

90 FEET FROM HOME

by

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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

Cramped 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 creeps 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 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 lays supine on top of the covers. Nude. His eyes wide open. Impossible to close. A downcast look upon them. He's on alert -- shaken, panicked.

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 --

SHELDON
Maybe the railroad.

RODGERS
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.

SHELDON
Can I ask you a question?

RODGERS
Of course.

SHELDON
How long does this last?

RODGERS
Our meetings? Several years
unfortunately.

SHELDON
Not the meetings.

RODGERS
Then, you'll have to be more
specific.

SHELDON
(leans in)
Being afraid.

RODGERS
Of?

SHELDON
Everything.

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

RODGERS
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 fold 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 it 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.

Your business man of the year. The power suit and the "good" tie. Well groomed. Oxford. Pressed. Perfectly creased and handsome.

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

Sheldon enters the meager station. The fireplace still going strong. A few bundled PEOPLE waiting for trains. One MAN studies a wall map. A schedule on the blackboard. Coffee machine in the corner. Runty.

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 too 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 their 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?

EXT. WATER SIDE PATH - NIGHT

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. I 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

Amy's home. It's cozy. Lots of throws and framed family pictures. A wall of memories. Candles on the mantel. The quietness of "When The Stars Go Blue." Gracefully decorated.

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 than 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 from 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 Huffly 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

(MORE)

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
inside.

(tosses 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's 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 borrow 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?

Sheldon's eyes turn dead serious. He's not fucking around. Mack just laughs. Sheldon rushes out.

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 eyes 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 under developed part of town. The broke crowd. Bikers and ball-flys. 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 tray. 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 the 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 from 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 squatting 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 beng 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.

Sheldon hesitates. Nods. Impatient -- he pushes back -- hard -- breaks Jerry's grip. Brothers. Toe-to-toe.

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.

SHELDON
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 receiver 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. Rosgers 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

(her 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.

(her keys)

I have to go.

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 ninth. 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...

JERRY
Everything changes.

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
acustomed 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