FADE IN:

EXT. TRAIN YARD - DAY

It's cold. It's snowing. Hard. An ashen, bleached blanket of falling flakes from the sky. Every tree is frosted and covered in an ivory glaze. The wind howls. Flurries waft through the whirlwind air like raindrops scattering off a windshield.

SHELDON (V.O.)
You've gotta swim. Swim for your life. Swim for the music that saves you when you're not so sure you'll survive.

Through this arctic blast of snowdrift emerges a blurred silhouette of a MAN. A silvery dimness to his shadow. He keeps a slow, measured pace -- alongside the iced tracks.

SHELDON (V.O.)
You gotta swim and swim when it hurts. The whole world is watching, you haven't come this far to fall off the earth.

Still a ways off, the MAN treks onward through the gale. Clothed in indistinct threads.

SHELDON (V.O.)
Memories like bullets, they fired at me from a gun. A crack in the armor. I swim to brighter days Despite the absence of sun. Choking on salt water, I'm not giving in. I swim.

Upon us now, we gather a better picture of our clouded figure. His face covered by cloth. Absorbed. Immersed against the elements. His eyes caked with snow. Still he journeys onward.

SHELDON (V.O.)
The currents will pull you away from your love. Just keep your head above...

A small, insignificant train station in front of him. His last few flagrant steps seem to take a lifetime. He reaches the outpost and leaves the squall of crystal behind him.
INT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

Crammed and undersized. Bare and lacking anything of any color. There is no one inside, except for an ATTENDANT behind her glass booth, reading a book. The fireplace GROWLS. Our Man limps to the flame.

He warms his frozen hands. Unwraps himself. The orange glow begins to thaw out his soggy apparel.

His name is SHELDON LENNON.

He's strong looking. A staunch face -- good jawline. Jailhouse tattoos. He carries his regret with him, at this point in his life, it's coming out of his ears. He's closed off. Reserved for the most part. There's a fading glimmer of youth in his sad eyes.

After warming himself, Sheldon walks to the Attendant. She's pretty. Large blue eyes and the darkest black hair.

ATTENDANT
Something I can help you with?

Takes a second to come out --

SHELDON
What town is this?

ATTENDANT
Excuse me?

SHELDON
I'm asking you what town I'm in.

She cautiously looks him over. He can feel her disapproving glances.

ATTENDANT
Newark.

He nods. So docile. Stands there expecting more. The Attendant presses --

ATTENDANT
Where you coming from?

SHELDON
Rahway.

ATTENDANT
What are you doing here?
SHELDON
What do you mean?

ATTENDANT
You obviously came from outside. You just out for a leisurely stroll?

Sheldon doesn’t answer. He stands there like a lost sheep. Hesitant and modest, searching. Until --

SHELDON
Any trains coming through here anytime soon?

ATTENDANT
Where you off to?

SHELDON
Anywhere.

ATTENDANT
(taken back)
Anywhere?

Sheldon nods. His hands wrestle with his knit hat. The Attendant can see his nervousness.

ATTENDANT
I’m sorry, the station is closed due to inclement weather.

SHELDON
Closed?

ATTENDANT
Can’t get any trains in or out of here in this. Sorry.

SHELDON
But you’re here.

ATTENDANT
I have to be. I get paid.

SHELDON
I see.

She’s reading the uncertainty on his face. It’s peaking her interest --

ATTENDANT
Everything alright?
SHELDON
I just --
(stop himself, quiet)
Would it be alright if I sat here for a little while?

ATTENDANT
In here?

SHELDON
Yes.

ATTENDANT
Why?

SHELDON
I don't have anywhere else to go.

ATTENDANT
Don't you got any friends?

SHELDON
No.

She's done prying. He turns and finds a folding chair. He drags it over to the fire and drops his weary limbs upon it. Palms up to the flame.

The Attendant brings him a hot cup of coffee. Sheldon reluctantly takes it from her. He's not good with people. Socially retarded.

ATTENDANT
(sympathetic)
And if you need anything else, you know where to find me. My name's Amy.

SHELDON
I can leave if I'm not supposed to be in here --

ATTENDANT
-- no. You stay as long as you need.

Sheldon nods -- thanks. He sips. Closes his drowsy eyes and leans back in his seat. Resting for the first time in what feels like an eternity.

AMY watches him from her booth. It's as if she's watching an injured fawn. So lost. So passive.
As Sheldon sleeps, a MANAGER enters from the raging storm beyond the walls. He shakes off the cold and sees Sheldon sitting there. He doesn't know what to make of him. Walks to Amy --

MANAGER
Who the hell is this?

AMY
Some guy. He came in about a half an hour ago.

MANAGER
Homeless?

AMY
I don't think so. I dunno. He was looking for a train.

MANAGER
To where?

AMY
He didn't know.

A good look at Sheldon's stiff body --

MANAGER
What is he, dead? Asleep?

AMY
I think he passed out.

MANAGER
What? I don't want migrants setting up tents in my station.

AMY
He's not hurting anyone.

MANAGER
That's how it starts...

She's borderline pleading with him --

AMY
Just leave him be. He looks lost or something.
MANAGER
(reluctant)
Fine. But when you head out of here, he goes with you or I throw him out in the cold, got it?

AMY
Fine.

He walks back to a narrow corridor, mumbling to himself all the while. Amy cannot take her eyes off Sheldon. There's something cryptic about him. Something unforthcoming. She's drawn to his mystery.

TIME CUT. AN HOUR LATER.

The fire is dying out. What remains of the dim sunlight outside, has now turned to darkness.

Sheldon sits asleep in the exact same spot. Amy crepes up behind him and cautiously shakes his shoulder. Wakes him up. His eyes flutter open and he jumps to his feet as if being attacked.

AMY
Sorry! I didn't mean to startle you.

Sheldon swallows. He was ready to pounce, comes back down to Earth. He sees she's wearing a coat and mittens.

SHELDON
You're leaving?

AMY
My shift's over and they're closing down until tomorrow.

SHELDON
I'll go.

He's putting his gear on, prepping for the frigid unknown once again.

AMY
Where will you go?

SHELDON
I dunno.

AMY
How will you get there?
SHELDON
Same way I got here, I guess.

AMY
It's cold out.

SHELDON
It was cold earlier.

AMY
It's colder.

He brushes past her without thinking twice. Amy spins to watch him leave, she cannot help but call out --

AMY
Wait! I have a car. I can drive you.

SHELDON
(reluctant)
Where?

AMY
Motel?

SHELDON
I'll be fine --

AMY
-- please. I'd hate for something to happen to you.

SHELDON
You don't even know me.

AMY
I'm human. I know enough.

Sheldon reached for the doorknob. Turns it. Mulls it over. Shuts the door.

SHELDON
Okay.

INT. FRONT SEAT - NIGHT
Amy's car is much to be desired. It's old. It's dirty. The consol is chewed up and the wipers squeak.

Sheldon sits shotgun -- silent. There's a stillness between
them. It's deafening. Amy waits until she cannot stand it any longer...

AMY
I know a place outside of town. It's maybe ten minutes from the bus station.

SHELDON
That's fine.

AMY
Warm enough?

SHELDON
I'm fine.

A second awkward silence between them. Then --

AMY
People probably think I'm crazy, huh?

SHELDON
What people?

AMY
I dunno, just... everyday people.

SHELDON
Why?

AMY
Driving a stranger around.

He's incapable of being polite. So brash and crude.

SHELDON
I didn't ask you to take me.

AMY
I know. I'm just saying.

SHELDON
How far are we from Upper Saddle River?

AMY
Thirty minutes -- maybe a little more. Why?

SHELDON
I know someone out there.
AMY
So, you do have friends.

SHELDON
Not exactly.

AMY
Who is it?

SHELDON
Why do you ask so many questions?

AMY
I can't deal with silences. Sorry.

SHELDON
It's fine. I just -- never met anyone that cares so much about a nobody.

AMY
You're not a nobody.

SHELDON
You don't know who I am.

AMY
I know that there's a purpose for everyone. No one gets here by accident.

A third silence. Sheldon glares out the window. They approach the Motel.

SHELDON
He's my brother.

AMY
He know you're coming? I can drive you up there...

SHELDON
You've done enough.

Sheldon looks at her. The first glance of sincerity in his broken eyes. Amy's hands are firmly planted on the cold steering wheel.

AMY
Well, this is it.

SHELDON
Thanks for the ride.
AMY
Good luck.

He nods -- understood. Pops open the passenger door and hops out. He peaks his head back into the car before slamming the door closed.

SHELDON
Thank you.

AMY
You don't have to thank me. Just tell me your name.

SHELDON
(hesitantly)
Sheldon.

AMY
(smiles)
See you round, Sheldon.

He shuts the door and struts off to the neon encrusted Motel Office sign. She watches him disappear into the glow of the lights. There's a sadness to her now. Like dropping off a lover at the airport.

The car races off. Sheldon watches from the front desk counter. There's little emotion on his brow, but you can tell he's been effected in some human manner.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

A dingy room. Along in years. Fossil-like furniture and dusty bedspreads. A staleness to the wallpaper.

Sheldon empties the contents of his pockets on the bed; a pocket knife, several crinkled dollar bills, loose change, a photograph or a little boy, and a map of New Jersey.

He runs his fingers through his long hair. He glances at the phone on the nightstand. Walks to the bathroom instead.

SHOWER

Sheldon closes his eyes and lets the stream of water wash over his forehead. It feels so good. Warm. Translucent. The dirt crusting off of him. He stays there for a long time.

SHELDON (V.O.)
Just keep your head above...
SINK

Sheldon shaves. A few petty cuts on his neck line. We see fresh bruises on his shoulders and back. Scars. Steam rises off the faucet. Everything is so new to him. He lets the steam hit his fatigued face.

SMASH CUT TO:

Sheldon is held down by two LARGE INMATES There's a brutal struggle for him to break free -- to no avail. A third INMATE behind him -- unbuckles his belt and drops his pants.

Sheldon grinds his teeth in gross anticipation of what comes next. A horrific look upon his face.

BACK TO:

BED


SHELDON (V.O.)

Just keep your head above...

The night takes him. Darkness falls. He gives in to the normality of it all.

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

The brutal storm continues. Rain and bullet-like sleet. Sideways and in all directions.

Sheldon waits for the city bus. It rumbles down the slushy street and comes to a skidding stop in front of him. He climbs onboard.

INT. BUS - DAY

Empty, for the most part, a few stragglers here and there. We bounce around a bit. Sheldon half-way down on the aisle. As stoic as they come. Little to no emotion, just a lost gaze out the window.

Like a stranger in a strange land, he watches the newness of everything beyond the glass. Every building is so advanced, so unknown, so distinct.
The bus storms onward into the urban terrain. Sheldon looks around him, strange faces and sorry frowns. The bus is a daunting spot.

INT. PAROLE OFFICE - DAY

A small, cramped office in an older government building. Lots of dark colors and metals. Expose piping. The walls covered in framed artwork -- nothing special. Awards and handshake shots above the wooden desk.

Sheldon sits opposite his parole officer, his name is RODGERS. He's the definition of overworked and underpaid. Fat and unhealthy. A crooked tie.

   RODGERS
   (in a file)
   How's the outside been treating you thus far?

   SHELDON
   Fine. Been two days.

   RODGERS
   Found a place to stay?

   SHELDON
   I'm at a motel right now.

   RODGERS
   I'll get you some names of some half-way homes.

Sheldon nods. He's not too pleased with the sound of that.

   RODGERS
   Given any thought to what kind of work you might start looking for?

   SHELDON
   No. Not really.

   RODGERS
   It's part of your conditional release...

   SHELDON
   If I don't work, I go back?

   RODGERS
   More or less. What do you think?
Sheldon mulls it over. He's searching --

\[
\text{SHELDON} \\
\text{Maybe the railroad.}
\]

\[
\text{RODGERS} \\
\text{Good. There you go. I can make some calls and see what available. You'll probably be started at minimum wage with little or no medical benefits.}
\]

\[
\text{SHELDON} \\
\text{Can I ask you a question?}
\]

\[
\text{RODGERS} \\
\text{Of course.}
\]

\[
\text{SHELDON} \\
\text{How long does this last?}
\]

\[
\text{RODGERS} \\
\text{Our meetings? Several years unfortunately.}
\]

\[
\text{SHELDON} \\
\text{Not the meetings.}
\]

\[
\text{RODGERS} \\
\text{Then, you'll have to be more specific.}
\]

\[
\text{SHELDON} \\
\text{(leans in)} \\
\text{Being afraid.}
\]

\[
\text{RODGERS} \\
\text{Of?}
\]

\[
\text{SHELDON} \\
\text{Everything.}
\]

Rodgers closes the file. Removes his reading glasses and sits on the edge of his creaky desk. He's getting personal with him --

\[
\text{RODGERS} \\
\text{I've never been to prison, so I don't know full well what you've been through during your time there. But, what I do know, is that life is hard -- behind bars or in front of them. The best thing you can do, that any of us}
\]

(MORE)
RODGERS (cont'd)
can do, is take it one minute at a
time and breathe. That's all.

SHELDON
That's it?

RODGERS
I'm afraid so. It'll get easier.

SHELDON
(standing now)
Thanks.

They exchange and half-hearted handshake before Sheldon makes for the doorway.

EXT. STREET - DAY

The snow has turned to an icy rain. Sheldon lights a cigarette, takes a hit, and begins down the impaired sidewalk. He passes by a dozen stale high rise buildings before taking a turn into a local store.

INT. LOCAL STORE - DAY

Sheldon shakes off the rust and cold. Takes a look down the aisles of the old-fashioned, runty shop. A little bit of everything in this place. Everything stacked, pinned, and piled.

He starts down the food aisle. There's a million choices. He's confused by the colors and labels. Placing items back in the wrong spots.

COUNTER

An older CLERK stands at attention. He's not trusting his lone customer and begins to folds his arms in a disapproving manner. A minute later, Sheldon approaches him.

SHELDON
Excuse me. You got any soap?

CLERK
(offers little)
What kind?

SHELDON
Just soap.
CLERK
Which brand?

SHELDON
Regular.

CLERK
End of the food aisle.

SHELDON
How about razors?

CLERK
What you need those for?

SHELDON
(confused)
To shave my face.

CLERK
They're behind the counter, I get them for you when you wanna check out.

SHELDON
Fine.

The Clerk rolls his eyes as Sheldon heads back to check out the stock of soaps. He gets about half-way down the tiny aisle, when he stops and turns back --

SHELDON
You got a problem or something?

CLERK
Excuse me?

SHELDON
Do you treat all your customers like that?

CLERK
Like what?

SHELDON
Playing twenty questions when all I want is some fucking soap and a pack of razors. Something wrong with my money?

A beat between them.
CLERK
(backing off)
I didn't say that.

SHELDON
Prick.

CLERK
I'm gonna have to ask you to leave. Now.

SHELDON
Fuck off.

CLERK
Leave.

SHELDON
I'm getting my soap and I'll be on my way.

CLERK
This is how I ask a second time...

The Clerk reaches down and presents a shotgun. SLAMS it on the glass counter. Knocks over the scratch offs and lighters.

Sheldon stares at the barrel, he's not scared in the least. You can tell he's been there, done that. He just puts his wool hat back on his head and slowly walks to the door.

SHELDON
(his teeth)
Point that gun at me one more second and I'll shove it right up the old ass of yours.

The Clerk lowers his stance. Sheldon fires him a "fuck you" glare and pushes out the door.

INT. BUS - DAY

Minutes later. Sheldon nearly in the same seat. A few more passengers this time of day. His head is buried in a map of central New Jersey.

A hand written address on the left hand corner of an envelope. 41 Hamlin Court. He's finding in on the map. Uses his finger to measure the distance. Not too far.
EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - NIGHT

Sheldon treks down the street of a wealthy neighborhood. He stands out like a purple elephant. He's tired. Steps becoming harder and harder.

Each house he passes is lit up. A well-off area. The ultimate taste of wealth and fortune. He watches them like a movie. An almost daring suspense in his tired eyes.

SMASH CUT TO:

A baseball diamond on a gorgeously sunny afternoon. The fresh cut grass, the powder chalk lines, the pockets of knats around the outfielder's faces.

It's a child's game and there are adolescent boys playing it. A RUNNER off third -- breaks for home at the PING of contact between an aluminum bat and the leather ball -- he's running HARD -- digs in deep -- SLIDES safely into home...

BACK TO:

Sheldon reaches the driveway of a massive two-story colonial. He checks the mailbox -- 41 Hamlin. He's here.

COLONIAL HOUSE

A BMW and TAHOE parked out front. A fountain and coy pond. He cleans himself a bit -- past himself down. Fixes his hair. Stands at the door.

KNOCKS.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
Who is it?

SHELDON
I'm looking for Jerry.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
Who's asking?

SHELDON
Uh -- is this the home of Jerry Lennon?

The door cracks open. Sheldon can only see the eye of the person behind the door. She's careful not to open too far --

FEMALE VOICE
Can I help you?
SHELDON
(the letter)
I'm looking for Jerry.

She looks at the letter, opens the door a bit further now.

FEMALE VOICE
Who are you?

SHELDON
My name's Sheldon. Jerry's brother.

She flings the large door fully open. She's striking. Deep colored hair and porcelain skin. Sheldon has a hard time looking directly at her. She smiles big. Her bubbly personality is borderline obnoxious.

MARY
It's really you?! Come in! I'm Mary -- Jerry's wife.

SHELDON
Wife?

MARY
We got married five years ago.
Come in. Get out of the cold.

Sheldon follows her inside the foyer. She closes the door behind them.

INT. JERRY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Monumental. Marble floors and vaulted ceilings. Affluent artwork and pillars on the staircase. Every corner plush and polished. Sheldon passes with caution -- like a museum -- you break it bought it. Magnificent room after room. They settle in the living room area.

SHELDON
Can I sit?

MARY
Of course.

SHELDON
Anywhere?

MARY
Don't be silly, sit. Can I get you drink?
Sheldon plops down on the brown leather sofa.

SHELDON
No. I'm fine.

MARY
You sure? Water, tonic, beer?

SHELDON
No alcohol for me. State rules.

MARY
Okay. Don't mind me while I fix myself something. Make yourself at home.

He watches her move into the kitchen. He stares at her ass. She's in great shape. He catches himself and looks away. She chit chats from the high top -- mixes a drink.

SHELDON
Is Jerry home?

MARY
He working, as usual, but he should be here any minute.

SHELDON
Working where?

MARY
In the city.

SHELDON
What's he doing?

MARY
He's an engineer. Small robotics. He's always busy, busy, busy.

SHELDON
I see.

She's joined him once again. Sheldon is very uncomfortable being alone with her, maybe it's her beauty --

MARY
I see you got the letters he wrote you?

SHELDON
A few.
MARY
When were you released?

SHELDON
Few days ago. Found my way here using the address on the envelope.

MARY
Do you need anything? Clothes? Shower? A place to stay? We have plenty of rooms.

SHELDON
No. Thank you.

MARY
If there's anything --

SHELDON
-- I was just kind of hoping to see Jerry is all.

Checks her watch, diamonds --

MARY
He's usually home by now. Maybe he's just stuck in traffic.

Awkward silence between them. She's too nice to sit there and not ask questions.

MARY
He'll be so happy to see you.

SHELDON
Yeah?

MARY
Sure. It's been a long time an all.

He doesn't answer.

MARY
Are you sure you're okay?

SHELDON
I'm fine. You know what? If you don't mind -- I might just wait outside.

MARY
It's ten degrees out there.
SHELDON
I know.

MARY
Was it something I said?

SHELDON
(already standing)
Not at all. I just feel --
(quiets himself)
I'll wait outside.

He sheepishly walks off, away from Mary -- who sits in confusion -- as if she's insulted the President.

She hears the front door open, then shut. She's alone again.

EXT. FRONT STEPS - NIGHT

Sheldon sits his his hands in his coat pockets. He's completely still. The frigid air seems to have no effect on him. He gazes down the empty street as if he's trying to FORCE a car appear. Nothing but chilly darkness looms.

Seconds later, a single CAR comes steaming down the street and pulls into the driveway. It something newish. A RANGE ROVER. The headlights flicker off and the driver's side door opens to reveal JERRY LENNON.


He takes a minute to recognize --

JERRY
Holy shit.

SHELDON
Surprised?

JERRY
Is it really you?

Sheldon hops to his feet and walks over to his brother.

SHELDON
Afraid so.

They share a sibling hug. Tight. The man fist pump on each others back. Release --
JERRY
Well, let me look at you...

SHELDON
What do you think?

JERRY
You look --

SHELDON
-- like shit, I know.

JERRY
No way. Well -- yeah. A little shitty, but no worse for wear. What are you doing here?

The letter from his pocket --

SHELDON
Got your letters.

JERRY
We were beginning to wonder. You never wrote back.

SHELDON
I tried but I never knew what to say.

JERRY
What are you doing on here in the cold? Mary didn't let you inside?

SHELDON
No, she did. She was great. It's just... ya know.

JERRY
(he knows)
I get it. Have you eaten yet? Mary's a great cook.

SHELDON
No.

JERRY
Come on inside. You like meatloaf?

SHELDON
Sure.
With that, Jerry walks Sheldon back inside through the garage door. The lights go out on the outside of the house.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

The sink is piled high with soiled pots and pans. The counter top is riddled with onion scraps and used forks. A feast was prepared.

The table is heaped with a hoard of food, mostly eaten, a few empty red wine bottles, and a liter of Coca Cola.

Mary is passed out on the couch. Sheldon and Jerry sit, much more casual, talking in the dim dinner lighting. Sheldon is much more comfortable around his brother.

JERRY
Why back to Jersey?

SHELDON
Not a whole lot of options at the moment.

JERRY
You missed the weather?

SHELDON
I don't remember it being this cold.

JERRY
It is. So, what happens now? Where do you go from here?

SHELDON
I haven't figured that out yet. I'm working on it.

Sheldon drinks his soda pop. Jerry drains his glass of wine. Pours himself another tall one.

SHELDON
You got a good thing going here.

JERRY
I do. It's not always easy though.

SHELDON
What do you mean?
JERRY
Sixty hour work weeks, bills out
the ass, the responsibility that
comes along with being president
of a 300 million dollar company.
It's tough.
    (the couch)
Not to mention, HER.

SHELDON
She's great.

JERRY
She is. She's been there when no
one else has. She's my rock.

SHELDON
I wanted to ask you something.

JERRY
Anything.

SHELDON
(low)
Dad?

Jerry slowly shakes his head --

JERRY
No.

SHELDON
(fuck)
Ma?

JERRY
I tried to get her into a home.
Somewhere she could live the rest
of her life and be happy --
somewhere close to here. But she
didn't wanna go. She said it was
like being in prison.

SHELDON
It must have killed her to know
where I was.

JERRY
No more than the rest of us.

SHELDON
I thought about her everyday. What
she would say to me if she found
me there. How she'd wave that
(MORE)
SHELDON (cont'd)
boney finger at me and scold me in that Irish accent of hers.

JERRY
(jokes)
She would have taken the belt to your ass if they'd let her.

Sheldon grins. The first sign of spark we've seen thus far. It's short lived.

SHELDON
She ever ask for me? Say anything?

JERRY
No.

That one hurts. Sheldon fights back the tears.

SHELDON
Nothing?

JERRY
Sheldon, you know how our family was. Dad never even told any of us that he loved us until he was about to die -- and even then, it felt forced. We've never been good with emotions. It's the reason mom died so far from all of us, and it's the same reason you can't sit in my living room with my wife without feeling out of place.

They're quiet now, letting the shrapnel sink in. Mary waltzes over to them -- kisses Jerry on the cheek.

MARY
I'm going up.
(to Sheldon)
Goodnight.

SHELDON
You too.

She heads off to the stairs. They watch her go. Jerry looks to his watch, his eyes let us know it's later than he expected. He sits up a bit --

JERRY
Where you staying? You need a ride somewhere?
SHELDON
I was kind of hoping I could stay here. Just for the night.

JERRY
Let me show you your room.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Sheldon follows Jerry to a spare bedroom. Lavish and traditional. Almost like a bed and breakfast in and of itself. Wood grain and fresh, clean lines.

JERRY
This is you. The bathroom is inside and you should have plenty of blankets and towels and all that crap. You think of anything else you need?

Sheldon takes a look around. Amazed by the wealth of it all. He looks to Jerry --

SHELDON
Thank you.

JERRY
No sweat.

SHELDON
Not for the room. For not asking about it.

JERRY
About what?

SHELDON
About what I did.

JERRY
Look, I don't know what you did or what you didn't do. All I know is what I read in the papers. And if those things are true, then I feel very sorry for you. But even if they are -- you're my brother and I love you no matter what happens. There's nothing you can do to change that. Understand?

Sheldon nods -- understood. Jerry's turning back down the hallway as --
JERRY
See you in the morning.

Sheldon softly shuts his bedroom door and has a seat at the foot of the bed. Everything is so perfect, he's almost afraid to touch anything.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jerry and Mary lay awake in bed. The moon shines in on them in streaks of yellow and white. It paints their faces as they look upward to the ceiling fan. Mary places her hand on his chest. There's so much on his mind she can see it on his face.

MARY
You okay?

JERRY
Ten years. That's a long time.

MARY
Why didn't you guys ever talk while he was away?

JERRY
He wasn't allowed visitors.

MARY
He didn't know about your parents?

JERRY
No. It was strange seeing him sitting there like that, in the kitchen, so different. So fragile.

MARY
He was afraid to be alone with me.

JERRY
Don't take it personal. He's adjusting, ya know?

MARY
I bet he doesn't even know what the internet is.

JERRY
Everything's so new to him.

She kisses his face. Relaxes him. He's letting her.
MARY
It must feel good to see him again. To catch up.

JERRY
He feels like a stranger. My own brother and it feels like I hardly know him. I mean, the last thing I remember was them taking him out of the courtroom in handcuffs. That was my last memory of him.

MARY
Now you can start new. Start again.

JERRY
You're right. It's good. It's a good thing he's here.

They kiss. She rubs his chest and rests her head upon it. He closes his eyes. Gives into her tenderness.

INT. SPARE BEDROOM - DAY

The next morning. It's brighter -- the sun is out and the weather has turned. Jerry stands in his work threads -- stares into Sheldon's room. Empty. The bed neatly folded and made up. A clean getaway.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Sheldon is on the move once again. He cannot stay in one place for very long. He's dodging the people around him -- not wanting to touch anyone. He keeps his head down and walks past everyone like a ghost. Unnoticed and unwanted.

SMASH CUT TO:

A prison recreation yard. Fenced in -- razor wire up above. GUARDS with sniper rifles oversee an ocean of INMATES.

Sheldon paces like a shelter dog -- a speck among the others. He minds his own business, broken off from the packs. Longing for escape.
INT. PAROLE OFFICE - DAY

Rodgers sits behind his desk, a God awful suit on. Two sizes too tight. A stack of paperwork behind him. He's presenting Sheldon with a written offer for employment.

RODGERS
I checked with the railroad folks, turns out they have a union policy against work placements for ex-cons.

(the paper)
So I got something else lined up for you. Take a look.

SHELDON
(reads)
I can't do this.

RODGERS
Why not? It's honest work.

SHELDON
You can't be serious.

RODGERS
You need money on this side of the fence. Nothing is free out here. What option do you have?

Sheldon takes the pen and signs on the dotted line. Flings the paper back across the desk.

SHELDON
I can't believe this.

RODGERS
I've seen worse, okay? Just... do your best and try not to get fired. In the meantime, if something else opens up -- I'll put your name on the list.

SHELDON
I was better off pressing license plates.

RODGERS
You could go back...

Enough of this. Sheldon gathers his coat and walks out. Rodgers files the paperwork.
INT. BURGER KING KITCHEN - DAY

A greasy prep table joined to the metallic freezer and french friers. A station with condiments, a dingy microwave, and an oversized sink -- already filled to the brim with pans and trays.

A CREW of four back here -- adolescent and Mexican. They're joking as they work. Making burgers, salting the fries, cleaning the stations.

Sheldon enters from the back. Swallows his pride -- he's in uniform, and apron in front, hair net and rubber gloves. You can tell he wants to scream, but he's a good sport. it beats the alternative.

SHELDON (V.O.)
You gotta swim through the night's that won't end.

He takes his spot -- the fry machine. He begins the monotonous task of ripping open the brown bag -- pours in the frozen fries -- dumps them in the scalding oil -- hits the timer. Waits.

SHELDON (V.O.)
Just keep your head above...

BEEP! BEEP! Times's up. Remove the fries -- dump them in the holder -- salt them -- scoop and place on the warming tray. Over and over. The minutes feel like weeks.

BREAKROOM

Sheldon removes his gloves and hairnet -- tosses them on an oblong table there. Walks to the cabinet and finds a glass. He fills it with soda and sits. Sips. No one to talk to. Alone. Tired.

The clock reads : 10:03 PM.

EXT. TRAIN YARD - DAY

The next morning. A beautiful day -- the sun melts the massive snow banks. Vivid snow covered tracks. Stunning tree lines. If it weren't below freezing -- it might be a nice place to stay. A TRAIN RUMBLES past Sheldon as he makes his way towards the train station from earlier.

Amy's car is parked out front. His pace quickens a bit.
INT. TRAIN STATION - DAY


Amy sits behind her booth. She's busy with something -- eyes down -- she doesn't even see Sheldon there.

He walks to her. Taps the glass with his fingertip. She looks up. The look of unforeseen bewilderment on her face.

AMY

Hey.

SHELDON

Hi.

AMY

What are you doing here?

SHELDON

Was out for a walk.

AMY

You walked here?

SHELDON

Yeah.

AMY

What is it with you and walking?

SHELDON

It's been a while since I got to stretch my legs.

AMY

You're definitely the only person I know that walks to a train station, just to walk back.

SHELDON

I'm sorry.

AMY

No, it's fine. I just didn't expect to ever see you again after the other night.

SHELDON

Why not?
AMY
I dunno. I guess... things don't usually turn up that way for me.

SHELDON
What way?

AMY
This way.

SHELDON
I wanted to see what time you get off work today.

AMY
(shy)
I just got here, but I get off at seven.

SHELDON
Seven?

AMY
It's a double for me today. I need the cash. But, I get a break at noon.

SHELDON
Well, how long is your break for?

AMY
Half an hour.

He looks behind him, a line starts to form -- he better spit it out, FAST.

SHELDON
Can I come back and see you?

AMY
Sure.

SHELDON
At your break?

AMY
At noon.

SHELDON
I'll come back.
AMY
(can't help but
smile)
I'll be here.

SHELDON
(backs off)
Goodbye.

AMY
See you later.

Sheldon walks to the door, the next CUSTOMER steps up the booth. Before he walks outside -- Sheldon looks back. Amy's watching him as well. He leaves.

EXT. TRAIN STATION STEPS - DAY

The sun and melted ice. Amy sits on the concrete steps just outside the pint sized station. She's alternating her stare from her wristwatch to the parking lot. Looking for someone. He's late.

Sheldon appears from within the lot full of late models. He walks over to where she is. Two cups of coffee in his hands.

AMY
I was starting to think you weren't gonna show.

SHELDON
Am I late?

AMY
Just a little.

He extends her a cup.

SHELDON
I drink it black, but this one has some cream in it. I wasn't sure what you liked.

She smiles. Takes the cup from his brute hand.

AMY
I'm not picky.

SHELDON
Can I sit next to you?
AMY
Free country.

He sets himself down beside her -- not too close. They both stare out into the crisp air.

SHELDON
I really do gotta get a watch.

AMY
It's fine.

SHELDON
You like working here?

AMY
As much as anyone can like working anywhere. It's a job. It pays the bills.

(sips)
What about you?

SHELDON
Me?

AMY
You got a job? Or do you just go around walking aimlessly?

His first joke --

SHELDON
I just spend my days walking to train stations hoping to find someone different.

AMY
Is that what you found?

SHELDON
What do you mean?

AMY
Something different?

It's a little to personal for him. He takes a mental step back and changes the subject.

SHELDON
You lived here long?
AMY
Since I was six. I still live in the house I grew up in. You?

SHELDON
Born and raised.

AMY
A townie.

SHELDON
(ironic)
More like a lifer.

She puts her coffee down on the steps next to her thigh and rubs her cold hands together. She's watching Sheldon as he looks out into the world. She wants to be inside of that head of his.

AMY
What's your story?

SHELDON
Story?

AMY
Everyone's got a story.

SHELDON
You wanna know my story?

AMY
That's what I'm asking.

SHELDON
It's complicated.

AMY
All the good ones are.

He looks back at her. She's got an answer for everything. She's breaking his shell.

SHELDON
I doubt you've got enough time.

AMY
You're probably right.
(she stands)
Which just means you're gonna have to take me to dinner tonight after work.
SHELDON
I am?

AMY
(whispers)
And it better be a good one...

She smiles wide. He drifts into her spark. Nods to her, and she races back inside.

Sheldon stares at her coffee cup -- a lipstick stain. Grins.

INT. JERRY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jerry's heating up a cold dinner that Mary has set out for him. His tie is undone and his suit jacket is sprawled out on the back of a chair. He looks annoyed, border line harassed.

Sheldon stands in the kitchen doorway. They've been talking for a while --

JERRY
Do you even have a license?

SHELDON
No.

JERRY
And you want to borrow my car?

SHELDON
You've got ten of them.

JERRY
That I pay a shit load of money for every month.

SHELDON
Isn't that what insurance is for?

JERRY
Smart ass?

Sheldon refuses to beg.

SHELDON
I'm not asking you for a kidney, I just need to borrow one of the cars for a few hours.
JERRY
What if you get pulled over?

SHELDON
Report it stolen.

JERRY
And you'd go back? For a joyride?

A low-blow. Sheldon hangs his head, his words as downcast as his swagger.

SHELDON
Sometimes... it feels like I never left.

Jerry stumbles into his haunting tone. He can't help but sympathize with his sorrow.

JERRY
Take the Volvo. Keys are in the dash.

SHELDON
Thanks.

JERRY
Listen -- that shit the other morning -- you just picking up and leaving like that. That's not gonna fly.

SHELDON
I didn't mean it like that.

JERRY
I know what you're used to and all that shit, but it's not like that here. We're civilized. We're family. It's not gonna kill you to say goodbye.

Sheldon nods -- understood. He turns and walks down the hall. Jerry hovers above his meal, no longer hungry -- he slides the plate into the sink. Frustration.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

A neon sign in the window. A dozen red booths along the wall, tables in the center. A make-shift crowd of businessmen and elderly early bird special lovers. A joint with character to it. Established.
Amy and Sheldon sit across from one another. They're into a conversation. Plates and glasses not the only things between them.

He is much more timid than she --

AMY
You got any family still left out here? Besides your brother.

SHELDON
Just my brother. He's married, lives in a big house in some snotty neighborhood. He let me borrow his car.

AMY
No more walking?

SHELDON
Taking a break.

AMY
What about the rest of your family?

SHELDON
There isn't any.

AMY
What about your parents?

He's reluctant to answer. She notices. Maybe she's stepped a mile too far. But he's considering...

SHELDON
My father... never cared much for having a family. Like it were all some kind of a mistake or something.

AMY
What happened?

Sheldon doesn't answer.

AMY
Okay.

And here it is --
SHELDON

The smell of cigarettes used to make me sick. My mother used to beg him to quit, but he never listened. He never listened to anyone.

(beat)

One night, I came downstairs to see my father coughing over the sink in his underwear. It was the kind of cough a hundred year old man gets. Pack of Durals on the counter next to him. When he saw me, he stopped coughing, then he wiped his mouth the back of his hand. The radio was playing some stupid song -- I don't remember what it was. He looked over at me, that cold look on his face, and he says, "I got cancer. What are you gonna do?"

(beat)

My mother later told me the doctors said he had a shot of beating the cancer if he would take an active approach, that's what they called it. But, he didn't care about living anymore. He didn't care about living, or dying, or my mother, or us kids. To this day, I bet he'd tell you the cigarettes never had anything to do with his dying -- but he'd be lying.

(beat)

Fact of the matter is, he just gave up. Plain and simple.

An now she's silent. The words as sharp as a blade. Uncovering the human side of Sheldon as he sips from his glass of water.

AMY

You're mother --

SHELDON

-- my brother tried to put her in a home while I was away. She refused. She died of old age not long after that. I picture her as this sad old lady, filled with regret I'm sure.
AMY
I'm sorry.

SHELDON
Me too.

AMY
You said you were away?

SHELDON
Story gets worse...

AMY
I want to know.

He hesitates. The words do doing thier best to stay hidden behind his teeth, but --

SHELDON
I was in prison for ten years.

A land mine she was not expecting. She sits back in her seat. The wind knocked out of her. Sheldon looks her over, afraid he's lost her.

SHELDON
I'm sorry. I don't want to scare you away.

AMY
It's alright. Just wasn't expecting that one.

SHELDON
That's the point, isn't it. Always keep your guard up?

AMY
I don't mean to pry.

SHELDON
I understand. I should have been honest with you before I asked you out here tonight.

She reaches out and places her soft hands over his. He looks at them. The nicest thing anyone has ever done for him. She smiles.

AMY
I asked you, remember?
A quaint, hushed area overlooking the skyline of New York City. The lights like the fourth of July. The air is cool but comfortable. A few shops and eateries sprinkled throughout. An ancient place.

Sheldon and Amy walk side by side passed the lovers and sounds of the Hudson below. It's romantic and reserved.

SHELDON
You planning on working in that station the rest of your good days?

AMY
No. I'm studying to be a veterinarian.

SHELDON
Animals?

AMY
(nods)
It's part time because I need to work, so it's taking me double the time to finish up.

SHELDON
How'd you find yourself there?

AMY
You mean what's my story?

SHELDON
Something like that.

AMY
Well, it's not as colorful as yours. My father was a railroader for thirty-eight years before they forced him to retire -- he was the one who got me that job. Mom was a nurse -- worked mostly nights and weekends. I never saw her a whole lot.

(beat)
She died of breast cancer when I was twelve. I remember the funeral like it was yesterday.

SHELDON
I'm sorry.
AMY
My father lives in Mount Vernon in the best nursing home I could afford. I visit him on Sundays. We go to church and feed the birds. It's kind of sad, seeing him need help. He was always so big and strong...

SHELDON
Life's full of those moments.

AMY
What moments?

SHELDON
The ones where you close your eyes, then open them back up just to find yourself in the worst situation possible.

She nods. He's suddenly making sense. They stand a bit closer. Cautiously.

AMY
Anyway, he's -- my father -- always telling me to take a shot at life. It takes enough shots at you, ya know?

SHELDON
Me?

AMY
Not YOU -- all of us.

SHELDON
Makes sense.

The walk in silence. Amy makes the first move -- places her arm through Sheldon's. He looks as if he's been hit with a cattle prod. She rests her head on his shoulder. Sweetly.

AMY
This was a good night. I feel good.

SHELDON
(low)
Me too.
INT. FRONT SEAT - NIGHT

The Volvo glides down the highway. Amy sits shotgun with her hands in her lap and her eyes out the window. Sheldon glances at her from time to time. He's attracted. She notices.

The car comes to a stop at the Station. Sheldon kills the engine and unbuckles himself. Amy does the same -- shifts her body to face him.

SHELDON

What?

AMY

I like you.

SHELDON

You do?

AMY

You've got your... quirks, but I like that.

SHELDON

You think you know me?

AMY

Getting there.

SHELDON

Still...

AMY

You shutting me out?

SHELDON

Well, can I see you again?

AMY

I dunno, do you want to see me again?

SHELDON

Yes I would.

AMY

Then I'll be sure that you do.

(opens the door)

Goodnight.

She's halfway out the door, when --
SHELDON
Can I ask you something?

AMY
Sure.

SHELDON
The day we first met -- why were you so nice to me?

AMY
(thinks, then smiles)
Why not?

She shuts the door and rushes over to her car. She pulls away -- waves to him one last time. Sheldon gives her a fuzzy wave back. He's lost without her, his smile fades the minute her car disappears into the fog down the empty street.

INT. BURGER KING KITCHEN - DAY

The stink of grease and smoke. The grills. The gouge my eyes out task of cleaning and scooping fries. Sheldon trenches through the shame of his new employment. The teeny boppers around him -- laughing. Joking. Sheldon glances at the clock, then the pile of dirty dishes.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

The door swings open to reveal an impaired one bedroom. Crumbling and dated. Furnished with antique furniture. A stained, white sheet blows over the window. Sheldon drops the key on the hallway table.

SMASH CUT TO:

Prison riot. A collage of fists and feet -- blood on the lunch line walls. Tables are toppled over and food skittled over the concrete floor.

Sheldon in the middle of the mayhen -- sirens and batons. He's quickly subdued. His body beaten to the ground by several mugged GUARDS. His eyes roll back from the punishing blows to his head and back -- fades...

BACK TO:

Home. Some government owned, half-way house wanna be apartment that's probably housed a hundred felons in the
past. It's a sad place. Dim and gray. Sheldon grabs the key and heads out -- just as fast as he entered.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

A quiet room with a busy counter. Mostly yuppy singles and office managers. Amy and Sheldon sit by the window overlooking the busy street.

    AMY
    It's a tiny town just outside the Laurentian Mountains. I'd love to open up some kind of shelter out there.

    SHELDON
    Where's this?

    AMY
    Near Montreal.

    SHELDON
    Canada?

    AMY
    It's nice there. My Father took my mother there when I was young. He raves about it.

    SHELDON
    You want some company?

She smiles, then laughs.

    AMY
    You offering?

    SHELDON
    I can clean cages or something.

    AMY
    Shovel shit?

    SHELDON
    Believe it or not, I've done worse.

Her smile slowly fades to a half-wit frown. He notices her change.

    SHELDON
    I was only joking.
AMY
It's not that.

SHELDON
What is it?

AMY
I remember when I was little, I went to these gymnastics classes with my mom. She'd drive me and then go sit in the bleachers. I was afraid of the high beam -- terrified actually. And one day, when I refused to get up, my mother had to come hold me up while I swung there. She kept whispering, "I won't let you fall, I'll never let you fall."

SHELDON
You miss her?

AMY
I guess part of me is always going to be afraid to fall. That's why I never do anything.

SHELDON
That's not true.

AMY
Really?

SHELDON
You're here, with me, now.

Sheldon searches for words.

SHELDON
I have this dream. Where I'm falling down a flight of stairs -- or like an elevator shaft or something. It feels so real when you're in it, but I always wake up. And when I do, I'm not afraid anymore. I'm fine. I'm always in one piece.

She gets his point. The brightest smile in his direction.

Sheldon looks at his watch --

AMY
You got a watch!
SHELDON
Didn't wanna be late anymore. You like it?

AMY
It's nice.

SHELDON
I stole it out of my brother's closet.

They laugh.

INT. PAROLE OFFICE - DAY

Rodgers scarfs down a meatball sub at his cluttered desk. A drip of marinara already on his white shirt. Sheldon hands in his paperwork.

SHELDON
I gotta tell ya, this living situation is for the birds.

RODGERS
Meaning?

SHELDON
It's worse than prison.

RODGERS
It's free.

SHELDON
What kind of answer is that?

RODGERS
A real one. Nothing's free, remember I told you that. Be grateful.

SHELDON
It's not that I'm not grateful, I just was hoping for something that didn't smell like old fucking cheese.

He wipes his hands and mouth clean --

RODGERS
You know how many files like yours come across my desk every month? Fifty. Fifty personalities, fifty fucking problem children. At my

(MORE)
RODGERS (cont'd)
salary, it is what is it.

SHELDON
I scoop fries for a living.

RODGERS
Beats the alternative, right?

SHELDON
(not lingering)
At least, when I was in the can, I
knew who was really on my side and
who wasn't.

He's out the door before Rodgers even knows what's hot him.
He throws the sub in the trash and picks up a ringing phone.
Business as usual.

EXT. BATTING CAGES - DAY

Jerry takes his hacks in the cage. Blue helmet on. He's
trying his bat speed at 70 mph. He's still go it -- a few
solid connects. Sheldon leans up against the backstop. He's
watching. Not interested in giving it a go.

SHELDON
I met someone.

JERRY
(swings)
Who?

SHELDON
A girl. A woman.

JERRY
(swings)
I figured as much, but who?

SHELDON
You wouldn't know who she is. I
met her at the train station.

Jerry finishes up and exits the cage. Removes his helmet and
fixes his hair.

JERRY
That's good, right?
SHELDON
Yeah it is. I kind of -- I was thinking maybe you should meet her.

JERRY
That serious?

SHELDON
Could be.

JERRY
You sure this isn't just a rebound?

SHELDON
Rebound from what? Prison?

Jerry has a seat on a nearby bench, cracks open a bottle of beer. Drinks.

JERRY
You know what I mean. It's a little sudden.

SHELDON
Don't you think I've wasted enough time?

JERRY
You can do whatever you want, you're a free man now.

SHELDON
You wanna meet her or not?

JERRY
What's her name? You DO know her name, right?

SHELDON
Amy.

JERRY
Okay. Amy train station. She got kids?

SHELDON
No.

JERRY
Married?
SHELDON
I hadn't asked.

JERRY
Well, did you see a ring?

SHELDON
No. Jesus, what is this?

Jerry drains his beer. He's gearing up for another go at the cages.

JERRY
Tell you what, this weekend, bring Amy train station over for dinner. Good?

SHELDON
I will.

Jerry grips the bat in his hands, so tight he nearly grinds off sawdust. He misses the game --

JERRY
You know I wake up sometimes thinking I still play ball? What I wouldn't give for one at bat. One inning in the field. I'd give up my wife -- I can tell you that.
   (grins)
I'd give up everything I got. Everything.

SHELDON
Why'd you stop playing?

JERRY
Life.

With that, he slots a few tokens and readies for the pitch. SWACK! Solid contact. Sheldon watches him. For a moment, they're children again.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT


Sheldon sits next to Amy on the sofa. Peter Bradley Adams plays next -- the stereo by the wall. She sips red wine, he drinks juice of some kind. The most romantic they've been
thus far. We're close in on them. They're close in on each other...

AMY
So, when do I get to meet them?

SHELDON
Soon. This weekend.

AMY
He thinks it's too soon?

SHELDON
How'd you know?

AMY
I told some of my friends about you.

SHELDON
Yeah?

AMY
They told me the same thing.

SHELDON
You believe them?

AMY
I just do what feels right.

SHELDON
Like giving a stranger a ride to a greasy motel in a snowstorm?

AMY
Exactly.

He almost kisses her, but doesn't. She looks disappointed. He changes the subject.

SHELDON
I have to ask you something.

AMY
What is it?

SHELDON
What do you see in someone like me?

AMY
I dunno how to answer that.
SHELDON
When you look at me, what do you see?

AMY
(low)
I see a man. A broken man. Someone who's running from something he regrets, because he thinks if he runs fast or hard enough -- he can leave it behind him. And when that doesn't work, he blames himself to the point where he refuses to let anyone near him because he's afraid.

SHELDON
Afraid?

AMY
That he might do it again.

He stomaches her response. She's nailed him. He drinks, holding back any emotions bubbling behind his eyes.

SHELDON
You're not curious?

AMY
I am.

SHELDON
So why not ask me?

AMY
Do you think I should know?

He doesn't answer her. He just looks around the room -- almost for hidden cameras or bugs. He's suddenly antsy. She calms him by touching his shoulders. He reluctantly begins his story --

SHELDON
I took a job delivering pizzas to help make ends meet. I used to get this list of addresses and I'd take the company car and make my way down the list, delivering the food all over town.

(beat)
It was my last stop for the night. It was raining and I remember missing the apartment number three of four times because the rain was

(MORE)
SHELDON (cont'd)
coming down so damn hard. My
sneakers were slick and I ran up
the stairs so fast I almost busted
it. It was apartment number 551.

(beat)
Most times, you'd knock once or
twice and they'd open the door.
Not this place. I must have
knocked ten times and still there
was no answer. That's when I
realized the knob was loose and
the door was cracked open.

(beat)
Maybe it was instinct -- I dunno,
but I opened that door knowing
full well that I'd probably get
fired for doing it. Anyway, I
could hear something that I had
never heard before. It was like
someone was throwing around some
boxes or something. There was a
scream coming from the back room.
I dropped the pizzas on the
counter and crept to the back to
see what all the noise was about.
Like a superhero.

(deep breath)
As I got closer, I knew what the
noise was. Someone was getting
tossed around like a piece of
garbage. This way and that way. As
I passed the hall bathroom, I
could tell it was a girl that was
screaming. I ran inside and took
the shower curtain off the rod --
I was gonna use it as weapon in
case something bad was happening.

(beat)
When I got to the bedroom, she was
already on the floor -- she
couldn't have been older then
fifteen. He was on top of her, his
pants down around his ankles. Her
skirt was a few feet away from her
body and she was bruised and beat
all to shit. He was raping her
when I walked inside. I made a
noise, like I cleared my throat.
He saw me standing there with her
shower rod -- probably thought I
was some stupid kid...

(beat)
Called me an asshole and said that
(MORE)
SHELDON (cont'd)
I was next if I didn't get the hell out of there. But I didn't move. He got off of the girl and came right at me. I just swung that rod back as hard as I could and hit him in the face. He dropped like a rock. I should have scooped her up and taken off -- but I saw her eyes. Those blue eyes. She was crying and, I mean, her face was unrecognizable. So I hit him again and I kept hitting him until there was blood everywhere. Until he stopped moving.

(beat)
Until he was dead.

Now there are tiny tears in Amy's eyes. The tear ducts overflowing. He's lost in the story...

SHELDON
By the time I was finished with him, the girl had already stopped breathing. I knew that I had done something bad -- something terrible. I had the guys blood all over my face. What I didn't know, was that someone had already called the cops and they busted in a few seconds later. They saw me covered in blood, two dead bodies on the carpet, and they arrested me on the spot.

AMY
You saved her.

SHELDON
No I didn't. The kicker is, the guy in the bedroom was the girl's father. To a jury it was gonna look like I raped her and killed the dad when he came to her rescue. We worked out a deal. I was looking at 25 to life, got it knocked down to 15, and served 10.

(beat)
That's that.

AMY
I don't know what to say.
SHELDON
You don't have to say anything.

AMY
You were innocent.

SHELDON
No I wasn't. I killed that man. And for every morning I woke up in that jail cell -- I was happy I had done it. Innocent people don't do that. Right?

She sits back. Sheldon begins to worry --

SHELDON
You wanna run?

AMY
No.

SHELDON
Sorry you asked?

AMY
Do you want to go back to my bedroom?

They look at one another for a long beat. He wipes the tears away form her face with his hands.

BEDROOM
Amy and Sheldon make love in the moonlight. It's almost intrusive to watch them. It's sensual. He collapses in her arms for the rest of the night.

EXT. JERRY'S BACKYARD - DAY

A massive yard covered in melting snow. A covered lap pool off to one side, the winter's remains of a lush garden to the other. Trimmed and proper. Vibrant colors -- greyscale.

A fire pit burns. Jerry and Mary sit on a swinging chair just beyond the flame. Sheldon and Amy sit opposite them on wicker chairs. The girls are melting marshmallows and keeping warm.

JERRY
(to Amy)
Sheldon tells us you work for the railroad?
AMY
It's part time, but yes.

JERRY
Sheldon's got some railroad experience...

Sheldon rolls his eyes -- he knows what's coming next.

SHELDON
Come on, we're gonna THERE now?

JERRY
I feel it's appropriate.

AMY
(to Sheldon)
What's he talking about?

SHELDON
Nothing. He's talking out his own ass.

MARY
As usual.

AMY
(to Jerry)
Tell me.

JERRY
(to Sheldon)
Lady wants to know...

SHELDON
Fine. Whatever.

JERRY
When we were in middle school, this joker goes into a pharmacy to buy some comic books. He starts looking up and down the aisle -- real inconspicuous like -- and he buries his head in a Marvel. At the same time, his left hand is sliding a box of Trojans into his sweatshirt pocket.

MARY
(to Sheldon)
You had sex in middle school?
SHELDON
No...

JERRY
He's curious. He had never seen a condom before, so he jacks a pack of them and walks out the front door like nothing ever happened. He hops on his bike, starts to ride off --

SHELDON
-- and the store manager comes looking for me.

JERRY
He's yelling from Sheldon to come back -- screaming.

AMY
What did you do?

SHELDON
I kept going.

JERRY
All the way to the railroad tracks. But the store manager's already called the cops and every black and white in town is now looking for a pimple faced teenager on a Huffy with a pocket full of ribbed rubbers.

SHELDON
For her pleasure.

They're all laughing -- even Sheldon.

AMY
What did you do with the condoms?

SHELDON
Nothing. I lost them.

JERRY
Sheldon here figures he needs to ditch his bike in the woods and loses the pocket full of rubbers in the process. He runs home on foot and doesn't leave the house for a week.
SHELDON
Two.

AMY
Oh my God, that's hilarious!

JERRY
Classic Sheldon.

SHELDON
Oh, and you were so innocent?

JERRY
Hey now...

MARY
It's only fair, Jerry.

JERRY
Fine.

Sheldon digs up a childhood story of his own --

SHELDON
Jerry bought this girl flowers one time. A dozen red roses. He was planning on giving them to her on Valentine's day in front of the whole senior class. So, lunch time rolls around and Jerry corners this girl --

JERRY
-- Christine Martin.

AMY
You remember her name?

MARY
How do you remember that?

SHELDON
(continues)
Jerry gets down on one knee, pulls out this poem he's written her, and let's her have it. When he's done, he's holding up the flowers like an olive basket -- but she won't take them. She tells him she's got a boyfriend that goes to another school and she just walks away.
Jerry covers his heart with his hands --

JERRY
Ouch.

SHELDON
So, later, after word gets out about what's she done -- the entire school's calling her names. Slut. Bitch. You name it.

MARY
I feel bad for her.

JERRY
Her? What about me? You know how embarrassing that was for me?

MARY
Is that why you never buy me flowers?

JERRY
You told me, on our first date, that flowers were a waste of money!

MARY
I lied. Every girl like flowers. (to Amy)

Right?

AMY
Afraid so.

JERRY
Shit...

They're all laughing again. The levity is good and light. Sheldon gets closer to Amy.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Behind the Burger King. A chilly, black evening. Sheldon walks the portable garbage dispenser to the dumpster. It's quiet. No one visible in either direction. He takes his time while heaves each garbage bag inside --

MACK (O.S.)
Hello Sheldon.
Sheldon squints into the darkness. A FIGURE emerges from the shadowy unknown. His name is MACK. He's fresh out of the joint. Smokes a cigarette as he approaches. He's been around the block -- twice. Scar on the left temple. Not to be messed with.

SHELDON

Who's that?

MACK

You don't recognize me? I'm insulted.

SHELDON

It's dark out here.

There's no hand shake between them, no friendly embrace. Sheldon is on pins -- he's less than thrilled to see his visitor.

MACK

The fuck you doing out here? Flipping burgers?

SHELDON

Work release.

MACK

If the boys inside could see you now, eh?

SHELDON

When did you get out?

MACK

Last night. I just got back into town.

SHELDON

How'd you know where to find me?

MACK

It's my business to know things.

SHELDON

I guess you're right.

Sheldon lifts the last bag and tosses it into the dumpster. He's not lingering. There's malice in Mack's voice --

MACK

Before I left, the guys were asking about you. Where you were. Where you lived. How hard it might
MACK (cont'd)

be to find you.

SHELDON

Is that right?

MACK

You pissed a lot of people off.

SHELDON

I did what I had to do.

MACK

I agree with you, believe me. You

do what you have to do when you're

(throws the smoke)

However, not everyone shares our

outlook on the situation.

SHELDON

That's their problem. I'm out here

and they're locked up. There's not

a whole lot they can do from that
distance.

MACK

I'm just a lowly messenger.

SHELDON

Whatever.

Sheldon's had enough of this intimidation bullshit. He's

pushing the dispenser back towards the back door. Mack takes

a few steps closer to him --

MACK

Some debts get paid back no matter

how far you run.

Sheldon shoots him the "fuck you" glare. Mack brushes it off

and continues --

MACK

What did you think? That we were
gonna be locked up forever? That
shit doesn't run downhill? You
make a deal with the devil -- he
expects you to pay. There's no
such thing as past due, inside or
out.
SHELDON
So what is this? You gonna shoot me out here in the parking lot over some bullshit I started five years ago?

MACK
Relax. You got me all wrong.

Mack is right up on him now. Too close. Sheldon braces. This is the first time we see his hidden rage first hand. Brief as it might be --

SHELDON
(teeth)
Take another step and I'll break every tooth in that fucked up face of yours.

MACK
Always the tough guy, huh? You never did know when to keep that pretty little mouth of yours shut. (backs up)
I'll be in touch.

SHELDON
Fuck off.

MACK
That's my next stop.

Sheldon calms himself -- opens the back door. Mack lights up another smoke. Puffs like only a free man can. He shows Sheldon his disastrous smile and ends his visit with...

MACK
Make sure you tell that little girlfriend of yours that the boys and I say hello.

And he's off. Sheldon watches his outline fade into the dark distance.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sheldon storms into his forlorn place. He's busting through the doors and checking every corner. Every crease is looked over. He's looking for God knows what. The closets, the pantry, the shower.

He's a mad man. Locking the front door -- the windows --
every door that has a lock on it. Making it so there's no way in or out.

Sheldon cuts off the lights. It's dark. He's at the window overlooking the street -- a few parked cars. Paranoia running wild. WHO IS THAT? Every one that walks past the building is suspect.

SHELDON (V.O.)
You gotta swim through nights that won't end. The currents will pull us, away from our love...

A new look is seen on his face. A new kind of fear and uncertainty. The look of, "Oh Shit!" Like he forgot to lock the front door -- like he's seen the trooper's lights in the rear view. Sheldon keeps watch deep into the night.

INT. AMY'S HOUSE - DAY

The next morning. A ferocious KNOCK on Amy's front door. She looks through the peephole and sees Sheldon standing there with his hands in his pockets. She quickly opens the door.

AMY
What happened last night? You never called. I was worried about you.

Her concerned words bounce off Sheldon like she'd never said anything at all. He's inside the foyer -- looking around. He doesn't say anything just yet.

AMY
What's the matter?

SHELDON
Has anyone come by here?

AMY
Who?

SHELDON
(direct)
Just answer the question.

AMY
No. Is something wrong?

SHELDON
Lock the door and lets go inside.
She turns the door lock. Sheldon've already moved on to the rest of the house -- scouring, searching.

AMY
Now you're starting to make me nervous.

SHELDON
I'll tell you in a minute. I just want to make sure no one else is in here.

AMY
I just woke up. The front door was locked all night.

SHELDON
Did you leave any windows open? No one came by?

AMY
No one.

SHELDON
You're positive?

AMY
(what the fuck)
Sheldon! Tell me what's wrong.

He sees the despair in her eyes and let's her know as much as he thinks she has to --

SHELDON
Last night, after work, a guy I knew in jail found me.

AMY
What do you mean, "found you?"

SHELDON
He must have known someone on the outside -- I dunno all the details.

AMY
But you said he was a friend?

SHELDON
He WAS.
AMY
I'm confused. Just, tell me what's wrong.

SHELDON
Look -- he's just not the kind of guy you want to have following you around.

AMY
What does that mean? Is he following you?

SHELDON
Maybe.

A long beat. Now she understands. Sheldon's not there for him, he's there for --

AMY
Me?

SHELDON
Possibly.

AMY
Why me? How?

SHELDON
I don't know yet. He mentioned you, and then he walked away. I just want to make sure nothing happens to you until I figure this whole thing out.

She's beginning to lose it --

AMY
(scattered)
How does he know who I am? How could he know where I live? Is he stalking me or something?

Sheldon puts his hands on her shoulders -- centers her a bit. Calms her nerves.

SHELDON
He's just trying to scare us. He's a ex-con with a fucked up face, and now that he's out he's looking to make moves. That's all. I promise, nothing is gonna happen to you.
AMY
What about you?

SHELDON
I'll be fine.

She leans in and hugs him tight. She doesn't want to let him go. He finally backs her off. She's visibly upset -- trying to hold it in.

AMY
What do you want me to do?

SHELDON
Call in sick today. Stay inside and I'll come by later to pick you up. Lock the door behind me and if you see anyone coming around -- call the police.

AMY
Where are you going?

SHELDON
I'm gonna fix this.

With that, Sheldon heads for the front door. He turns the knob and steps half-way through. Before he can walk out completely, he looks back to a fragile Amy --

SHELDON
I'll never let you fall.

She forces a smile and watches Sheldon leave her apartment.

INT. JERRY'S OFFICE - DAY

The large office. Extensively furnished. Cherry woods and sleek angles. Floor to ceiling windows. The buck stops here.

Jerry sits behind his desk. The door closed. He's reading the hand written notes off a tiny piece of paper. An irritated look upon his face.

He looks up to Sheldon, who's standing in front of him. Hat in hand.

JERRY
This is a joke, right?

Sheldon nods -- no.
JERRY
(the notes)
What the hell am I supposed to do with this?

SHELDON
Can you help me or not?

JERRY
(the notes)
You need a place to stay -- fine. You need a car for while -- no problem. But this? This is suicide.

SHELDON
If I had anywhere else to go --

JERRY
-- you're willing to bust your parole agreement for this?

SHELDON
These people corner me, and there won't be any agreements to break.

JERRY
Jesus... what did you get into?

SHELDON
(offers nothing)
Can you help me?

Jerry looks back to the paper. Crinkles it, takes out a lighter from his desk drawer, and burns it in the metal trash can nearby.

JERRY
I can't get you the things on that piece of paper. (sighs) But I have a gun at the house.

SHELDON
Thanks.

JERRY
But I never gave you anything, I never showed you anything, and this conversation never happened -- understood?
SHELDON
(nods)
When can I pick it up?

JERRY
Tonight.

SHELDON
I'm bringing Amy with me. She's not safe either.

JERRY
You told her?

SHELDON
Yes.

JERRY
And she hasn't cut and run?

SHELDON
Not yet. Can she stay with you?

JERRY
(aggravated)
Fine. I get off at six.

Sheldon can sense his brother is far from happy. He offers the only comfort her can --

SHELDON
I'm sorry. I take care of this and everything will go back to the way it was.

JERRY
(whatever)
I'll see you at six.

INT. COIN LAUNDRY - DAY

Busy. The constant hum of dryers and spin cycles. A bank of candy machines and CLERK'S desk at the front. A few broken arcade games near the back door. Faded, yellow machines -- many out of order.

Sheldon sits in the waiting area. He's still and silent. A "not too pleased" frown on his face. He's not uncomfortable, just anxious. Mack comes walking in from the front. He takes the empty seat beside him.
MACK
Public place. Maybe you're not as
dumb as you look.

SHELDON
So, how's this gonna work?

MACK
We've got a nice round figure in
mind.

SHELDON
Thirty.

MACK
You remembered.

SHELDON
Down to the last cent.

MACK
You should've been an accountant.

SHELDON
When do they want it?

MACK
They WANTED it six months ago.
They'll take it tonight.

SHELDON
What if I can't get all of it by
tonight?

Mack uses his sinister grin so well --

MACK
(suggests)
You have all your business in
order?

SHELDON
I need more time.

MACK
Not my problem. Time's up. Get out
the treasure map and start
digging.

SHELDON
(plays his card)
Fine. I'll get you your money
tonight. Quincy's -- you know it?
MACK

Newark?

SHELDON

Nine o'clock.

Mack extends his hand -- a spider tattoo up the left thumb. Sheldon refuses to shake it.

He stands and begins to walk past Mack -- who reaches out and stops him by the wrist. Without even standing --

MACK

I start the clock at nine. One point for every minute you're late, and that's not up for discussion. After ten minutes -- there's no more numbers. Understand?

SHELDON

You can threaten me all you want, because I don't give a shit how strong you think you are. What, you think you're the only ex-con in Jersey?

(leans in)

But if you or anyone else touches a single hair on her head, I'll kill you plain and simple. You got me?


EXT. DRIVeway -- NIGHT

Jerry and Sheldon stand behind the Volvo. Jerry hands him a brown paper bag -- the handgun. Sheldon slides it into his pants without even looking at it.

SHELDON

Loaded?

JERRY

Should be.

Amy watches from the nook window. Her arms crossed and her eyes welding up. She's broken and confused. She locks yes with Sheldon for a brief moment, but then --
SHELDON
I'll be back later tonight. Make sure nothing happens to her.

JERRY
I will.

SHELDON
I'll come back fast.

JERRY
Are you sure this is the smart thing to do?

SHELDON
Smarter.

Jerry hands him a thick, white package --

SHELDON
What's this?

JERRY
It goes against my better judgement to give you this, but it should square you away.

Sheldon thumbs through the hundred dollar bills. Looks back to his brother --

SHELDON
You said you couldn't.

JERRY
I shouldn't, but I just did. So take the damn money, pay this fucker off, and let's be done with it.

SHELDON
But you gave me the gun?

JERRY
No, I didn't...

Sheldon just stands there with the money in his palm. Jerry's not taking "no" for an answer.

JERRY
I'm serious. I don't know what you're up against, and I don't wanna know -- all I know is...

(Amy)

... she's more important to you

(MORE)
JERRY (cont'd)
that whatever this is. I KNOW she
feels the same way. And you'll
lose her.

SHELDON
You have my word.

Jerry gives him a shrug, "doesn't mean much" type stare. Amy
now stands in the front door. Sheldon puts the cash in the
front seat of the Volvo and walks to her. They meet
half-way.

AMY
Everything alright?

SHELDON
Yeah.

AMY
Liar.

SHELDON
Really. Everything's fine.

He kisses her lips.

AMY
Do me a favor? One day, explain
this whole thing to me?

SHELDON
I won't have to.

AMY
I'll see you tonight?

SHELDON
You will.

AMY
(tears)
I'll see you tonight.

He leans in close and kisses her deeply. It's almost as if
this will become his last kiss. Like two parting lovers who
know they'll never see each other again.

Sheldon pulls away, hops into the Volvo, glances back to a
fragile Amy one last time, shoots her a smirk -- and he's
gone. Jerry leads her back inside the house.
INT. QUINCY'S - NIGHT

A rowdy spot in an underdeveloped part of town. The broke crowd. Bikers and ball-flyers. A long oblong bar stocked with cheap businessmen and out of town housewives. Pool tables to one side, a few tables to the other.

It's messy in spots. Turned up country-rock from the juke box. Other spots are full of charm and character. Mack at the bar with his Gin.

Sheldon walks in like the sheriff. High noon. He's all business. Like a fighter headed to the ring. Something about his eyes tells us he's not here to give up the cash...

He finds Mack there. Squeezes in beside him, slams his hand down on the bar to grab his attention.

MACK
(smokes)
You're early.

SHELDON
I've got your money.

MACK
Let me finish my drink and we'll get to it. You want one? My treat.

SHELDON
Let's do this now.

Sheldon pulls back the zipper of his jacket and reveals the handgun to Mack. Mack smiles as if someone just told him a punchline.

SHELDON
Something funny?

MACK
Isn't that a bit pretentious?

SHELDON
Fuck you.

MACK
Fuck me?

SHELDON
Or did you already get enough of that in prison?
Mack laughs. He’s good at being bad. He crushes the cigarette in the trey. Turns to face Sheldon --

MACK
You think that gun scares me? I’ve been shot three times, brother. Guns don’t scare me.

SHELDON
My car’s out front.

MACK
I told you, when I’m done with my drink --

Sheldon’s not fucking around. He SLAPS the Gin right out from under Mack’s chin. Alcohol smatters on the bar and all over Mack’s face. He calmly dries himself off.

SHELDON
We do it now or I put a bullet in your head.

MACK
Fine. Which car?

SHELDON
White Volvo.

Sheldon turns to exit, Mack not far behind him, they’re steps from he front door when Sheldon hears the CLICK of a knife.

He slowly turns. Mack’s armed and ready --

MACK
You shouldn’t have told me which car.

He’s walking toward Sheldon now.

MACK
Now I’m gonna cut you into three pieces, take your money, and fuck that pretty little gal of yours. Maybe I’ll bring her back to the hole, let the sodmites tune her up for a little bit? She probably likes that kinky stuff.

The caged animal is released...
SLAM! -- out of nowhere -- Sheldon swings -- a fist -- sneak attack -- like a mace -- catching Mack hard and --

Mack stunned -- smashing into the pool table, slices his neck through on a shard of glass -- SCREAMS! But he follows up -- knee up into Sheldon's ribs -- THE GUN KNOCKED FREE FROM Sheldon's hip! -- skittering across the floor -- Sheldon -- as Mack starts to move -- backhanding him and --

It's war -- a flat-out, close-quarter death match -- Mack bleeding and older, but strong and determined -- Sheldon still hammered with ruthless sucker-punches -- the two of them braced there -- grappling -- falling --

Sheldon -- he's got Mack in a choke-hold -- but Mack driving his head back -- into Sheldon's face and --

Sheldon -- Mack -- THE GUN on the floor -- struggling for it -- Mack there first -- Sheldon on him -- pinned there -- four hands, one gun and --

BLAMM!!! -- wild shot -- into the fleeing crowd -- Still wrestling -- breaking Mack's nose, until -- The gun knocked away again.

Finally their hands locked into each other's throats. This is as real and up close as it gets. Until, Sheldon finally holds dead weight. Eyes fixed. Staring...

Sheldon jumping back. Blood all over his shirt -- his first kill in a long time. A messy one -- Revulsion.

POLICE SIRENS and LIGHTS fill the now empty bar...

INT. JAIL CELL - NIGHT

Darkness. Utter darkness...

SHELDON (V.O.)
I'm not giving in. I swim. Even in the dark, there's no shame in drifting, feel the tide shifting and wait for the spark.

As daylight breaks, Sheldon sits along the wall of an empty, decrepit, six by eight holding cell. He's alone here. Face all puffy and bruised. Shame in his swollen eyes. Loathsome. Hangs his head. Waits...

TIME CUT -- HOURS LATER
The same spot. Sheldon softly bangs the back of his head against the stiff wall. He's sulking. His wounds healing. The loneliness of this place heavy on him.

TIME CUT -- EVEN LATER

Sheldon's rigid body now lay in the corner of the cell. A plate of food splattered on the floor -- he's flipped it over. A small spot of dry blood lines the wall where he was banging his head earlier. Mortality and necrosis in it's purest form.

   GUARD (O.S.)
   You got a visitor. On your feet.

The bars are rolled back and Sheldon stands to his feet. He looks like shit. The GUARD cuffs his swollen hands and leads him out.

INT. VISITATION ROOM - DAY

A sad and somber place. Painted over, white concrete walls, and blue trim. This room is split in two. Rows of thick glass and used telephone receivers to each side.

Jerry, dressed from work, hands a red piece of paper to a stout Guard behind his post. He reads it over.

   GUARD
   Who you seeing?

   JERRY
   Sheldon Lennon.

The Guard buzzes the door open and quickly searches Jerry for any weapons. He's clean.

Sheldon is led from the other side of the glass. Fit into his prison grays. He's thoroughly searched by another GUARD. He's clean too. Sheldon hands the GUARD a piece of paper --

   GUARD
   You're in ten.

Jerry watches him with a sadness to his face. A dim look in Sheldon's eyes. To see his brother so lost...

Sheldon makes his way around the room and over to booth ten. Jerry has a much shorter distance to cover -- watches Sheldon walk. The saddest symphony plays in his head.

They sit across the glass form one another.
JERRY
Last time was here, they had you in orange.

SHELDON
Things change.

JERRY
How did you ever screw up so badly?

SHELDON
What was I supposed to do?

JERRY
You were supposed to be SMART! You were supposed to take the money and pay that son of a bitch off and come back home to your family -- to Amy.

A low blow.

SHELDON
Where is she?

JERRY
She went back home.

SHELDON
Why didn't she come?

JERRY
She got tired of waiting.

A hard pill for Sheldon to swallow. He's holding back tears now --

JERRY
(low)
She doesn't wanna see you. I'm sorry.

Sheldon finally lets us inside --

SHELDON
(deep from within)
Ten years is a long time. The world literally changes without you. Before I met her, before I saw any of you -- I got off the bus and went to my favourite bar. It was empty. I went to a cafe my friends used to touch dicks at and

(MORE)
SHELDON (cont'd)
none of them were there. I went to
the old house, pulled the boards
off and went inside. Everything
was just as I'd left it with a
decade years worth of dust. Most
depressing thing you've ever seen.
I lay down on my bed and paranoia
started setting in. I realised I
was pretty much squating and was
paranoid about being picked up by
the cops and breaching my parole,
so I took off. I checked into a
motel and sat on the edge of the
bed, watching MTV and ordering
Pizza. I must have ordered like
five pizzas from five different
places, stayed up till dawn. Thing
about prison, is that sleep
becomes like a chore you do each
day. You're never really tired, so
you never really want to sleep, it
just breaks up the time. I felt
like I didn't want to sleep ever
again. Next morning I decided to
go for a walk, and thought I'd
rent a car - but my driver's
licence had expired. I went to get
a new one, but because I'd been
inside they needed me to get a
letter from my parole officer. So
I just wandered around for a day.
Felt like everyone was staring at
me. Then, I found her in that
station.

JERRY
What do you want me to say?

SHELDON
I was lost until I saw her there.

GUARD (O.S.)
Two minutes!

SHELDON
I have to see her again.

JERRY
You're in a hole here, you know
that?
SHELDON
I promised her I wouldn't let her fall.

Jerry can see the pained sincerity in his eyes. For the first time -- he believes him entirely.

JERRY
I'll make some calls. Just -- stay out of trouble until I come see you.

A soft nod between them and they hang up. Sheldon is led away by the Guard and Jerry struts to the door. He's BUZZED out.

SHELDON
I promised her I wouldn't let her fall.

INT. JAIL CELL - DAY
Sheldon paces like a shelter dog -- circles. He mumbles to himself, something he's crafting in his mind. The right words.

He sits under his tiny desk lamp and feverishly writes a letter. It's addressed to AMY.

TIME CUT

LATER THAT NIGHT -- the prison is dark, lights out. SCREAMS and TAUNTS heard from within the dark unknown beyond Sheldon's cell. There are all kinds of unrecognizable NOISES in the night. BANGS, YELLS, LAUGHS. Creepy ambiance.

Sheldon sits up in bed, no need for sleep -- his shirt on the floor -- his hands on either side of his head. He looks as if he's about to implode.

INT. VISITATION ROOM - DAY
Sheldon and Jerry sit at a foldable table. Two metal chairs. Two COKES -- one for each of them. A bag of CHIPS closer to Sheldon. A GUARD watches them closely.

SHELDON
What did he say?
JERRY
He's thinking self-defense is your best option.

SHELDON
Can they prove that?

JERRY
(nods)
They should. They charge five hundred and hour.

SHELDON
You know I'll pay you back.

JERRY
(sly)
Sure you will.

SHELDON
Whatever they need to do, I just need to get out of this place. I can't stay here any longer.
(beat)
It was self-defense.

JERRY
(direct)
Was it?

An ashamed stare between them. Sheldon says nothing.

JERRY
Jesus, Shel. It's not going to be that simple.

Changes the subject --

SHELDON
Has she come to see you?

JERRY
No.

SHELDON
Why not? What about the letters?

JERRY
I dunno.

SHELDON
Has she said anything?
JERRY
(grows impatient)
No...

SHELDON
Why won't she write me back?

JERRY
She just doesn't want to see you
Shel --

SHELDON
Why not? I mean -- why not?

And here it is --

JERRY
Because she's pregnant.

A stunned look on Sheldon's face. He wants to ask Jerry to repeat himself, but he's silenced by the gravity of what he's just been told.

Sheldon leans back in his chair. Overcome, overwhelmed, muted by emotions.

SHELDON
Are you sure?

JERRY
(nods)
She came by the house right after you came here. I'm sorry.

SHELDON
What do I do?

JERRY
I know you're about to burst through these walls.

Jerry leans in, and as direct as he can be --

JERRY
Just wait.

INT. COURTRoom - DAY

A hushed, wooden box. Paired pews line the back portion of the room and lead to a set of massive double doors. A filled juror's box to the front side and the JUDGE'S seat raised above the floor.
Sheldon, cuffed and soundless, sits beside his LAWYER. No emotion on either of their faces.

The PROSECUTOR stares in at Sheldon, long and hard.

Jerry sits directly behind his brother -- zipped and covered in anxiety.

The Judge removes her glasses and glances over at the juror's box. Their blank, iced expressions.

A middle aged WOMAN stands to deliver the verdict --

JUDGE
Foreperson, on the charge of first degree murder, does the juror find the defendant -- Sheldon Lennon -- guilty or not guilty?

Sheldon closes his weary eyes. A slight beat before the FOREPERSON'S overmodest reply...

FOREPERSON
We find the defendant, not guilty.

JUDGE
In light of the jury's verdict, I hereby release Mr. Lennon to the custody of this district's probationary court effective immediately.

(bangs her gavel)
And Mr. Lennon -- a word of advice before I release you. Next time someone runs towards you with a loaded weapon... run. Court dismissed.

The courtroom springs to life. The BALIFF un-cuffs Sheldon, allowing him to embrace Jerry and shake his Lawyer's hand. It's only seconds before the Baliff leads him out through the private courtroom entrance.

Sheldon yells back to Jerry as he's being led out --

SHELDON
Tell her I'm coming. Tell her I'm coming to see her!
INT. FRONT SEAT -- RANGE ROVER -- DAY

A silent ride. Jerry concentrates on the blacktop -- Sheldon glares straight ahead. No words. You could hear a pin drop. Jerry breaks the muffled tone --

JERRY
So you know, now I owe that scumbag lawyer -- and his wife, my balls for this.

SHELDON
I'm sorry Jerry, you know I am.

JERRY
(you asshole)
Do you have any idea how much this kind of thing costs?

SHELDON
A lot.

JERRY
It's not just money.

SHELDON
You made your point.

JERRY
It's not a point!

SHELDON
Alright, fine. What do you want me to say?

JERRY
It's not just the goddamn lawyer! It's money I paid to witnesses, the prints on the gun -- all of it. That lays on me. On my conscience.

SHELDON
I thought that never happened?

Jerry grabs him by the arm. SLAMS on the breaks. Stops the car. JERKS Sheldon close...

JERRY
You don't get another chance.

JERRY
Most people only get one shot.
Everyone except you. You keep
fucking up, and each time you do,
you drag someone else down with
you. Not anymore. Not for me, not
for Mary, not for Amy, or that
baby.

Sheldon just taking it. Jerry backing away. Hits the gas,
and now they're on the move again... Gone.

INT. AMY'S HOUSE - DAY

The door to Amy's place opens. Sheldon walks inside --
slowly, not knowing what to expect. He's making very little
noise.

SHELDON
Amy?

He moves through the apartment with stealth.

Through the front living area, to a back hall and
ultimately into the bedroom.

Sheldon stands in the bedroom, sensing something. He moves
to the OFFICE, sees the door slightly AJAR and a SHADOW
on the FLOOR.

He PUSHES IT OPEN slowly.

We REVEAL: AMY, SITTING ON THE FLOOR, she's been
crying.

Sheldon quickly moves toward her but she backs away --

AMY
Get out.

SHELDON
Wait...

AMY
I know what you are.

SHELDON
Just hold on a second --

She reaches for her landline.
AMY
I'll call the police.

Sheldon moves very slowly. He eases himself across from her.

SHELDON
You really want to do that?

AMY
I want you to leave.

Why?

AMY
Because you're an animal, Sheldon -- you really are.

SHELDON
I'm not. You have to trust me.

AMY
You lied to me.

SHELDON
I never lied to you --

Now she's angry --

AMY
You're a murderer and you had me feeling sorry for you!

SHELDON
I never did that to you on purpose. I NEVER meant to hurt you.

AMY
Liar! Everything you've ever told me was a lie!

SHELDON
Amy --

AMY
Fuck you! Get out of my house!

He notices her hand on her belly. She turned brittle, breaks into tears.
SHELDON
Don't cry.

AMY
Don't you see what you've done to me?

SHELDON
I didn't mean to do anything --

AMY
-- it's bad enough to fuck with my head, you have to literally FUCK me too?

SHELDON
Calm down.

AMY
I don't want to see you. Ever. Understand?

SHELDON
I won't just leave. What about the baby?

AMY
Leave now.

She starts to dial --

SHELDON
Listen --

AMY
Go.

He backs away. Scared of her anger and sheer force. Amy SLAMS the reciever to the floor and wails.

INT. PAROLE OFFICES - DAY

An empty waiting area. Grey folding chairs. Sheldon waits his turn.

Rodgers opens his office door.

RODGERS
Lennon? Come on back.

Sheldon stands and meakly makes his way to Rodger's office. The door closes behind them both.
INT. RODGER'S OFFICE - DAY

Sheldon refuses to sit. He's not lingering. Rodgers inking up his file -- not even making eye contact.

SHELDON
How's this gonna work? I be at point A at a certain time, and if I'm not and you find out -- I go back to jail?

RODGERS
(nods)
Pretty simple.

SHELDON
Do I get any kind of warnings first?

RODGERS
It's a little late for that.

A long silence, and --

RODGERS
Your thinking about walking out on me...

SHELDON
Who said that?

RODGERS
You don't have to. It's in your eyes.

SHELDON
Are parole officers experts in body language?

Now Rodgers is sizing him up --

RODGERS
Your type, criminals, they keep everything in their eyes. Pain -- happiness -- all of it. You're easy to read. Like a book.

SHELDON
Is that right?

RODGERS
Yep. And if you really DO have the balls to make a run, just remember that court records are (MORE)
RODGERS (cont'd)

perminant.

Sheldon can only smile. Rodgers is non pleased by his sly reaction to his threat.

RODGERS
Something funny?

SHELDON
(one last dig)
If I run -- if I choose to leave this shithole and all your rules and regulations, it'll be so fast and so far that you won't even know what hit you.

RODGERS
You sure about that?

Sheldon's already at the door, his hand turning on the knob.

SHELDON
Bet on it.

EXT. TRAIN STATION PARKING LOT - NIGHT

A light drizzle. Amy is off her shift and walks to her car, she struggles with the keys, eventually drops them. Sheldon finds her there. She turns. Look at him.

AMY
What are you doing here?

SHELDON
I just need a minute.

AMY
I don't have any more time to give you.

SHELDON
Why not?

AMY
You scare me.

SHELDON
I'm not gonna hurt you.
AMY
Is that what you told those other guys, too?

SHELDON
That's not who I am. You know that...

AMY
You're wrong. I don't know anything about you -- obviously. I knew what you'd done and I let you in anyway. It's my fault.

SHELDON
Don't say that.

AMY
What should I say then? That I love you? Yeah -- I LOVED you. I did. But I don't anymore. Is that what you wanna hear?

This crushes Sheldon.

SHELDON
Amy --

AMY
(his teeth)
You made me believe this was something different. You told me about your past and I kept coming back for more, now look at me. I'm pregnant...

SHELDON
Will you listen to me?

AMY
Why would you lie to me?

SHELDON
I didn't want to hurt you.

AMY
And look how that worked out.

SHELDON
Ask me anything. Anything at all.
AMY
It's late.

SHELDON
Please.

And yet, after all her tears and anger, she falls for his resilient eyes.

AMY
Did you kill that man because he was raping his daughter?

SHELDON
Yes.

AMY
And you killed the man in the bar?

SHELDON
Yes.

AMY
Have you killed anyone else? Ever?

SHELDON
No.

AMY
Why'd you leave me that night? You left me at your brother's house. Why didn't you talk to me and tell me what was going on?

SHELDON
I wanted to. I tried -- more times than you could ever imagine.

Her next question takes her longer to ask --

AMY
Did you love me?

SHELDON
Yes.

AMY
Do you love me?

SHELDON
Yes.

That sinks in. Quietly:
AMY
Are you going to kill again?

SHELDON
No.

AMY
Are you ever going back to jail?

SHELDON
Never.

AMY
I need to know.

He looks at her --

SHELDON
It's not an option.

She looks at him with something between loss and disappointment.

AMY
(her belly)
This is your child.

SHELDON
You don't have any reason to believe me, and I don't hate you for doubting. All I can tell you is the truth. I've done things; no excuses. Even though I don't deserve it, I hope there's a chance for us, I really do. I will never hurt you or the baby, never. I'll never lie to you and if you walk away from me right now, I'll regret it for the rest of my life.

She's covered in tears now. Not sure what to do, she's utterly lost --

AMY
I don't know.

SHELDON
We can leave.

AMY
Leave?
SHELDON
Yes. We can leave.

AMY
You can't leave.

SHELDON
I don't care about that. You, me, and the baby -- we'll go to Canada. To those mountains.

AMY
(low)
I don't know.

SHELDON
I tell you what -- don't answer me right now. Think about it. I'm gonna set some things up and I'll meet you up there.

AMY
When?

SHELDON
Soon.

She hesitates to trust. Sheldon backs away, never breaking from her soft eyes --

AMY
Where are you going?

SHELDON
Remember... the mountains.

AMY
What if I can't? If I won't?

He's farther off now, almost yells back to her --

SHELDON
I TRUST YOU!

EXT. PARK - DAY

A bench overlooking a busy lake. It's a beautiful, sunny day. A few boats in the distance. Children play nearby.

Jerry sits there, alone. He gazes out into the bright sunlight as it hits the glassy lake water. He's in a peaceful place, as --
Sheldon walks up from behind and takes a seat next to him.

SHELDON
Whatcha looking at?

JERRY
You remember this place? When we were kids?

SHELDON
We spent our whole summers here.

JERRY
Only ma wouldn't buy us swimming tags, so we had to run into the water real fast so no one saw us.

SHELDON
I remember.

JERRY
(points)
The high dive was over there...
the snack stand right next to it.
A blow pop would cost you fifty cents. You remember?

SHELDON
Yeah.

JERRY
Things sure do change, don't they?
Everything... changes.

SHELDON
Memory lane, isn't it?

Jerry shivers off the memories. Back to Sheldon --

JERRY
Shouldn't you be at work?

SHELDON
I should...

JERRY
So? What's the deal?

SHELDON
I'm not going back there anymore.
JERRY
The fuck you talking about?

SHELDON
You know.

JERRY
So now you're trying to get thrown back in jail?

SHELDON
(looks off)
I gotta do what I gotta do.

JERRY
(taken back)
Hell of a montra, isn't it?

A beat of silence between them, until --

JERRY
You gonna bust your parole? And for what? What are you thinking?

SHELDON
I dunno what I'm thinking. But when I woke up this morning -- I thought about dad. First time in a long time, ya know?

JERRY
Yeah, so? What about him?

SHELDON
Do you remember that year we were both on Lazon Paints?

JERRY
Sixth grade.

SHELDON
Right. And one game I had to play catcher and you played center field. You remember that game?

JERRY
(tries his best)
Sort of. It was warm that summer. De Jong field.

SHELDON
We were tied in the bottom of the nineth. Dad was standing behind the backstop -- cheering us on. 

(MORE)
SHELDON (cont'd)
You were on third and I came up to bat...

JERRY
The black uniforms.

SHELDON
Right. Anyway, I took two called strikes and the coach calls for time. He huddles all the kids together -- tells us some bullshit about how it's okay to lose as long as you keep your head held high.

Jerry grins -- nods.

SHELDON
I could hear dad from the backstop. He was louder than everyone else. He was saying something to me -- as if I was the only one that could hear it. Do you remember what he said?

JERRY
No.

SHELDON
He said, "Your brother's only ninety feet from home..."

And now Jerry understands. This is Sheldon's goodbye. They shoot each other the serious eyes.

JERRY
He said that, huh?

Now he's saying it to Jerry --

SHELDON
Your brother's only ninety feet from home.

Jerry smiles -- nods. He gets it. It has to be this way. Sheldon laughs, he's happy.

Jerry looks out onto the still water. Two last words between them before Sheldon disappears just as quickly as he arrived on the bench...
INT. AMY'S HOUSE - DAY

The sunlight filters in through the cluttered hallway. We find Amy at the bedroom window -- hands on her growing belly and a soft glow in her eyes.

She turns from the window to the bright hallway. She takes a hard look at all the things around her. All the books, the magazine, the furniture, everything someone collects over a lifetime. Everything you could ever need or want. Something is missing.

SHELDON (V.O.)
You gotta swim through nights that won't end. Swim for your families, your sister, and brothers, and friends.

She grabs a jacket -- her keys -- shuts and locks the front door, she's gone.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Jerry steps out of his car and sees a package leaning up against the front steps.

He walks over to it and reads the note attached to the front...

SHELDON (V.O.)
Here's a little something to put down on my tab. Don't ask how or where I got it. You don't wanna know. Anyway, I'll get you the rest someday -- hold me to it. I'll see you around, soon. Your loving brother... Shel.

Jerry folds the note and carefully places it in his back pocket. He looks up to find Mary in the doorway -- beautiful as ever. She smiles big. Jerry grins. Happy to see her face.

EXT. MOUNTAINS - DAY

Something magnificent and majestic. Peaks as high as the eye can see, piercing the whitest clouds imaginably. A mist in the cool air. Dark greens and deep blues. Picture perfect.
SHELDON (V.O.)
You gotta swim, swim in the dark.
There's no shame in drifting, feel
the tide shifting and wait for the spark.

A tiny house sits atop one of the cliffs. Wooden and quaint.
Not much to it -- a back porch overlooking the valley below.

A TAXI pulls up to the corner of a sleepy street. Amy climbs out of the back seat.

The beauty of this place washes over her weary eyes. She takes a deep breath, holding onto the newness of it all.

SHELDON (V.O.)
You gotta swim, don't let yourself sink. Find the horizon, I promise you it's not as far as you think.
The currents will drag us away from our love...

The taxi pulls away as Amy begins down the sidewalk. She looks strangely similar to Sheldon when we first saw him along the snowy railroad tracks. She looks lost, but accustomed to it.

She stops at the crosswalk, her eyes scanning for something... someone.

SHELDON (V)
Just keep your head above...

From the tiny house we see movement. The porch's screen door flings open and SHELDON emerges. Longer hair and slightly unkempt. The widest smile on his face, but he doesn't make a sound. He waits for her eyes to find his... and they finally do.

The End