CASTLING

Written by

Benjamin L. Hinnant
FADE IN:

1 INT. AIRLINER - EVENING

POV FROM INSIDE AIRLINER: A sea of rolling clouds hover above us. Anchorage sparkles beneath us lit by sundown’s afterglow.

CUT TO:

2 INT. CHEVROLET TAHOE (MOVING) - EVENING

DRIVER’S POV: The Christmas spirit is on full display as we drive through the wintry-laced streets of downtown Anchorage. Each stretch of road brimming with the local and franchised ordinariness of the lower forty-eight states. The dashboard’s GPS system is guiding us to the Anchorage Police Department.

CUT TO:

3 INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

NAVID FARUQ, 30, Iraqi-American, sits under an unflattering light at the table in an ill-fitting sweat suit, contempt and frustration visible in his eyes. Seated across from him is the Detective questioning him - ORENTHAL HAWKINS, Black, 45.

HAWKINS
Young brother out for a walk. And he happens to be wearing a hoodie.

NAVID
No, it wasn’t like that. It wasn’t.

HAWKINS
Wasn’t it? It’s winter. In Alaska. Everybody wears a hood. So explain to me how you singled him out for a stop and frisk, hood over his head?

NAVID
I’ve been working that post going on what, three months now? I have a good idea who lives where. Yes, he stood out looking as ghetto as he did. Wait, what I meant... I barely saw his face with that hoodie over his head. But I could tell he was young. You know, twenties young.

HAWKINS
And you say this brother was armed?
NAVID
When he turned, I caught the flash of the barrel aimed directly at me.

HAWKINS
Ever had a gun aimed at you before?

NAVID
I’m eleven-Bravo Army infantry, two tours Operation New Dawn. Of course I’ve had guns aimed at me before.

HAWKINS
You know the difference between a gun barrel and a soda bottle. Good for you. But you shot him anyway. What? Did the sun get in your eyes?

NAVID
It was dark. Daylight burns out by three in the afternoon this time of year. You live here. You know that.

HAWKINS
Your orders state “observe and report”. You reported him to your dispatch and were advised to stand-to. Why cowboy up and follow him?

NAVID
To observe him. There’s been a rash of break-ins in that neighborhood.

HAWKINS
Explains why your employer issued you pepper spray. But why the heat?

NAVID
C’mon. It’s for protection. I have a carry permit. There are plenty of unwanted guests to worry about working outdoors. Weighs eight-hundred pounds, shits in the woods?

HAWKINS
Imagine that. Anything else about this young brother jump out at you?

NAVID
You mean the trespasser? He didn’t blend with the other residents.

HAWKINS
Looking as ghetto as he did?
NAVID
Sounds like your mind’s made up. I should speak to another dick.

HAWKINS
Sure ‘bout that, my man? Right now I’m your best friend in the world.

NAVID
I was the victim. Yet you sit there treating me like I committed a hate crime. What happened out there had nothing to do with race. Nothing.

HAWKINS
There’s a sixteen-year-old boy in critical condition. And I will go harder than a pack of wolves to get the truth. Yes. That same boy you admit you shot. After you waived your right to counsel. Twice.

WE MOVE IN ON THEIR REFLECTION IN THE MIRROR.

CUT TO:

INT. VIEWING ROOM - NIGHT

Dark. A lone policeman, CHARLES COOLEY, White, 36, watches NAVID and HAWKINS from this side of the observation window.

NAVID
Why should I hide behind a mouth-piece? It was self defense. Where is my uniform? I wish to leave now.

HAWKINS
You reported him trespassing while performing your rounds. Dispatch advises you to wait for back-up to arrive. You chose to pursue him. He sees you, rabbits, you corner him at gunpoint down by the lake. So tell me why he would rush you if you have a gun on him? For street props? According to you, he charged you “like an animal”. And right when he’s about to lunge at you...

NAVID
I thought he was going to kill me. I had less than a second to react. You would have done the same thing.
HAWKINS
Would I?

The door swings open. WITT MCKENNA, White, 44, unshaven, over-layered in cold weather gear, stumbles inside, disoriented.

MCKENNA
(steadies himself)
Excuse me. Just got off a plane.

COOLEY
Lower forty-eight? How can I help?

MCKENNA
This the rent-a-cop interview?

COOLEY
I’m sorry, you are...?

MCKENNA
Here to do a job. Can I get a cup of coffee please, officer? Thanks.

McKenna fumbles through multiple pockets until he finds his Chicago District Attorney’s badge and offers it to Cooley.

MCKENNA (CONT’D)
It’ll have to do for now. I’m your Criminal Investigation Bureau’s new Deputy Attorney General: McKenna, Mason W. Please, call me Witt.

COOLEY
Cooley, Chuck. A pleasure. Chicago, huh? You’re in luck. Our winters are much more milder here. Did not expect you to transition this soon.

MCKENNA
Seems my predecessor couldn’t wait to trade in his sled dog races for the Red Sox. And if by chance you know of anyone interested in a two-bed two-bath condo in Lincoln Park, the seller’s motivated.

COOLEY
I see a bad shooting’s not beneath your radar. Thanks for coming in.

MCKENNA
Are you kidding? Barstow called all lights-and-sirens. That’s why I’m here. Who am I looking at in there?
COOLEY
Orenthal Hawkins. Detective first grade. Eighteen years in, exemplary service record, highest closure rate in the precinct. With him...

MCKENNA
The watchman who copped to the shooting. Good for the soul, right?

COOLEY

MCKENNA
Priors?

COOLEY
No criminal history, no warrants...

MCKENNA
Did he mistake the kid for caribou? Sorry, what’s the kid’s name again?

COOLEY
Sharif. Sharif Tyrone Sweet. He was bussed to Anchorage Regional.

MCKENNA
Anyone pick up the story yet?

COOLEY
That’s a job for Press Relations. Let’s not deprive ‘em.

MCKENNA
Always better to stay ahead of the story than respond to it. Teen shot for being the wrong color? Shooter claims self defense? So much for originality. Barstow’s not wasting time bending me over his desk. If this goes south I’m the fall guy. And Barstow’s got another thing coming if he expects me to suck his cock after he ass-rapes me.

McKenna’s eyes drift past the back of Cooley’s windbreaker.

MCKENNA (CONT’D)
Excuse my language. I didn’t mean to... I didn’t know you were a...
COOLEY
Think I haven’t heard worse, old as I am? Come with me.

McKenna follows Cooley out of the Viewing Room.

CUT TO:

INT. PRECINCT CORRIDOR - NIGHT

MCKENNA and COOLEY come out into the bleak hallway. Stenciled on the back of Cooley’s windbreaker: “POLICE CHAPLAIN”

COOLEY
Coffee’s this way. Swill’s the only blend we serve here. But the donuts are fresh. I’d join you but three cups a day’s my limit.

McKenna stops Cooley midway towards the break room to examine the gun in his holster.

MCKENNA
Glock Twenty-one. Standard issue. You’re not a volunteer chaplain.

COOLEY
I’m in charge of the volunteer clergy. But I am an actual police officer. Went to the police academy and everything. And thanks for not asking if I ever killed anyone.

CUT TO:

INT. PRECINCT BREAK ROOM - NIGHT

COOLEY pours MCKENNA a cup of coffee.

COOLEY
I was off grid visiting my parents when the watchman reached out to me. To act as an advocate on his behalf. I barely made the passenger train coming back. F-Y-I: the Arab community doesn’t trust our police.

MCKENNA
What denomination are you, Cooley?

COOLEY
Right now? I’m your denomination.
MCKENNA
You’re talking to a lapsed Catholic from Terre Haute, Indiana. First, let’s not assume Faruq is Muslim...

COOLEY
Assyrian. He’s an Iraqi Christian. I do know how to do my job.

CUT TO:

INT. DETECTIVES’ DEN - NIGHT

MCKENNA trails COOLEY inside. Half a dozen empty desks mostly cluttered with paperwork and takeout containers. Except one.

MCKENNA
An Arab-American shoots an African-American, armed with a soda bottle, in self-defense. Spoiler alert: We will discover the kid is an honor student who’s never been in trouble with the law before, since they’re the only ones whom regularly encounter this type of trouble.

HAWKINS appears from behind them heading to his desk.

HAWKINS
It never ceases to amaze me. How far people will go to prove their ignorance, fear, and hatred.

McKenna wonders how much Hawkins’s heard, and if Hawkins’s dig was meant for him. Hawkins situates himself behind his desk - the only one neat and in manageable order.

COOLEY
Rennie Hawkins, Witt McKenna. Witt is the new whatever- whatever...

HAWKINS
He inherited Bob Mara’s old desk. I read the newsletter. Irene Dawson is doing just fine as the interim appointment. Why’s he here already?

MCKENNA
It’s how he earns his pay. Give me your gut, Detective: The watchman punishes an unarmed kid because he wasn’t dressed for the prom. Will his story hold up in these parts?
HAWKINS
Comes down to whether it was self
defense or murder. Either way he
could waltz out of a courtroom, but
thanks for asking. The law says we
all bleed red. But even here, where
we’re only six per cent of the
population, profiling’s still a
reality. Plus, this watchman thinks
he’s exempt from race crimes ‘cause
he’s not white. It’s obvious he
sized up that kid because of his
skin color, not his winter parka.

MCKENNA
So far I’m not seeing a case of
race beyond a reasonable doubt,
Detective. What have you got?
Witnesses? Video? Have you gotten
the kid’s version of events yet?

HAWKINS
The kid’s still in surgery. If the
watchman shot this kid because the
kid’s close enough to put him down,
where’s the blood on the uniform?

MCKENNA
That’s for you to find out. Can I
rely on you to conduct an unbiased
investigation, Detective Hawkins?

HAWKINS
Rely on my desire to seek justice.
So you know, I was catching calls
when I caught this case. It lives
with me from here on out. I arrived
at the scene, roped the area off,
no one in, no one out... I escorted
the watchman back myself. His hands
were swabbed for gunshot residue,
his uniform’s under a microscope,
bailistics bagged the gun, blood-
alcohol... Complete work-up.

MCKENNA
Eighteen years in, you know what’s
needed. I won’t stand over your
shoulder. But if the other side
files any successful motions to
suppress, I’ll rip you a new one.

COOLEY
Let’s not forget ourselves, fellas.
MCKENNA
Kidding. Can we connect this kid to the rash of burglaries plaguing the affluent community of Emerald Cove?

HAWKINS

MCKENNA
How squeaky clean is the kid? Did he pick fights in school? Cop a feel off a girl’s tit? Experiment with drugs? Anything pops, send up a flare. Where’s the watchman now?

HAWKINS
Cooling his heels in interrogation. Let’s pull him off the playing field, detain him for negligence.

MCKENNA
Cut him loose. We’ll wait and see what the forensics reveal first.

CUT TO:

INT. PRECINCT CORRIDOR – NIGHT

COOLEY hurries to catch up with HAWKINS before he leaves.

COOLEY
Hawkins! We’re pairing up.

HAWKINS
You drive. You know I’m not built for this weather.

COOLEY
Southern boy still ain’t used to our Northern weather.

HAWKINS
The watchman’s playing the self-defense card. Whatever I ask him, he’s the victim.

COOLEY
And that “squeaky clean” business? What is this, Social Services? The kid’s not the one on trial.
HAWKINS
Isn’t he? The system is stacked against him. His skin color’s lost him sympathy votes. And he will be subjected to harsher scrutiny than White kids, if anyone gives a shit.

COOLEY
Is that the truth, Detective?

HAWKINS
That’s gospel, baby. The other side will amplify the usual stereotypes of Black people to dirty the kid’s character, saying he had it coming. Each time an unarmed Black male is shot, time goes back fifty years.

COOLEY
That’s a little paranoid, Hawkins.

HAWKINS
I expect that sort of tunnel-vision from someone who actually benefits from ethnic questionnaires. Must be nice living so ignorantly in that alternate reality where racist attitudes and behavior don’t exist.

CUT TO:

INT. ANCHORAGE REGIONAL HOSPITAL - NIGHT

COOLEY and HAWKINS locate LAVELL & IDA SWEET (both Black, in their early fifties) in the waiting area, silently praying.

HAWKINS
Lavell and Ida Sweet? I’m Detective Hawkins. Mind if we talk while you wait? How is Sharif doing?

MR. SWEET
Not out of the woods yet is all we know. Have you found out who shot Sharif and why?

HAWKINS
We’re working on it. Officer Cooley here is our chaplain on duty.

COOLEY
I wanted to be here for you. And for Sharif. When he recovers.
MRS. SWEET
None of this makes any sense. He’s a good kid. He goes out of his way to avoid trouble. I’m telling you, it’s those bitch-ass cyber-bullies.

MR. SWEET
You should look into some kids from his school who bullied him online since the elections. “Go back to Africa. You monkeys are ruining the country.” We went to the principal several times with this. Despite all the evidence we presented he saw no signs of racial animosity.

HAWKINS
They never do. Not when a school’s rep is at stake. Does Sharif know anyone who lives in Emerald Cove?

MR. SWEET
Yes. His brother Marl. Marlon. He’s flying in from overseas.

COOLEY
(low to Hawkins)
So much for restricted.

MR. SWEET
His wife Sigrun still lives there. They’re separated. Marl wants kids.

MRS. SWEET
At her age? She should know better. Sharif collected Susan B. Anthonys when he was little. Sigrun got him interested in rare coins. He visits her all the time. He digs the lake.

MR. SWEET
Sigrun’s a doctor in this hospital. Detective, please. The media don’t care, the politicians don’t care... Our boys are our life. We need you to care. Find Sharif’s shooter.

CUT TO:

10 INT. ANCHORAGE REGIONAL HOSPITAL - NIGHT

“DING”. The elevator doors slide open. COOLEY steps out and approaches the NURSE behind the nearest reception island.
NURSE
(into cellphone)
It’s me again. Call me back when you get a chance. Love you, bye.

She hangs up quickly turning her complete attention to Cooley.

NURSE (CONT’D)
Hi. May I help you, Officer?

COOLEY
Is Sigrun Sweet on duty tonight?

NURSE
Are you a psych patient? Just kidding. Dr. Arnbjørg, she still practices under her maiden name, she took a personal day. But you are welcome to leave a message.

COOLEY
Is she home? It’s an urgent matter.

NURSE
Isn’t it always? If it’s all right with you, I’d rather not say. There have been problems with some of her patients in the past. They want to know her home address, hand-deliver her flowers and mail. They think they’re in love with her. Are you familiar with transference?

COOLEY
Something along those lines, yes.

NURSE
She has it bad enough dealing with their problems without having to worry about them creeping around her house every night too. I know she’s been losing sleep over it.

COOLEY
Her brother-in-law Sharif is in surgery upstairs. Do you know him?

NURSE
He’s been here. Pretty much keeps to himself. Oh, God... Is he going to be all right? What happened?
RESUME w/HAWKINS talking to MR. & MRS. SWEET in the waiting area. Mr. Sweet’s weary eyes have now intensified.

MR. SWEET
He confessed he shot my son and you haven’t arrested him yet? Why not?

HAWKINS
We are waiting for the evidence to fall into place and contradict his claim of self defense.

MR. SWEET
Self defense? He’s the one armed. And he has the nerve to say he was scared? Of a boy carrying a soda? If anything Sharif should have been afraid. Grown-ass man stalking a teenager down a dark street. And for what? Walking while Black? My wife and I are decent, hard-working people. You know how hard it is to keep your children safe and off the streets? Make sure their homework’s done when they have friends who can’t keep their pants pulled up? I put both my boys in the Boy Scouts, took ‘em to church every Sunday...

HAWKINS
My old man moved us up from Mobile, Alabama during the pipeline years. He figured hate hadn’t made it this far north. Who saw Sharif last?

MRS. SWEET
I pick him up from school everyday. We always go straight to the supermarket after for supper groceries. It’s our quality time together.

A DOCTOR appears. And he is not bearing good news.

DOCTOR
Mr., Mrs. Sweet?

MRS. SWEET
How is he, Doctor? Can we see him?

Hawkins knows what’s coming next. He averts his eyes from the parents and tries to drown out the sound with little success.
DOCTOR
We did everything we could. He
didn’t make it. I am so sorry.

The CRYING and SCREAMING from the Sweets penetrate Hawkins’s
senses like a knife. Hawkins finally looks. It is the type of
anguish one does not easily forget as the couple collapses to
the floor almost as if physically in pain, locked together in
private grief and hysteria.

COOLEY returns and instantly feels the parents’ sorrow. He
moves in closer, crouches near them, reaches out to comfort
them. Mrs. Sweet turns to him and collapses into his arms.

MRS. SWEET
Tell me why? Why? Please, help me
understand. Was this God’s will?

COOLEY
When a child dies, many things will
be said to ease your mind. But one
thing that should never be said is
that any unnatural death is God’s
will. The God I know and serve does
not put his finger on the trigger.
His fist around the knife. Or his
hands on the steering wheel. God’s
heart was the first to break once
Sharif was taken from us. Losing a
parent takes away cherished moments
of our past with them. But losing a
child is harder. It robs us of the
hopes and dreams we’ve pinned onto
them. Because you loved your son so
much the wound is deep. And as
unbearable as the pain is now, once
it turns into bearable sorrow, seek
consolation in the unconditional
love for your son that will never
die. “Cast thy burden upon the Lord
and He shall strengthen thee.”

Mr. Sweet numbly rises to his feet and turns to Hawkins.

MR. SWEET
It never ends. It just never ends.
Does it? Against us.

CUT TO:
A small anteroom with an assistant’s desk and a couple of chairs. McKenna takes his heavy overcoat off and puts it on the desk before opening the door of the inner office.

HIS OFFICE

A desk. A computer. Boxed files piled on the desk. The window offers a charming view of downtown picturesquely framed by the Mountains. He walks inside and sits behind his new desk.

COOLEY (O.S.)
Sharif Sweet is dead.

COOLEY stands in the doorway looking defeated.

COOLEY (CONT’D)
The watchman may have murdered an innocent, sixteen-year-old child.

McKenna rises and comes around his desk to Cooley.

MCKENNA
The question is does he know that? Barstow hasn’t returned my calls.

COOLEY
Most weekends he and his wife are moose-hunting in Wasilla. With her. Why didn’t he use the pepper spray? Is everybody so trigger happy?

MCKENNA
I’ll ask Hawkins to go back in the morning, re-interview neighbors. That time of day there had to be witnesses. How are the parents?

COOLEY
How do you think? Have you ever lost a child? Do you have children?

MCKENNA
Can’t say that I’ve been blessed. To my knowledge. Heading home now?

COOLEY
Nice night to stay indoors. Day or night, you reach out for me. Okay? (before he leaves) I know you’d rather get some rest, but... How long since you ate? Did you eat during the flight?
MCKENNA
Yeah, right.

COOLEY
How 'bout I treat you to the best surf and turf in the city then?

CUT TO:

INT. GLACIER BREWHOUSE - NIGHT

Popular brewery/restaurant in the heart of downtown. Packed late-night crowd. A WAITER takes COOLEY and MCKENNA’s order.

COOLEY
Set us up with two orders of Rib-eye, medium rare, and crab legs.

WAITER
The usual Blonde, Chaplain Charlie?

COOLEY
You bet your life.
(to McKenna)

It’s a beer. They brew their own here. You drink beer, Witt?

Mckenna nods enthusiastically, eliciting a grin from Cooley.

MCKENNA
I’ll be bold. The Raspberry Wheat.

The Waiter collects their menus then leaves them.

MCKENNA (CONT’D)
Ever imagine living anyplace else?

COOLEY
Alaska’s it. No matter where in the state I’m in, I’m home. I invited you here because it is important to maintain a productive relationship with the D-A’s. Consider this table a confessional and I’m your priest. Everything said remains right here.

MCKENNA
As long as you’re not working me. What would you like to know, Chuck?

COOLEY
What brings you to our corner of Shangri-la? The quality of life?
(MORE)
COOLEY (CONT’D)
De-stress? Something for your resume or tell your grandchildren?

MCKENNA
Because I graduated in the middle of my class from a second-rate law school and was not besieged with the hot offers. Because I quietly chose loyalty over opportunity. Because no one appreciated me when they had me. Because I’ve spent my entire so-called career trying to make ends meet, sparing no time for a social life. And because I needed a fresh start. You?

COOLEY
I’m born and raised in Juneau, our glorious capital. I graduated from Emory University in Atlanta with a Master of Divinity degree. My plan was to attend seminary in Vienna. And then become a priest preaching against the evils of homosexuality. Which would’ve made me a hypocrite since I am openly bisexual. So, I moved back here to Alaska and found the next best way to serve others.

The Waiter returns with their beers. McKenna raises his:

MCKENNA
(toasts)
To saints with a past and sinners with a future.

Cooley will drink to that. They CLINK mugs.

CUT TO:

14 INT. GLACIER BREWHOUSE – NIGHT

MCKENNA and COOLEY at their table mid-dinner.

COOLEY
Where are you staying?

MCKENNA
Good question. The house I’ve been leasing to establish residency is undergoing renovations for three weeks. I’ll settle for a key in a door with free Wi-Fi and parking.
COOLEY
The night auditor at the Inn down the hill, I have her number. One call gets you fully installed. Free Wi-Fi, full breakfast... Or bunk at my house while you get things sorted. I may need to open a window and clear out that mothball smell.

MCKENNA
You do have lovely manners. Not that I don’t appreciate your offer. I just prefer a place that’s mine.

COOLEY
And a spare bedroom with no charge or check-out time won’t suffice?

MCKENNA
When Barstow had to replace Robert Mara, he chose to draft an outsider than promote from within. Either I walked onto a minefield and you’re softening the blow, or I must have made quite an impression on you.

COOLEY
You’re a smart man, Witt. So you’d know if I was after you. Which I’m not, I assure you. I want us to get off on the right foot. That’s all.

DISSOLVE TO:

15 EXT. EMERALD COVE - MORNING

The dense, white fog envelops the community. An Alaska State Trooper FORD TAURUS INTERCEPTOR emerges from the smothering fog driving past custom homes on the lake. Snow blankets the lush greens of the trees and lawns. The vehicle turns into a driveway. HAWKINS exits the passenger’s side, Trooper SAWYER STODDARD, 26, the driver’s side. They head to the front door.

HAWKINS
How are you enjoying your first year as a ‘blue shirt’, Trooper?

STODDARD
Not as romantic as citing salmon snaggers, but it has its charms.

Hawkins RINGS the DOORBELL. Beat. SIGRUN ARNBJØRG, White, 40, answers the door. It’s too early in the morning for her.
HAWKINS
Good morning, Dr. Arnbjørg. I’m Detective Hawkins. This is Trooper Stoddard. I’d like to ask you some questions about Sharif Sweet.

SIGRUN
It’s so early. Is Sharif okay?

HAWKINS
I’m sorry, ma’am. You haven’t heard?

CUT TO:

INT. SIGRUN ARNBJØRG’S HOUSE - MORNING

HAWKINS and STODDARD sit with SIGRUN in the living room. An elegant view of the lake and private dock in the backyard. A fire burns in the fireplace. Tears stream down Sigrun’s face.

SIGRUN
I heard that army of police and paramedics yesterday but thought it had nothing to do with me. No one knocked on my door. If only I had looked outside. My bedroom window overlooks the lake. I heard what sounded like a gunshot yesterday, but I had taken a sedative and turned my phone off. Still, you’d think I’d know a gunshot by now.

HAWKINS
Let me guess - you hunt.

SIGRUN
Give the man a gold star. I was eleven when I killed my first brownie. I’m from Fort Yukon. My family migrated here from Norway back in the early nineteen-hundreds during the Gold Rush. I come from a family of survivalists. Trappers, hunters... A part of me misses it. I had planned on moving back to open a clinic after medical school.

HAWKINS
What did you in? Brain drain?

SIGRUN
Indoor plumbing. Spoiled me rotten.
HAWKINS
You lived in Emerald Cove long?

SIGRUN
Year and a half. This house was a short sell. Took three months for the bank to tell us the house was ours. No way could we afford this area without the price break. And I’ve been taking work where I can get it since it’s just me now.

HAWKINS
Again, you two had plans yesterday?

SIGRUN
The Gordon Forbes Coin Collection is in town at the museum for two weeks. Prized Greeks and Romans in pristine condition. We were going yesterday but postponed. Marl likes to “big brother” Sharif up, take him to MMA matches before his next assignment sends him away. Anything to get Sharif out the house. Coins became an addiction, which is why his mother never made his visits here easy for him. Sharif stopped playing sports, hanging with his friends... I’m making coffee.

Sigrun rises and heads into the kitchen. She suddenly stops.

SIGRUN (CONT’D)
You’re positive it was the watchman who works evenings who shot Sharif? That doesn’t make sense.

CUT TO:

17  EXT. COOLEY’S HOUSE - MORNING
Modest ranch house. Wondrous, snow-capped mountain views. Large trees. Cooley’s Jeep Cherokee and McKenna’s Chevrolet Tahoe rental in the driveway.

CUT TO:

18  INT. GUEST ROOM - MORNING
More like a storage room for fishing, sporting, and camping equipment.
Sunlight pouring in through the window awakens MCKENNA. He HEARS something outside. A shadowy “something” lurks behind the window’s blinds. He sits up, peeks outside.

MCKENNA’S POV: A MOOSE curiously treading around the house.

MCKENNA
(too early for this)
You’ve got to be kidding me.

CUT TO:

INT. COOLEY’S HOUSE/KITCHEN - MORNING

MCKENNA drifts into the kitchen in a tee-shirt and pajama pants. COOLEY, in his underwear and robe, cooks breakfast.

COOLEY
Good morning, city slicker. Did the peace and quiet keep you awake last night?

MCKENNA
There’s a moose outside your house.

COOLEY
Yeah... I should charge ‘em rent. As long as the trash lids are on tight. They like to sleep by the heating vents. I have a book on moose etiquette you’re welcome to.

MCKENNA
There’s a scary thought: an entire book dedicated to moose etiquette.

COOLEY
Breakfast? Duck eggs and reindeer sausage. The way mom used to make.

MCKENNA
Whose mom? Do you like what you do for a living, Chaplain Charlie? Is it all right if I call you Charles?

COOLEY
After a lifetime of Chuck and Charlie, I welcome it. Do I like providing ministry and perspective to officers twenty-four-seven? Yes.

Cooley transfers everything he was cooking on the stove to plates on the kitchen table. McKenna sits down and digs in.
MCKENNA
(re: breakfast)
This is really good, Charles. So what’s a typical day for you like?

COOLEY
Depends. During ride-alongs or when my officers respond to back-to-back distress calls, I’m their church. Their lifeline to God, hope and healing. It helps knowing how to minister to all walks of life. I can arrive at a scene and become more of a support person for the collars, the victims, or witnesses.

MCKENNA
I can’t help but wonder if the brotherhood of the badge ‘round here is as Kumbaya as they appear, considering how open you are.

COOLEY
My friend, when you’re fresh out of the academy, good and cherry with everything to prove, discretion is the better policy. But to establish trust with my fellow officers and perform my job effectively, I need to be open and honest about myself. I still get misquoted the typical Leviticus catch-phrases. So don’t expect me to run any politically correct victory laps with the good old boys anytime soon.

MCKENNA
Must help to have guys like Hawkins watching your six.

COOLEY
Who needs enemies, right? Hawkins was the worst offender during the rookie hazing. But, as they say, everything’s all good now.

CUT TO:

EXT. COOLEY’S HOUSE - MORNING

COOLEY, in uniform, and MCKENNA, freshly shaved and suited, leave the house and head to their respective vehicles. Cooley’s CELLPHONE BUZZES. A text. He reads its message.
COOLEY
Prelim’s ready, tox is pending.

MCKENNA
That was quick.

COOLEY
We’re not backed up on bodies here. Don’t let ‘em work you too hard.

MCKENNA
Just glad to have a job. The M-E’s report, could you...? I’m still new to these streets. And this air.

McKenna inhales deeply.

COOLEY
I’ll swing by and pick it up, sure.

MCKENNA
I appreciate you. I see your moose has left. What if I see any bears?

COOLEY
Be careful.

MCKENNA
And what if I don’t see any bears?

COOLEY
Be extra careful. The trick is don’t try to outrun them. Just outrun whoever’s ahead of you.

They drive off towards the city, McKenna following Cooley.

CUT TO:

INT. MCKENNA’S OFFICE – MORNING

MCKENNA sits behind his desk frustrated. He is having trouble logging onto his computer.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
It’s password protected.

McKenna looks up to see IRENE DAWSON standing in his doorway. She’s in her early forties and of Iñupiaq descent.

MCKENNA
You must be Irene, the woman whose job I stole. Sorry about that.
IRENE
You’ll get over it. My husband warned me moving up from player to coach would be an uphill do-se-do. That I’m nothing more than the conservative response to diversity.

MCKENNA
What am I, the token liberal?

IRENE
Proof they can play well with others. While we have you here, you can pee in a cup, receive access to the server, e-mail, mobile service, and building entry. More forms to fill out, surprise, and...

Irene sets some files down on his desk.

IRENE (CONT’D)
First responding officer’s report, crime scene report, Detective Hawkins’s D-D-5... Oh, did you hear the watchman’s call to dispatch? AK-49 records all their transmissions.

MCKENNA
I read the transcript on the plane.

IRENE
Listen to the tape. It supports the watchman. He did not profile this kid. Race is used as an identifier.

MCKENNA
Dispatch asks him to describe the trespasser, watchman responds “male usual”. Slang for a black male.

IRENE
The watchman described the kid as a suspicious-looking character.

MCKENNA
I’ve seen cops more suspicious-looking. A mother dresses her boy warmly before sending him outside to play, that makes him suspicious-looking? What if it were a white girl? I arrived at the precinct wearing pretty much the same thing. No one stopped me, asked for my I-D, nothing. The kid broke no laws.
IRENE
Then what does the watchman have against the kid? What’s his motive?

MCKENNA
He shouldn’t have brought the gun with him. The moment he pulled his gun, the kid was at a disadvantage.

IRENE
Bearing arms are a God-given right. If the watchman drew his gun it was for protection. Not show and tell. Let’s show him some consideration.

MCKENNA
Then he should have used the gun to control the situation. Didn’t they teach him that in the military?

IRENE
They taught him to zero and fire.

MCKENNA
But since we’re trying him and not the victim... What this watchman knows about Black people he pulled out of a Woody Allen movie. C’mon, what Black parent hasn’t sat their Black child down and talked to them about getting got in this country? No, not this kid. He just had to be different. Put a gun in his face he charges you “like an animal”. Why is Barstow still dodging my calls?

IRENE
He’ll give you your days back if that’s why you’re looking for him. Didn’t he call you before he took off for the holidays?

MCKENNA
“Get on the first thing smoking and head this thing off at the pass” was the extent of our conversation. He always that generous? Or does he know how he wants this case to end? Because a Black kid was killed?

IRENE
Part of the regime change’s promise to shake things up and street-sweep the system of racism and violence.
MCKENNA
And this is my test case.

IRENE
Only if there’s sufficient evidence
to charge him. With a hate crime.
So? Is there sufficient evidence to
charge Faruq with a hate crime? You
pull it off, Barstow won’t forget.

CUT TO:

INT. MEDICAL EXAMINER’S/HALLWAY – MORNING

Cinder-block walls. Fluorescent lighting. COOLEY walks down
the corridor until he reaches the first open doorway – the
medical examiner’s office.

COOLEY
Hello? Dr. Porter?

No response. Cooley moves further down the corridor until he
reaches the morgue. Inside, Assistant Medical Examiner MAMIE
PORTER, fifties, sits at a computer typing. Cooley KNOCKS on
the window. Mamie stops what she’s doing and crosses to him.

MAMIE
Morning, Chaplain Charlie. You’re a
man on a mission. Who are you fetch
and carrying for today?

COOLEY
New man on the team. Bobby’s fill-
in. Witt. They flew him in last
night and put him on the big one.
That’s why I’m here. Sharif Sweet?

Mamie hands him a manila envelope and a clipboard with a pen
attached to it. Cooley signs the clipboard.

MAMIE
Witt, huh? You two close as Siamese
twins already?

COOLEY
Yeah. I won him in a church raffle.

MAMIE
Sometimes I hate this job. This kid
Sharif... Not even this side of
legal. No stippling or powder burns
found on the body. Had to have been
shot from a minimum of five feet.
COOLEY
You’re sure about that distance?

Mamie shoots him a look. Don’t ever second-guess her.

COOLEY (CONT’D)
Oops, lost my mind for a second.
And how was your vacation?

MAMIE
Depends. Where did the wagging tongues send me this year?

COOLEY
Nudist colony in the Caribbean.

MAMIE
Bless their hearts. Sugar, I was recuperating from surgery.

COOLEY
Surgery? Oh, Miss Mamie. I’m sorry.

MAMIE
Elective surgery. You ever hear of a procedure called vaginoplasty?

Cooley frowns and turns to leave. He’s heard enough.

MAMIE (CONT’D)
Hey, after six kids... I have to keep it fresh for the mister.

COOLEY
Bye Felicia.

MAMIE
Hold on, I got another one heading your direction. The body they pulled out from under the ice...

COOLEY
That’s Fulkerson’s.

MAMIE
Twenty minutes if it’s going with you. Oh, the Sharif kid, I noticed some old bite marks on his forearms and back from a possible run-in with a grizzly.

COOLEY
Fact of life living this far north. I’ll be back in twenty, Miss Mamie.
Mamie returns to the computer resuming her work. Cooley heads back down the hallway. A well-dressed Black man comes through the double-door entrance. MARLON SWEET, 30, military type, looks around, unsure of his surroundings.

MARLON
Excuse me. I, uh...

COOLEY
Yes, can I help you, sir?

MARLON
I’m here to see my brother. He was shot yesterday. My brother’s dead. Wow. First time I said it out loud.

COOLEY
I’m sorry to hear that. Is he...?

MARLON
Here? I assume he’s here. I’d like to see him if I can.

COOLEY
Visitation isn’t allowed here once a body’s under jurisdiction of the medical examiner, sir. You can make arrangements with your funeral home once he’s transferred. Have we met?

MARLON
I’d remember. I’m Marlon. I just flew in. I was supposed to arrive yesterday. I got delayed by work...

COOLEY
Sharif Sweet’s your brother.

Marlon nods somberly.

COOLEY (CONT’D)
I am so sorry for your loss. I’m Charles Cooley. Police chaplain.

CUT TO:

INT. MEDICAL EXAMINER’S – MORNING

MARLON, still in shock from his loss, watches COOLEY feed the VENDING MACHINE change and buy himself a GRANOLA BAR.

MARLON
Do I call you Reverend? Sergeant?
COOLEY
Chaplain’s good, ‘til I retake the
sergeant’s exam. Chaplain Charlie
to most. You’re flying in from...?

MARLON
Jordan. I’m a security consultant.
My take-home’s more than the
President’s. Ain’t that something?
My dad left a message for me with
my interpreter about Sharif. I
caught a military hop to the states
at the very last second. I touched
down at Stevens about an hour ago.

Cooley guides Marlon to a pair of empty seats. They sit.
Cooley offers Marlon some of his granola bar.

MARLON (CONT’D)
No. Thank you, no.

COOLEY
We’ll collect Sharif’s personal
effects once Dr. Porter is ready.

Marlon’s eyes fall on the expensive cross Cooley’s wearing.

MARLON
Nice, around your neck.

COOLEY
Thanks. From an ex-girlfriend.

MARLON
You have an ex-girlfriend?

COOLEY
I have a few. I’m a chaplain, not a
priest. The job has its perks.

MARLON
I heard that. You must have went in
to swing some ice like that.

COOLEY
All I remember was how reluctant
she was to let me keep it after we
parted ways. You drove here?

MARLON
Taxi. My wife still has the car.

COOLEY
That would be Sigrun.
MARLON
She gets around. You’d think she was married to her patients, the amount of time she spent with them. My mom never liked her. Mainly because she’s a decade ahead of me.

COOLEY
Would you like a ride back?

CUT TO:

24 EXT. SWEET HOUSE - MORNING
A modest, two-story, single-family home. Flowers and burning candles left by well-wishers are piled up on the front porch.

CUT TO:

25 INT. SWEET HOUSE/SHARIF’S ROOM - MORNING
Typical boy’s room. A manageable mess. A collection of video games, posters of popular rappers affixed on the walls. COOLEY stands in the center of the room absorbing it all. A DREAM CATCHER hangs over the bed. MARLON is in the doorway.

MARLON
My parents are looking for a coffin to bury my brother in. I offered to spring for the funeral. This all feels too final. Unnatural. My big fear? They’ll leave his room this way. Some sort of morbid shrine.

COOLEY
The dream catcher over the bed...?

MARLON
Bear catcher. Authentic. Picked it up from a Sugpiak native during a fishing trip my dad took us on. It attracts all dreams in its web and filters the good ones out from the bad ones. The bear totem inside... Sharif had a close encounter with a black bear in the backyard when he was little. He had serious night terrors whenever he tried to sleep. I thought it would help him.

(beat)
He’s gonna get off. Isn’t he? The lowlife who killed my brother.
COOLEY
You should discuss that with the prosecutor. I do have his number...

MARLON
You of all people won’t be straight with me? Damn. Did this guy walk a beat, wear a badge? If you’re here to dig up dirt on my brother... Blaming the victim is what bigots do. How cops cover for each other.

COOLEY
I can understand your frustration, and the police are very concerned about racial violence in this city.

MARLON
Man, please. You sound retarded. The murders of unarmed brothers has gotten so commonplace it doesn’t even qualify as news. You don’t know how it feels to step outside when men with guns have declared war on your race. You don’t get what’s at stake when or if it reaches a courtroom. A jury knows. They’ll not only acquit that killer, they’ll spit in our face and name a shopping mall after him.

COOLEY
The shooting was not intentional.

MARLON
An unarmed watchman conveniently brings a gun to work? Let me flip burgers and bring a piece to work, see how fast I’m pink-slipped.

COOLEY
I spoke to the watchman. And he has expressed genuine remorse for...

MARLON
I’m not trying to hear that, man. Two things I know about this watchman: One, he killed my brother. And two, he’s still breathing. The door’s been opened, Chaplain. This thing here is gonna get dirtier than an alley fight. Believe that.

CUT TO:
HAWKINS re-walks the snow-covered crime scene, from the street to Diamond Lake down past Sigrun’s house, whilst talking to the uniformed SUPERVISOR from AK-49 Security.

SUPERVISOR
Residents get nervous if they see just anyone wandering around. As much as they pay to live here? The developers hired us to maintain a twenty-four-seven, three-sixty-five watch. We post one guard during the winter, two during break-up season.

Hawkins looks up and notices several telephone poles with security cameras installed.

HAWKINS
Those up there working?

SUPERVISOR
The security cameras? Installed on the cheap, just for show. Not ours. Helps the residents feel secure.

HAWKINS
God forbid my job should be any easier. How long’s Faruq been on your payroll?

SUPERVISOR
Half a year. He’s one of my best.

HAWKINS
Yeah? No complaints?

SUPERVISOR
No red flags raised. Attentive, alert, keeps detailed logs...

HAWKINS
I’d like to see yesterday’s logs.

SUPERVISOR
In the guardhouse at the gate. Last night’s are incomplete because of the... You know. Oh, the watchmen he relieves love him. Always half an hour early before shift change. Ready to fill in when needed...

HAWKINS
He’s worked other posts?
SUPERVISOR
When we started him he requested mornings. His father’s in a nursing home. We rotated him around a lot. Best we could do since everybody wants to work bankers’ hours. The outdoor evening rotations are where the steady shifts are at. When he heard there was an opening here at the Cove, he lobbied hard for it.

CUT TO:

27  INT. MCKENNA’S OFFICE – AFTERNOON

MCKENNA is busy on his computer when COOLEY strolls in and drops the medical report on McKenna’s desk.

MCKENNA
You take the scenic route?

Cooley shoots him a look.

COOLEY
Buy me lunch and I’ll give you the rundown on my morning so far.

MCKENNA
Buy you lunch just to hear about your morning? You’re no cheap date. Certain special interest groups are making waves. I’ve only had e-mail access here a few hours and I’m flooded with messages subject-lined “Hate Crime” or “Racially Motivated”. Where are we eating?

COOLEY
You like sushi?

MCKENNA
Not this early in the day. But a little brain food wouldn’t hurt.

CUT TO:

28  INT. SANDWICH DELI – AFTERNOON

COOLEY and MCKENNA at the deli counter ordering lunch.

MCKENNA
Tuna on white, mayo, the works.
Cooley composes a message on his phone. Without looking up:

COOLEY
Turkey and Swiss, mustard, lettuce, cucumbers, olives, tomatoes, extra onions, no oil, wrap it in a pita.

MCKENNA
Are you posting your lunch online?

COOLEY
Giving Hawkins our twenty.

CUT TO:

INT. PRECINCT CORRIDOR - MORNING

HAWKINS, inside from the cold, is peeling out of his overcoat and returning to the detectives’ den when...

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
Dad!

A tomboyish, streetwise-clad female crosses to Hawkins. She is LOTUS, Hawkins’s daughter, 14, biracial, her closely-cropped hair revealed when she removes her skull cap.

HAWKINS
Look who came to visit her old man out of the goodness of her heart. On payday. How did you get here?

LOTUS
People Mover. I need some money.

HAWKINS
Noticed I stopped asking “what for”? Shouldn’t you be in school?

LOTUS
Half day. Off for Christmas break.

HAWKINS
Ah. Did you know Sharif Sweet?

LOTUS
Because “we” all know each other? We were online friends, exchanged ‘Happy Birthdays’. That’s about it. I attend East High, he attends - attended West. That guy who shot him was the buzz on campus today. He used to teach at our school.
Hawkins pulls out his wallet and slips her some money.

LOTUS (CONT’D)
This what you pay your C.I.’s?

HAWKINS
Seriously? Navid Faruq taught at your school? Was he your teacher?

Hawkins’s cellphone BEEPS. It’s a text message from Cooley.

LOTUS
Before my time. Some senior chicks I roll with had him. Said he’s one of those walk-on-water teachers. You had a problem he’d work you ’til you had it down. Organized for special causes like AIDs Walks, clothing drives for the homeless... He was forced out because parents had beef with him. Guess why?

CUT TO:

30 INT. SANDWICH DELI - AFTERNOON

COOLEY and MCKENNA eating lunch.

MCKENNA
How reliable’s your ballistics guy?

COOLEY
Blake Anderson? The guy’s sharper than a Swiss Army knife. You definitely want him on your side.

MCKENNA
I’m meeting with him later. If his conclusions are anything like your medical examiner’s, then this case is a slam dunk.

HAWKINS breezes into the deli. He orders from across the room:

HAWKINS
Chef salad to go! Thousand Island!

He plops himself down in an empty chair at their table.

HAWKINS (CONT’D)
I have good news and I have bad news. Which would you like first?
MCKENNA  
Bad news. And pass the lube while you’re at it. No offense, Charles.

HAWKINS  
Sharif Sweet had a best friend.

MCKENNA  
God, my skin’s already crawling.

HAWKINS  
A classmate. Theodus Wiggins. He’s sixteen. Black. And... Two years ago, Wiggins and his buddies were busted for putting on dog fights.

MCKENNA  
Jesus Christ! Again, no offense, Charles.

COOLEY  
Yeah, yeah, you can do penance. Sharif was into dogfighting?

HAWKINS  
Sharif had zero to do with man’s best friends ripping each other apart. He’s never attended any dog fights, refused to take part in it, never even had a dog as a pet.

COOLEY  
Okay... I get what you’re saying. I just don’t get what you’re saying.

MCKENNA  
The problem, my friend, is guilt by association. We present Sharif in his pearly whites and Sunday best, the other side will impeach him by associating him with a street thug responsible for the sudden Fido shortage. It’s never about what it is. It’s about what it looks like. And in this country it’s easier for people to sympathize with an abused animal than with a dead Black kid.

HAWKINS  
Explains why Michael Vick did more time than George Zimmerman.

A DELI CLERK delivers Hawkins’s order. Hawkins pays him.
MCKENNA
What’s your source, Detective? I still have to vet every detail.

HAWKINS
Lotus, my daughter. Sharif Sweet friended her on a social network. It’s all public knowledge. If you can keep her out of it, please?

COOLEY
Excuse me, what’s the good news?

HAWKINS
Thought you’d never ask. I paid a visit to the sister-in-law’s this morning. The one our vic’s been a little too chummy with. She sang, man. Gave us enough rope to hang Navid Faruq for Murder. One.

CUT TO:

31 INT. DISTRICT ATTORNEY’S/CONFERENCE ROOM - MORNING

MCKENNA enters with an armful of files and notes. NAVID is already seated at the conference table. With him is lawyer PETER DEVLIN, silver-haired, sixties, expensively dressed.

MCKENNA
Thank you both for coming in this morning. Shall I send for coffee?

DEVLIN
We’re fine, Mr. McKenna. Welcome to the Municipality of Anchorage. Our condolences to the boy’s family.

McKenna sits and evenly spreads his notes out on the table.

MCKENNA
You’re Faruq’s Attorney of Record?

DEVLIN
Peter Devlin. And you’re the new Robert Mara. A throne many of us presumed your Bureau Director Irene Dawson would ascend to. Sure didn’t see you coming.

MCKENNA
Then clearly you haven’t seen my conviction record. I’d like to...
DEVLIN
You are licensed in Alaska?

MCKENNA
I wouldn’t be here without going through all the proper channels and being thoroughly vetted to the letter. Or do you also need to see my long-form birth certificate?

DEVLIN
Just getting up to speed, counselor. Let’s keep it civil.

MCKENNA
(flips through his notes)
Mr. Faruq, you’ve described, in as much detail as you could recall, the events which occurred on the afternoon in question to Detective Hawkins. I asked you here for a clearer picture of those events. And we will proceed from there. You confessed to utilizing deadly force because Sharif Sweet was about to attack you. What lead up to that? You’re on block patrol, he enters the premises without your go-ahead?

NAVID
That is the nature of trespassing, yes. I saw him and I yelled for him to stop. He was nonresponsive. When I cornered him by the lake, he had a wild look in his eyes. I caught a flash of what I thought was a gun barrel. I had my gun on him. But it did not stop him from coming at me. I shot him. I thought he was going to kill me. I’m sorry I did it but I’d do it again if I had to.

MCKENNA
You’re holding a gun on an “armed” kid, yet he lunges himself at you. Some set of stones on this child.

DEVLIN
Spare us the rhetoric and address my client with questions, please.

MCKENNA
Mr. Faruq, you were close enough to see the trespasser’s face, right?
NAVID
It was already dark out. And, well, I don’t know how else to say it, he was dark. And wearing a hoodie. It was hard to see his face.

MCKENNA
But you saw that look in his eyes. Prior to AK-49 Security, you spent eight years in the military, thank you for your service. After your discharge you taught high school.

NAVID
Nearly two years. Until parents of the students petitioned to have me removed. A terrorist teaching their children American History is a slap in “their” face. I am an American.

DEVLIN
There is a wrongful termination lawsuit that’s currently pending.

MCKENNA
As a result you’re working below your qualifications, and potential employers do not respond favorably to the name ‘Navid Faruq’ on resumes. Your current employer thinks highly of you. Which is why you were assigned to Emerald Cove. You said you know who lives where?

NAVID
I have a working knowledge, yeah.

McKenna pulls out an affidavit and slides it across the table to Devlin. Devlin looks it over.

MCKENNA
A sworn affidavit from Emerald Cove resident Sigrun Arnbjørg. She has witnessed your client on numerous occasions engage in conversation and allow Sharif Sweet onto the premises whenever he visited her.

DEVLIN
I certainly hope this is not the hand you’re betting on, counselor.

There’s a quick RAP on the door. HAWKINS has arrived. McKenna gestures for him to come in and take a seat.
DEVLIN (CONT’D)
And who’s this?

MCKENNA
Detective Orenthal Hawkins, the lead investigator. He asked to sit in. Please continue, Mr. Faruq.

NAVID
As I said, I only know those people who live there by faces. Not names.

MCKENNA
But he couldn’t have been more than a few feet away from you. Correct?

NAVID
A few feet, yeah. But his face, I couldn’t really...

DEVLIN
My client has stated he could not see his attacker’s face because it was dark, as was his attacker. If you don’t believe him, then let’s turn off the lights and see how well you recognize your affirmative action colleague here in the dark.

HAWKINS
Who the hell...? You must be the barrack-room lawyer.

MCKENNA
Detective Hawkins, this is Mr. Faruq’s lawyer, Peter Devlin.

HAWKINS
Peter Devlin? You’re Peter Devlin? Never had the pleasure.
(to Navid)
Scraping the bottom of the barrel? If this man can get you off, he’s worth every cent you’re throwing at him. But keep in mind he will never board the same flight as you.

NAVID
I did not want to come here without the benefit of an attorney. You did indicate I was entitled to one.

HAWKINS
So you called him?
DEVLIN
I’m representing him pro bono.

HAWKINS
I bet. You representing a rag-head? You want this to go to trial.

DEVLIN
Unless the rules have changed since I sat on that side of the table, evidence is still a requirement to arrest someone for a crime.

McKenna slides another file across the table to Devlin.

MCKENNA
The ballistics report.

CUT TO:

32  INT. BALLISTICS LAB - AFTERNOON

Ballistics expert BLAKE ANDERSON, fifties, leads MCKENNA into an insulated firing range where two demonstration dummies are positioned facing each other. One dummy holds a gun.

ANDERSON
You’ll find plenty to do during your downtime here. You like the outdoors?

MCKENNA
I’m developing a taste for it. Tell me about yourself, Mr. Anderson.

ANDERSON
I’m a retired forensics specialist with the FBI. I analyze evidence involving firearms and ammunition to ascertain trajectory. And match projectiles to the make and model of the weapon it was fired from.

MCKENNA
And what’s all this?

ANDERSON
A demonstration I set up for you, based on the approximate distance described by the shooter, between himself and the gunshot victim, using an exact replica of the firearm. Step inside the booth.
McKenna enters the observation booth. Anderson dons a pair of headphones. He grabs the handle of a cord attached to the trigger of the gun held by a dummy dressed in a mock security jacket. The gun is aimed at the dummy positioned a few feet away. Anderson, from a safe distance, pulls the handle triggering the gun - BANG! Fake blood explodes from within the target dummy splattering the ‘security’ dummy.

CUT TO:

INT. DISTRICT ATTORNEY’S/CONFERENCE ROOM - MORNING

RESUME w/ MCKENNA, HAWKINS, NAVID, and DEVLIN.

MCKENNA
Based on trajectory, the gunshot that killed Sharif Sweet was fired from a distance of thirty feet. Any closer, his blood would have hosed your client. Your client shot that boy from a distance, Mr. Devlin.

DEVLIN
These results are enough to lock and load, but not enough to charge the fort. This goes to court, I’ll publicly embarrass you, counselor.

HAWKINS
(to Navid)
Lying will only dig you a deeper hole. Your lawyer’s not God. You will not walk. You’re going in, my man. Think the world’s cold now?

DEVLIN
I’m advising my client to keep his mouth shut.

HAWKINS
I’m onto you, Navid. I know your dirty secret. You did something few men get to do in this world. S’why you feel guilty about what you did. You liked it. Hell, you loved it. Greatest adrenaline rush a man can experience. Did your tits get hard after you squeezed the trigger?

DEVLIN
That’s enough, you. If you had all your ducks in a row you’d save your breath and charge my client.
MCKENNA
Convince me why he should not be charged, Mr. Devlin. And we’ll all go home.

DEVLIN
For shits and giggles, let’s say my client pleads guilty to misdemeanor reckless endangerment. No jail time and no felony charge on his record?

MCKENNA
Your client pleading guilty to a hate crime has a nicer ring to it.

NAVID
That’s a felony. I’m not a racist.

DEVLIN
We came as a courtesy to convince you to drop this ridiculous charge, and you try to ‘Al Sharpton’ us?

MCKENNA
(to Navid)
You want to take your chances with a jury trying to guess what was in your heart? Or can you live with yourself for taking a plea? I am a very good litigator, Mr. Faruq.

DEVLIN
My client stood his ground.

HAWKINS
You’re invoking ‘Line in the Sand’?

MCKENNA
Is that even policy in this state?

HAWKINS
As of a year ago. “There is no duty to retreat if one is lawfully present.” How do you wanna proceed?

MCKENNA
Assistant Medical Examiner Mamie Porter rules it a homicide. We’ll proceed to pretrial. Arrest him.

DEVLIN
A man does his job, is he thanked? He’s treated like a criminal. What happened out there is a tragedy. (MORE)
DEVLIN (CONT’D)
You are politicizing this to stake your political claim. Serving up my client as a sacrificial lamb... He shot that kid before the kid shot him. A kid living his kind of life, it was only a matter of time. It’s not like my client shot someone who mattered. This kid was never going to be president, thank God. It’s his legacy to catch a bullet.

MCKENNA
Hawkins, hold up. Mr. Faruq, get your affairs in order, think very hard about your representation and turn yourself in first thing. Or a no-knock warrant will be issued for your arrest. Can I be any clearer?

DEVLIN
I’ll hand-deliver him myself.

Devlin and Navid are on their feet ready to leave.

DEVLIN (CONT’D)
And why hasn’t Barstow shown his face? What could possibly have a higher urgency than an alleged hate crime during an election year?
(re: McKenna)
Instead, he sics his new nigger on me.

HAWKINS
(to McKenna)
He’s trying to knock you off balance, counselor. Don’t play into his offensive sense of theatrics.

DEVLIN
You give Tarantino his ghetto pass but I’m offensive? Can’t have it both ways, Django. I hope both you boys are big enough to apologize once the truth comes out.

Navid is already out the door. Devlin turns to McKenna.

DEVLIN (CONT’D)
A White man holding a smoking gun stands over the corpse of a Black man. For the sake of argument, a non-Black man is holding the gun. What will people assume happened?
Devlin turns and leaves with a smug look on his face.

CUT TO:

INT. DETECTIVES’ DEN - AFTERNOON

HAWKINS at his desk completing paperwork. MCKENNA enters.

MCKENNA
It’s long after sundown and you’re still here because...?

HAWKINS
Top’s lowering the boom on us about having the Fives completed on time. You think people can change, Witt?

MCKENNA
No. But I’ve seen it happen. What’s the skinny on Peter Devlin?

HAWKINS
Hot shot out of Florida lives here half the year. That court whore loves the law so much he comes during verdicts. What you saw was Devlin on a church Sunday. Three White cops pull a Black driver over in Florida ‘cause he “resembled” a suspected felon with outstanding warrants. Driver steps out his car, cops claim he reached under his seat for a weapon, all three empty their clips into him. Turns out the driver was unarmed, just graduated college with honors that morning. Witnesses say the driver stumbled getting out. His arm got caught in the seat-belt. Devlin convinced a white jury the cops were suffering from a mental defect he coined ‘racial paranoia’. Got ‘em all off.

MCKENNA
Jesus. What makes someone dislike an entire race so intensely?

HAWKINS
They only see what they fear. What they fear is loss of control. How deeply into savagery would your people regress if their perch of white privilege was threatened?
MCKENNA
Put a Black man in the White House and let’s find out.

HAWKINS
Can I take you somewhere tonight?

MCKENNA
Wow. Women really are scarce here.

HAWKINS
Don’t even joke like that. Let me take you to Brazil. A workout dojo.

MCKENNA
Brazilian Jujitsu. Charles told me. You train to fight, Detective?

HAWKINS
I train to take the other guy down. My way to thank you for not white-washing this case. I spoke to some cats in Chiraq before you arrived. They say you’re a straight shooter.

MCKENNA
I prefer stickler for thoroughness. Get to know me, you’ll learn I’m heavily invested in all my cases. Chicago’s home to the largest Iraqi-American community in this country. I transferred there a few months before planes flew into the Towers. Did you know the counter-terrorism response to 9/11 encouraged racial profiling? Every other case that landed on my desk involved bogus terrorism threats. Civilians crying wolf on people who were perceived to be, but were not, Arab or Muslim with ties to sleeper cells. My point is when it came to those profiling Iraqis, Blacks were not exempt. I don’t play the race card until I’ve seen the entire deck. You ever had a gun in your face?

HAWKINS
First time? Back in Mobile. I was seven. My mother wanted to call the police. I said to her, “mama, who do you think was holding the gun?”

CUT TO:
An open bay fighters’ gym. COOLEY grabs his sparring partner JASON “OFF-SWITCH” WYLER, sweeps him up off his feet and SLAMS him hard onto the mat. Coaching them is SAMSON, a big, Black, tough-looking fighter in his forties. HAWKINS, STODDARD and other FIGHT-TRAINEES ROOT and observe.

**SAMSON**
Keep your focus on your opponent.
The issue is not about him reaching for your gun. It’s the submission.
You make the gun the issue, it’s “officer down”. If he reaches for it, he deprives himself of a hand.

**COOLEY**
(exhausted)
There’s no way. No way I can...

**SAMSON**
Bullshit! Don’t tell me there’s no way. There’s always a way. You feel it, Chuck? It’s called adrenaline. Use it to your advantage. Take him!

Cooley scrambles on top of the incredibly agile Wyler, trying to submit him. Cooley manages to encircle his arm around Wyler’s neck into a rear naked choke, making it hard for Wyler to breath. Wyler taps out. APPLAUSE for both fighters.

**SAMSON**
Way to go, guys. Bigger man is only a bigger target. Chance of more snow tonight. Since some of us have to drive home in it, let’s call it a night. Don’t forget Wyler’s headlining the main card on New Year’s Eve. If anyone wants to fight on the undercard, take home some extra cash for the new year, come see me.
Cooley looks up at “Lights Out” promo posters on the wall. He then takes in the other colorful promo posters of past fights decorating the walls. He stops when he recognizes one of the fighters prominently featured on a poster: It’s MARLON “Marlboro Man” SWEET in fight stance opposite his OPPONENT.

COOLEY
I knew he looked familiar. Samson, Marlon Sweet trained here?

SAMSON
Years ago. Taught him everything he knows. After he enlisted he fought on the amateur circuit. Brought his little brother Sharif to all his fights. In fact, Marl called me and said he was bringing Sharif to the exhibition match we staged the same night he got shot. Damn shame what happened to the kid. Damn shame. I should show my face at the funeral.

WYLER
You think they’ll strap the guy who killed his brother to the injection machine, send him straight to hell?

CARTER
For a Black kid? No wonder they call you Off-Switch, Wyler.

WYLER
Hey, don’t make me come over there and pull your off-switch, Carter.

HAWKINS
How was Sweet as a fighter?

STODDARD
No way you’d forget him. Not “The Marlboro Man”. No siree. He had a ground-n-pound that made men shit themselves. Shame he didn’t go pro.

SAMSON
He was stationed at Elmendorf-Richardson with the 71st when he got discharged. Last I heard he was having a hard time readjusting to civilian life.

COOLEY
I met him. He had that glassy-eyed look on his face. Guy’s textbook.
HAWKINS
It’s a mad long waiting list for vets who need help. You sacrifice your home and family to serve your country. Because you’re bound by a code. Come home and life’s moved on without you. You can never get back that time spent in the field.

CUT TO:

37 INT. BODY FIGHT ACADEMY/OFFICE – NIGHT

COOLEY, SAMSON, STODDARD, WYLER and HAWKINS are gathered around a TELEVISION watching video footage of an MMA fight.

ON THE MONITOR: A younger, faster MARLON SWEET brutally dominating his OPPONENT in the ring with a lightning-fast series of blows, one after another until the REFEREE ends it.

STODDARD
And that’s why he’s “The Malboro Man”. Once he taps that sweet spot, he will smoke your ass.

CUT TO:

38 EXT. DRY CLEANERS – NIGHT

It’s lightly snowing. COOLEY exits with a clean police uniform wrapped in plastic flung over his shoulder. He gets into his JEEP CHEROKEE and merges back into traffic.

CUT TO:

39 INT. COOLEY’S HOUSE/HIS BEDROOM – MORNING

The police uniform hangs on the back of the door. The door swings open – COOLEY enters dripping wet, wrapped in a towel.

His morning routine begins: trousers pulled up over a toned pair of hips; police-issue shirt buttoned up over regulation cold-weather undershirt; heavy black shoes with thick soles laced up; and a Glock-21 slipped snugly inside its holster.

As Cooley combs his hair...

A KNOCK ON HIS DOOR.

MCKENNA appears with coffee in hand. He’s nearly dressed aside from the necktie hanging freely around his neck.
MCKENNA
Morning. Cup of Joe?

COOLEY
(takes it, sets it down)
Thanks. Hey... You got something against the way I make the coffee?

MCKENNA
Only returning the favor. But since you brought it up...

CUT TO:

INT. COOLEY’S HOUSE - MORNING

COOLEY and MCKENNA enter the den and finish dressing by preparing for the cold weather outside.

COOLEY
I thought we were watching Conan last night. You were pretty unconscious when I got home.

MCKENNA
Blame those Venison Sloppy Joe’s waiting for us in the kitchen when I got in yesterday. “Love, Audrey”? You holding out on me, Charles?

COOLEY
My sister. Being on call twenty-four-seven leaves me little time to play house. She keeps me stocked up on groceries. Have a look. There’s red salmon, Caribou meat, homemade ice cream - our mom’s recipe...

MCKENNA
Well, your sister is one mighty fine cook.

COOLEY
She better be. She owns a food truck.

MCKENNA
What kind of calls you guys get when you’re on duty?

COOLEY
Drugs, drinking, domestics mostly. Disoriented is on the rise.
MCKENNA
Disoriented?

COOLEY
Those who wander off. Alzheimer’s.
You should schedule a ride along.

Cooley’s CELLPHONE RINGS.

    COOLEY (CONT’D)
(answers phone)
Cooley... I’m busy this morning...
What does it matter what I’m busy
doing? I’m reading to the blind.
Just log whatever it is ‘til I get
there... What about him? ...I’m on
my way to his house now. He’s
turning himself in... I’m on it.
    (hangs up, urgent)
Ten-thirteen. Shots fired at Navid
Faruq’s house.

CUT TO:

41    EXT. ZARA FARUQ’S HOUSE – MORNING
Middle Eastern-friendly neighborhood. The ‘Police Chaplain’
CRUISER pulls up in front of the single family home alongside
other State Trooper CRUISERS that are barricading the street.
COOLEY hops out of his vehicle. Alarmed NEIGHBORS curiously
stare. Cooley finds STODDARD among the troopers on duty.

    COOLEY
    Hey, Sawyer. Where’s Faruq?

    STODDARD
    Inside with his mom. Trooper Ross
is with them.

    COOLEY
    Any witnesses to the drive-by?

    STODDARD
    Neighbor across the street. He was
outside having a smoke. His wife
doesn’t allow smoking in the house.
Says it was an SUV at full speed,
either black or midnight blue,
tinted windows, no plate numbers...

    COOLEY
    Where’s the magic of camera phones
when you need ‘em?
STODDARD
Aimed at us. We did recover some
nine-millimeter shells off the
street before the snow swallowed
‘em up.

COOLEY
Leave ‘em with me. I’ll drop ‘em at
the lab for prints. Maybe we’ll hit
pay-dirt, guy’s in the system. I’ll
be inside with the family.

Cooley crosses the slush-covered road to the home’s front
door and RINGS the BELL. Cooley notices the surprising lack
of media present. A very distressed NAVID answers the door.

NAVID
You see what’s happening to me?
Everyday I’m crucified in public,
threatened over the phone...

Cooley enters the house.

CUT TO:

INT. ZARA FARUQ’S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

COOLEY moves past NAVID. The atmosphere inside is relatively
calm compared to the chaos outside. State Trooper ROSS stands
guard in the living room with a shaken ZARA FARUQ, sixties.

ROSS
Chaplain Charlie.

COOLEY
Trooper Ross. Mrs. Faruq... Zara,
are you all right?

MRS. FARUQ
Of course I’m not all right. I was
almost shot. What do you suggest we
do the next time someone attacks
us, Chaplain? Turn the other cheek?

NAVID
See what’s happened? People are
shooting at my home. My mother
could have been killed. It will
only get worse if I go to court. I
didn’t think it would go this far.
I should speak out, on my family’s
behalf. I need to go to the press.
COOLEY
To the press? Look, I am sorry about what’s happened. But going to the press right now is not...

NAVID
Hey! We don’t want your sympathy. We want some respect. We are real Americans. We’re entitled to it. So just do your job and protect us.

COOLEY
(snaps back)
Excuse me, but does it look like I’m kicking back with my feet up?

Cooley catches himself.

MRS. FARUQ
Navid, tell him about the reporters who keep calling. He promised our names would be kept out of the press. They just want to make us look like barbarians.

COOLEY
My source at the news assures me whatever’s been leaked to the press is not coming from anyone in blue. A case like this, expect leaks.
(to Navid)
Let’s go into the kitchen and talk.

NAVID
Mother, we’ll be in the kitchen “connecting on a human level.”

Cooley ushers Navid into...

CUT TO:

INT. ZARA FARUQ’S HOUSE/KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

NAVID and COOLEY enter and sit at the kitchen table.

COOLEY
Presumed guilty, people turn on you quickly. I don’t think your lawyer would go for a press conference.

NAVID
I have to make a statement. I have to explain my side.
COOLEY
And what if it backfires?

Navid is hesitant to respond.

COOLEY (CONT’D)
Just two guys talking.

NAVID
Except one of us is in cop mode.

COOLEY
It’s an ongoing investigation, so technically nothing’s privileged.

NAVID
I wronged that family. Their child is gone before his time because of me. I did a terrible thing to them.

COOLEY
Is the guilt weighing you down?

NAVID
No. I’m sorry everyday I’m alive. But I reacted in self-defense. The world should know the truth.

COOLEY
Were your shots fired with hatred?

NAVID
I didn’t shoot that kid because he was Black. I was protecting myself. How often have you pulled your gun, someone reaches under their jacket?

COOLEY
God didn’t deliver the outcome you expected. So your pride took a hit.

NAVID
You think it was God’s plan for me to take that boy’s life?

COOLEY
Who on this Earth’s privy to God’s plans? Pride is a sin. Maybe the take-away from all of this is...

ROSS (O.S.)
Chaplain!

TROOPER ROSS comes in interrupting them.
ROSS (CONT’D)
Sorry, Chaplain Charlie. There’s a real douche of a lawyer outside demanding to see Mr. Faruq. You want me to shoot him?

COOLEY
Not funny, Ross. But if he makes an improper suggestion... Let him know we’re coming out.

CUT TO:

INT. ZARA FARUQ’S HOUSE - MORNING
On their way out, COOLEY, NAVID and ROSS pass the living room where ZARA FARUQ waits.

COOLEY
Navid, you got someplace safe your mother can stay?

NAVID
She can stay at my girlfriend’s. Mother, go and pack some clothes.

MRS. FARUQ
This is my home. I’m staying right here.

COOLEY
Zara, if you choose to stay, then I suggest avoiding the windows and the side of the house facing the street. If it’ll help I’ll have a car posted outside. Will that help?

NAVID
The police hate us. We were victims of hate crimes after 9/11. We had to hound them to take our reports. Now you expect them to protect us?

COOLEY
Yes. I do.

CUT TO:

INT. JAIL BOOKING AREA - MORNING
MCKENNA and HAWKINS are present as COOLEY escorts NAVID to the booking counter. DEVLIN trails them.
MCKENNA
(to Hawkins)
The sooner he’s processed and
arraigned, the sooner I’m on a
plane back home for the holidays.

Navid removes his personal effects and places them in a box
for the police to inventory and store.

HAWKINS
Navid Faruq, you have the right to
remain silent. Anything you say can
and will be used against you in a
court of law. You have the right to
an attorney. If you cannot afford
an attorney one will be provided
for you. Do you understand the
rights I have just read you?

MONTAGE: Navid is searched, photographed, and fingerprinted.

CUT TO:

INT. ARRAIGNMENT COURT - AFTERNOON

MCKENNA, DEVLIN with NAVID stand before JUDGE TILLMAN. Among
those seated in the gallery we find MARLON seated a few rows
behind COOLEY and HAWKINS. Navid catches a glimpse of Marlon
over his shoulder. Navid feels overwhelmed by guilt.

DEVLIN
Released under own recognizance,
your Honor.

MCKENNA
Judge Tillman, Navid Faruq’s being
charged with a hate crime. And from
what I understand this time of year
is considered fugitive season. That
makes him a flight risk. Remand.

NAVID
(low, to himself)
I did it. I’m guilty.

DEVLIN
(through clenched teeth)
Stop your whimpering and let me
handle this.

TILLMAN
Does your client wish to change his
plea, counselor?
NAVID
Yes, I do, Your Honor. I’m guilty.

DEVLIN
No, he does not. Your Honor, there has been an attempt on my client’s life. Understandably, he’s overwrought. He’ll stick to his plea of not guilty.

TILLMAN
The court accepts the defendant’s plea of not guilty. Mr. McKenna, you get your wish: remand. And welcome aboard.

MCKENNA
Thank you, your Honor.

CUT TO:

INT. COURTHOUSE CORRIDOR – AFTERNOON

COOLEY and HAWKINS wait outside of the courtroom as some of the participants and visitors file out.

HAWKINS
Did you put a man on the street?

COOLEY
Tried to. “Not in the budget”. Any idea who we’re shielding ‘em from?

HAWKINS
Emotional low achievers with an axe to grind against Mr. Itchy Trigger Finger. People handle grief in different ways. Some fools handle it the ignorant, open-carry way.

COOLEY
Bad news doesn’t travel fast enough from here. Where are the headlines, the news trucks camped outside? The media’s had more than a whiff.

HAWKINS
With the players involved? “Navid shoots Sharif” doesn’t sell, man. Neither will the parents of a dead Black child on the 6 O’clock news.

MCKENNA comes out of the courtroom.
HAWKINS (CONT’D)
Marlon Sweet was just here. He had to take off. The memorial’s today.

MCKENNA
Charles, I hate to ask...

COOLEY
No you don’t. But ask me anyway.

MCKENNA
A ride to Anchorage Correctional where Faruq is about to become a guest.

COOLEY
I still have that incident report to write up.
   (to Hawkins)
Can you take him?

MCKENNA
(to Charles)
Devlin wants to discuss a plea. And he thinks you should be there too.

CUT TO:

INT. ANCHORAGE CORRECTIONAL/VISITORS ROOM - AFTERNOON

COOLEY and MCKENNA sit across from NAVID and DEVLIN. Navid sits silently. Angry.

DEVLIN
I appreciate you meeting with us, counselor. I thought we could discuss a mutually agreeable exit strategy without the media circus.

MCKENNA
I’m listening.

DEVLIN
First, I must assert my objection to my client’s “meetings” with him.

Devlin’s eyes venomously lock on Cooley.

COOLEY
On what grounds? I’m only offering spiritual guidance at your client’s request.
DEVLIN
(vehemently)
You believe you can offer spiritual guidance, you Christ-killer? You’re an abomination! Every time you take a cock inside of you you’re killing Christ! Your very presence is an obscenity. It makes me sick to my stomach to sit in the same room as you. I insist on an apology. Now!

COOLEY
(smoothly)
None will be forthcoming. Never to cowards using the bible to justify bigotry. How’s your father, Navid? You get a chance to speak to him?

NAVID
I saw him before I turned myself in. Each time I visit him it’s not a pretty picture.

COOLEY
The nursing home bills must add up. If you’re not guilty, fight this. So you can take care of your dad.

Tears begin to well up in Navid’s eyes.

NAVID
It’s not fair. I risked my life Over There. I fought for this country. My country. In the Army I was an asset. Decorated more than the other soldiers in my unit. I come home to look after my family and we’re treated like terrorists.

DEVLIN
You call yourself a chaplain, your filthy anal disease, you fag fuck? “If a man lies down with man as he lies down with a woman, he shall surely be condemned to death.”

COOLEY
Jesus Christ is my savior. He gives me the strength to live my life with grace and integrity. Therefore I do not accept your condemnation.

(back to Navid)
Navid, this isn’t going to work unless you’re honest with me.

(MORE)
COOLEY (CONT'D)
(Navid looks down)
Look at me. Was it your intention to kill Sharif Sweet?

NAVID
Do you have any idea what you’re asking me?

COOLEY
Who got to you, Navid? First it was a statement to the press. Then it’s pleading guilty during arraignment. Is someone pushing you to take the fall for Sharif Sweet’s murder?

Cooley reaches into his back pocket, pulls out a small bible and slams it down in front of Navid on the table.

COOLEY (CONT'D)
Swear on it! If you didn’t mean to kill Sharif Sweet, then swear it.

NAVID
The bible’s nothing to play with.

COOLEY
Does it look like I’m playing? Put your hand on it and swear to me.

DEVLIN
Using the bible against him? That’s coercion. Any statements he makes I’ll get this entire case tossed.

MCKENNA
(warns him)
Chaplain Cooley...

COOLEY
(to Devlin)
Let me shut you down right now. Do not quote Leviticus to me if you do not enforce punishment for pork, shellfish, blasphemy, trespassing, shaving, disability, incest, mixed clothing, and your top two vices: fornication outside of marriage and prostitution. Yeah, I’m aware of your frequent visits to Thailand, your taste for jailbait hookers. It’s called sexual tourism. And it’s federal. Come for me again, one phone call, I will send you to places Jesus wouldn’t dare go.
Devlin cowers back in his seat defeated. Cooley turns back to Navid.

COOLEY (CONT’D)
The drive-by on your house... Was that a warning? Do you know who’s responsible? Are you being coerced?

MCKENNA
We can protect you, Navid.

Navid wants to laugh. Devlin is completely in the dark.

DEVLIN
Navid, is there something you and I need to discuss? Privately?

NAVID
Yeah. How much time would I do if I plead guilty?

DEVLIN
Not another word. Interview’s over.

NAVID
(snaps, explodes)
I shot him! Okay? I meant to shoot the nigger! Is that what you want to hear? I’ll do time for the hate crime. I don’t care. Do whatever is necessary. I want this to be over.

MCKENNA
Twenty to life.

DEVLIN
Out of the question. No way.

NAVID
Yes, I’ll do the twenty to life. Let’s just get this over with.

MCKENNA
You’ll have to allocute to Sharif Sweet’s murder in open court.

DEVLIN
No deal. I said no deal. Not until after we’ve ordered a seven-thirty exam. I’m not sure what the hell just happened here, but this is some bullshit.

Navid passes the pocket bible back to Cooley.
COOLEY
You keep it, Navid. It could save your life.

(beat)
Wear it in your shirt pocket. Stop a shiv from puncturing your heart.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE CHAPLAIN CRUISER (MOVING) - AFTERNOON

COOLEY driving, HAWKINS shotgun, and MCKENNA in the back.

HAWKINS
You’d definitely have to be crazy to go from ‘stand your ground’ to ‘It’s nigger season’. Just goes to show, you can never tell about people. Faruq wants to plead to a hate crime, he should do the max. You should’ve accepted his plea.

MCKENNA
And ignore the fact that Devlin is possibly laying the groundwork for a mistrial? You really want to put that past him?

HAWKINS
Devlin knows he’ll get Navid off. It will be an all-white jury, this is Alaska, and he will hammer every possible Black stereotype into the jury’s heads until he strikes gold.

COOLEY
Devlin seemed genuinely surprised when Navid changed his tune.

MCKENNA
Which you believe was compromised.

COOLEY
I’d like to think if he pleads guilty it’s because he is guilty. Not because he was forced.

HAWKINS
Why force him? The evidence proves beyond a reasonable doubt Navid did kill Sharif Sweet. Who profits from Navid going on the record with a guilty plea? It makes no sense.
COOLEY
Rennie, you’re making our usual stop, right? Because I’m-a jonesin’ for some Strawberry Rhubarb.

HAWKINS
Simpatico, bro. Ask if the Chocolate Banana’s ready-made.

CUT TO:

50 EXT. PEGGY’S RESTAURANT - AFTERNOON

Classic Alaskan diner. Cooley’s CRUISER pulls into the parking lot. COOLEY jumps out of the vehicle and goes inside.

CUT TO:

51 INT. POLICE CHAPLAIN CRUISER - AFTERNOON

HAWKINS and MCKENNA watch COOLEY in the diner ordering pies.

MCKENNA
This place is...?

HAWKINS
A sacred spot between the precinct and the pokey for pancakes or pie.

MCKENNA
I’ll add it to the list then. You live comfortably? No moonlighting?

HAWKINS
I tended bar, square-badged a few times after my daughter was born. That’s it. You agree with Chuckie? You think Faruq was compromised?

MCKENNA
He’s made some valid points. What if Faruq was making an announcement to whoever it is that benefits from his guilty plea? Why else go public with a press conference after there is an attempt on his life at home, or his freedom in the courtroom?

HAWKINS
Maybe he really was overcome by the heat of the moment. Or maybe he was giving someone a show.
MCKENNA
Someone’s following this case very closely, obviously. Someone has eyes on him. During the arraignment did you recognize anyone noteworthy in the courtroom?

HAWKINS
You mean besides Marlon Sweet?

Through the windshield, Cooley gives Hawkins the thumbs up.

CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

FAMILY and FRIENDS attend Sharif’s burial ceremony, braving the cold weather. The BLACK PASTOR renders his final eulogy.

BLACK PASTOR
How long do we weep over our babies because others see their skin color as a thing to fear and destroy, not celebrate and encourage? I am here to tell you that there is power in weeping. Power that can shame a country to change. Make our country pay attention. We do not respond to violence with violence. We protest.

COOLEY and SAMSON are among the mourners. MARLON stands with his PARENTS, holding each one’s hand. Cooley spots an SUV with tinted windows pull up and brake. Whoever is inside is observing them from within the warmth of the vehicle.

Cooley slips away and approaches the vehicle. He taps on the driver’s window. It rolls down revealing LENORE RAINES, 28, pretty, and blonde. There is something familiar about her but Cooley can’t place it yet.

COOLEY
Horrible thing, the loss of a child. Did you know the deceased?

LENORE
(befuddled)
Uh, yeah. Briefly. Chaplain, I’m...

COOLEY
Are you press? Some I.D., please.

Lenore digs into her purse for her wallet.
LENORE
You don’t remember me? I’m the
nurse you spoke to at the hospital.
You were looking for Dr. Arnbjørg?

Cooley recognizes her now.

COOLEY
(off her I.D.)
Ms. Lenore Raines.

LENORE
A lot of people don’t recognize me
out of my uniform. You know what I
mean. Dr. Arnbjørg hasn’t been to
work since you came looking for
her. I thought I’d see her here.

COOLEY
She was close to Sharif. Must be
hard for her. Thank you for taking
time to come and pay your respects.

LENORE
I didn’t think I’d be welcomed at
the funeral. Me or my boyfriend. He
wanted to come too. But being held
without bail prevents it. He turned
himself in to the police recently.

COOLEY
He turned himself in? Is he trying
to put us out of work?

LENORE
I’m talking about Navid Faruq. He’s
my boyfriend. You look cold. Hop in
and warm up. We should talk.

CUT TO:

INT. LENORE’S SUV (PARKED) – AFTERNOON

COOLEY and LENORE observe the burial from inside.

LENORE
Just when I had given up on men,
Navid walks into my life. We met at
the job. He was a teacher then, had
his own home. When he lost his job
he moved back home with his mother.
We’re saving up for a house
together. We’re getting married.
COOLEY
Congratulations. Now, do you want to gossip or talk turkey?

LENORE
You’re a police officer. I need your help.

COOLEY
I’m low on the food chain, Lenore. What do you expect me to do?

LENORE
You have no idea what it’s like to love a man who’s seen combat. It’s like he’s never out of it. The way he gets stressed out. Two tours from the bush to the sand and back home both times. Sometimes I wish Navid would see a doctor, or talk to someone.

COOLEY
I can’t open him up more than he’ll allow himself. He’s careful what he says to me. No expectation of confidentiality makes it harder for me to pull him in. He never opened up to Dr. Arnbjørg during their sessions? Or am I wrong assuming he was her patient? You did say you met him at your job.

LENORE
If he was a patient of hers, it is confidential. And we met at my former job. At the nursing home. His dad has a very aggressive form of M.S. Navid and Zara admitted him the day we met.

COOLEY
I’m not sure what it is you want me to do, Lenore. I can’t solve cases in one episode. I’m just a grunt.

LENORE
I need to know if depression runs deep in that family? Find out how Navid’s brother died. Really died.

COOLEY
Navid’s brother? What does he have to do with any of this?
LENORE
I arranged for Dr. Arnbjørg to meet with Samir, Navid’s brother, at the coffee shop across the street from the hospital. I wasn’t there, so I can’t say with certainty what happened. Except that Samir had a massive heart attack and died ten minutes later after talking to her.

COOLEY
A heart attack? Sounds like you may have answered your own question.

LENORE
I was told he had a heart attack. Every time Samir’s name comes up, Navid and Zara change the subject. Zara’s hard-core about suicide and being buried in consecrated ground.

COOLEY
Why do you think he’s suicidal?

LENORE
Look at Samir’s “before” pictures. Then tell me if he looks like a man who would one day shrivel to the size of a skeleton afraid of his own shadow. Samir was the man women would sacrifice their firstborn to marry. He would tack an extra mile on to his morning runs. The day I met him, Samir was afraid to leave his own house. Navid said he was living with depression.

COOLEY
You don’t believe Samir had a heart attack because he was suicidal? Is it that important for you to know?

LENORE
To know if depression runs deep in the family? It is very important to me. Navid won’t talk to me, but his lawyer keeps me up. Navid’s going to be examined by a court-appointed shrink. If two tours, his brother’s death and depression triggered some sort of P-T-S-D, won’t it save Navid from doing hard time?
Your concern for Navid indicates his working at Emerald Cove was not in his best interest. Especially if he’s undergoing post-combat stress.

You know the Board of Ed offered to reinstate Navid if he dropped the lawsuit? But he turned it down. It would have meant more money. But can you blame him if he’s gun shy?

CUT TO:

COOLEY

COOLEY is about to enter his home when the front door swings open. McKENNA comes out hauling his luggage to his car.

MCKENNA

There you are. Come to see me off?

COOLEY

What? You’re leaving already?

MCKENNA

Isn’t that how it’s done? You get off work early you go home? I still have an entire condo to ship here.

Cooley is disappointed. Or hurt. He relieves McKenna of one of his bags and helps ferry it to the car.

COOLEY

You didn’t say anything last night.

MCKENNA

I had planned to stay another day and indulge in the fine Japanese Tourist tradition of “capturing the moment.” This morning I woke up, changed my mind and my flight.

COOLEY

When will you be back?

McKenna climbs into the driver’s seat.

MCKENNA

Dry your eyes, darling. I’ll be back my original start date in the spring. A week before court prep.
COOLEY
Invest in blackout curtains. They will come in handy. Unless you like your nights bright and shiny.

MCKENNA
I’ll do that. The stress of moving. It goes without saying how much I appreciate what you’ve done for me here. I’ll say it anyway ‘cause you like hearing it. Thanks, Charles. For being the brother I never had. Promise you won’t shake things up while I’m gone?

COOLEY
I’ll try not to step on any toes.

MCKENNA
I don’t believe you. You know why?

COOLEY
Because I’m a nosy White boy?

MCKENNA
Marlon Sweet was in that courtroom.

COOLEY
Is that unusual? He’s the brother.

MCKENNA
Not unusual. But too obvious. See?

COOLEY
You’re saying Marlon Sweet forced Navid Faruq to confess to killing his brother? Why? He was impatient?

MCKENNA
Anything you need, you have Irene Dawson’s number. Anything not work-related, Skype me. Merry Christmas. And put your tree up already. What kind of chaplain are you?

Their handshake turns into a hug. Their friendship sealed.

COOLEY
I’ll see you in the New Year.

Cooley watches McKenna drive off into the horizon. He stares out at the wintry, suburban landscape feeling totally alone.

CUT TO:
EXT. SIGRUN ARNBJØRG’S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Cooley’s JEEP CHEROKEE pulls up to the house. COOLEY, dressed in his civvies, gets out and heads to the front entrance. He RINGS the BELL. Beat. No answer. He RINGS the BELL again. No answer. Cooley tries the doorknob. Unlocked. He steps inside.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
Hello?

A WOMAN carrying a “For Sale” SIGN under her arm appears from around the corner of the house.

REAL ESTATE AGENT
If you’re here for a preview, you should call. The open house is in two days. You’re not a flipper stealing an early peek, are you?

COOLEY
I’m looking for the resident, Sigrun Arnbjørg. Did she move?

CUT TO:

INT. SIGRUN ARNBJØRG’S HOUSE - MORNING

The house is empty. Stripped completely bare. Every piece of furniture removed. No evidence anyone ever lived there. The REAL ESTATE AGENT inspects the house as COOLEY looks around.

REAL ESTATE AGENT
I got the listing last Tuesday, “the sooner the better”, he said. His moving crew cleared out the house as if a hurricane was coming. All Mr. Sweet said was that he’s relocating for work and had a funeral to attend in a few days.

Cooley pulls out his cellphone and produces an image of Marlon - from one of his fight posters. He shows it to her.

COOLEY
Is this the man who came into your office?

She barely looks at the photo.

REAL ESTATE AGENT
Not him.
COOLEY
Another look at the picture please, ma’am? It’s very important.

REAL ESTATE AGENT
I’m positive that’s not Mr. Sweet. I’m not colorblind.
(of the house)
First look is everything.

COOLEY
Marlon Sweet, the man you met with at your office, was white?

CUT TO:

57  EXT. OLD GLENN HIGHWAY - AFTERNOON  57

Cooley’s JEEP CHEROKEE coasts along the road towards the hillside community of Chugiak, twenty miles north of Anchorage.

CUT TO:

58  EXT. HAWKINS’S HOUSE - AFTERNOON  58

A custom log home with plenty of character and views overlooking Anchorage. Cooley’s JEEP CHEROKEE pulls up. COOLEY climbs out and crosses to the front door. He RINGS the BELL. HAWKINS answers in work-clothes covered in renovation filth.

CUT TO:

59  INT. HAWKINS’S HOUSE - AFTERNOON  59

HAWKINS is in the open kitchen washing his hands vigorously.

HAWKINS
I’m re-tiling the shower. This couldn’t wait til I’m on the clock?

COOLEY
Navid Faruq is being charged with a hate crime.

HAWKINS
As he should be. The evidence supports it. He confessed.

COOLEY
Could you dig deeper before you close this thing as a hate crime?
HAWKINS
He was given every consideration. His story had chinks. You’re not withholding information, are you?

COOLEY
Of course not. I’ve been very forthcoming about our sessions.

HAWKINS
Then just do your job and you’ll be rewarded accordingly. Is that it?

COOLEY
I don’t see a lot of ice in his veins. What if he’s suffering from some sort of post-combat trauma?

HAWKINS
Or what if Marlboro Man convinced him to do the right thing?

COOLEY
There’s gonna be blowback on this if there’s a measure of truth to Navid’s self-defense claim.

HAWKINS
Which side of the fence does your loyalty lie? Who else knows you’re hauling water for the other team?

COOLEY
This isn’t about taking sides. I’m asking if all bases were covered.

HAWKINS
By offering up an alternate angle when evidence proves he murdered that boy in cold blood? Wow, I’m not resenting being second-guessed at all.

COOLEY
Look, a bad shooting does not make someone a racist. Or a murderer.

HAWKINS
This is grits and gravy to you. But I wear the damn badge, I avenge the dead. You can hold your breath waiting for his confession. But I’m gonna be the rare brother who caught a cab and savor this moment.
COOLEY
Did you choose to be black?

HAWKINS
What do you mean, “did I choose”?

COOLEY
Did you choose to be black? How often have I heard you bitch about being hated on because of your race, which was not a choice? And then turn around and hate on me for something which was not a choice.

HAWKINS
Are you gonna always hang that over my head? I apologized for that.

COOLEY
You apologized after you discovered your teenaged daughter enjoys pussy as much as you do.

Cooley already regrets what he said. Hawkins is heated.

HAWKINS
Really? Bringing my baby girl into this? You’re gonna disrespect me like that in my own fucking house?

COOLEY
I’m sorry... I am so...

HAWKINS

COOLEY
Please, forgive me. I am truly sorry. That was inexcusable. I am so... I’ll leave. Okay? I’ll leave.


COOLEY (CONT’D)
Just one thing: I’m looking for Sigrun Arnbjørg. Will you help me?

HAWKINS
More grunt work? Even if I wanted to, I have a load of real cases. And I don’t appreciate you working any of them behind my back either.
COOLEY
Something’s happened to her. She’s disappeared.

HAWKINS
Disappeared? Well, how ‘bout that? Did next of kin file a report? Once it’s on paper it becomes official.

COOLEY
You may have been the last person to see her. She hasn’t shown for work. Her house is for sale. And the realtor told me the Marlon Sweet she met with was a White man.

HAWKINS
Okay, you have my attention. What about witness protection? Put in a call to Blake Anderson. See if she’s one of theirs. I have a lead to follow on one of my milk-carton cases first thing. I’ll call you if or when I find out anything after.

COOLEY
Thank you. Again, I apologize. My mouth sometimes gets the better of me...

HAWKINS
(forced)
Water under the bridge. We good?

COOLEY
One more thing? I have to ask: If you feel that strongly, about race, why do you only date white women?

HAWKINS
If you know any sisters in all of Alaska who are not paired up and aren’t afraid to fish, hike and get their hair wet, please, hook me up.

CUT TO:

EXT. ANCHORAGE ISLAMIC CENTER - EVENING

The Jeep Cherokee slips into the parking lot. COOLEY jumps out into the cold and hurries inside.

CUT TO:
COOLEY enters. The beautiful, rhythmic CHANTING of EVENING PRAYERS chimes throughout the resplendent Mosque. Imam KALIM AL-NOOR greets Cooley.

COOLEY
Imam Kalim. You’ve been playing hooky on me these last few months.

KALIM
Our congregation has grown three-thousand strong since these doors opened. Leaves me little time for police ride-alongs and donut runs.

COOLEY
Three thousand? I had no idea there were that many Muslims in the city.

KALIM
We’re just as diverse as any other religious community, from Anglo to Negro to Eskimo. We’re not just the state’s first Mosque. We’re a safe haven for the growing Muslim and Middle Eastern communities. We hold both Muslim and Christian services here. You should come and speak.

COOLEY
On a related note, I just inherited Reverend Villareal’s ministry at the Elks Lodge Retirement Center. I go where I’m sent and give them my one-hundred when I get there.

KALIM
As long as you love what you do.

COOLEY
Have there been any threats here, Kalim?

KALIM
Threats are a simple fact of life for those of us who don’t fit the ‘all-American’ norm. You know that.

COOLEY
Any since Navid Faruq’s arrest?
KALIM
Nothing that’s been brought to my attention. Did you come here to ask me to step in as Navid’s spiritual counselor? He’s just as Christian as you, my friend. You’ll do fine.

COOLEY
There’s more going on with him than he’s willing to share with me. What can you tell me about the family?

CUT TO:

INT. ANCHORAGE ISLAMIC CENTER/KALIM’S OFFICE - EVENING

KALIM reaches inside his mini-fridge, pulls out a couple of bottled waters and tosses one to COOLEY.

KALIM
Zara Faruq is a true asset to the community. She volunteers here and assists with families relocating to Alaska. You know, with housing and medical assistance, employment and legal services. She helps families acclimate to the Alaskan lifestyle. Before she retired she worked thirty years at Child and Welfare.

COOLEY
This stays between us - are we talking about illegal immigrants?

KALIM
Do you know how many millions of Iraqis have fled their country and how many thousands are granted asylum? Lower forty-eight refugee centers call us to help lighten the load with resettlement services for those who made it over the hump.

COOLEY
Did Navid volunteer his services?

KALIM
Certainly. Navid believes in giving back. Especially after losing his job as a teacher. Navid’s fluent in Arabic and Aramaic. He’d translate or help clients with their English. It made him feel really useful.
COOLEY
And what about his brother Samir?

KALIM
Did he volunteer? Never had the time. His work kept him on the road a lot. Samir was an engineer.

COOLEY
On the Alaskan Railroad?

KALIM
Mechanical engineer. He was some kind of project manager with Renoble. He was always traveling.

COOLEY
Renoble Oil?

KALIM
Renoble Global now. They’re thinking ahead to energy alternatives.

COOLEY
Did Samir suffer from depression prior to his death? Is there a history of depression in the family?

KALIM
I’m not at liberty to speak about that. I know you want to help Navid. But investigating him could hurt him in court. And his family.

COOLEY
Hurt them? How do you mean?

KALIM
Charlie, I know you. You’re a die-hard truth seeker. You work in a building full of detectives. You’re not going to let this go. So I am going to change the subject.

CUT TO:

INT. ANCHORAGE ISLAMIC CENTER - EVENING

KALIM walks COOLEY through the luminous sanctuary to the exit.
KALIM
In the bible, a widow with very little money gave it all away. To live free from the love of money and be content with what she had.

COOLEY
The widow with two coins. “No servant can serve two masters.”

KALIM
You can’t serve both God and money. I don’t have to tell you how people have abandoned faith in pursuit of money, nor at what cost. What’s a top money-maker in this country?

COOLEY
Land, drugs, human trafficking...

KALIM
Fear.

COOLEY
Fear?

KALIM
Absolutely. Madison Avenue makes a mint manipulating our insecurities. How we must look younger, slimmer, own material objects or brand names to feel worthy as human beings. The latest marketing campaign: the war on terror. I’ll spare you my 9/11 conspiracy theories because you’re tired and want to get home under the covers. National security is big business. And for it to work effectively the country needs the illusion of progress. But what people know and what they see are two different things. Optics.

COOLEY
I should never leave my thinking cap at home before working out.

KALIM
Here’s a hypothetical: A local Muslim suspected of terrorist-related activities is taken from his home, detained and tortured by his fellow citizens. He’s never heard from again.

(MORE)
And his family fears jeopardizing their residency status by reporting him missing. His fellow citizens who abducted him, did they do it for God and country? Or did they do it for the gold?

COOLEY
"Either he’ll hate the one and love the other. Or he’ll be devoted to the one and despise the other." Luke. Hypothetically, how many local Muslims are we talking about?

KALIM
This year, locally, that I’m aware of? Maybe a dozen. Hypothetically.

CUT TO:

INT. BANK - MORNING

Bank manager’s office. ANNA SWEET ushers HAWKINS inside as she returns to her desk.

MRS. SWEET
You didn’t come to open an account with us, did you?

HAWKINS
This is my bank. I’m having trouble reaching Sigrun. Can you help me?

Hawkins sits.

MRS. SWEET
She and I aren’t exactly BFF’s. She didn’t even show at Sharif’s funeral. Some “big sister”.

HAWKINS
Her phone goes straight to voice-mail. Her home is empty, all the furniture gone, house for sale...

MRS. SWEET
Hopefully she took a powder, now that Marlon finally had the sense to kick her to the curb. At least she was good for something. My son never met with the realtors when they were house-hunting.

(MORE)
MRS. SWEET (CONT'D)
He was positive their “swirl” would influence the realtor’s decision to sell to them or boost the asking price. Maybe Sigrun retreated to whatever backwoods she came from. I really can’t concern myself with that now. God just took my baby from me. It wasn’t that long ago I was reading to him every night.

HAWKINS
How can I get in touch with Marlon? I’m sure he would know where I can find his wife, contact her family.

MRS. SWEET
He left right after the funeral, returned to work. Very hush-hush.

HAWKINS
What’s the best way to reach him?

MRS. SWEET
Marlon rarely tells us where they send him, so much risk involved. I still remember him coming home the day after he was discharged from the Army. He wasn’t the same man.

HAWKINS
I’m sorry. Did he seek help?

MRS. SWEET
He got thirty days of counseling. Before his benefits lapsed.

HAWKINS
Lapsed? Did your son receive an honorable discharge from the Army?

MRS. SWEET
To my knowledge. Why?

HAWKINS
He deserves more. Do you know which private military firm he works for?

MRS. SWEET
He would sometimes ask us to forward his mail to a P.O. Box in care of Star Wars or something. I can’t be sure. We’d get e-mails, calls on the holidays, birthdays... The sensitive nature of his work.
HAWKINS
To your knowledge, he’s never been treated for combat-stress trauma?

MRS. SWEET
I know these are routine questions you must ask, Detective. But you are driving in the wrong lane if you think my Marlon is responsible for Sigrun’s disappearance. Please assure me you’re not pinning that woman’s disappearance on him. Because if you do, I’ll come after you. Hard. I just lost one son.

CUT TO:

INT. RENOBLE GLOBAL/RECEPTION - MORNING

COOLEY is seated, waiting to be seen. Behind the reception desk is the logo for “RENOBLE GLOBAL”. Business executive DOUGLAS HATHAWAY steps into reception area and finds Cooley.

HATHAWAY
Officer, I’m Doug Hathaway. Come with me. We’ll talk in my office.

Cooley follows Hathaway down the passageway to his office.

HATHAWAY (CONT’D)
You’re asking about Samir Faruq. Great guy to work for. Always made you feel like an important part of the team. He’s really missed here. I really feel sorry for his family. We all got to know each other at the company picnics and functions.

COOLEY
Then I’m sure you’re aware of his brother’s legal trouble. I’m Navid’s spiritual counselor. What I’m trying to do is put Samir’s death into some sort of context.

HATHAWAY
Yeah... Whatever they did to Samir over there really broke him down to his very soul. Samir’s actual death was nothing more than a formality.

COOLEY
And where was this again?
Hathaway stops Cooley before they enter his office.

HATHAWAY
Our lawyers urged everyone to never revisit this matter with anyone. This was at Samir’s insistence.

COOLEY
(produces his cellphone)
Tell you what, since we’re whipping ‘em out, run this past your lawyers and I’ll get our new Deputy Attorney General here while he’s in town. I can ask him to come and join us. For the sake of formality.

CUT TO:

INT. HATHAWAY’S OFFICE - MORNING

HATHAWAY returns to his desk where he left his breakfast. COOLEY sits across from him, proud he bluffed his way in.

HATHAWAY
(re: breakfast)
You mind? I have a full day, and if I don’t get this down in me now...

COOLEY
Knock yourself out.

HATHAWAY
Renoble has equity in several oil companies based in Baghdad. Samir was senior engineer on a drilling project. American sentries came to the hotel where we’re having dinner and took him. Just like that, no reason given.

COOLEY
Took him? You mean Abu Ghraib?

HATHAWAY
We suspected. But that’s the thing. No one knew where Samir was being held. This went on for two weeks. We knew there had to be a mistake. Calls were made on Samir’s behalf, until contact was made with some higher-ups in Baghdad who demanded his immediate release. That took another week.
COOLEY
I thought we withdrew the last of our troops back in December 2011?

HATHAWAY
Plenty of private security’s been in and out of there since the new U.S. Embassy began construction.

COOLEY
So, am I to understand an American citizen was targeted, held against his will and possibly tortured? How was all this kept quiet?

HATHAWAY
Did you just fall out of the womb? How else?

Hathaway rubs his thumb and two forefingers together: money.

CUT TO:

INT. COFFEE SHOP - MORNING

A line full of CUSTOMERS. COOLEY is talking to the MANAGER.

MANAGER
Guy drops dead of a heart attack in my place of business, you think I’d forget some shit like that?

COOLEY
Take me through the day. Samir and Navid, the brothers, arrived first?

MANAGER
Guy who died, the older one, was not a regular. He comes in with the younger guy, his brother. They met with one of my morning regulars who comes in for her usual Double-shot Espresso. Don’t know her name but definitely works at the hospital. She’s talking with the brothers maybe a few minutes. Then she’s back in line ordering a Danish, she’s staying awhile. And that’s when... It was the weirdest thing.

COOLEY
Go on, let’s hear it.
MANAGER
Well, a young black man comes in and starts making out with the lady doc. I put it out of my head once I saw the matching wedding bands. But that older brother... He sees them going at it, goes totally ape shit, starts yelling something in another language. He drops to the ground, shaking like a fish out of water, and I'm thinking this guy must be racist as hell to react like that. The lady doc tries to help the guy out, "everybody clear the area", but the black guy pulls her off of him and drags her out of the shop.

COOLEY
Anything else happen after that?

MANAGER
An ambulance arrives in less than two minutes from across the street. Good thing the hospital's there. A few times we've had to carry people to the E-R from here.

COOLEY
What did you serve them?

CUT TO:

68 INT. DETECTIVES' DEN - MORNING

HAWKINS is at his desk busy on the computer. COOLEY comes in with two cups of coffee. One lands on Hawkins's desk.

COOLEY
My first cup of the day. Can you believe it?

Cooley pulls up an empty chair next to Hawkins's desk.

COOLEY (CONT'D)
Cards on the table? I may have bitten off more than I can chew.

HAWKINS
We'll table that discussion for later. And next time, focus on the smaller picture. Official cause of death for Samir Faruq?
COOLEY
Congestive heart failure. At least it was designed to look that way to those who care enough about him.

HAWKINS
Smaller picture. Remember?

COOLEY
Then how about this for a smaller picture: Samir Faruq was kidnapped and tortured in Baghdad by rogue mercenaries prior to his death.

HAWKINS
Shit. Here’s the sweetener: Marlon Sweet received a Chapter five-thirteen discharge from the Army.

COOLEY
I’m sure it’s not a biblical verse.

HAWKINS
A preexisting personality disorder discharge. Basically it says that a soldier’s medical problems are not a result of combat trauma, but from a mental disorder that existed prior to enlistment. Bottom line: the military is not on the hook for any long-term medical care.

COOLEY
So a soldier can risk years of his life, bleed for his country, but when he returns home Uncle Sam drops him like a safe. That reeks.

HAWKINS
Thousands of soldiers have been hit with Five-Thirteens. The temporary benefits they get won’t allow them to get their head together. They’ll have a tougher time finding work. Some turn to mercenary firms. Like Sweet did, now that his worth is measured by his kills. Blackstar’s head of U.S. Operations is Skyping me back any second now. Any clue which outfit tortured Faruq?

COOLEY
No. You mentioned Blackstar. Is there any reason to suspect them?
HAWKINS
About half a billion reasons. They scored the Pentagon’s largest military contract in Iraq.

The SKYPE RING TONE WAR BLES on Hawkins’s computer.

HAWKINS (CONT’D)
Talk about timing. Privacy, please?

Cooley moves out of view of the monitor’s camera. Hawkins answers the call. The stern face of NATHAN BENEKE in his office appears on the computer screen.

HAWKINS (CONT’D)
Nathan Beneke. Thank you for getting back to me.

BENEKE
How can I help you, Detective?

HAWKINS
Some background on one of your men?

BENEKE
If I can. What’s the name?

HAWKINS
Sweet. First name Marlon.

We HEAR Beneke TYPING on his keyboard.

BENEKE
He was one of ours. Tough as nails.

HAWKINS
He’s not your Joe anymore?

BENEKE
I cut him loose three months ago at the insistence of one of our former shrinks. She described him a loose cannon more than capable of taking work home with him.

HAWKINS
In other words he went rogue?

BENEKE
If any of our contractors takes matters into their own hands by refusing to comply with domestic and international laws, they will be held accountable.
HAWKINS
Can I have a peek at Sweet’s file?

BENEKE
Normally I’d put my lawyers on you, National Security being what it is. Since he’s no longer one of ours...

HAWKINS
I’ll give you our Fedex account number.

BENEKE
I’ll do you one better. Shoot me your e-mail address and I’ll send you a P-D-F copy of his file.

HAWKINS
(types)
E-mail address... Sent. I presume doctor-patient privilege prevents your shrink from talking to me?

BENEKE
That and marital privilege.

Hawkins and Cooley exchange looks.

HAWKINS
Sigrun Arnbjørg’s one of yours?

BENEKE
She was. Sweet hand-picked her to be a part of his interrogation team. It’s how they met three years ago. Is there anything else?

CUT TO:

INT. PRECINCT/MEN’S ROOM - AFTERNOON

COOLEY and HAWKINS are alone. HAWKINS flips through pages of the file he printed out on Marlon Sweet.

HAWKINS
Some security consultant. Numerous letters of reprimand for excessive force, abuse of authority... Rape accusations! Well, prisoners have been known to “fall” on things. No wonder Beneke wanted distance from him. He probably spends his Fridays setting fires to baby animals.
COOLEY
What did Sigrun do for the team?

HAWKINS
She supervised the stressers Sweet implemented during interrogations to gather intel. Stress positions, sleep deprivation, solitary, ice baths...

COOLEY
All of which could have helped along the heart attack that killed Samir. This is the connection to Sharif’s death. Samir recognized Sweet as his torturer at the coffee shop right before he died in front of Navid. And that sets Navid off.

HAWKINS
So, Navid goes out and shoots the wrong brother? Grasping at straws.

COOLEY
Not if he’s the right brother. Eye for an eye? Brother for a brother?

HAWKINS
Revenge isn’t a hall pass to commit murder. If Navid Faruq purposely sought out that boy, then Sharif’s murder was wholly intentional.

COOLEY
Marlon isn’t forcing Navid into a guilty plea. Navid is protecting whoever’s responsible for his brother’s death. His family was given financial compensation in exchange for their silence.

CUT TO:

INT. ANCHORAGE CORRECTIONAL/VISITORS ROOM - DAY

It’s just COOLEY and NAVID this time.

COOLEY
I want to believe you, Navid. I’m in your corner. But this evidence stinks of premeditation. Extreme emotional disturbance, maybe.

(MORE)
COOLEY (CONT’D)
But you planned Sharif’s death for months with remorseless efficiency. You stalked him like prey. You followed him, familiarized yourself with his routine, the guard job... Self defense, fabricated bullshit.

(beat)
I’m often asked what I dream about when I sleep. I dream about the countless, murdered children I’ve come across and I wonder what they would have achieved if they lived. The four-year-old who couldn’t stop crying, drowned by his own mother, he may have discovered a cure for Parkinson’s. The eight-year-old viciously raped by her father. Or Sharif. He could have been an astronaut. A historian. A parent. Listen to me because this is the job I was given to do: You are a child of God. God’s children obey the law. An eye for an eye makes the whole world go blind. If you do feel justified by your actions, own it. But if you want to do this the hard way... A family is grieving the loss of their young son. You’re looking to go in for a long time. It’s sad. You’re all Zara has now. Your mother’s lived a full life. She understands death. Loss. She understands forgiveness. The best you can do right now is give your mother that one thing to remain loyal to. Give your mother her son to love. Can you do that? For her?

NAVID

(beat)
Samir never knew their names. Their name tags were taped over. He said he would never forget their faces. Especially the bastard who lead him around on all fours by a leash. No one would listen to him. The things they did to him. I couldn’t get the visuals out of my head. It did something to me. Enraged me. Lenore gave me his name. I just wanted the bastard hurt. I wanted him to feel the pain I felt. For a long time.
INT. PEGGY’S RESTAURANT - AFTERNOON
COOLEY sits alone eating pancakes, lost in thought.

CUT TO:

INT. COOLEY’S HOUSE - NIGHT
COOLEY lets himself in. He’s beat. He takes off his coat and throws it on an empty chair. On the couch, LOTUS is asleep underneath a blanket. Cooley dials a number stored in his cellphone’s memory.

COOLEY
Wanna talk about it?

LOTUS
(without opening her eyes)
The usual father-daughter shit.

CUT TO:

INT. SURVEILLANCE VAN - NIGHT
HAWKINS is in the rear of the van with a team of plain-clothes COPS on a stakeout. His CELLPHONE VIBRATES.

HAWKINS
(into phone)
Can I call you back? I’m sitting in on a stakeout.

CUT TO:

INT. COOLEY’S HOUSE/KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS
COOLEY roots around in his refrigerator for something quick to eat.

COOLEY
(into phone)
Lotus is here.

CUT TO:

INT. SURVEILLANCE VAN - CONTINUOUS
RESUME w/HAWKINS. He exhales a SIGH of relief.
HAWKINS
She needs time to cool off and remember who the parent is. Can I swing by in the morning?

CUT TO:

76  INT. COOLEY’S HOUSE/KITCHEN – CONTINUOUS

RESUME w/COOLEY. He sticks a plate of Sloppy Joe’s in the microwave and sets the timer.

COOLEY
No problema.

He hangs up.

CUT TO:

77  INT. COOLEY’S HOUSE/BEDROOM – NIGHT

COOLEY is in bed, with an empty plate beside him, watching a rerun of The Golden Girls.

ACTOR ON TV
“It makes me want to kiss you, Josie.”

COOLEY
(recites with ‘Blanche’) “Mind your manners, Biff. We’re at the Fourth of July picnic. The whole town is here.”

ACTOR ON TV
“The hell with this town. Come away with me.”

COOLEY
“But you’re a drifter, Biff. I can’t just pull up stakes and run off with you.”

ACTOR ON TV
“Please reconsider, Josie. You’re the prettiest girl in the county. I need to have your answer now. What’s it gonna be?”

COOLEY
“I want you to take me, Biff!”
His CELLPHONE RINGS, causing Cooley to jump as if he had been caught in the act.

COOLEY (CONT’D)
(answers)
Yeah? ...Blake Anderson. You got something for me? ...How hard is it to set up a meet? ...What if we happen to conveniently cross paths?

CUT TO:

78 I/E. JEEP CHEROKEE - AFTERNOON

COOLEY sits in the driver’s seat dressed in a suit under his parka, and snacking on homemade grilled cheese sandwiches. A bouquet of flowers lay beside him on the passenger’s seat. He’s surveilling the cemetery where Sharif was buried.

COOLEY’S POV: A conspicuous, armored SUV pulls up to the curb near Sharif’s grave. A WOMAN wrapped in hooded fur coat steps out accompanied by a FEDERAL MARSHALL type who follows her to Sharif’s grave. She stands at the grave while he keeps a safe distance, allowing her privacy as she quietly mourns.

Cooley grabs the flowers and gets out of the vehicle.

CUT TO:

79 EXT. CEMETERY - AFTERNOON

COOLEY pretends to search for Sharif’s gravesite, going from one grave to another, until he finally approaches the woman. The FEDERAL MARSHALL moves in a few steps closer.

COOLEY
Is this the kid who was shot? I read about it, wanted to come.

WOMAN
It is.

MARSHALL
Sir, you mind taking several steps away from the woman?

WOMAN
He’s okay. He’s just here to...

COOLEY
What do you say to parents who lost a child? I choose to say nothing.
She locks eyes with Cooley. It’s SIGRUN. They speak in hushed tones.

SIGRUN
Please do not attempt to contact me again. As far as you’re concerned you’re seeing pink elephants.

COOLEY
I know the drill. There are people concerned about you.

SIGRUN
I had to disappear. Or else I’d end up in a watery dump-site in the Gulf fifty miles off Seward’s shoreline with the rest of the bodies. The man I married is not that man anymore. I just wanted to feel safe again. You think I wanted to turn on my husband? Things had been getting bad for months. Him coming home was a reminder. The arguments escalated and ended with him threatening to get his gun.

COOLEY
Which only proves how unstable he is. I saw it in his eyes when I met him. There’s a lot of heat on this.

The armored SUV’s DRIVER emerges from the vehicle, concerned. The Marshall follows his cue.

MARSHALL
Ma’am, is everything okay? Sir, take a few steps back, please.

SIGRUN
He’s a minister. He was just...

MARSHALL
Back in the vehicle, ma’am. Now!

COOLEY
(to the Marshall)
Sir, my name is Charles Cooley...

The Bodyguard pulls his gun and aims it at Cooley.

BODYGUARD
I don’t care if it’s Humpty Dumpty. Down on the ground. Now! Ma’am, back to the vehicle.
Sigrun hurries back to the SUV as Cooley kneels.

COOLEY
I’m a police officer, badge number 4-7-6.

MARSHALL
You didn’t see any of this, Officer Cooley, badge number 4-7-6. You’ll be hearing from us. Very soon.

He keeps his weapon trained on Cooley until he is back inside the SUV. They peel off. Cooley catches a glimpse of the plate number. A glimpse is all he needs.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE REPORT ROOM - AFTERNOON

COOLEY is on one of the computers fishing for information. He opens the DMV mainframe and enters the license plate number.

WOMAN (O.C.)
Officer Cooley, badge 4-7-6?

Cooley looks up. JANICE WOLVERTON is a smartly-tailored woman in her forties carrying a pair of heavy shopping bags.

WOLVERTON
The desk sergeant said I’d find you here.

COOLEY
You must be the special-kind-of-pain-in-my-ass I was warned about.

WOLVERTON
Assistant U.S. Attorney Janice Wolverton. I’m dying for lunch.

CUT TO:

INT. PRIVATE CONFERENCE ROOM - AFTERNOON

COOLEY and WOLVERTON sit opposite each other in the busy cafe. Wolverton is relieved to let go of her heavy bags.

WOLVERTON
I had to get this last-minute shopping in. Since it’s just me working, my husband’s become the parent and I’m the paycheck.
A WAITRESS arrives at the table to take their order.

    COOLEY
    I already know what I want. Red Chair Salad and Iced tea.

    WOLVERTON
    That sounds yummy. I’ll have the same, please.

Once the Waitress leaves...

    WOLVERTON (CONT’D)
    Who else have you talked to?

    COOLEY
    No one. Should I call my PBA rep?

    WOLVERTON
    You’re a chaplain so I’ll take your word for it. Marlon Sweet’s been on our radar for some time now, for crimes above your pay grade. Crimes which fall under the category of domestic terrorism, you did not hear that from me... Having his wife “missing” or “dead” helps us tighten the noose around his neck. He’ll get sloppy and make mistakes.

    COOLEY
    You’re basically telling me what I need to hear to move forward.

    WOLVERTON
    I’m asking you to stop fishing. There’s too much on the line.

    COOLEY
    Does this have anything to do with bodies buried in the Gulf fifty miles from the Seward shoreline?

    WOLVERTON
    We sent divers. Whatever was down there was cleaned up. When the leash is on, Sweet’s an invaluable asset protected at all costs. But when the leash is off...

    COOLEY
    Then I shouldn’t be surprised you’re turning your back on him. He did risk his life for this country.
WOLVERTON
Sweet is so wound up, his patriotic
duty doesn’t stop at erasing enemy
combatants. He’s taken out law
enforcement for suspecting him,
children he felt may one day grow
up and seek revenge... There’s only
so much that can be written off as
collateral damage. His wife called
knowing what she was up against. We
picked her up on a witness scoop,
stashed her someplace safe. It’s
best she’s presumed dead. Sweet’s
rep as a loose cannon and his
wife’s disappearance makes him both
unpredictable and expendable. And
if I’m his employer...

CUT TO:

82 EXT. KENAI RIVER - MORNING
Thick snow blankets the woods and trees on both sides of the
Kenai River, resembling a winter wonderland.

We FOLLOW the MOTORBOAT as it cuts through small chunks of
ice forming in the river. The MOTORIST is dressed head-to-toe
in cold-weather gear, his face masked. He motors past
secluded, riverfront cabins spaced along the shoreline.

The ROAR of a CHAINSAW grows LOUDER and LOUDER as he reaches
the floating dock of one property,

CUT TO:

83 EXT. FISK CABIN - AFTERNOON
DYLAN FISK, 42, White, rugged, outdoors-y type, is cutting up
firewood with his chainsaw when he sees the motorboat parking
at his dock. Dylan cuts the chainsaw’s power, instinctively
reaches for the pistol holstered across his chest and moves
tactically toward the dock. As he closes in...

DYLAN
(calls out)
HELLO? WHO’S THERE?

The MOTORIST secures his boat to the dock and then pulls off
his hood and face mask. DYLAN is pleasantly surprised to see
it’s COOLEY.
COOLEY
You’re a hard man to find, Dylan.

DYLAN
It’s not like I’m out here social networking. How did you find me?

Cooley pulls a heavy duffle bag out of the boat, opens it, and pulls out a heavy stack of mail addressed to Dylan.

COOLEY
A very handsome bush pilot, whose residence is listed as your current mailing address when I ran your social. He wanted me to remind you how eagerly he’s looking forward to New Year’s Eve.

DYLAN
Owen has two daughters from his marriage. He spends every other weekend and holiday with them. That and his job makes his visits few and far between. It’s not just the heart that grows fonder, stud.

COOLEY
Convenient he’s a pilot. Since the only way here is by plane or boat.

DYLAN
Duffle bag looks heavy. Moving in?

COOLEY
Would you like me to? I’m your Secret Santa this year. I brought provisions from the supermarket.

DYLAN
I don’t get a lot of company. Come in, stay for lunch. Need some help?

COOLEY
I got it. Give me the grand tour.

Cooley slings the duffle bag over his shoulder and follows Dylan off the dock. They pass the fish-cleaning station.

DYLAN
Cleaning station, conveniently located next to the river. I can scale fish and all the waste pipes out into the river, which keep the bears from paying me a visit.
COOLEY
Nice. The water off the bank is shallow, faster. You must get your run of red salmon out here.

DYLAN
The reds come in thick here. And having the river outside my front door... You should visit when it’s warmer. Wake up, take the gear out, and throw your line in the water. I tell ya, there’s nothing like it. Wasn’t that our game plan once upon a time: couple of old men, in the river fishing, over discussions of “back in the day”?

They trudge towards the beautifully-built, stilted, log cabin home and its neighboring storage shed.

DYLAN (CONT’D)
I’m trying to live without leaving a carbon footprint. My laptop runs off the solar panels.

COOLEY
That should stop global warming.

CUT TO:

INT. FISK CABIN - AFTERNOON

DYLAN and COOLEY enter. Clean, cozy open-living space with a homesteader feel. The wood stove is the cabin’s centerpiece. A refrigerator, stove and sink in the kitchen area. A bed and dining table. The low-ceiling loft can be reached by ladder. A sofa sits under the picture window overlooking the river.

DYLAN
The wood stove keeps me warm in the winter.

COOLEY
A working refrigerator.

Cooley sets the duffle bag on the dining table, emptying the dry goods from inside it, and storing items in the cabinets.

DYLAN
Powered by propane. The tanks are under the house. The chinking in the walls keeps the house airtight, and the mice out.

(MORE)
Doors and windows are bear-proof. The loft over your head’s for guests.

COOLEY
Running water?

DYLAN
Pumps in from the river so I’ll never run out. Check out what’s behind door number one.

He gestures to a closed door beside the kitchen. Cooley looks inside – a functioning bathroom with toilet, shower and sink.

COOLEY
You have a shower.

DYLAN
Unlimited hot water fueled by the propane. Plus a flushing toilet.

COOLEY
Pretty upscale for remote living. You’re really classing up these woods. What’s the building outside?

DYLAN
Storage. Wood, snowmobile, meat.

CUT TO:

COOLEY and DYLAN utilize every inch of kitchen preparing lunch. A pot of Halibut Stew is on the stove. Cooley slices and marinates moose steaks, Dylan peels red potatoes. Both men working with a rhythmic precision perfected over time.

COOLEY
You happy sleeping out here inside a pile of logs?

DYLAN
You know I’ve always preferred the simple life. I’ve taken a page out of the homesteader’s manual as per your parents’ retirement pact and reinvented myself out here. Isn’t that what happens after a bad break-up?
COOLEY
Ask someone older and less handsome. You and Owen... Find what you’re looking for with him?

DYLAN
He’s not the love of my life. But we give each other what we need. So, why are you really here? You didn’t go through the trouble of tracking me down because you’re feeling the holiday spirit. Or are you back to sleeping with men?

COOLEY
I wanted to see how the other half lives.

Dylan is not amused.

COOLEY (CONT’D)
I need to talk to you. Blackstar Security came up in conversation.

Dylan’s eyes suddenly swell with anguish.

CUT TO:

86 INT. FISK CABIN - AFTERNOON

COOLEY and DYLAN eat lunch. On the table between them: Caesar salad, marinated moose steaks, and seasoned red potatoes.

DYLAN
I bailed before the quicksand got past my knees. The things I saw and heard pulling guard duty in that place kept me up nights. It goes on for months and no one says a thing, scared to say anything... The trouble I had adjusting when I got home. My mother pleaded with me to see someone. Anyone. I came to you.

COOLEY
And I behaved inappropriately, taking advantage of the situation.

DYLAN
It takes two, Charlie. I’m a grown-ass man. I let it happen. I’m not blaming you. At least we got three good years out of it. Right?
COOLEY
If you left me because I was too insecure, or aggressive because of my temper, I’ve been seeing a...

DYLAN
(changes the subject)
Why did you want to talk about Blackstar?

COOLEY
I may have a constitutional crisis on my hands. A watchman’s act of self-preservation just escalated into American citizens held and tortured by their own government. A local gun-for-hire may have taken matters into his own hands. And I’d like to know what I’m dealing with.

DYLAN
There’s a playbook Blackstar issues new hires after the ink’s dry: Legal techniques for the detention and interrogation of unlawful enemy combatants. A how-to manual on abducting, illegally detaining, abusing secret detainees and how to avoid prosecution.

COOLEY
And who are these secret prisoners?

DYLAN
Not prisoners. Detainees. Geneva Convention. They are anyone withholding terrorism-related information. Their identities, location, and reason for detention are never released.

COOLEY
Weren’t the gates to places like Abu Ghraib closed to prevent this?

DYLAN
Shutting down Abu Ghraib was just for show. Do you know what a black site is? A hidden location where secret detainees are ghost-trained and stashed for far more “enhanced” questioning without due process. It could be on land, sea... George W himself confirmed their existence.
COOLEY
So what happens to these ghost detainees when questioning’s over?

DYLAN
They vanish. Forced disappearances. No one claims responsibility ‘cause there’s no proof of their deaths. I heard some were dropped from planes into the ocean while still alive.

Cooley pushes his plate back. He can’t stomach anymore. He looks outside the window. The sun is already setting.

COOLEY
Gets late so early. I should go, get my deposit back on the boat.

DYLAN
You staying in Soldotna?

COOLEY
At the Lodge. Gotta hit the road early. It’s a three-hour drive back home and I have a sermon to prepare for Sunday morning. I’ll change out my light-bulbs and save some polar bears. Christmas is around the corner. I should put my tree up.

DYLAN
Holidays are just another day to me out here. Charlie, you’re not in any trouble, are you?

COOLEY
No, nothing like that.

DYLAN
Stay here tonight. For my peace of mind. I’ll show you something you haven’t seen in a long time.

COOLEY
You coming on to me, Dylan?

DYLAN
Hey. Ain’t no friend like an old boyfriend. It’s the best time of year to see ‘em. When nights are longer and the skies are darker.

COOLEY
Northern lights.
DYLAN
For old time’s sake?

Cooley strongly considers Dylan’s offer.

CUT TO:

87  EXT. FISK CABIN - NIGHT
Trees bristle in the cold wind. An ominous sheen saturates the woods. Establish.

CUT TO:

88  INT. FISK CABIN - NIGHT
Embers CRACKLE in the wood stove. COOLEY is in bed asleep. He reaches across the bed for Dylan. He isn’t there.

DYLAN (O.S.)
Charlie, wake up.

Cooley slowly stirs to life.

COOLEY
(drowsily)
What’s up?

DYLAN is awake and slipping into a sweat suit and some boots.

DYLAN
There’s someone outside.

Cooley bolts up, totally awake and alert.

COOLEY
You sure? Maybe it’s a animal.

DYLAN
Live here long enough you can tell the difference.

Cooley, in his underwear, jumps out of bed and gets dressed.

COOLEY
Hold on. I’m going with you.

Dylan secures his rifle.

DYLAN
You carrying?
COOLEY
My off-duty weapon.

CUT TO:

89 EXT. FISK CABIN - NIGHT

The darkness is near-impenetrable. COOLEY and DYLAN exit the cabin armed with their weapons, their FLASHLIGHTS piercing the formidable darkness blanketing the night. They separate and move in opposite directions circling the cabin. The thick layer of snow muffles their footsteps.

Dylan is halfway around his side of the cabin, his rifle straight-armed, his barrel-hand holding onto his flashlight. The trees seem to come alive within the flashlight’s beam.

Cooley has half-circled his side of the cabin, step after instinctive step. The faintest sounds capture his attention. His eyes fixed on what his flashlight reveals in his path. Cooley and Dylan regroup behind the cabin.

DYLAN
Nothing. No footprints...

COOLEY
Living alone’s made you jumpy.

DYLAN
I was so sure... Maybe it was an animal. Let’s get back inside.

COOLEY
Yeah, let’s. It’s too ‘Blair Witch’ creepy out here for me.

They return inside the cabin.

CUT TO:

90 EXT. FISK CABIN - MORNING

COOLEY and DYLAN are at the dock hugging each other goodbye.

DYLAN
You’ll come back and see me?

COOLEY
Give me ‘til spring?

DYLAN
I’ll be here. Careful getting home.
COOLEY
Hey, we’ll do some fishing, buddy.

Cooley boards the motorboat, waves goodbye and motors away as Dylan watches him disappear around the bend from view.

Dylan treks back to his cabin. He is about to go inside when the sharp CRACK of GUNFIRE ECHOES -- Blood and skull EXPLODE from Dylan’s head as he drops limply to the ground.

CUT TO:

EXT. KENAI RIVER LODGE - MORNING

COOLEY heads inside through the main entrance.

CUT TO:

INT. KENAI RIVER LODGE - MORNING

COOLEY at the front desk with the CLERK.

COOLEY
I’d like to settle up. Last name Cooley. I’m just getting my things.

The Clerk looks up his reservation. Cooley heads to his room.

CUT TO:

INT. KENAI RIVER LODGE/HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

COOLEY lets himself in with his key. It is the slight movement of shadow that causes Cooley to draw his gun and aim it at the INTRUDER sitting on the bed. Cooley relaxes his grip on his gun when he sees who it is.

COOLEY
Marlon.

MARLON sits calmly on the bed.

MARLON
I’ll spare you the small talk. You have brought considerable risk to yourself. I’m specifically warning you to seek justice elsewhere.

COOLEY
And I’m grateful you took the time to break in and set me straight?
MARLON
You can’t begin to imagine what’s in store for you if anybody besides myself knew how entrenched you are. Would you want to spend the rest of your life looking over your shoulder? Understand I take no pleasure in killing but I don’t get off on it either. I don’t enjoy it.

COOLEY
Did you just threaten me to kill me? You think you can kill me, a White cop, and get away with it?

MARLON
If I wanted you dead... You went above the call of duty for my parents when Sharif died. You were there for them when they needed someone. And that carries weight.

COOLEY
And I’m stupid enough to believe that based on your line of work? I go outside, your overwatch puts two between my eyes.

MARLON
I’m asking you nicely to put what you know out of your head. Okay? You’re too young to die of a heart attack.

COOLEY
If you’re willing to let me live, then what would another act of human kindness cost you?

MARLON
What would I gain? You don’t know how high the stakes are here.

COOLEY
I know you can’t serve two masters. The paycheck’s twisted you so badly you don’t know which end is up. You were a soldier. You fought for our country. And now your patriotism’s for sale to the highest bidder. It’s a fine line between patriots and common killers these days, I’m learning.
MARLON
Don’t ever question my patriotism. I save American lives. I will not apologize for doing my job. Do you want insurgents walking the streets of our country? It’s harder for you to see the big picture. Trust me. It’s much bigger than Alaska.

COOLEY
Samson back at the dojo mentioned you saw action straight out of high school after you enlisted.

MARLON
Fallujah. Right after 9/11. I was assigned to interrogations. Being shot at and bombed at every other day. The gunfire, IED’s, stepping over body parts… Hard to shake.

COOLEY
I have a moral objection to murder. Regardless if it’s government-sanctioned. I have a bigger problem with men and women putting their lives on the line only to be short-changed by their government. You’re a soldier following orders who’s been dismissed as a liability. You don’t have to do this anymore. Why are you doing this?

MARLON
Not significant.

COOLEY
Navid Faruq can always turn on you.

MARLON
You think you can squeeze Faruq to get to me? Son of a bitch murders my brother, people cheer him as if he committed some coup de grâce. Way I was raised, someone shoots an unarmed victim he forfeits his right to freedom.

COOLEY
Then someone’s taking liberties with the law because you, my friend, should be in jail.
MARLON
Sometimes just being yourself is punishment enough.

Cooley grabs his coat and overnight bag.

COOLEY
Best thing I can say about myself, I always did the right thing. I’m free to leave?

MARLON
Am I holding you hostage?

Cooley leaves the room without hesitation.

CUT TO:

94   EXT. KENAI RIVER LODGE - MORNING

Cooley comes out of the hotel. He scans the area, unnerved by the possibility of being targeted for murder, before heading to the parking lot. He throws his coat and overnight bag into the trunk of his JEEP CHEROKEE, jumps inside and speeds off.

DISSOLVE TO:

95   EXT. COOLEY’S HOUSE - NIGHT

Bright Christmas LIGHTS illuminate the contours of the house. Multi-colored FLICKERING LIGHTS on the Christmas tree radiate ceremoniously in the living room window.

CUT TO:

96   INT. COOLEY’S HOUSE - NIGHT

Half-eaten takeout pizza sits on the coffee table. COOLEY is on the couch surrounded by freshly-wrapped Christmas gifts. Cooley finishes another soda listening to Christmas MUSIC.

The DOORBELL RINGS. Who could it be at this hour? Cooley answers the door and is surprised to see it’s OWEN LANDAU, a powerfully-built man, forties, his eyes red from crying.

COOLEY
Mr. Landau. What are you...?

OWEN
Owen. Please.
COOLEY
What are you doing here? Is everything all right? Is it Dylan?

CUT TO:

INT. COOLEY’S HOUSE - NIGHT

COOLEY is very emotional. There are tears in his eyes. OWEN moves closer towards him, puts a comforting arm around his shoulder.

COOLEY
You found him?

OWEN
I flew there to, you know, leave him his Christmas gift, check on him, see how he was doing...

COOLEY
Check on him? Or check up on him?

Owen quickly recoils from Cooley.

OWEN
How dare you? How fucking dare you? You know, I had a bad feeling about you the morning you knocked on my door looking for him. Yes, your being alone with him bothered me. Excuse me for being human. But the look in his eyes whenever your name comes up... I wanted to blame you for his death. I wish I could blame you. Finding him out there like that, frozen in the snow... Alone.

COOLEY
I underestimated your relationship. And I apologize. Can I get you anything? Some pizza, perhaps?

OWEN
Honestly? I’d love some pizza.

Owen helps himself to a slice. Cooley summons the courage to confess.

COOLEY
Dylan’s death is my fault. Someone wanted to send me a message. Remind me who I was dealing with.
OWEN
What? You know who killed him?

COOLEY
I do. But I can’t prove it. And if I could, I don’t think he’d be held accountable.

OWEN
Why the hell not?

COOLEY
I’m not at liberty to discuss it.

OWEN
So, whoever killed Dylan won’t face any murder charges. Is that what you’re saying? That’s unacceptable. Is there anything you can tell me?

COOLEY
You mean anything that won’t get you killed like it did Dylan?

OWEN
I spent a lot of time in the field when I was a Navy Seal. Not so much anymore because I have my two girls to think of. But I gotta tell you, right now, this moment, there is nothing I won’t do to give Dylan some justice. What are you willing to do to avenge his death, Charles?

COOLEY
Whatever it takes. Within the law. As far as I’m concerned, he’s lost every last bit of sympathy I had for him. And his family.

OWEN
Good. I’m counting on that. Because I really want this bastard’s head. You play chess? Dylan and I played chess a lot. There’s a defensive move in chess called castling. The only time more than one piece can be moved when it’s your turn. You, he’ll see coming from as far as Russia. That works in my Rook’s favor. Whoever he is will pay for what he did to Dylan. I promise.

CUT TO:
INT. MERRILL FIELD, PRIVATE TERMINAL - DAY

Through the window, we see a private plane being refueled. MARLON sits in the lounge operating his iPAD. He looks up in time to see HAWKINS with two STATE TROOPERS approaching him.

HAWKINS
Marlon Sweet. Come with us, please.

MARLON
Am I under arrest?

HAWKINS
We can go there. On your feet.

The Troopers confiscate his things as Hawkins cuffs Marlon.

MARLON
You wanna tell me what I’m being arrested for?

HAWKINS
The murder of Dylan Fisk. Despite popular belief, Chuck Cooley is not the type to lie back and take it up the ass. Marlon Sweet, you have the right to remain silent. Anything you say can and will be used against you in a court of law...

They escort Marlon out of the terminal.

CUT TO:

INT. DISTRICT ATTORNEY’S/CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

COOLEY (in uniform) and HAWKINS enter and find IRENE rising from the conference table with a lawyer, COREY MURDOCK.

IRENE
Officer Cooley, Detective Hawkins, this is Corey Murdock, attorney for Stillwater Security and Risk Assessment, Mr. Sweet’s employer. He’s here on Mr. Sweet’s behalf.

MURDOCK
I’ll keep it brief. My client’s presence is required in Jordan. Without revealing too much, a security detail’s cover has been blown behind enemy lines.

(MORE)
MURDOCK (CONT'D)
His skills as an interrogator are urgently needed to locate them.

COOLEY
What does this mean?

HAWKINS
It means they’re waving the flag and Sweet’s walking.

MURDOCK
My client is a federal contractor protected from prosecution during all official operations.

COOLEY
Is that code for Diplomatic immunity?

IRENE
I’m sorry, Chaplain. But there will be no indictment filed against Mr. Sweet. On behalf of the District Attorney’s office I apologize for any inconvenience we caused your client.

MURDOCK
Thank you. American lives are at stake. Have a Merry Christmas.

On that note, Murdock leaves the office.

COOLEY
You’ve prosecuted with much less, Irene.

IRENE
You heard him. This office has no jurisdiction. And if I’m charging someone like Sweet, I need more than circumstantial evidence.

HAWKINS
You know Stillwater Security is a front for the Toolshed. It’s one of their most played-out aliases.

COOLEY
What is the Toolshed?

HAWKINS
Toolshed’s the final frontier. The heavy-duty dark lords.

(MORE)
HAWKINS (CONT'D)
These mother fuckers you contract to send into Satan’s battlefields. Toolshed’s who you call for jobs legit PMF’s like Blackstar can’t do. Black ops. And off the books.

IRENE
How do you know all of this?

HAWKINS
I keep my ear to the streets. And I explored all of my options when I left the marines. Very thoroughly.

COOLEY
And Marlon Sweet works for them.

HAWKINS
Let’s not question his motivations without questioning our country’s.

COOLEY
You know he’s gonna come after me.

HAWKINS
You did declare war on him when you had him arrested. You’re unfinished business to him now. Don’t worry, Chuckie. You know we got you. Irene, you and yours coming to my Christmas party tomorrow night?

IRENE
Who do you think’s doing all the cooking at my house tonight and tomorrow? Is Happy Hour still on?

HAWKINS
You bet. What about you, Chuckie? What are your Christmas plans?

COOLEY
Deliver toys to the children at Anchorage Regional in the morning. Christmas service at the Elks Lodge. Dinner at my sister’s...

HAWKINS
Audrey’s catering my Christmas party tomorrow night. You may as well come. You shouldn’t be alone.

CUT TO:
100  EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

HAWKINS walks COOLEY to his car.

    COOLEY
    Why did you become a cop?

    HAWKINS
    I can’t sing and I won’t steal. You know I’m in Marlon Sweet’s corner. I’m very defensive when it comes to our military. He’s been in combat since he was eighteen, a kid just following orders. In some ways he’s still in it. But he’s beyond the point of no return. The best way to help him is to put him down. I’m sorry. But no man should spend his life living in fear, looking over his shoulder. He made it clear he won’t stop at just you. Those you care about, they’d be at risk too.

    COOLEY
    Still talking me down off the ledge? I’m good, Rennie. I’m on solid ground now. I got this.

Cooley gets into his car. Hawkins watches him drive off.

CUT TO:

101  INT. GUN RANGE - DAY

The TARGET, a silhouette of a human head and torso, flutters in the air as it’s riddled with bullets. Each shot tightly grouped in the shoulder and upper thighs. The gun is empty. COOLEY turns to the police firing range’s FEMALE COACH once he clears his chamber, keeping it aimed down range.

    COOLEY
    Clear.

    COACH
    Are you re-qualifying?

    COOLEY
    Putting him down long enough to cuff him.

    COACH
    And long enough for him to shoot back at you.
COOLEY
Some of us became cops to save lives, you know.

CUT TO:

102 EXT. SWEET HOUSE - MORNING

A Car Service BENTLEY turns into the driveway. The suited DRIVER gets out, crosses to the front door and KNOCKS. MRS. SWEET answers the door. The Driver’s possesses a pleasant, non-threatening demeanor.

MRS. SWEET
Merry Christmas. He’ll be right out.

DRIVER
I’ll wait in the car, ma’am. And a Merry Christmas to you as well.

He returns to the car and gets back into the driver’s seat. We recognize the Driver as OWEN LANDAU.

CUT TO:

103 INT. AUDREY’S HOUSE - MORNING

AUDREY, White, 33, is in her robe cooking up a storm. Dishes and platters cover every inch of counter and table space in the kitchen and adjoining dining room. COOLEY lets himself in using his key, hauling Christmas gifts inside.

COOLEY
Merry Christmas, sis.

AUDREY
I called you three times...

COOLEY
I was in the middle of service.

AUDREY
And left three messages reminding you to pick up more baking pans.

COOLEY
I didn’t have time. I just came to drop these off. You had this month and last month to prepare for today. Why weren’t you ready?
AUDREY
Wait until you have children.

COOLEY
I’m delivering Rennie’s order. I’ll stop at the store on my way back.

AUDREY
What good will that do me when I need them now? You have any idea how many dinners I’m preparing?

COOLEY
Free of charge? I didn’t think so.

Cooley’s PHONE BEEPS.

AUDREY
What do you think mom and dad will do out there in the woods all by themselves this Christmas?

COOLEY
Probably each other.

AUDREY
Thanks for putting that image in my head, Charlie.

Cooley checks his message - an attached picture message was sent: A selfie of McKENNA wearing a SANTA HAT and making a goofy expression. Cooley shows it to Audrey.

COOLEY
Check it out. It’s Witt. His last Christmas in Chicago before his big move here.

AUDREY
Just how interested is he in you?

COOLEY
Probably not as interested as you’d like him to be. So, before you put us in a hot tub together...

AUDREY
Just friends? No chance of more?

COOLEY
Audrey, it’s not a coin toss.
AUDREY
Straightener than nine-fifteen, huh? Just what this state needs - another eligible bachelor. A good-looking lawyer too. I’d give him a tumble. Except I have Slater and three kids, presumably his, coming back from my mother-in-law’s traditional Hallelujah breakfast.

COOLEY
You’d never be accused of putting your needs ahead of mine. And that’s why I love you, you bitch.

AUDREY
Then promise me you’ll stop putting other’s needs before your own. It would be nice if you met someone who appreciated you and didn’t need saving. Or your savings. Last thing I need is to help my brother pay his mortgage because some skank-a-zoid he fell hard for greased him.

COOLEY
Sweet Jesus, Audrey. How long ago was that?

CUT TO:

104  EXT. SWEET HOUSE - MORNING

MARLON comes out of the house with his luggage saying his good-byes to his PARENTS. OWEN helps him load his luggage into the trunk, then they get into the car and leave.

CUT TO:

105  INT. BENTLEY (MOVING) - MORNING

OWEN behind the wheel. MARLON in back relaxing.

DRIVER
Where to, sir?

MARLON
Merrill Field. Let’s try to get it right this time.
Marlon tries to slip in a nap during the drive. As he drives, Owen reaches into his leather bag seated on the passenger seat. He pulls out a sharp, stainless-steel COBRA SPIKE-KNUCKLE KNIFE, made popular by its movie-namesake starring Sylvester Stallone. Owen’s eyes burn with menace.

CUT TO:

106  INT. JEEP CHEROKEE (MOVING) - MORNING 106

COOLEY driving along the highway. Cooley’s eyes suddenly widen. He slams the brakes - there’s a loud SCREECH and a heavy THUNK! He’s collided into something.

CUT TO:

107  EXT. SEWARD HIGHWAY - MORNING 107

Growing traffic is at a standstill. An Alaskan State Trooper cruises past the traffic to the scene of the accident, lights illuminating the night. COOLEY steps out of his vehicle.

Trooper STODDARD emerges from his Cruiser and surveys the scene: An injured MOOSE lying in the middle of the road in pain, bleeding, its legs broken.

STODDARD

Chaplain Charlie, you okay?

COOLEY

The moose just came out of nowhere.

STODDARD

Where are you headed?

COOLEY

I’m delivering Rennie Hawkins’s party platters for my sister.

STODDARD

For the party tonight. You going?

COOLEY

No choice. The passenger train only runs once a month this time of year, so my parents have to do without me this year.

STODDARD

Looks like he’s hurt bad. We have to hurry and move him off the road. Give me a hand, will ya?
Cooley doesn’t move.

**COOLEY**
Sawyer... You’ll have to dispatch him. I’m sorry, but I don’t see any other way.

Stoddard inhales deeply, realizing what he has to do. He reaches inside his Cruiser and pulls out a SHOTGUN and HEADPHONES to muffle the shotgun’s blast. He aims at the moose, locking eyes with the animal. Stoddard registers the suffering in its eyes. He hesitates, his hands trembling.

**COOLEY (CONT’D)**
Careful. You don’t want the bullet to ricochet and hit someone.

Stoddard lowers the shotgun.

**STODDARD**
I didn’t think it would be this hard. I was with Fish and Wildlife. Protecting both people and the natural resources... How do I bring myself to that level to do this?

CUT TO:

**108 EXT. GLENN HIGHWAY - MORNING**

The BENTLEY coasts along the highway normally. It suddenly begins swerving erratically, across lanes, driving off the highway until it finally comes to a stop. Beat. OWEN calmly exits the Bentley. He buttons his overcoat tightly with his gloved hands and walks to Merrill Airfield in the distance.

CUT TO:

**109 EXT. SEWARD HIGHWAY - MORNING**

**COOLEY** gently relieves **STODDARD** of the shotgun and head-phones.

**COOLEY**
Here, I’ll do it. My least favorite part of the job, but I’ll do it.

Cooley puts the headphones on, then aims the gun steady at the base of the animal’s skull. As his finger tightens on the trigger, **WE CUT TO BLACK SCREEN**.

FADE OUT.