase gets up, clicks off the lamp light, they exit together.

CHASE
Happy holidays, Viv ... Somehow, I’m sure it will be.

VIV
Thanks.

INT. RALPH’S HOUSE- THE KITCHEN- NIGHT 20

Ralph’s wife, Gloria, is washing dishes with a none-too-pleased scowl on her face.

THE LIVING ROOM

Ralph is sprawled on a brown sectional wearing BOXER BRIEFS, SOCKS, shirtless, watching football highlights on a FLAT SCREEN SET.

A nicely trimmed fir stands in front of a set of opened white curtains.

Gloria calls out from the kitchen:

GLORIA
Hey!

RALPH
Hey what, Glowy?

GLORIA
(rolls her eyes)
Stop calling me that, will you?

RALPH
Sorry, dear.

GLORIA
That, too. I hate pet names. You ever consider helping me out with, any, of the chores ...?

RALPH
Oh! You got jacked up, sucka! Eat it! ... Oh, sorry, honey, what'd you say?

GLORIA
Help! You damn slob. What am I, your maid? Sheesh ... I should have listened to my dad.

RALPH
Babe, you're missing this. What are you doing in there anyway? You really need to slow down.

GLORIA
(drops a dish)
Ralph Waldo Emerson, if you do not come in here right now, so help me god ... I'll --

RALPH
(pops up)
Be right there.

GLORIA
You'd think I actually liked doing this kind of crap.

Ralph enters the kitchen. He tries to kiss Gloria; she rebuffs him.

RALPH
Okay ... What's all the fuss, babe? No, don't tell me you want me to bust the suds ...

Gloria slaps a towel across his face.

GLORIA
And dry them. And when you’re done maybe you can take out the trash and feed that mutt of yours, too.

RALPH
Hey, he’s a wolf mix and he’s here for your protection.

GLORIA
My protection? He runs from his own reflection. What’s he gonna protect?

RALPH
The guy I bought him from said he was an attack dog.

THE DOG

Whimpers, lies down, eyes low.

RALPH
Don’t listen to her, boy. I know you got it in ya. Grrr ...

THE DOG

Gets up and scampers away.

RALPH

A ’don’t say it look’.

GLORIA
Guess he heard something.

GLORIA
And don’t forget the garbage, okay, dog whisperer.
(chuckles)

RALPH
What, where you goin’? Little help ...?

GLORIA
(kisses Ralph)
Highlights. Thanks, Ralphie.

RALPH
Don’t call me that.

GLORIA
Have fun washing ...

She leaves.

RALPH
I got you a gift ...

GLORIA
Put it with the other ones.

RALPH
You don’t even know what it is.
What if it’s some bling?

Gloria re-enters the kitchen with a card in her hands.

GLORIA
This came in the mail yesterday.
It’s a good thing one of us likes
Mexican.

RALPH
Where’s my gift?

GLORIA
(over her shoulder)
It’s in the mail ...

INT. THE POLICE CRUISER- MOVING- NIGHT 21

Wade, taps his thumbs on the steering wheel and sings along to the Seger tune on the radio. His eyes scan the lanes of oncoming traffic.

A heavy rain beats down on the vehicles hood.

INT. THE DODGE RAM- MOVING- NIGHT 22

Chase wearing a crisp white button down, a loosened paisley tie, his platinum wedding band.

On the phone.

CHASE
Are you gonna wear what I bought
for you?

KELLY(V.O)
You mean what you bought for you?
Yes ... and right now I’m slowly,
(MORE)

KELLY(V.O) (cont'd)
peeling it off ... my naked body ...

CHASE
You're gonna cause an accident you keep talking like that.

KELLY(V.O.)
Oh, no ... then what would I do ...? I'd be so lonely, and ... horny ...

CHASE
Don't get started without me.

EXT. A FARMHOUSE- RAINING- NIGHT 23

An antebellum porch wraps around the two-story house. The downstairs is aglow; the upstairs dark.

A BUSTED-AS-HELL DODGE SHADOW sneaks up the driveway.

INT. THE KITCHEN- NIGHT 24

Candace, sporting a revealing turtleneck sweater, hip hugger dungarees, no shoes.

CANDACE
Three to four days a week. Yes every week ...

EXT. THE FARMHOUSE- NIGHT 25

The beater parks at the side of the porch.

NATE WITHERS

Exits from the passenger side, leaves the door open, mounts the porch and peeks into the front window.

INT. THE KITCHEN- NIGHT 26

Candace, her cell held between her ear and shoulder, walks into the LIVING ROOM.

INT. THE LIVING ROOM- NIGHT 27

She sits on the couch in front the gloaming fireplace. She has a coffee mug in her hand.

CANDACE
You should come with me ... You'd love it. The trainer's really hot ...

A pause to listen. Laughter.

CANDACE
Ten years we've been married, Deb. I wouldn't know what to do with another man.

Suddenly,the front door kicks open. Nate rushes in, cocked and loaded.

CANDACE

Cringes and turns around just as Nate grabs her. The mug crashes to the floor. He yanks her up.

She tries to fight, but he mops her face with his steel.

CANDACE
(through blood)
Who are you? What do you want? Please, just don't kill me.

NATE
Where's the money, bitch?

CANDACE
For god's sake I don't have any money --

NATE
You're fuckin' lying. I'll fucking' kill you if you don't give it to me.

CANDACE
Please, take whatever you want. I won't tell anyone. Just get out of here ...

NATE
Shut the fuck up. I said give me your goddam money, lady ...

CANDACE
I told you... I don’t have any money ...

Nate aims the semi-automatic weapon.

BLAM!

EXT. THE INTERSECTION- NIGHT 28

The light turns green and the Cruiser pulls into the intersection.

INT. THE DODGE- MOVING- NIGHT 29

Chase ends his conversation and puts his phone in the center console. When he looks back up;

The Police Cruiser is right there.

CHASE
Holy fuck.

Crash!

The sound of metal crunching and window glass shattering, showering the wet road. The two vehicles spin into oncoming traffic.

INT. THE CRUISER- NIGHT 30

The cruiser’s airbags deploy. Wade’s neck snaps back from the impact. A gash opens up on his head.

EXT. THE DODGE- NIGHT 31

The powerful pickup spins four times before stopping. It’s front end is mangled, and it’s facing the wrong way in traffic.

EXT. THE ROAD- NIGHT 32

Oncoming vehicles swerve, honk, and barely avoid the wreckage and even more destruction. A few good Samaritans stop to help.

INT. LIVING ROOM- NIGHT 33

Candace is face down on the floor, unmoving, blood running away from her body. We take a look around the room. Pictures of happier times.

Slowly back to the floor.

EXT. FARMHOUSE- NIGHT 34

Nate’s fucked up Shadow flies down the driveway.

INT. THE SHADOW- MOVING- NIGHT 35

Nate, frantic.

NATE
Get the fuck out of here! I think I killed her, dude!

DRIVER
What the fuck happened!?

NATE
She came at me, I couldn’t stop her. It wasn’t my fault, man. Go!

From Nate’s sweaty face this;

JEREMY; HIS FACE FULL OF ANXIETY

JEREMY
No fucking way, dude. This shit can’t be happening ... Did you shoot her?

Nate says nothing.

JEREMY
Did you fucking shoot her, you stupid fuck!? Did you!?

NATE
Fuck ... I shot her! I shot her in the face ... I don’t wanna go to jail.

An oncoming car nearly sideswipes the fleeing vehicle.

JEREMY
Shit!

The Shadow swerves, the passing vehicle honks it horn, keeps going.

NATE
Promise you won’t tell anyone about this ... Swear’ta me right now, man.

JEREMY
You just fucking shot the sheriff’s wife, they’re gonna know it was you. They’ll find out.

NATE
(points the .45)
Promise me! Now! Or I swear I’ll blow a hole in your head!

JEREMY
(nearly crashes)
Fuck, alright, alright, goddammit! No one, dammit. This is fucked way up.

NATE
(calmer)
... Just remember our deal ...

INSERT- MUSIC

EXT. THE INTERSECTION- NIGHT 36

An AMBULANCE have arrived. So have MORE COPS.

EMT’s attend to Wade’s injury. Chase talks to TWO OFFICERS.

Chase goes over to Wade. They shake hands. They smile. They talk.

CLOSE ON Wade, he reaches into his blazer and pulls out a small cell phone. His silver badge flashes.

WADE
(smiling)
Hey, honey ... Got into a bender out on Runners --

His smile slowly fades, his brow furrows and his face turns pallid...

WADE
Honey ... Candace!?

OFFICER#1
Everything okay, Sheriff?

Wade does not respond, he just stands, stunned.

CHASE
Sheriff? Anything I can do to help?

The Two Officers and Chase attempt to talk to Wade. But, it’s no use. He just heard his wife take her last breath.

SIRENS

Ring through the cold night as the ambulance speeds off down the dark road.

Wade jumps into a cruiser with the Two Officers and they drive off.

Chase stands there. Watching. Wondering.

INT. A CHURCH- DAY 37

Wade is standing in front of the his wife’s open casket, tears flowing freely from his eyes as he caresses her hand one last time.

Some mourners file by and pat him on his heavy shoulders. A few offer their condolences.

INT. WADE’S LIVING ROOM- DAY 38

The fireplace is lit. Wade, wearing black, obituary in hand, standing, weeping. Tears speck the white paper.

He goes over to the fire, stops, gives another look at the memoriam, watches it as it falls in. He turns, walks over to the couch, sits, stares into the flames.

INT. SHOWER- NIGHT 39

Wade is lathering his hair. Hot clouds of steam rise from his back.

He rinses his hair, shuts the water off, steps out.

INT. BEDROOM- NIGHT 40

Wade sits on the edge of his bed, pulls on a white t-shirt, socks, gets up. He walks over to a computer on a desk against the wall. He sits down, taps a few keys, reads, taps a few more keys, clicks twice.

The printer springs into action. Soon, white sheets are rolling out and into Wade’s hand. He gathers them, arranges them neatly, walks over to the bed.

THE BED

Wade lies back, papers in hand, reads them silently, intensely, over and over. Finally;

He looks at a picture of his wife on the nightstand. He picks it up, holds it in front of his face, a tear forms. He wipes it with his hand.

He replaces the picture, stands, shuts the light off, lies back down.

But instead of falling asleep, he lies wide awake, his not-yet-healed wound visible, he doesn’t even attempt to shut his eyes.

After a few seconds tears begin to trickle; this time he allows them to come, full and heavy, his body jerks with each sob and we pull out to that sound.

INT. COURTROOM- DAY 41

Nate Withers, seated next to Chase. His parents seated behind them.

Wade is seated behind the Prosecution, a white bandage over his head wound.

The Prosecutor opens...

PROSECUTOR
This is another senseless crime that could have been avoided. The defendant didn’t care about the life of Candace Briscoe, so I ask you, ladies and gentlemen of the jury, why should you spare his?

Nate’s steely gaze is fixed on a point the wall in front of him.

PROSECUTOR
The defense says that he’s just an innocent kid. That he’s full of remorse for for the lives he destroyed.

CHASE
Your honor.

JUDGE
Sustained.

PROSECUTOR
Your honor, if I am not allowed to address the jury, then what is the purpose of this sham!?

JUDGE
Counselor, you’re not doing yourself any favors haranguing the accused. I’ll have you removed if you do not exercise better decorum in my court.

Wade his head bandaged, looks towards the DEFENSE TABLE, his eyes brimming.

PROSECUTOR
The evidence we have will show that Nate Withers did act alone in committing this cold blooded murder.

CHASE
What evidence? The only thing you have is a witness statement.

JUDGE
(bangs his gavel)
Enough. That is quite enough. Order will be maintained in this court.

PROSECUTOR
Nothing further, your honor.

WADE

Gets up from his seat, walks out of the courtroom.

SUPER: ONE WEEK LATER

INT. GARFIELD COUNTY JAIL- DAY 42

Tom walks in to the reception area wearing his blues. He takes a chair at a table. From his sad look this;

Nate enters the room, approaches Tom; head down. Sits down.

Tom looks up slowly, smiles. He and Nate clutch hands.

TOM
Did you do it?

NATE
Yeah.

TOM
What are you gonna do about it?

NATE
I don’t know ... nothing. I mean, what the fuck can I do?

A SENTRY walks by. The two friends hold their words.

TOM
Look, you’ve gotta start growing up. I don’t want you to be stuck in a fucking place like this.

NATE
I always looked up to you, dude. You were more like my dad than anyone else ever was.

TOM
If you really mean that you’ll change things, do what’s right. This aint the life for you.

NATE
My folks are leavin’. Goin’ to Junction City, Dad’s job ... I don’t really wanna go.

TOM
Go. Get the fuck out of Glenwood Springs. Fuck, if you aint got a fancy car and a big house you’re shit.

NATE
I don’t want that stuff, I’m not like them. I’ll never be like them ...

TOM
Be true to yourself, little bro’. Wherever you end up, promise me you’ll always do that.

NATE
(a long look)
... I promise.

SENTRY
Visitation’s done!

EXT. WITHERS RESIDENCE- DAY 43

Nate, his mother and father. Mr. Withers locks the door.

A U-Haul is parked curbside.

A police patrol unit rolls by down the street; slows, it doesn’t stop.

The disgraced family loads into the mover and drives off.

INT. JUDGE’S CHAMBERS 44

The Bailiff, the judge, Wade and Chase.

JUDGE
Under normal circumstances we handle these matters as criminal proceedings, however, considering the uniqueness of the situation I see no reason to go forward with this. Do you both agree?

CHASE
Your honor, I will accept your decision without prejudice.

JUDGE
Very well. And you, Sheriff Briscoe, what is your disposition?

WADE
... I don’t think there’s any question how I feel about this.

The Bailiff shifts his weight. The Judge looks over to him, waves.

JUDGE
Wade, I’ve known you since your father was Sheriff of Garfield County. He was a fair man, never one to be heavy handed --

WADE
My father was a drunk. He threw his career away inside a bottle.

JUDGE
He was the best.

Wade contemplates the Judge’s words.

WADE
I agree ...

JUDGE
It’s for the best, Wade. Bailiff, notify the clerk that we’ve reached an agreement.

BAILIFF
Yes, your honor.

He departs.

The three remaining men sit in silence.

SUPER: "TWO YEARS LATER"

INT. NEWS STATION- NEWS DESK- NIGHT 45

MIKE and TERI have just signed off. Kelly has been watching.

KELLY
Good job, guys. See you in the morning.

TERI
Bright and early.

MIKE
Happy anniversary, Kelly.

KELLY
Thanks, Mark.

She walks off the set.

INT. NEWS STATION- A HALLWAY- NIGHT 46

BARBARA, blonde, 40’s, sticks her head out of an office door.

BARBARA
Hot date tonight?

KELLY
Anniversary dinner. .. Sorry, can’t stop, I’m late ...

BARBARA
Have fun, you kids.

KELLY
We will ...

BARBARA
I’ll bet you are ... Oh, hey, great show tonight.

KELLY
Thanks, Barb. See you tomorrow.

Barbara admires her with a smile.

EXT. RUNNERS ROAD- NIGHT 47

Tall Colorado pines hover over the bucolic road concealing it in a shroud of mystery.

A BLACK LAND ROVER zips close in front of the camera from b.g to f.g.

INT. THE LAND ROVER- NIGHT 48

Kelly, wearing a black dress, flowing hair, chandelier earrings, and 1.5 carats on her finger. She’s singing out of tune to a hit country song.

She checks her makeup in the rear view mirror. She notices a vehicle behind her. The vehicle turns and she continues singing.

EXT. DRIVER’S SIDE- NIGHT 49

Moonlight stripes the side of the vehicle as it penetrates the darkness in front of it.

A FALLEN BRANCH

Gets caught underneath the vehicle causing it to lose traction momentarily.

INT. THE ROVER- MOVING- NIGHT 50

Kelly is tossed, her hands jump from the wheel. A few seconds more and;

INSERT - A RED LIGHT, BLINKING

The tire pressure gauge. She pulls over.

EXT. THE FRONT TIRE- NIGHT 51

Kelly kicks the flat tire. Pulls out her cell phone; dials, no service. She hangs up.

INT. A RESTAURANT- NIGHT 52

Chase is seated alone at a white linen covered table.

A FEMALE WAITRESS stops and asks about a refill. Chase declines and she departs.

He reaches his cell phone and dials.

KELLY
Hey, it’s Kelly. Leave it after the beep.

Beep.

CHASE
Hey babe, it’s me. Wondering where you are. Call me when you get this.

He closes the phone quietly. Looks toward the door. That’s not his date.

EXT. RUNNERS ROAD- NIGHT 53

Kelly pulls her pink scarf tight around her neck and tries her phone again. She ignites a flare.

A PAIR OF HEADLIGHTS

Flashes Kelly, the vehicle parks just behind her.

She walks up to the driver’s window and knocks. The driver does not turn to her immediately. Kelly knocks again and says:

KELLY
Hey. You alive in there?

Wade slowly rolls down his window. He turns to face her. His look is distant, a cold smile creases his lips.

WADE
Need some help?

KELLY
My car broke down back there. I just need to get to a phone.

WADE
Hop in. I live just up the road.

KELLY
Maybe I could borrow your cell phone ...? I’m kinda in a hurry.

WADE
Oh -- of course. How forward of me.

Wade reaches over to the passenger’s seat. When he returns he’s pointing a .38 caliber revolver straight at Kelly.

KELLY; SCARED AS FUCK

WADE
(as if to a friend)
Hop in. Or would you prefer a more sudden death?

It’s either get in or get shot. Kelly reluctantly complies.

INT. THE CAR- NIGHT 54

Only silence separates kidnapper and victim as they speed further into the eerie black hole before them.

WADE
Forgive me for being so rude --

KELLY
What gives, you just lonely tonight?

WADE
Sarcasm. I hate that, annoys the hell out of me. So, where you headed?

KELLY
You’re awfully friendly for a guy who just kidnapped me at gunpoint.

WADE
Crazy, aint it?

Kelly goes for the steering wheel. Wade quickly regains control.

WADE
Don’t ever do that again. Next time I won’t be as nice. Now, where were we?

Heather goes for her door. Locked.

EXT. THE DRIVER’S SIDE- NIGHT 55

The car stops -- immediately. Wade gets out and opens the trunk. He snatches the passenger door open, throws Kelly to the wet ground kicking and screaming.

Kelly is cuffed, thrown into the back seat.

EXT. THE RESTAURANT- NIGHT 56

Chase settles the check and leaves the joint.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE RESTAURANT- NIGHT 57

Chase redials.

INT. WADE’S CAR- NIGHT 58

Kelly’s cell rings.

WADE
Sorry about the surprise. I mean, it being your anniversary and all, but I --

The car turns onto a side road.

KELLY
Who the fuck are you?

WADE
Oh ...
(in the mirror)
Wade Briscoe. And you’re Kelly Lawson. How’m I doin’ so far?

KELLY
Impressive.

WADE
I sure hope so, I’ve been waiting on you for two years now. My big moment.

KELLY
It was you, then? You’ve been following me. Why?

WADE
" How poor are they who have no patience ..." Shakespeare, I think.

KELLY
Fuck off. I just made that one up.

WADE
Go figure, I thought you were an Oprah type of gal ... Huh.

The ringing stops.

They arrive at Wade’s farmhouse.

WADE

Exits the car and frees Kelly’s feet: "Get out".

INT. CHASE’S CAR- MOVING- NIGHT 59

He dials again.

INTERCUT

CHASE
How’s Tyler?

MILLIE
He’s fine, we’re fine. He’s an angel.

CHASE
In that case we’ll be back next week.

MILLIE
Okay, it’s not that great. What’s up, forget something?

CHASE
Hey, has Kel called you at all tonight?

MILLIE
Not once, why?

CHASE
That’s odd, she usually checks on Tyler every hour.

MILLIE
... Huh, you’re tellin’ me. She may as well take the kid everywhere she goes --

CHASE
Okay, I get it. She never showed up for dinner. And she’s not answering either.

MILLIE
Wow ... on your anniversary, little brother?

CHASE
Yeah, no, Millie, it’s nothing like that. She probably just got lost.

MILLIE
Hey, you never know these days. She could half way to Paris by now with some young stud.

CHASE
You haven’t lost your touch.

MILLIE
Family trait, can’t help it.

CHASE
If you hear anything --

MILLIE
Sure. Sure. Try not to worry, I’m sure she’ll turn up, somewhere ...

CHASE
Thanks a million, sis.

He hangs up.

EXT. A BARN- NIGHT 60

Wade shoves Kelly into the wood-frame dinosaur.

WADE
How do you like it? Not much on looks, and it won’t keep you warm at night, but consider it yours.

KELLY
Let me out of here, now. You have no right to do this.

WADE
Oh, don’t I? Your husband owes me.

KELLY
You’re lying.

WADE
You know, I really wish I was ... but I’m afraid not, cupcake.

KELLY
He’s out right now looking for me.

WADE
That’s exactly what I was hoping for.

KELLY
What is your problem with my husband?

WADE
Oh, nothing, unless you consider he defended the kid who killed my family.

INT. CHASE’S CAR- MOVING- NIGHT 61

A white-knuckled grip on the steering wheel.

His cell rings.

CHASE
Hello. Is that you, babe?

WADE(O.S.)
No, but, she’s right here with me, though, safe and sound.

CHASE
Who is this? Is this a joke, honey? Stop playing around ... Where are you?

WADE
Listen to me closely, I have your wife, she’s safe, for now. Figure the rest out on your own.

CHASE
If you touch my wife I’ll kill you, understand me?

WADE(O.S.)
Understand this, your wife dies if you don’t come alone ... Am I clear?

Click.

CHASE
Hello. Hello. Fuck.

He closes his phone. His eyes filled with rage, he stares straight ahead into the road ahead.

INT. THE BARN- NIGHT 62

Wade hangs up.

WADE
I think he’s pissed at me. I wonder why?

KELLY
You’ll pay. And I’ll be right there to twist it in deeper.

WADE
You know, you don’t have to stay out here alone like some animal ...

KELLY
I’d rather freeze to death.

WADE
Tough girl, let’s see how tough you are when your coward husband doesn’t show up.

KELLY
He’ll be here. And he’s gonna --

WADE
Then I guess I have no choice.

With a wild look in his eyes, Wade walks over to Kelly, strokes her face, bends and kisses her.

WADE
It’s been a long time since I felt the pleasure of a woman next to me ...
(another kiss)

But, this time, Kelly bites him on his face drawing a drop of blood.

WADE
(wipes;calm)
If that’s the way you want it ...

He grabs her and forces her out of the barn. Her scarf falls to the floor.

INT. CHASE AND KELLY'S HOUSE- LIVING ROOM- NIGHT 63

Tyler, their precocious two year old son, wearing jammies, running around the living room.

Millie enters the living room holding a dish.

MILLIE
Hey, look, I've got chocolate chip cookies ...

TYLER
Mommy makes them better. I want mommy's cookies.

He takes off again.

MILLIE
Now I know why ... Hey, I am not kidding. I am an adult.

She takes off behind him, cookies spilling.

INT. A POLICE PRECINCT- NIGHT 64

Chase is explaining his quagmire to Paul.

CHASE
We were supposed to meet at The Crest for dinner, but she never showed.

RAMSEY
And you haven't heard from her since?

CHASE
About ten minutes ago I got a call, but not from her.

RAMSEY
Mr ...

CHASE
Chase Matthews.

RAMSEY
Well, we can't get anyone at the phone company 'til morning. Have to wait 'til then I s'pose.

CHASE
We’re talking about my wife.

RAMSEY
Come back out here first thing and we’ll look around.

CHASE
I’ll sleep right here until morning, then. You guys don’t mind me.

Chase finds a hard old bench and plops down right there.

RAMSEY
... Cells have blankets on the beds.

CHASE
No thanks, I’ll be fine right here. You guys just forget about me.

RAMSEY
Will do.

The two men go about their separate concerns.

EXT. RED MOUNTAIN- DAY 65

Looming, bold.

A search and rescue chopper hovers overhead.

The team on the ground climbs, digs, calls out, leads dogs through the knee-deep powder.

INT. THE PRECINCT- DAY 66

MORE OFFICERS have arrived for their shifts. They move about doing police business. Deputy Ramsey is on the phone.

RAMSEY
Anything you can do for us would be great, Lyle. Alright. Talk to ya later.

CHASE
Any news on my wife?

RAMSEY
You say you a man answered your wife’s phone?

CHASE
That’s right.

RAMSEY
Has she been seeing someone else?

CHASE
No, honestly ...?

RAMSEY
Maybe someone you don’t know about? Just askin’, fella.

AN OFFICE DOOR

Jeremy, holding a white paper in his hand.

HUNDLEY
South county found one out on Runners Road. No sign of the driver anywhere, though.

He hands the paper over to Deputy Ramsey.

CHASE
What kind of vehicle?

RAMSEY
Black late model. Out near the sheriff’s house.

CHASE
What are we waiting on? We’ve gotta go check it out? Let’s go.

Hundley gives Ramsey a look.

Ramsey agrees. They depart.

INT. A POLICE VEHICLE- MOVING- DAY 67

Deputy Ramsey, Hundley and Chase are inside.

RAMSEY
So, what’s your business?

CHASE
I’m a junior partner at Lyman and Gold.

RAMSEY
Lawyer, huh?

CHASE
Yeah, I’ve worked with a few clients in your jurisdiction as a matter of fact.

HUNDLEY
I thought I recognized you. You defended Nate. We were friends in high school.

CHASE
Is that so ...?

HUNDLEY
Guy could’ve been somebody, you know? Had a real good arm.

CHASE
Yeah, well he still has a chance to get his life in order.

RAMSEY
Lotta folks here were pretty red over that boy going free.

CHASE
The state knew going in that their case was circumstantial at best.

RAMSEY
Some people wouldn’t care if you ever set foot in a courtroom round here again.

CHASE
That’s their prerogative. I just do my job.

HUNDLEY
There it is, black Land Rover.

The police vehicle stops in front of the deserted SUV.

CHASE

Looks into the driver’s window.

CHASE
It’s Kelly’s.

HUNDLEY
You sure about that?

CHASE
I bought it for her ... It was an anniversary gift.

Ramsey radios in to dispatch.

RAMSEY
Runners Road. Yeah, got one abandoned out here. Yeah, we will.

CHASE
She’s must be close. Come on, we’ve got to search every house out here...

HUNDLEY
The only house out here for miles is the Sheriff’s.

From the Hundley’s face:

Wade’s cruiser rolls down the road towards the group.

Deputy Ramsey flags him down.

RAMSEY
Mornin’ sheriff. Empty when we found it.

WADE
Call it in, Deputy.

RAMSEY
Right.

WADE
See what you can find out about it for me, too, will you?

RAMSEY
Sheriff?

WADE
Yeah?

RAMSEY
This fella here says it belongs to his wife. Annivers ...
(half turns to Chase)
Anniversary gift, right?

CHASE
That’s right. Deputy Ramsey tells me you live out here? Did you hear or see anything last night, sheriff?

WADE
(smirking)
Well now, fancy this. Don’t see you for two years, and out of the blue, you’re back.

CHASE
It’s good seeing you again, too, Sheriff Briscoe.

RAMSEY
Sheriff, he says another man answered his wife’s phone last time talked to her.

WADE
Well, now that is very peculiar.

CHASE
Sheriff, I just want to find my wife and be on my way.

WADE
Of course. My county will offer its full support in seeing you do just that.

Wade slowly wrists his window up.

WADE
It’s cold out. Try not to be out here too long.

He continues on his way.

HUNDLEY
Brutal out here today. Brrr ...
Whatta you say we grab something to eat.

CHASE
Might help me think straight.

HUNDLEY
Sure it will. Mrs. Collins has the best food around.

RAMSEY
Well, it is the -- only place around here?

HUNDLEY
... Never thought of it like that.

INT. NEWS STATION- NEWS DESK- DAY 68

Mike and Teri deliver the news.

TERI
This story has special meaning to all of here at 7 News.

MIKE
That’s right, Teri. Reporter Kelly Lawson has gone missing.

INSERT - A PICTURE OF KELLY

MIKE
She was last seen here at 7 studios. Police are asking for anyone with any additional information to come forward.

TERI
We’re all praying for a speedy and safe conclusion to this disturbing story.

MIKE
Our thoughts and prayers are with her and her family.

INT. WADE’S BEDROOOM- DAY 69

Kelly, lying on the bed, naked, sobbing.

Wade enters the room, fresh from the shower, towel around his waist.

Kelly looks as if her world’s just ended.

KELLY
Don’t you fucking touch me!

WADE
Are you sure? Not even right here ...?

He touches her private area. But we never see it.

KELLY
God ... don’t let this happen to me ...

WADE
He can’t hear you either.

He proceeds to have his way with her again.

All we hear are heavy sobs ...

INT. WADE’S LIVING ROOM- DAY 70

The first thing we see is Wade’s silver badge, then;

He shoves Kelly face first on the floor.

WADE
So, I hope you like the carpet. I just got it in. Cost me an arm and a leg.

KELLY
I hope you die.

WADE
Don’t we all ...?

KELLY
You’re not a man, you’re a coward. A coward who hides behind a badge. You’re horrible!

WADE
Oh, now, come on, I took my time.

Kelly, from the floor, kicks Wade in the balls. He goes bug eyed, doubles over, reels back onto the couch.

INT. MRS. COLLINS RESTAURANT DAY 71

An average roadhouse. The three men munch on their breakfasts; bacon, eggs, toast.

DEPUTY RAMSEY'S CELL RINGS

Deputy Ramsey answers his phone.

RAMSEY
Hello, Lyle, find out anything for me? No kiddin'... Well, he'll be surprised by that one, I'm sure. Thanks a million, Lyle.

CHASE
What? Did they locate my wife or what?

RAMSEY
Kinda hard to say. Phone records only show that she was somewhere in the county.

Deputy Ramsey closes his phone.

HUNDLEY
That could be anywhere.

RAMSEY
... Not a lot of places to hide out there, though, Garfield's a small place.

CHASE
I'd like to talk to the sheriff. I want to ask him a few questions of my own.

RAMSEY
Not too big on small talk these days.

HUNDLEY
Good luck with that.

CHASE
Yeah, it oughta be fun.

INT. WADE’S ATTIC- DAY 72

Wade pushes Kelly into the attic and slams the door shut.

WADE(O.S.)
Stay.

Kelly, a trickle of blood from her nose, tears rolling, screams at the top of her lungs.

INT. CHASE AND KELLY’S HOUSE- DAY 73

Chase and Millie are sitting at the kitchen table. Tyler is sitting in Greg’s lap.

MILLIE
You don’t think she ran off and left you do you?

CHASE
Come on, this is serious.

MILLIE
Okay, sorry. I was just asking.

CHASE
Why would she? We’re happy together.

TYLER
Daddy, where’s mommy? I want her to make me cookies.

CHASE
(hugs Tyler close)
She’ll make you a whole bunch, buddy, as soon as she gets home.

TYLER
I miss her.

CHASE
She’ll be back really soon, okay?

TYLER
Okay.

He runs off.

CHASE
I need you to stay with Tyler.

MILLIE
Great. Another night for me to sit and ponder where it all went wrong for me. You know, I have a life, too.

CHASE
What are you talking about? You don’t even work.

MILLIE
(coy)
I used to ...

CHASE
That’s refreshing, big sis.

MILLIE
Yeah, yeah, sure. What about going to see the sheriff? Does he know something?

CHASE
You remember the Withers kid? The star high school athlete, about two years ago?

MILLIE
Okay ... If you say so.

CHASE
Well, he was accused of killing the sheriff’s wife.

MILLIE
Whoa, which prison is he in? I hope he’s living underneath it.

CHASE
He’s not. He never received a sentence.

MILLIE
Why not? Is he still on the loose?

CHASE
I defended him, he got off with probation. Kid was only 16.

MILLIE
Kid kills an entire family, and he’s out on the streets? But, if he killed those people, how did he get off?

CHASE
It was a weak case from the start.

TWO YEARS EARLIER

INT. GARFIELD COUNTY COURTROOM- DAY 74

Chase is cross examining a PROSECUTION WITNESS...

CHASE
How long have you worked in forensics?

WITNESS
I’ve worked in forensics for half my life.

CHASE
And in your work have you ever been called as an expert witness?

WITNESS
Numerous occasions. If I had to estimate I’d say once or twice a year.

CHASE
So, people respect your opinion.

WITNESS
I’d say so.

CHASE
And have you ever been a part of a case with such a glaring lack of evidentiary material?

WITNESS
Never.

THE JURY

A few members shift in their seat. Some are emotionless. Others fighting boredom and sleep.

The Prosecutor objects.

PROSECUTOR
Your honor, he’s leading the witness.

JUDGE
I will monitor the question more closely. Proceed.

CHASE
Ladies and gentlemen, the simple fact is, the prosecution has not delivered on its promise of smoking gun evidence.

The judge sits forward a bit.

Nate sits unmoving.

The jury reacts.

INT. NEWS STUDIO- DAY 75

The two anchors from earlier.

MIKE
Good morning. We’re following a story involving one of our own.

TERI
Police are still asking for your help as they search for Kelly Lawson.

MIKE
We’ll keep you updated on this developing story.

INT. A POLICE AIR UNIT- DAY 76

The unit circles the area.

ON THE GROUND

A MAN signals the PILOT.

PILOT
(into a headset)
Control, we’re not seeing anything out here. We’ll try again later.

MAN ON THE GROUND

Gets into his vehicle and drives off.

INT. NEWS STATION- BREAKROOM- DAY 77

MOS. Ralph is sitting alone at small round table near the center of the room.

Barbara walks in. Ralph looks up. She speaks, walks off.

RALPH

His subway sandwich in hand, slams his sandwich down, gets up, says: "Fuck You"

INT. THE PRECINCT- NIGHT 78

Deputy Ramsey dials on a land line.

INTERCUT

RAMSEY
Hello, Mr. Lawson. Fine. Ramsey over here at the Lewis County Precinct.

CHASE
Is there any news on my wife?

RAMSEY
Not exactly. We called off the search for now. We'll be back out later.

CHASE
This isn't a lost puppy, deputy. It's my wife. With or without you, I'm going to look for her.

RAMSEY
We can't have you out there alone runnin' around. I'm ordering you to stand down.

CHASE
Tell that to the guy who snatched my wife.

RAMSEY
We do reserve the authority to put you in jail for violatin' the laws of our county.

CHASE
... Guess you have some work to do then.

EXT. WADE’S HOUSE- NIGHT 79

Wade’s cruiser moves along the serpentine driveway.

He exits the vehicle and removes a cardboard box from his back seat. He slams both doors shut.

INT. WADE’S HOUSE- NIGHT 80

The front door pushes open and Wade freezes.

WADE
Honey, I brought you a present.

THE ATTIC DOOR

Bursts open.

WADE
It’s your favorite. Boston Cream ... No dessert, then.

He lets the pie fall flat.

He exits.

WADE
Where are you ...? I know you’re here somewhere ... I can smell your fear.

KELLY

Cowering in a corner on the other side of a bed. She’s trying hard to not be found, and even harder to not make a sound.

THE HALLWAY

Wade creeps down the hallway. He stops at a door. Knocks.

WADE
Okay if I come in?

INTERCUT

He eases the door open ever so slowly.

KELLY

Sobbing, huddled into a corner.

WADE

Scans the room. Empty. He exits.

INT. CHASE’S CAR- MOVING- NIGHT 81

Chase’s focus is straight ahead.

His cell phone rings. He answers.

KELLY
It’s me.

CHASE(O.S.)
Where are you?

KELLY
I’m in his house. He kidnapped me.

CHASE(O.S.)
Who’s house, Kelly? Tell me where you are.

Wade knocks on her door. Kelly jumps; shrieks ...

KELLY
He said his name is Hank.

WADE
There you are ...

He flings the door open and wastes no time grabbing her.

KELLY
He’s in the room with me, Chase. Please hurry ...

WADE
Where’d you get that? Huh?

Wade snatches the phone away. Kelly tries to bolt, but he grabs her.

Click.

CHASE
Fuck.

He dials another number.

INTERCUT

RAMSEY
Hello ...? Lewis County.

CHASE
Deputy, question for you.

RAMSEY
Shoot, cowboy.

CHASE
What’s the sheriff’s name?

RAMSEY
Briscoe. Why do you ask?

CHASE
His first name. What name do you call the guy?

RAMSEY
Wade. Always has been.

CHASE
Shit ... thanks a million, deputy.

RAMSEY
Careful out there.

Click.

INT. THE HALLWAY- NIGHT 82

Wade follows Kelly out of the room. She turns and boots Wade square in his balls. He hits the deck.

Kelly grabs her cell phone from Wade and runs for the door.

EXT. WADE’S HOUSE- NIGHT 83

Kelly barely stays on her feet as she mushes through the forever long field of snowfall.

CHASE’S CAR

He dials a number.

KELLY

Running, looking back. Her cell phone falls.

CHASE

Waiting.

KELLY

Stops, goes back for her phone. She frantically scratches through the snow. She reaches the phone, gets to her feet, keeps running.

EXT. BACKYARD- NIGHT 84

A snowmobile. Wade straddles it, turns the ignition, zooms off.

KELLY

Fumbles with the wet phone. She flips it open.

KELLY
Hello. Hello ...

CHASE
Has he hurt you? Are you okay?

KELLY
He’s coming ... Please, hurry.

From Kelly’s face a pair of headlights illuminate the trees in front of her.

Wade’s snowmobile skids to a stop. He hops off, grabs Kelly, handcuffs her, hops back on.

He restarts the snowmobile and forces her to walk in front of him.

INT. WADE’S LIVING ROOM- DARK- NIGHT 85

A lamp pops on. Wade’s revolver, stuck in Kelly’s ribs.

WADE
That was fun. You should come over more often.

KELLY
You fucking maniac, just kill me ...

WADE
What, just when things are getting good? I wouldn’t think of it.

He shoves Kelly face first into a chair in front of the fireplace. He sets a fire.

The growing flames make an eerie showing on Heather’s face.

WADE
I thought I had lost you. I was worried ...

KELLY
This is all going to end the wrong way for you. You think you’re gonna get away with this? Do you?

WADE
Why else would I do this? Getting away with the murder’s the fun part isn’t it?

KELLY
Go to hell.

WADE
After you.

EXT. RUNNERS ROAD- NIGHT 86

Chase’s car speeds down the road.

INT. WADE’S LIVING ROOM- NIGHT 87

Wade pours himself a drink. He sits on the couch and gazes into the fire.

WADE
We met two years ago.

KELLY
What are you talking about? I’ve never seen you before.

WADE
The night my wife died. Two years ago.
(a forced laugh)
He wrecked my car. And his client ruined my life, all in one night.

KELLY
He didn’t kill your wife --

WADE
(snappishly)
He may as well have, if it hadn’t been for him I would have been home. I would have been able to stop it.

Kelly holds her tongue.

WADE
Do you know what it’s like to have the one thing you love snatched from you? Do you? For two years I’ve come home to this empty house.

INSERT - A PICTURE OF WADE AND CANDACE

KELLY
Why Chase? Why now, after two years?

WADE
He was just a kid, I couldn’t kill a kid, no matter what he’d done ... But I was close. Your husband defended him. He knew he was guilty, but you think he cared? Tell me, how was your Christmas that year? Did you get what you wanted?

KELLY
That’s none of your business.

WADE
... I tried to deal with it, I tried my damndest, but the memories kept coming, day and night, until I ...

EXT. OUTSIDE WADE’S HOUSE- NIGHT 88

Chase parks his car off the road below Wade’s house and sneaks across the large front yard.

INT. WADE’S HOUSE- NIGHT 89

Wade stands, draws the curtain back: Chase has been made.

WADE
Well, well. I underestimated him.
Be back in a flash.

He grabs the shotgun from earlier on and exits.

INT. THE BARN- NIGHT 90

Chase inspects the cramped room. The door flies open. It’s just the wind.

EXT. THE BARN- NIGHT 91

Chase exits and;

Wade has the shotgun aimed at him.

WADE
What are you doing out here all alone? Looking for something?

CHASE
... My dog, haven’t seen her have you?

WADE
(at first, silent)
... Why don’t you go on home, Mr. Matthews.
(slings the shotgun over his shoulder)
You’re a long way from home.

CHASE
Yeah ... I guess I am. Guess I’ll be on way.

WADE
Safe drive home.

CHASE
(a thought; but he says nothing)
Yeah.

INT. HOT SPRINGS AND POOL- LIVING ROOM- NIGHT 92

INTERCUT

CHASE
He knows something. I can feel it. The guy’s holding out.

MILLIE
But what could he know? I mean he’s the sheriff, why would he kidnap your wife?

CHASE
That’s what I’d like to know. If he had a beef with me, why not come after me ...? Why go after Kelly?

MILLIE
This town is nuts, murders, kidnappings, and now, a rogue sheriff ...? I’m moving back to LA, at least there the only thing you have to worry about is boobs and who’s doin’ whose husband.

CHASE
You can leave, Millie, but you can never get away from Glenwood Springs.

MILLIE
When are you coming home? Your little --

TYLER(O.S.)
Bang! Bang! I got you. You’re dead!

MILLIE
You hear that? That’s the sound of your demon spawn ... Auntie Millie doesn’t die, Tyler ... Help?

CHASE
Afraid you’re gonna have to hold on for a little while longer. At least until I have a talk with the sheriff.

MILLIE
What, where are you?

CHASE
The HOT SPRINGS AND POOL.

MILLIE
I thought you were going to his house.

CHASE
I went.

MILLIE
Well, did you talk to him yet?

CHASE
We talked briefly.

MILLIE
And? What’d he say? Has he seen Kelly?

CHASE
He pulled a shotgun on me. Told me to get off his property.

MILLIE
What!? Chase, are you hurt?

CHASE
I’m fine. But I’m not coming home just yet. I think I’ll pay Sheriff Briscoe another visit.

MILLIE
Where are you?

CHASE
I got a room at the Colorado for the night.

TYLER(O.S.)
Come on, come on. I have to tie you up now.

MILLIE(O.S.)
Auntie, doesn’t believe in being tied up.

CHASE
Hang in there, sis. Oh, and if you give him some warm milk he’ll sleep all night. He loves the stuff.

MILLIE
Now you tell me. Just hurry back before I go crazy ... Okay?

CHASE
He’s just saying he loves you, that’s all.

MILLIE
Well, his love hurts.

Chase laughs.

DISSOLVE TO:

A KNOCK ON THE DOOR

Chase gets up to answer it.

INT. THE DOOR- NIGHT 93

CHASE
Yes, who is it?

VOICE(O.C.)
Butler service. Will you be needing anything from the kitchen tonight?

Chase opens the door.

CHASE
Sorry, I was --

BUTLER
That’s quite alright, sir. Many of our guests stay with us because we allow them to be anonymous. I did happen to notice that you have a guest --

CHASE
Right. Well ... there’s no need to bother. We’re fine.

BUTLER
Very well, sir. Enjoy your stay.

He turns to walk away.

CHASE
One second.
(he pushes a bill forward)
(MORE)

CHASE (cont'd)
Thank you.

BUTLER
Good night, sir.

EXT. COURTHOUSE- DAY 94

A throng of reporters lobs questions at Wade as he is coming out of the building.

REPORTER#1
Sheriff, what can you tell us about the disappearance of Kelly Lawson?

WADE
We're actively pursuing all known leads.

REPORTER#1
Some people don't think you're doing enough. How do you answer to that charge?

WADE
My department will continue to search for Mrs. Lawson. Any other questions?

Ralph lowers his camera, sets it on the ground.

RALPH
Where the fuck is she? Why don't you just tell us, asshole?

The group of reporters invariably pause, some urge their cameramen to film, others furiously write in small pads.

WADE
There'll be no more questions...

RALPH
I think you know, and I'm gonna stay on you like ... until you tell us!

Wade makes his way through the crowd of reporters coming face to face with Ralph. They lock eyes ...

WADE
If you'll excuse me ...

He walks off. Ralph stands, looks, furious ...

INT. WADE’S HOUSE- DINING ROOM- NIGHT 95

Kelly is alone, one hand cuffed to her chair. Wade enters carrying two plates. One he sets in front of an open seat, the other he sets in front of Kelly.

WADE
Venison, shot it myself. Dig in.

Kelly looks at the gamey dish with a look of disgust.

WADE
Of course.
(he begins feeding her)
There ... all in.

Kelly gags, spits the unchewed dinner in Wade’s face.

KELLY
Sorry, I’m a vegan.

WADE

His face dripping with spit and meat, smirks, excuses himself.

EXT. BACKYARD- NIGHT 96

Chase tries desperately to look inside a window. He balances himself atop the snowmobile.

WADE

Looks up, wipes his face.

CHASE

Ducks, slips, crashes against the house and snowmobile with a loud thump.

WADE; WIPES HIS FACE

Stops, peers out of the window, exits the kitchen.

Chase staggers around the side of the house rubbing his head. Just as he passes the SIDE DOOR;

WADE

Carefully pushes the door open, steps out, shotgun in hand, shifts a round into the barrel.

CHASE

Freezes.

WADE
Lemme guess, your bitch got lost again ...

CHASE
Where is she?

WADE
That a yes? Come on, it’s okay, I kinda have to insist now.

He waves the gun moving Chase inside.

INT. WADE’S HOUSE- LIVING- ROOM NIGHT 97

Chase hugs and kisses his wife.

WADE

Boots him aside.

WADE
Not in my house, lover boy. Sit. Down, sit down. My house, my rules. Got it?

CHASE
You’re a really tough guy, you know that? You make real cops look like bullies.

WADE
Why thank you, I’m sort of ... Wait a min ...

He walks over to Chase and butts him in his viscera.

WADE
Funny.

Chase hits the deck. His shit is wrecked.

KELLY
No ... You’re insane. How dare you?

WADE
How dare I? How dare... you have no idea the torment I sleep through every night. You didn’t see what I saw ...

REMEMBERED

EXT. WADE’S HOUSE- NIGHT 98

The Police Cruiser screeches to a stop at the foot of the porch. Wade jumps out, followed by the Two Officers.

THE LIVING ROOM

WADE
Where is she? Where is my wife, I want to see her...

A couple of DICKS try to hold Wade back. He pushes right through them.

WADE
You’re gonna make it ... Hold on for me...

CANDACE

Her eyes closed, her breathing stopped.

A paramedic covers her face with the white sheet. Rolls her dead body out of the living room.

PRESENT

CHASE

WADE
That’s not enough for me. My wife died, and now yours is going to die, too. And it’s because of your arrogance.

CHASE
You were there. You had your chance to address any grievance with the court. You didn’t.

WADE
Forgive me, I must have been preoccupied with... I don’t know, say, my wife’s death. Two long years, counselor, I’ve counted.

CHASE
You’re being crazy. I did my job.

WADE
By tomorrow you won’t have a job to do. You’ll be dead.

Chase pounces on Wade and seizes the barrel. A struggle ensues.

WADE AND CHASE STRUGGLE FOR THE SHOTGUN

Chase falls on top of Wade.

Wade kicks him off.

Chase falls to the floor.

Chase scrambles behind a wall.

Wade takes aim. He blasts a hole clear through the wall.

CHASE

Ducks and runs for the stairs.

WADE

Follows him, but patiently

INT. THE ATTIC- NIGHT 99

Wade enters the dark room.

WADE
Haven’t you heard? Real men don’t hide ... Where --

Suddenly, Chase steps out of the dark and knocks the gun from Wade’s grip.

Wade punches Chase, he falls.

Chase kicks him, sending him reeling to the floor.

The two men scramble for the shotgun.

WADE

Grabs the back of Chase’s head, smashes his face into the floor. He grabs the gun, aims, fires.

Chase, somehow, avoids the blast and runs.

Wade stops and reloads.

WADE
... And I thought you'd be the lay down and take it type. Of course, all this means is more time for you to think about how much you're going to hate it when I shoot you in your face.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS- NIGHT 100

Chase searches for Kelly.

CHASE
It's me, babe. Where are you? Come out. It's me.

KELLY(O.S.)
(pounding on the door)
I'm in here. I'm locked in.

THE PANTRY DOOR

Chase fights with the door handle, yanking, pounding his fists, desperate to get the fucking door open.

INTERCUT

WADE

Slowly, stealthily, shotgun raised, walks down the dark stairwell.

INT. THE KITCHEN- NIGHT 101

Chase is searching through the drawers. He grabs a hammer.

FRANK
(calling out)
Hey, why not make this easy for both of us? You lawyers like snappy conclusions, right?

THE PANTRY DOOR

Chase shoves the back of the hammer into the door lock. He snatches, pulls ...

THE PANTRY

KELLY
Chase, hurry... Please, get me out of here...

THE STAIRS

FRANK
(racks a shot)
Ready or not ... here I come.

CHASE; FRUSTRATED

Beats the doorknob with the hammer.

CHASE
Fuck! Fuck you!

He turns around and;

Stops dead in his tracks.

WADE
Sorry to interrupt.

He levels the shotgun.

A long tense moment passes then;

A KNOCK ON THE DOOR

Wade holds his aim. Chase is sweating bullets.

CHASE
Better get that ... might be somebody important.

WADE
Talk about bad timing.

INT. BASEMENT- NIGHT 102

Wade hustles the pair into the dark cellar.

WADE
You two are way more trouble than you’re worth, you know that?

KELLY
Sorry for the inconvenience, asshole.

WADE
Aww ... what, did we sleep together or something?

Chase gives Kelly a look, then Wade. He’s sick to his stomach.

KELLY
It was the shortest ride of my life.

WADE
Ouch ... You don’t mean that, do you? Coz, I thought we made a deep connection.

Chase lunges at Wade. Wade shoves him to the floor.

WADE
Give it a rest, hero. What’s done is done. If you’ll excuse me, I’ve got guests to attend to.

He leaves.

INT. THE STAIRS- NIGHT 103

Hundley sees the other hole.

HUNDLEY
Fuck, Sheriff, who trained you, dude?

THE ATTIC

Hundley pushes the door open, gun drawn. He flashes his flashlight inside. He walks in.

HUNDLEY
What’s this?

THE BINDINGS

Hundley picks them up and exits.

INT. THE BARN- NIGHT 104

Ramsey cautiously enters the cold edifice. He shines his flashlight; the tools, the John Deere, not much else.

A gust of wind slams the door open. Ramsey whips around, hand on his gun. False alarm. He smiles.

As he walks out his foot gets caught on something. He flashes his light on it.

KELLY'S PINK SCARF

He picks it up, gives it a once over, exits.

INT. LIVING ROOM- NIGHT 105

Deputy Ramsey enters the living room without knocking, scarf at the ready.

RAMSEY
Found this out in the barn. Wouldn't know anything about it would ya ...?

WADE
That ... was my wife's.

RAMSEY
Right. Officer Hundley, you bout ready in here?

Hundley enters from the stairs.

HUNDLEY
Sheriff ...? Been doin' a little role playing?

WADE
(surpriesd)
Just some old rope, Officer Hundley. Nothing to it.

HUNDLEY
Sure looks like somethin'. I think there's some blood on 'em.

RAMSEY
Didn't know you had a new lady friend, Wade. Anybody I know?

WADE
Okay, guys, if you're done with your investigation here --

RAMSEY
Sure, we'd better get on out of here. Sorry for the trouble, Sheriff.

WADE
It’s no trouble at all. My house is always open.

HUNDLEY
When’s he next party, Sheriff Briscoe? I heard you throw a good one.

WADE
What?

RAMSEY
Come on, rookie. Now you’re goin’ too far.

HUNDLEY
But, you told me --

WADE
You’re invited.

HUNDLEY
Huh?

WADE
Yeah, next time there’s something going on here, you’re invited. My guest, Officer Hundley. And I’ll be sure you have the time of your life.

HUNDLEY
I’m free this weekend ...

RAMSEY
Boy, you don’t give up do you?

WADE
You gentlemen have a good night.

They depart.

WADE
Idiot ... Let’s have a party Sheriff ...

INT. BASEMENT DOOR- NIGHT 106

CHASE/KELLY
Help! Help us! Hey!

The door swings open.

WADE
Can it, they’re gone. Just us, all alone ... Whadda you guys wanna do now?

KELLY
Watch you suffer.

WADE
You mean you don’t feel like dying. Can’t say I blame you.

CHASE
You can still save yourself, Sheriff. Just let us go, we’ll say we got lost. No one ever has to know.

Wade walks up to Chase, stops, a smile creeps over his face.

WADE
Shut up. Lawyers ...

Chase just shoots daggers through him.

WADE
You two don’t deserve this, but I’m gonna cut you a break. Isn’t that great?

KELLY
Yeah, you’re the best.

CHASE
Must have been lonely growing up with no friends, you sick bastard.

WADE
Oh, not really. I had friends, I just hated them all.

CHASE
Sure it wasn’t the other way around?

WADE
You know, if I were you I'd be on my knees thanking me for not killing you already.

CHASE
How can I ever repay you?

WADE
You think you're mad now, imagine how mad you're gonna be when I shoot you in your face.

CHASE/KELLY;SILENT

Wade turns and exits.

WADE
Oh yeah. No sex in my house, you two.

A couple more steps and:

WADE
On second thought.

He grabs Chase and cuffs him to a pole.

WADE
And you get to sleep in my bed.

Chase yanks like hell on the pole.

CHASE
Don't you fucking touch my wife! Your wife is dead!

WADE
(stops)
What did you just say?

He quickly walks over to Chase, kicks him, punches him, punches him again. Raises the shotgun ...

KELLY
No! No ...
(through tears)
I'm yours ... I'm all yours. Come and get me.

WADE

Stops, looks at Kelly, back to Chase, another kick. Leaves him.

WADE
Guess you liked it after all.

KELLY
Yeah, just come on, I want you.

CHASE; SLUMPED, BLEEDING

CHASE
Kelly, you don’t have to do this. Let him kill me if he wants to. But you don’t have to do --

WADE
Oh, quit your bitchin’, the lady knows a good thing when she gets it.

KELLY
Let’s go ...

INT. BEDROOM- NIGHT 107

Kelly is standing at the side of the bed; Wade seated. He caresses her butt, kisses her belly lightly, his hands trail over her.

KELLY

Dying inside with every touch. Tears streaming from her puffy eyes.

WADE
I want you to take a shower with me.

Kelly’s sobs become heavier.

WADE
My wife used to love that. She always made it ... interesting.

KELLY
I’m not your wife ...

INT. THE BED- NIGHT 108

Kelly is lying, her back to Wade; his arm thrown over her body, crying silently. Wade snores.

EXT. GARFIELD JAIL- DAY 109

Wade is surrounded by reporters. They shove microphones at his face, lob questions, jockey for the best shot.

Ralphie is behind the camera with A REPORTER FROM 7 NEWS.

7 REPORTER
She’s been missing for a week now, Sheriff ... What is your department doing to find her?

WADE
My officers have searched every acre of this county for Mrs. Lawson. And we will continue to search until we find her.

7 REPORTER
A lot of people don’t feel you’ve done enough.

WADE
That’s life. You can’t satisfy everyone. Are there any more questions?

RALPH
Yeah, Sheriff, I’ve gotta question.
(sets the camera down)
Where is she?

WADE
I don’t have that answer.

RALPH
I think you do. I think you’re a lying fucking asshole, too!

The group of reporters invariably pauses, some urge their cameramen to film, others write furiously in small pads.

WADE
That’s it, folks. You all have a nice day.

RALPH
Yeah, we’ll have a nice day ... As soon as you let her go.

REPORTERS
Sheriff. Sheriff, one more question.

WADE
That’s it.

Wade makes his way through the crowd of reporters coming face to face with Ralph. They lock eyes ...

WADE
If you’ll excuse me ...

RALPH
I think you know, and I’m gonna stay on you like ... until you tell us.

He walks off. Ralph stands, looks, furious ...

INT. THE PRECINCT- DAY 110

Ramsey and Hundley are eating lunch and watching the news on AN ANCIENT TV SET.

HUNDLEY
You don’t think ...?

RAMSEY
Maybe he does ...

EXT. RUNNERS ROAD- NIGHT 111

Ralph is behind the camera as a FEMALE REPORTER speaks:

FEMALE REPORTER
It was here on this isolated road that Kelly Lawson was last heard from a week ago. Investigators have been combing the area daily looking for any sign of life. So far, nothing.

INT. POLICE VEHICLE- MOVING NIGHT 112

Ramsey and Hundley are inside.

WADE
I hope we’re wrong.

HUNDLEY
Never woulda’ thought the sheriff would go off the deep end.

RAMSEY
Let’s not convict a man before he’s had his day.

HUNDLEY
Yeah, I guess you’re right about that ...

EXT. RUNNERS ROAD- NIGHT 113

Ralph and the reporter are talking.

RALPH
I feel like I should’ve been here for her, you know?

MEGAN
I know it’s fucking freezing out here. Can we go?

RALPH
Kelly never complained. She loves this job.

MEGAN
Great, but I work in Marketing and I don’t love this job. It sucks.

RALPH
This is so fucked up. I bet he’s got in some torture chamber right now. Doin’ who knows what to her. Fuck!

MEGAN
Who and what are you talking about?

RAPLH
(incredulous)
The sheriff ... Look, Megan, I think you’re a smart girl, those elves were a stroke of ... okay. He’s out of his fucking gourd! Get it?

MEGAN
No, but I don’t really give a shit anyway. Let’s go.

RALPH
(to himself)
Fuck you, too, cunt.

EXT. WADE’S HOUSE- NIGHT 114

Ramsey bangs on the door.

Wade answers.

WADE
Paul, what brings you here again?

RAMSEY
I think you’d better let us in Sheriff. Need to talk to you.

WADE
Can’t it wait? I’m in the middle of something.

Wade attempts to close the door. Ramsey sticks his arm between the door and jamb, he and Hundley walk in.

Wade slowly closes the door.

RAMSEY
Something’s been eatin’ away at me since the other day. Wanna make sure it’s just me.

WADE
Well go ahead, have a look around.

RAMSEY
This time you’re gonna show us around. After you, Sheriff.

Wade leads them to the stairs.

WADE’S BEDROOM

The door opens, the trio enters. Hundley walks over to Wade’s computer, his leg bumps the table, the MONITOR lights up.

HUNDLEY
My bad ... Like the news, huh?

WADE
(sort of nervous)
... The weather ... I like to know what the weather’s gonna be.

Ramsey walks over and looks at the Monitor.

RAMSEY
Kelly Lawson missing since last week. Sher --

When he turns around Wade is gone.

Ramsey and Hundley look at each other, draw their guns and exit.

INT. DWNSTAIRS- NIGHT 115

Dark, an ominous silent.

Ramsey and Hundley flick their flashlights on, split up.

HUNDLEY

Enters the living room. He flashes his bright beam on the curtains ... Nothing. He moves on.

RAMSEY

Walks down the hallway approaching the kitchen. He stops at the side door entrance, flashes it, walks on.

WADE

From behind smacks Hundley hard across the back of his head with his shotgun, he drops to the floor. Wade drags his limp body behind the couch.

THE KITCHEN

Ramsey looks around, enters the dining room, shines his light on the table and all around the room. When he turns back around the light illuminates Wade’s face. The two men tussle.

EXT. NEWS STATION- NIGHT 116

Megan gets out of the news van. Ralph speeds off. Megan almost says something, but doesn’t. She just to her car and drives off.

INT. THE DINING ROOM- NIGHT 117

Wade pushes Ramsey to the floor and stands over him. Ramsey kicks him in the stomach, Wade falls back.

Ramsey gets up, scrambles over to Wade and tries to snatch the shotgun from him.

THE TWO MEN

Roll over twice on the floor, finally;

Wade punches Ramsey in the jaw, Ramsey is stunned.

INT. THE BASEMENT- NIGHT 118

Wade shoves the shotgun in Chase’s back forcing him and Kelly up the stairs.

INT. THE LIVING ROOM- NIGHT 119

Ramsey is sitting slumped in a chair, flexing and holding his jaw. Chase and Kelly stand next to him.

Wade has the shotgun trained on them.

WADE
Who’s first?

KELLY
You are, asshole.

WADE
If I were you I’d make my last words count ...

KELLY
Fuck you.

WADE
You already ... Never mind.

RAMSEY
Wade don’t do this. It’s not worth it. Let us help you.

WADE
Help me? You want to help me? Bring my wife back here ... How about that, can you do that?

CHASE
No one can.

WADE
Well, in that case I think you all know what’s next.

Wade raises his shotgun and aims it Chase.

HUNDLEY

Stirs loudly.

HUNDLEY
What the fuck ...? What’s goin’ on? Sheriff ...?

WADE
Nice of you to wake up, Officer Hundley. Now fall in over there. Now!

Hundley half stumbles over to the others. Wade measures his shit again. He squeezes the trigger ...

BOOM!

The front door kicks open with a flourish. Ralph rushes in and charges straight for Wade. He lays a hit that would make a linebacker proud on the gun weilding sheriff.

RALPH
Yeah, baby! How you like that shit!?

The shotgun slides across the wooden dining room floor. Chase with his foot stops it, picks it up, aims it at the sheriff.

WADE

Whips Ralph’s legs with his, Ralph’s arms flail wildly, he falls.

RALPH
Ah ...

Wade clutches Ralph’s neck with his arm, pulls out his revolver.

WADE
You idiot, I should kill you right now! Nice little plan, but this is how things are going to happen. You’re all going to die tonight. Any questions?

RALPH
Does that include me?

WADE
You’re first.

He pushes Ralph in front of him. Aims his pistol;

BANG!

Wade’s eyes turn into saucers. He looks down, crumbles to the floor.

HUNDLEY

His lowers to his side.

WADE
Fuck ... You shot me.

Blood pours from his hit wound onto the floor. Ramsey rushes over, gun drawn, grabs Wade’s gun.

Chase hugs Kelly; sobbing, they both crumble to the floor.

HUNDLEY; DISBELIEF

RAMSEY
(into his radio)
Officer shot. Repeat, officer shot.
We’re at the Sheriff’s house.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WADE’S HOUSE- NIGHT 120

MONTAGE - THE CRIME SCENE

-- Police move in and out.

-- Paramedics roll Wade out on a gurney.

-- Hundley, head down.

RAMSEY
You did what you had to do.

HUNDLEY
I never thought I’d have to shoot a man. I guess I was just foolin’ myself.

CHASE
You saved four lives tonight, Officer Hundley.

RAMSEY
Paramedics say he’s got a good chance of making it. Takin’ him over to Valley View. He’s a good man. Just got lost...

CHASE
I hope he gets the help he needs.

RAMSEY
Just doin’ what we’re sworn to do, Mr. Matthews, nothing to say thanks for.

KELLY
Well, just the same, thank you, both.

RAMSEY
We’ll need to get a statement from you folks down at the station.

Chase puts his arm around Kelly and they walk away.

CHASE
It’s been a long couple of days, deputy. Whaddaya say we see you in the morning?

RAMSEY
Hey, now, just a minute. You’ve been a good guy until now. Come back here...

He takes off behind them.

HUNDLEY

Morose, as he slowly drops his head...

SUPER: ONE WEEK LATER

EXT. HOT SPRINGS POOL- NIGHT 121

Chase and Kelly are sitting inside, steam rising from the water, kissing between sips of bubbly.

CHASE
Babe, I love you.

KELLY
I ...

Her cell phone rings.

She answers.

MILLIE
When are you guys coming back...? Tyler is trying to rob me of my last reserve of sanity.

Chase grabs the phone.

CHASE
Bye, Millie...

Click.

Over the following scene this:

TERI(V.O.)
I’m happy to report tonight that Kelly Lawson is safe tonight.

MIKE
Welcome back, Kelly. We hope to see you back here and on the job soon.

INT. RALPH’S LIVING ROOM- NIGHT 122

Ralph and Gloria, on the couch, watching the news.

RALPH
Man, that was close.

GLORIA
Yeah, I’m glad they found her. Are you still in love with here ...

RALPH
No, well, yeah, but don’t worry about that --

GLORIA
Oh please, Ralphie, that was so long ago. Besides, if she wants you she can have you ...

RALPH
What?

GLORIA
Ralphie?

RALPH
What’s up, babe?

GLORIA
Shut up ... and kiss me, you idiot.

They kiss and then this;

INSERT - MUSIC

INT. POOL- NIGHT 123

Chase has his arm around Kelly’s shoulders, smiling, they kiss ...

The snowy peaks of Glenwood Springs gleam in the moonlight.

FADE TO BLACK.