

HOA

written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - NIGHT

A long row of familiar looking homes silhouetted by dimly lit STREET LAMPS. It's lights out, in the later hours for all but one house that neighbors a dense patch of woods.

SEVERAL CARS in the driveway. At the curb and around a circular cul-de-sac.

A SMALL POND

just behind this dead end curve. The water is calm, quiet, glasslike. A FULL MOON reflected on the surface. Ominous MUSIC builds as we take in the creepy vibe of the giant moon overhead.

LOUD HIP-HOP

And a BOOMING yet STEADY BEAT from the busy house party still going strong. Some faint LAUGHTER of drunk female guests are heard from the street.

INT. BOOKER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A large flat screen displays a paused football game. Before the TV sits a cluttered coffee table featuring a flurry of unopened bills, several half empty bottles of booze and the longest Maglite flashlight ever.

IN THE KITCHEN

A bloody hand is being rinsed out under the running water of a sink. On the tile floor is a busted bottle of Jack Daniels and a knocked over chair.

The unseen man grabs a dish towel and dries his hands. He carefully wraps some gauze around a wounded palm.

We reveal the man to be CHARLIE BOOKER (30s), unbuttoned security guard's shirt, white wife beater and wrinkled khakis.

He has trim hair, thinly shaved, military cut. Tired bags under his eyes. A true sadness about him.

LIVING ROOM

Charlie drags himself back to the living room couch and slumps down. He snags up a cell from the coffee table, gives it a good look. He stares down at --

A PHOTO OF HIS EX GIRLFRIEND featured behind the busted glass frame he most likely punched with his fist.

BOOKER

Talk to me, Katie. Because I
really don't know what to do.
You tell me. What's my next move?

Booker stares into her beautiful eyes. He loses his cool and flips the frame over. Face down.

BOOKER (CONT'D)

Yeah, well. I don't believe you.
Try again.

Booker pours himself a healthy shot of vodka into a dirty glass. He quickly downs the double shot.

INT. THOM GREER'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The loud MUSIC still audible from across the street. A hand snags up a cordless phone from the couch. This is --

ELAINE GREER (40s), house robe, ponytail, mean as a snake. She dials 911 and sighs with disgust as her henpecked husband --

THOM GREER (40s), beer gut, t-shirt and baggy sweatpants, puts a leash on their Jack Russell.

The disobedient dog yips away in protest as he fights Greer every step of the way.

Greer stares up at his wife as she holds the phone to her ear and taps her heel in an angry fit.

GREER

What are you doing?

ELAINE

If you won't do something about
this, I will. It's only been three
nights in a row.

GREER

Hang up the phone.

Greer snags the phone out of her hand.

911 (V.O.)

911. What's your emergency?

GREER
(into phone)
She didn't mean it.

He hangs up.

ELAINE
You can't do that. Just hang up on them like that. You know, they're just gonna send someone anyways.

GREER
You wanna keep making trouble for these kids? It's Spring Break. Let them have their fun. And in a few days, everything will be back to normal. It'll be nice and dull again. Just like you like it.

Meanwhile, the dog never shuts up. YIP-YIP-YIP!

ELAINE
In other words, you don't have the balls to do anything about it. Just like last week when they let the air out of our tires and you couldn't do a fucking thing but stand there with that same dumb look on your face.

YIP-YIP-YIP! Greer shoots the dog an angry stare, jerks on the leash to settle him down.

GREER
And you wanna call the cops again because they did so much the last time.

YIP-YIP-YIP!

ELAINE
Yeah, well, at least they'll get them to turn down the music. Which is more than I can say for you.

YIP-YIP-YIP! Greer finally snaps.

GREER
Shut up!

ELAINE
Excuse me?

GREER
I wasn't talking to you.

Elaine scoffs.

ELAINE
Oh, really?

GREER
I was talking to the dog. You
know? The bitch?

Elaine fights the urge to slug him. Greer knows he screwed up, looks away from her.

ELAINE
Tell them to turn the music down.
Or I'm calling the police.

GREER
Yeah, that's great. Let me piss
off an entire house of drunken
college kids and get them all riled
up since that worked out so well
the last time.

Elaine just smirks with disgust, storms off, back to the bedroom. SLAMS the door shut.

GREER (CONT'D)
Yeah, I love you too!

EXT. THOM GREER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Greer gets control of his dog as they step away from the house and onto a sidewalk. They head toward the end of the street where the pond sits.

The MUSIC still bumping out from the two story home on the corner. The wild guests LAUGH OUT LOUD as they continue to carry on long into the night.

EXT. POND - NIGHT

Greer lets his dog take care of business on the grassy hill as he scrolls through his email. He stares off, into the water, mentally exhausted.

GREER
God, give me the strength to accept
those things I cannot change.

The scrappy little devil manages to yank the leash off of Greer's finger and tears off into some nearby woods.

Greer stares into the trees. Listens to the dog YIP-YIP from somewhere long into the sticks.

YIP-YIP-YIP!

GREER (CONT'D)

Bear, get back here! Bear!

Greer turns on his phone's FLASHLIGHT and heads toward the darkness of the secluded woods.

GREER (CONT'D)

Bear! Come on now! Let's go!

INT. WOODS - NIGHT

The MUSIC is all but a quiet and indistinguishable beat from inside the trees. A DEAD MAN in unbuckled jeans which barely hang from his partially exposed rear end lay motionless in the mud and fallen leaves.

BEAR

Rushes to the scene, licks around the man's face and hair as a pair of legs approach the body. The phone's flashlight slowly scans over the corpse.

CUT TO:

DARKNESS

...a LOUD KNOCK...

BUMP-BUMP-BUMP

INT. BOOKER'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Booker passed out on the couch. The TV has un-paused itself some time ago as an old sitcom rolls the end credits.

And another LOUD KNOCK.

BUMP-BUMP-BUMP

wakes him up. He gazes around the room, confused, paranoid but now fully alert.

BUMP-BUMP-BUMP

Booker checks his watch:

12:45 AM

and leaps from the couch and to the door.

BUMP-BUMP

BOOKER
I'm coming! Hold on!

Booker answers:

It's Greer and his dog. He looks as if he's just seen a ghost.

GREER
Hi. Sorry. I know it's late,
Charlie, but you need to come with
me. Like, right now.

Booker, with zero sense of urgency, checks his watch, scratches his itchy scalp, irritated.

BOOKER
You sure about that?

GREER
I'd be willing to stake the lives
of not only my wife but all three
of my kids and their unborn
children. So, yes. Very sure.

Booker still isn't sure as he gazes at his watch.

BOOKER
Okay.

He points inside.

BOOKER (CONT'D)
Just let me get some shoes on.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSING PROJECT - STREET - NIGHT

Booker's SECURITY PATROL CAR slowly cruises the residential street with LIGHTS OFF.

Greer rides shotgun. They approach the last house on the right before the cul-de-sac.

From the front window of the party house, a young man's face peers out with genuine curiosity.

INT. SECURITY CAR - NIGHT

Greer spots the face of the young man staring back at the car and tugs at Booker's sleeve.

GREER

It appears we've been busted.

Booker takes a look for himself --

-- the young man quickly ducks behind the drapes, out of sight.

BOOKER

I see. You get a good look at him?

GREER

Good enough.

BOOKER

Good. That's real good.

Booker pulls his car against the round curb of the cul-de-sac and parks. He and Greer both step from the car.

EXT. CUL-DE-SAC - WOODS - NIGHT

Booker walks to his trunk, pops it and grabs a large maglite flashlight from a side pocket.

Greer keeps a close eye on the house. It seems every light in the house is on, both downstairs and up. Booker also watches the house as he shuts the trunk.

BOOKER

You see our guy?

GREER

No.

Booker hands him the flashlight.

BOOKER

Okay. Show me.

Greer leads the way into the dense patch of woods and trees as Booker follows behind.

INT. WOODS - NIGHT

Greer stays one step ahead of Booker as he shines the flashlight at the ground before them.

They approach the body.

GREER
Here he is. Right here.

Booker squints as he stares down at the motionless lump in the mud and leaves. He snags the flashlight from Greer and moves in a thoughtful circle.

GREER (CONT'D)
I thought maybe he just came out here to take a leak and passed out. I didn't touch him.

Booker moves the light over every inch of the body, starting with the feet and legs - his waist - unbuckled jeans pulled down half-way past his rear.

GREER (CONT'D)
Well. Is he dead or not?

Booker points his light at the head: The leaves and forestry surrounding it are a BLOODY MESS. He kneels down for a look.

GREER (CONT'D)
Oh my God.

Greer turns away. Booker isn't phased in the least.

BOOKER
The hair's clean. Looks like his throat was cut.

Greer is put off but can't help but take another look.

GREER
Oh God. Are you sure?

Booker stares up at him, annoyed.

BOOKER
No, I'm not sure. But that's what it looks like.

Booker feels the victim's stomach.

BOOKER (CONT'D)
He's still warm. This couldn't have happened more than an hour ago.

GREER
I'm calling the police.

Greer turns to leave.

BOOKER
Wait a second.

GREER
What?

Booker pauses. Unsure.

BOOKER
I wanna handle it.

GREER
What the hell are you talking
about? Handle what? He's dead.

BOOKER
And the person who killed him could
very well be in that house.

Greer stares through the trees at the well lit house.

GREER
Yeah, maybe. Maybe not. So what?
What's that have to do with you?

BOOKER
Think about it. By the time the
coroner carries this body out of
here and the cops are done roping
off the perimeter, collecting
evidence and questioning all the
neighbors, our killer's gonna be
long gone with an air tight alibi.
(beat)
He's gonna have one because he had
time to think about it. A fool
proof plan to cover his ass.

Greer is still confused but nods in agreement.

BOOKER (CONT'D)
We go after them now and we
blindside them. They won't have
time to cook up a story for the
cops.

GREER
Why are you making this your
problem?

BOOKER

Do you even understand the position I'm in, Thom? I should've shut this party down an hour ago. And this poor bastard would most likely still be alive.

GREER

You're right. He probably would be. Or maybe they have nothing to do with this. Ever think of that?

BOOKER

No.

GREER

Why not?

Booker points his flashlight at TWO EMPTY BEER BOTTLES in the dirt. Both covered in brown paper bags.

GREER (CONT'D)

It's just a coincidence. Could've already been here.

Booker maneuvers his way through the tree branches, sees a large clearing and the small pond in the distance.

BOOKER

He was most likely down by the water taking a piss when they cut him from behind. And then drug him out here, out of sight and dumped the bottles.

GREER

What are you, a cop now?

Booker turns to him.

BOOKER

Yes. I was. And you know that. So what?

Greer is unimpressed.

GREER

Well you aren't now. You're a security guard and, technically, you work for me. So I'm instructing you to call the cops.

BOOKER

You don't think the news is gonna find out that little tid bit of information? That they're not gonna throw that in my face every minute the cops don't have this guy in cuffs?

Greer thinks it all over.

BOOKER (CONT'D)

Not to mention this kid's family and everyone else in the neighborhood who are gonna call for my head on a stick for letting this happen.

GREER

Yeah, you're probably right. So now's your chance to do the right thing before you make it worse for yourself.

BOOKER

The way I see it, we got an hour, maybe two before this party shuts down and we lose our guy for good.
(beat)

If we got half a chance at solving this thing, we gotta move now.

GREER

Look, I don't know what happened with you and the police force. It's none of my business, but this is not your job.

Booker gets in his face.

BOOKER

You're right. But this neighborhood is my job. And the way I see it, we have an advantage the cops don't have.

GREER

We do? What?

BOOKER

Nobody knows we found the body.

Greer starts to come around.

BOOKER (CONT'D)

Think about it. All it takes is for one of those drunk assholes to slip up and tell us something we're not supposed to know and we've got him.

Greer rolls his eyes and shakes his head.

GREER

And what makes you think they'd talk to you?

BOOKER

Because I was a cop. It's what I did for a living. But if I'm gonna do this, I'll need someone else there to back my play.

(beat)

So what do you say, partner? You're always saying how you need some excitement in your life. Now's your chance.

Greer is unsure but senses a real sincerity and burning passion in Booker's eyes.

GREER

Okay, so what's the game plan?

Booker smiles.

BOOKER

I have an idea.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Standing in the driveway and sipping on a beer is SCOTT (20s) bushy brown hair, dark eyes, trimmed beard, stache.

Scott sports some canvas shoes, sleeveless hoodie and thin leisure pants.

He keeps a close eye on Booker and Greer as they slowly appear from out of the darkness and head for the house.

SCOTT

Good evening, gents.

Booker ignores him, flashes his light at the front window and then in Scott's face.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Is there a problem?

BOOKER
We've had some complaints about the music. Sounds like you boys are having a real time tonight.

SCOTT
Yeah, man, sorry. Travis keeps fuckin' turning up the stereo.

Scott laughs nervously.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Shit. Excuse my language. Had a few tonight.
(smiles)
But don't worry, bro. I got your back. We'll keep it down.

GREER
(angry)
Yeah, so you say.
(to Booker)
As soon as you leave, they turn the music back up. Just watch.

Booker turns to Greer, his hand out, keeps him back and calm.

BOOKER
Back off. Let me handle this.

Greer plays as if he's put off and folds his arms in protest.

Booker shoots Scott an irritated look and rolls his eyes.
Scott cracks a grin.

BOOKER (CONT'D)
So is this your place?

SCOTT
Yeah, man. Me and a couple of my boys rent the place.

Scott pops a smoke in his mouth, about to light up.

BOOKER
You think I can bum one of those?
It's been one of those nights, brother.

SCOTT
Yeah, no problem. Absolutely.

He hands the pack to Booker who quickly sparks one up.

BOOKER

Thanks.

Greer loses patience and charges toward them both.

GREER

It's getting cold out here. You
gonna ask him or not?

Booker stands between Greer and Scott.

BOOKER

You know what?! Go wait in the car!
Let me handle this!

Greer shoots Scott the stink eye as he slowly backs off and walks to the security car. He can't help but notice

ELAINE

standing at their front door, watching with great interest.

GREER

Shit.

Booker also notices Elaine and shoots Greer a stare.

BOOKER

I think your wife's looking for
you.

GREER

Yeah, I see that. Thanks.

Greer heads back to his home. Elaine watches him all the way back.

Scott, confused, has a good laugh.

BOOKER

Okay, here's the deal. This guy's
daughter came down here to the lake
with her friends over an hour ago
and hasn't come home. He seems to
think they made a stop at your
little party here.

Scott laughs. He stares across the street at Greer and Elaine as they talk, stare back at him from the door.

BOOKER (CONT'D)

You know how old these girls are?

SCOTT
No, sir.

BOOKER
Sixteen.

Scott smiles, bashful.

BOOKER (CONT'D)
Yeah. And you know what happens if
I find out you're giving alcohol to
an underage girl, don't you?

SCOTT
Yes, sir.

BOOKER
And you wouldn't be that stupid,
right?

Scott quickly shakes his head "no".

SCOTT
No, sir.

BOOKER
Good. Now I'm not here to crash
your party or make trouble for you
or your friends but I gotta take a
look inside. A quick five minutes.

Scott seems uneasy with the idea as he rubs his hair.

BOOKER (CONT'D)
Look. It's either me or this
asshole beating down your door all
night.

Scott bounces on his heels, nervous, unsure. He takes another
look at Greer and Elaine staring back at him.

BOOKER (CONT'D)
You choose.

Scott shrugs his shoulders, carefree.

SCOTT
Yeah, bro. Whatever. Come on
inside.

Scott heads back inside. Booker follows behind, stares over
his shoulder at Greer still with Elaine.

EXT. THOM GREER'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Greer and Elaine still by the door.

GREER

I can't explain everything right now. But I need to go.

ELAINE

Go where? It's One in the morning. What else is there to discuss? Charlie needs to do his fucking job. It's what they pay him for. Just tell him if they don't turn that shit down, we'll get the cops to do it.

GREER

Look. There's a lot more going on than loud music. But I can't get into it with you right now. There's no time.

Elaine spots Booker poke his head out the front door and stare back at them. Greer turns, gives Booker a quick nod as Booker heads back in.

ELAINE

What the fuck is going on over there?

GREER

I gotta go. But I need you to promise me. To promise me, you won't come near that house. For at least an hour or so. Okay?

ELAINE

I don't like this, Thom. What is going on? I know you're hiding something from me.

GREER

So we agree? Wonderful.

Greer smooches her cheek.

GREER (CONT'D)

I'll be back in a bit. Get some sleep.

Elaine attempts to follow but gives up.

ELAINE

Hey!!!

CUT TO:

INT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Scott taps out his cigarette and drops the butt in his beer as he leads the way inside.

Booker takes in the scene:

Two guys shooting pool and smoking pot on the rear porch and a couple drunk chicks watching a yoga instructional on youtube and tumbling over one another.

BOOKER

(to Scott)

Okay, so here's what I need from you. I want everyone in the house in the living room. Fast as possible. The quicker we get this done, the faster I'm out the door. You feel me?

SCOTT

I hear that.

Scott moves further inside.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

(to friends)

Alright, you assholes! Shut the fuck up and listen!

The two yoga twins drop to the carpet in a drunken stupor, all eyes on Scott.

One is JOCELYN (20s), dyed red hair, ponytail, too much eye makeup, and the other is LAINÉE (20s) jet black hair, cut close to the neck, nose ring and tats.

The guys out back stop their game, stare into the home through the open sliding glass door.

This is TRAVIS (20s), linebacker build, full beard, shaggy hair, and CRAIG (20s), blonde, thin, NFL jersey and khaki shorts.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

I need all ya'll in the living room real quick! My man here wants to ask us some questions!

The two pool players stare at one another, not budging as the two girls both laugh and attempt to conceal a large bong under the coffee table.

JOCELYN
(whispers)
Shit.

LAINEE
(whispers)
Shut up.

SCOTT
I told my man here ya'll would cooperate so no one go bein' a smart ass.

Travis and Craig head inside, stop near the door with pool cues in hand.

BOOKER
Is everyone here?

SCOTT
(to Travis and Craig)
Yo, where's Ronnie?

TRAVIS
Where you think, man? He's still puking.

SCOTT
Fuck, man. You serious? Where?

CRAIG
The bathroom, bro. Where do you think?

SCOTT
Yeah, I know, smartass. Which one?

Travis belts out laughing. Craig just smiles.

CRAIG
The hallway, bro. Chill out, man.

Scott, irritated, moves for the hallway restroom as Booker keeps an eye on the others.

RESTROOM

Scott opens and spots RONNIE (20s), shaved head, goatee, hoodie and some jogging pants, hugging the commode.

SCOTT

Oh, come on, bro. What is this
crap, man?

Scott kneels down, grabs Ronnie's face and squeezes as his
eyes roll in the back of his head.

Booker pokes his head in.

Scott stares up at him.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

He's totally gone, bro. I don't
think he's making it to the couch.

Booker takes one look at him, rushes in and grabs Ronnie by
his shirt collar, forces him to his feet and drags him out
with no regard for his well being.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Hey, man! What're you doing?!

Scott jumps out, follows Booker and Ronnie to the

LIVING ROOM

where Jocelyn and Laine are still seated on the floor.
Booker drops Ronnie on the couch, face first, passed out.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Are you crazy? He could've puked
all over the place, bro!

Booker gets in his face.

BOOKER

Chill out, bro. And sit down.

SCOTT

Oh, it's like that?

BOOKER

Sit down!

Scott shakes his head, slumps down on the couch in defeat.

Booker spots Travis and Craig in the kitchen doing shots of
jack and giving him the stink eye.

BOOKER (CONT'D)

Hey! I need you guys out here with
the others! Let's go!

Travis and Craig share a laugh. Travis moves for Booker, a big lumbering tree stump of a guy.

TRAVIS
Yo, what's this about?

BOOKER
I'll ask the questions. And don't worry what it's about. Right now, I need you out here.

Craig cracks a new beer and joins Travis in the living room. Booker spots the girls on the carpet, hot stuff, smiling at him.

BOOKER (CONT'D)
(to girls)
Okay, ladies. Let's take a seat on the couch where I can see you.

Jocelyn and Lainea unfold from their crouching position, take a seat on the couch.

BOOKER (CONT'D)
(to Travis)
You too, Big Ben. Your friend too.

Travis and Craig reluctantly join the others on the couch. Booker points at Ronnie's limp body, still sawing logs.

BOOKER (CONT'D)
How much has he had to drink?

The crowd all stay quiet as they stare at one another. Jocelyn and Lainea both keep their heads down.

CRAIG
He's twenty-one in a couple weeks. Hell does it matter? He's not even driving.

Scott walks over, smacks him on the arm.

CRAIG (CONT'D)
Ouch!

SCOTT
Shut up, dude! And that's not what he asked!

Booker keeps a close eye on the two girls who are still keeping their heads down.

BOOKER

How about you girls? You wanna tell me how much Ronnie's had to drink tonight?

Jocelyn and Lainea still keep their heads down.

BOOKER (CONT'D)

Eyes up, ladies.

Lainea looks up. Jocelyn slowly lifts her head.

LAINEE

A few shots.

BOOKER

He's had more than a few shots. How many?

JOCELYN

Maybe eight or nine.

BOOKER

Maybe eight or nine.

Booker reads Lainea.

BOOKER (CONT'D)

Maybe ten or twelve?

Jocelyn checks with Lainea.

BOOKER (CONT'D)

Don't look at her. Look at me. Did he do more than ten shots? Yes or no?

JOCELYN

Maybe. I don't know. I sort of lost count.

Booker takes a good long look at Ronnie.

BOOKER

Okay, so here's the deal. A young lady was involved in an auto accident this evening. Wrapped her car around a truck. One that just so happened to be parked in a driveway over on Addison Drive.

CRAIG

So?

Booker shoots him a nasty stare.

BOOKER

So this young lady was not of legal drinking age. And I have reason to believe she was coming from your little get together when she crashed.

The two girls stare at Ronnie.

Booker takes notice. Craig and Travis both look sick to their stomachs.

BOOKER (CONT'D)

What? You guys aren't gonna tell me it's been just the seven of you all night? Tell me how wrong I am?

Travis turns his back, walks off, unable to answer Booker with a straight face.

SCOTT

Is she okay?

BOOKER

I don't know. It all depends.

LAINEE

On what?

BOOKER

On what else they find in her system.

Everyone plays quiet, keeps a close eye on one another, nervous but keeping their composure.

Craig nervously runs his hands through his hair, leans his head back and rubs his weary face and eyes.

CRAIG

Shit, man. Ronnie.

Scott and the others can hardly believe it.

SCOTT

(to Craig)

Are you serious right now? Why don't you shut up!

CRAIG

Nah, man. Why should we? He's the one picking up girls at the dollar store. Why not let him answer for this shit.

Jocelyn about falls off the couch as she slaps Craig's legs.

JOCELYN

Shut up, asshole.

CRAIG

You heard Scott. We're supposed to cooperate, so I'm cooperating.

TRAVIS

Why don't you just shut up like the rest of us? You don't see us flapping off at the mouth like a scared little bitch.

(to Booker)

He's just some rent-a-cop. Yeah, you, bro.

Booker smiles and plays it cool.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

You ain't the cops. The way I see it, we don't have to say nuthin.

Scott shoots Travis a dirty stare.

SCOTT

There better not be anything to tell.

LAINEE

(stares at Travis)

That's what I'm talking about.

JOCELYN

Yeah, Travis.

TRAVIS

(to Jocelyn and Laine)

Why don't ya'll shut up!

BOOKER

Why's that, Travis? You hiding something?

Travis folds his arms in protest.

TRAVIS
I'm not saying shit. Take that shit
someplace else, man.

Scott stares Travis down, unflinching, unwavering.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)
What, bro?

SCOTT
I'm telling you right now, man, if
I find out you and this dumb
motherfucker got some high school
chick toasted I'm not gonna be
happy.

Lainee gets in his face.

LAINEE
So just tell him you didn't and he
can leave!

TRAVIS
Hey, man. I didn't do shit.

BOOKER
But you know who did, don't you,
Travis?

A LOUD KNOCK draws everyone's attention to the front door.
Scott stares at the door, and then Booker, unsure.

BOOKER (CONT'D)
Tell you what. We'll come back to
that. Everyone sit tight.

Booker heads to the door as the others all whisper to each
other, confused, angry.

FRONT DOOR

Booker answers. Enter Greer. Booker gives him a wink and a
nod as the two head for the

LIVING ROOM

and are stopped half-way by Scott.

SCOTT
Whoa. Wait a second, bro. You said
this chick was in a car accident.
Not hanging out by the lake. What's
this have to do with this guy's
daughter?

GREER
 (to Scott)
 Where is she?

Greer charges toward him but held back by Booker.

BOOKER
 Hey! Back off! We're gonna get to
 the bottom of this, just relax!

Travis, curious, stares down Greer, struts toward him.

TRAVIS
 Yo. What's he talking about?

GREER
 (to Booker)
 Is he the one?

BOOKER
 I don't know. Right now, we're just
 talking. You gotta let me talk,
 okay? The quicker you stay quiet
 and the quicker we find her. If you
 can't be quiet, I'm gonna have you
 wait outside.

SCOTT
 (to Booker)
 I don't remember inviting him
 inside, bro.

GREER
 I'm not going anywhere without my
 daughter!

Travis turns to Ronnie, still passed out on the couch.
 Jocelyn and Laine are so embarrassed that they cover their
 faces and keep their heads low.

SCOTT
 I don't know what you're talking
 about!

BOOKER
 (to Scott)
 Hey, don't talk to him! Talk to me!
 (to Greer)
 And what did I say? Not one more
 word!

Greer backs off. Folds his arms, paces, furious.

SCOTT

(to Greer)

Don't come in here yelling about
shit you don't know, brother! You
got me?

BOOKER

He's not gonna say another word.
But he's not going anywhere. Not
until you tell me something.

SCOTT

What, man?! Whadd'ya wanna know?!

TRAVIS

Don't tell this guy nuthin', man.
He's running some bullshit game.
Telling you right now...they need
to take that shit outside.

Travis bows up, steps closer to Booker.

BOOKER

(to Travis)

Take it easy, Lurch. Okay?

Jocelyn and Lainea both stand, hold each other, scared.

TRAVIS

Or what, man? You gonna arrest us?
Fuckin' fake ass security guard,
cop wannabe.

BOOKER

You're right. Maybe you should call
the cops. Have me removed.

Travis is quiet all of the sudden. He and Scott share a quick
look.

Craig jumps from the couch, leaps over the armrest and joins
the others by the door.

CRAIG

(to Scott)

That's right, bro! You could bust
his ass for trespassing! Do it,
man!

Scott rocks on his heels, unsure of his next move.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Come on, man! Let's do it!

SCOTT

Shut up! Just shut up a second!

Booker smiles. Greer watches Travis and the others closely as he and the girls whisper back and forth.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

(to Craig)

Why don't you go sit your ass down!
Let me worry about what I need to
do! Alright?

Craig looks put off as he shakes his head with disgust and utter disappointment.

CRAIG

Shit, man. Okay. Whatever, bro.
You're the boss.

Craig heads back to the couch.

BOOKER

Okay, here's the deal. This girl
who got hurt was last seen with his
daughter.

Scott and Travis both watch Greer.

BOOKER (CONT'D)

Now I know that they were both here
at some point in the evening. I
also have reason to believe your
friend Ronnie, if he were awake,
would know a little something about
that.

Travis and Scott both stare at the unconscious lump on the couch.

Ronnie snores like a buzzsaw.

BOOKER (CONT'D)

The problem is, he is not awake.
All of you are. So somebody's gonna
have to give me something or I'm
gonna have no choice but get the
cops involved.

Scott shuts his eyes, sick at the thought. Travis also throws his hands on his hips and turns away.

SCOTT

Look. I don't know if she was here
or not.

(MORE)

SCOTT (CONT'D)

There was kind of a lot of people here earlier. A lot of faces I didn't recognize. Maybe she was here, maybe she wasn't. All I know is...she's not here anymore. I don't really know what else I can tell you.

BOOKER

Paramedics pulled one girl from that wreckage. Not two. That means we still got a girl missing. And I'm sure you and your friends wouldn't want anything happening to her too. Now would you?

Scott checks with the others.

SCOTT

No. We wouldn't.

BOOKER

Okay. I'm gonna need to check the rest of the house. Make sure she's not here.

Scott folds his arms, exhales. Defeated.

SCOTT

Okay, fine. Whatever.

BOOKER

(to Greer)

Thom. I need you to keep an eye on things down here. Make sure they don't go anywhere.

Travis cracks a grin.

TRAVIS

Are you kidding me?

BOOKER

No, I'm not. This is my job.

TRAVIS

We live here, bro. Where the fuck are we gonna go, dude?

Booker heads for the stairs. Travis gives Greer the stink eye.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

What're you looking at, man?

SCOTT

Shut up, dude. Just let him do his thing and he's out of here.

Scott walks to the bottom of the staircase and waits.

Travis fake charges at Greer, makes him flinch. He laughs and heads back to the living room.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Booker spots a bathroom door slightly ajar and steps inside for a look.

BATHROOM

Booker stands by the door, lets his eyes do the work. The sink is clean, shower curtain pulled back as the inside tiles are still beaded up with water.

And then --

spots a small plastic bag in between the toilet and sink.

Inside the bag is A PAIR OF TENNIS SHOES and PINK SCRUNCHEE.

Booker inspects them carefully. The bottoms are caked in wet mud and grass.

Booker checks the tongue for a shoe size -- 9

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Scott awaits at the bottom of the steps as Booker heads down the stairs with a dead serious look in his eyes. He nudges Scott out of the way and heads for the couch.

SCOTT

Okay, bro. So she's not here. So why don't you take off.

Booker hovers over Ronnie's limp body, still crashed out on the cushions of the couch.

BOOKER

Not so fast, bro.

Booker grabs Ronnie's shoeless and sockless feet, pretty small.

Travis and the girls hover behind him, curious, fed up, ready for him to leave.

TRAVIS
What're you doing, man?

Booker inspects his pockets, pulls them inside out and comes up with a PINK SCRUNCHEE.

Travis and the girls gasp at the sight. They back up a step or two.

BOOKER
What is this? Huh?

SCOTT
Where did you get that?

BOOKER
Someone wanna tell me what this was doing in his pocket?

Scott, Travis and the others share a befuddled look. But no one is more surprised than Greer. He shoots Booker a hard stare as Booker returns with a wink.

Greer is unsure at first but gets into character.

GREER
What is that?! Where did you get that?!

TRAVIS
He just said where he got it. It was in his pocket.

Travis smiles, shakes his head.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)
No, dude. I had my eye on bro all night. He didn't fool with none of those girls.

Travis points at Booker.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)
He planted that shit.

BOOKER
So what're you saying, Travis? You vouch for him?

Scott and the girls all stare Travis down, waiting. He grows very uncomfortable very quickly.

BOOKER (CONT'D)

Because if he identifies this as his daughters, we're gonna have a problem.

Booker purposely stares Greer dead in the eye. Greer takes this as his signal and nods.

BOOKER (CONT'D)

You think maybe you wanna re-trace your steps?

Scott is intrigued as he shoots Travis a hard, angry stare.

BOOKER (CONT'D)

Think of a time maybe Ronnie wasn't in your sight. And maybe he was hanging out with some girls he picked up down at the store.

Travis grows more and more nervous as his friends all stare him down.

TRAVIS

Why are you guys all staring at me like I did something? I don't know where he got it from. He was striking out with those skanks all night. There's no way he got laid.
(to Craig)
You saw him, dude. Say something.

CRAIG

Shut up, dude.

Travis takes a good look at Greer, shakes his head. He points at him as the others follow his look.

TRAVIS

No way any of those girls belong to him. Besides. It's like a three mile hike from here to the store. You telling me they humped it three miles to the store and three back for a couple sodas and some twizzlers?

Booker checks with Greer. A small grin.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

No way, bro.
(to Scott)
Come on, man. You saw them two skrags. Trailer trash, man.
(MORE)

TRAVIS (CONT'D)
Probably live in that trailer park
off of Stetson. You said so
yourself.

Scott shuts his eyes, embarrassed. He turns away from Booker
and paces the carpet. Jocelyn and Lainea watch him with
disdain.

BOOKER
Sounds to me like you all got a
good look at these girls.

SCOTT
Yeah, so what? Maybe we did. But
none of us have some girl's
scrunchie in our pocket, now do we?

BOOKER
I don't know. I haven't checked any
of your pockets.

SCOTT
That's right. You haven't. And
you're not going to.

Booker and Greer share another look.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
You got a problem with Ronnie, I
suggest you let him sober up and
take it up with him. Until then,
get out of my house.

Booker looks to Greer, desperate.

GREER
It's hers.

The girls are both shocked. Craig shuts his eyes, slumps down
in a chair, defeated.

Travis and Scott share a nervous look.

TRAVIS
Bullshit, bro. You're just saying
that.

GREER
No. She was tying up her hair in
one of those things when she left
the house. It was that one. I know
it was.

TRAVIS

Yeah, right, bro. A pink scrunchie.
That only narrows it down to about
five hundred billion other chicks.

SCOTT

Just shut up, alright?!

Travis is shocked. Craig also looks up. Jocelyn and Lainea are both taken back by the outburst.

Scott carefully approaches Greer.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

(to Greer)

Look. I'm sorry your girl is
missing. I don't know where she is.
If I knew, I'd tell you. But I
don't. So I think it's time you
both left.

Greer shakes his head incessantly. He backs away from Scott and moves further into the home, joins the others.

GREER

No. No way I'm leaving. Not without
her. Not until I find out what
happened here.

Greer grabs the scrunchie from Booker and points at Ronnie's limp body.

GREER (CONT'D)

Now you wake him up and you ask him
where he got this from!

Greer holds the scrunchie in Travis's face. Travis is a bit sad for the man as he observes his desperation.

TRAVIS

Okay, bro. Okay. We'll ask him.

Scott, now livid, rushes back to the living room.

SCOTT

Are you kidding me? I thought you
wanted him out.

LAINEE

His daughter's missing. The least
we can do is try to piece together
what happened. Maybe she was here.
I don't know.

JOCELYN

Yeah. Like, I don't see what the big deal is. Maybe Ronnie and her hung out tonight. Who knows?

Scott throws his hands in the air, gives up.

SCOTT

Okay, whatever.

Craig watches passively from the leather chair.

BOOKER

Awfully quiet over there, Craig. You got any problem with us staying?

Craig scoffs.

CRAIG

Like my opinion counts, bro.

Scott folds his arms in protest.

SCOTT

Okay, so what now?

BOOKER

The way I see it, we still got a girl missing. One was already hurt in a car accident with God knows what in her system.

Jocelyn rubs her cold arms at the thought.

Greer notices her strange behavior.

BOOKER (CONT'D)

Too much to drink is one thing. But if the cops find out she got into something else, they're gonna come back here asking all kinds of questions.

SCOTT

Why would they do that? They don't know she was even here tonight. And neither do you.

Scott looks to Greer.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Neither does her old man.

BOOKER

That's right. It would be a shame if I made them aware of your little party here tonight. The way I see it, if she were here, they're gonna find out about it anyways. Oh, it might take them awhile, but sooner or later they'll figure out where she was coming from.

Jocelyn and Laineé both look to Ronnie.

JOCELYN

(to all)

Look, we have to wake him up. He's the one who brought them here. Why not let him answer for this shit?

Craig isn't so sure as he squints at Jocelyn.

LAINÉE

Yeah. She's right.

CRAIG

We don't know that.

JOCELYN

What?

CRAIG

You don't know that. Maybe she came with someone else. Or maybe she wasn't here at all. So stop talking talking about shit you don't know about.

JOCELYN

Shut up, Craig. At least I'm talking. What're you doing? Sitting there like you weren't hanging all over those girls, just like Ronnie.

Craig leaps from his chair, steps about an inch from Jocelyn's face, hopping mad.

CRAIG

I ain't messing with no underage chicks, bro. So step off with that shit.

Craig heads for the kitchen for another beer. Jocelyn follows behind, relentless.

JOCELYN

Oh, yeah, right, like just before you begged for their phone number you stopped and asked to see their ID. Gimme a break, Craig.

Booker watches the exchange in silence.

CRAIG

Oh, yeah, well if I was getting laid, what would I still be doing hanging around you assholes for? Huh?

SCOTT

Look, the way I see it, if she were here, all we need is a picture.

(to Greer and Booker)

We don't recognize her and we can say goodnight to both of you, right now.

Booker thinks it over, turns to Greer.

BOOKER

You have a photo?

Greer digs his phone out of his pocket.

GREER

Yeah. I have one right here.

He pulls up a recent photo of daughter SANDRA (16), pigtails and freckles, awkward. He hands it to Booker who bypasses Scott, Travis and Craig and heads straight for Jocelyn and Lainee.

BOOKER

Okay, girls. The ball's in your court. You see her here tonight or not?

They both take a long hard look. Silent. Lainee is the first to shake her head "no" as Jocelyn follows her lead.

JOCELYN

No. I don't know her. Never saw her.

LAINEE

No. I mean, yeah, I think I've seen her before. You know, like down by the lake, but I didn't see her here tonight.

BOOKER

So you've seen her down by the lake?

Lainee shoots Travis a hard stare. Greer notices. Travis notices Greer's eyes on him.

LAINEE

Well. Yeah. I mean, not tonight or anything but I've seen her around.

Booker turns to Scott, Travis and Craig, all watching and waiting.

BOOKER

How about with any of these guys?

LAINEE

No. Like I said, I've only seen her by the lake. It was maybe once or twice.

BOOKER

Once or twice. And when you were down by the lake, who else was with you?

Lainee squints, a confused smile.

LAINEE

I never said I was at the lake. I said I saw her down by the lake.

BOOKER

No reason to be defensive. I'm just asking a few questions.

Lainee scoffs, now visibly irritated.

LAINEE

I'm not being defensive. You're the one being defensive.

BOOKER

I'm just trying to get a clear picture. That's all.

LAINEE

No. You're trying to put words in my mouth.

BOOKER

Nobody can put words in your mouth.
Only you can put words in your
mouth. Just like it was your choice
to tell me about seeing his
daughter at the lake. Not once, but
twice.

LAINEE

That's right. Because you asked me.

BOOKER

And you didn't have to say
anything. But you did. All by
yourself.

Travis also grows tired of this back and forth, walks up
behind Booker, eyes fierce, fists clenched, ready to fight.

Scott motions for him to back off.

LAINEE

Hell are you talking about?

TRAVIS

Hey. That's enough. She answered
your question, now back off.

Booker ignores him, all eyes on Lainee.

BOOKER

You know what I'm talking about.
First, you said "no". Never saw
her. And then you said "yes". I've
seen her. Once or twice. Or maybe
it was more like three or four
times. Maybe five or six. Maybe
you're not being straight with me.

LAINEE

Maybe you're full of shit.

TRAVIS

Hey! I said back off!

Travis moves even closer. Scott quickly intervenes as he
reaches for Travis's shoulder.

SCOTT

Ease up there, Travis. Let it go,
man.

BOOKER

Why so nervous, Laine? I'll tell you why. Sounds to me like his baby girl spent some time down by the lake. Enough time that it took you two seconds to ID her photo. To me, that's a red flag. I think she liked hanging around down here because this is where the party is. Travis knows what I'm talking about. He knew what I was doing here the second I walked through the door.

TRAVIS

(to Booker)

You got something to say about me, you say it to my face!

Booker turns to him, no hesitation.

BOOKER

Come on, Travis. We all saw you dump that baggie in the side pocket. You even laid your cue on the table so you could have a free hand to cover your stash.

Jocelyn and Craig step closer to the sliding door and peek out onto the porch area where they spot a cue stick on the pool table.

Travis feels all eyes on him, gives them all a quick look and then back to Booker.

TRAVIS

Full of shit, man. This is such bullshit!

SCOTT

Are you serious, dude?

TRAVIS

Just back off, alright?

BOOKER

Only one way to find out.

Booker heads for the back porch as the others follow behind. Greer also joins.

BACK PORCH - POOL TABLE

Booker slowly walks around the table where Travis was last seen shooting pool with Craig. He stops at the side pocket, begins unloading various billiard balls onto the table as they roll about the green. And then --

-- pulls out a tied PLASTIC BAGGIE OF PILLS.

Jocelyn shuts her eyes, busted. Lainee also hangs her head low.

Craig nervously scratches his head and looks away as Scott folds his arms in defeat.

BOOKER (CONT'D)

Ecstasy. Looks like about eight hits left. Well well. I guess Ronnie wasn't the only one looking to get laid tonight.

TRAVIS

So what, man. We all took a hit. All of us. It doesn't prove shit.

As all of the friends let out a disgusted sigh.

LAINEE

Thanks a lot, Travis.

CRAIG

Yeah, man. No doubt.

BOOKER

When you say all of us, you mean just you guys or everyone at the party? Because when this girl tests positive for "x" the cops will wanna know where she got it from.

TRAVIS

It was just us, man. Okay? If some dumbass fucked around and gave it to some underage chick, that's on them.

BOOKER

Them being who, Travis? Craig and Ronnie?

Craig moves for Booker, truly unsettled.

CRAIG

Hey. Keep me out of this. I didn't do anything, alright? So watch it.

BOOKER

I call it the way I see it, Craig.
You and Ronnie are the only single
ones here, are you not?

Craig points to Lainee.

CRAIG

How do you know me and her aren't
together.

Lainee scoffs out loud.

LAINEE

Yeah, in your wet dreams.

Craig rolls his eyes.

BOOKER

It's obvious Lainee is Travis's
girl. That makes Scott and Jocelyn
a pair.

Scott and Jocelyn catch eyes. She walks to him, throws her
arm around his waist.

BOOKER (CONT'D)

(to Craig)

That leaves you and Ronnie.

CRAIG

Hey. I didn't take shit all night.

(to Travis)

Tell him, Travis.

TRAVIS

How am I supposed to know what the
hell you did, bro?

CRAIG

Are you kidding me right now?

Craig digs around in his pocket, pulls out a small white pill
and tosses it across the pool table.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

There. There's the fuckin' thing.

It's been in my pocket all night.

You happy now?

Booker picks it up, inspects it.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Great. Glad to hear it. I'm out of here.

(to all)

Thanks for the support guys.

Craig heads for the door.

BOOKER

Not so fast.

Craig stops in his tracks.

CRAIG

What?

BOOKER

What about the other one?

Travis shoots Craig the thousand yard stare. Craig gives him a back off look.

CRAIG

Other what?

TRAVIS

He's talking about that second hit of "x" I gave you. So quit stalling.

SCOTT

Where is it, Craig?

CRAIG

What's up with you?

TRAVIS

I'll tell you what's up. You were striking out all night, bro. You and Ronnie.

CRAIG

So what? All that proves is I was nowhere near those girls.

BOOKER

Or maybe that second hit made it into some girl's drink when she wasn't looking.

CRAIG

Get lost, man. You don't know shit.

(to all)

(MORE)

CRAIG (CONT'D)

He doesn't know. He's just playing us against each other.

SCOTT

Okay. So where's the other pill?

Craig bursts out laughing, right in Scott's face.

CRAIG

Come on, man. You see what he's doing to you guys? He's just a rent-a-cop.

SCOTT

Fuck you. This rent-a-cop wouldn't be here if it weren't for you and that idiot inviting underage bitches to my house.

CRAIG

Okay. Fine.

Craig once again digs in both pockets. He comes up with nothing as the others stare and wait.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Just hold on a sec.

Craig digs way down, nothing. He grows frustrated and takes off his shorts in front of everyone.

TRAVIS

Come on, dude. Put that thing away.

Craig flips all his pockets inside out. Nothing.

BOOKER

How's your memory doing, Craig?

CRAIG

Look, I didn't roofie anyone, okay. Let alone some high school chick. I don't care what any of you say.

BOOKER

It doesn't matter what we say. It's the cops you should be worried about.

CRAIG

Okay, so maybe I talked to some girls. So what? But just remember who it was that was carrying in the first place.

Travis gets in his face.

TRAVIS
What was that?

CRAIG
You heard me, man. Mister life of the party. Mister "I'm the only one behind the bar". Between you and your girl passing the bowl around all night, no wonder this chick crashed her car.

Scott checks with Booker who hangs on every word.

SCOTT
(whispers)
Shhhhit.

TRAVIS
Shut your mouth.

CRAIG
Fuck you, bro. The cops run some bullshit on me, I'm handing all you motherfuckers over.
(to all)
So all ya'll can stop staring at me like you're a bunch of innocents.

JOCELYN
Calm down, Craig.

CRAIG
Why's that, Jocelyn? You got something to hide? You and Laine were with those girls more than any of us. But nobody wants to talk about that. Oh no.

BOOKER
You girls have something you need to tell me?

JOCELYN
Look, It's no secret we were smoking pot. Last I checked, people weren't wrapping cars around trees after a few bong hits. At least we weren't throwing shots down anyone's neck, which is more than I can say about some people.

Jocelyn looks directly at Travis.

TRAVIS

Hey, I didn't force anybody to do anything. So why don't you check that shit.

CRAIG

It doesn't feel good does it, Travis?

Scott grows restless, steps between them all, intervenes.

SCOTT

Now, wait a minute, WAIT A MINUTE! Everybody stop!

Booker shoots Greer a quick glance.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Nobody here saw this girl at the party. Is that everyone's story?

They all nod in agreement.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Now, between all of us, somebody's responsible for inviting her. I can't answer for anyone else, but between Jocelyn and me, we didn't invite anyone but JD and Karen, and they came and left with each other. The way I see it, all ya'll gotta do is start making some calls. Anybody you invited. Maybe they saw this girl. Maybe one of them left with her.

Craig laughs. Shakes his head.

CRAIG

Awfully convenient there, Scott.

SCOTT

What's your problem?

CRAIG

I mean why don't you let your girl speak for herself?

JOCELYN

I can speak for myself, thank you.

SCOTT

She already said she didn't see her. And fuck you.

JOCELYN

Look. Aren't we forgetting the obvious?

Jocelyn walks to the sliding door, points inside at Ronnie still passed out on the couch.

JOCELYN (CONT'D)

He's the one with the scrunchie in his pocket. If he wasn't fooling with her, maybe he knows who was. Let's just wake his ass up and ask him.

Scott, Travis, Craig, Lainea all shoot Booker a glance. He nods in agreement.

BOOKER

Put some coffee on?

LIVING ROOM - LATER

Everyone hovers around Booker as he stands over Ronnie, still sprawled out on the couch, but awake and sipping coffee.

RONNIE

Scrunchie? Fuck, man. If you say so.

Ronnie laughs at himself.

GREER

Yeah, real funny.
(to Booker)
Ask him what it was doing in his pocket?

RONNIE

What's your problem, bro?

TRAVIS

Just show him the photo.

Greer hands his phone to Booker who shoves it in Ronnie's face as Sandra Greer's photo glances back at him.

RONNIE

Shit, bro, I don't remember. Maybe.

GREER

What does that mean?

SCOTT

It means he's wasted.

GREER

He knows. Who did she leave with?

RONNIE

I don't know, bro.

(thinks back)

Wait.

(to all)

What's he talking about again?

Scott rolls his eyes and plants himself on a nearby chair as the others all share equally frustrated stares.

LAINEE

He wants to know why his daughter's
scrunchie was in your pocket?

Greer and Booker catch eyes. They both wait for Ronnie who is strangely quiet.

RONNIE

Can I see it?

BOOKER

Sure.

Booker grabs it from Greer. He shows it to Ronnie who shoots Scott a nasty stare.

BOOKER (CONT'D)

This jog your memory?

RONNIE

What is this, dude?

(to Scott)

What's he doing here?

BOOKER

You tell me.

Ronnie once again checks with Scott who quickly peeks at Greer who is staring dead at him.

SCOTT

You heard the man. He wants to know
what you were doing with that
scrunchie in your pocket.

Ronnie stalls. He just stares back and forth between Greer and Booker.

GREER
 What's he waiting on?
 (to Ronnie)
 Where did you get it?

Ronnie stays quiet, eyes down. Greer charges toward him but Booker holds him back.

GREER (CONT'D)
 I said where did you get it?!

BOOKER
 Back off! Right now!

Greer slowly backs down, a couple steps back.

BOOKER (CONT'D)
 On the porch! Wait for me! Go now!

Greer moves through the crowd of friends, out the sliding door and onto the porch, paces like a train wreck.

BOOKER (CONT'D)
 Everyone stay put. I'll be back.

Booker also heads for the rear porch as the friends all turn their attention towards Ronnie, still drunk and confused.

RONNIE
 What the hell's going on?

Booker shuts the sliding glass door behind him.

CUT TO:

INT. BACK PORCH - NIGHT

Booker grabs Greer by the elbow and walks him into the corner and out of sight.

GREER
 How'd I do? Too much?

BOOKER
 No. You did perfect.

GREER
 Okay, so what now?

BOOKER
 So check this out. I found a pair
 of muddy tennis shoes and a pink
 scrunchie in the upstairs bathroom.
 (MORE)

BOOKER (CONT'D)
Both in a plastic grocery bag. A
Quick Stop bag.

GREER
Okay. So?

BOOKER
So Craig and Travis both claim
Ronnie picked up a couple girls at
the gas station. I'd be willing to
bet my left nut - that pink
scrunchie belongs to one of them.

GREER
And what if it does? What does that
prove?

BOOKER
Didn't you see what was happening
back there? The way Ronnie and
Scott were staring at each other?

Greer thinks back.

BOOKER (CONT'D)
They both knew where it came from.
They knew it was upstairs, in the
bathroom and they knew I took it.

GREER
Okay, so if they know you're lying,
why didn't they call you out on it.

BOOKER
Exactly.

Greer is so confused he incessantly shakes his head.

GREER
You're losing me.

BOOKER
If they know I took the scrunchie,
they know I saw the muddy shoes.

Greer is struck with a sudden realization.

GREER
And when you planted it on Ronnie,
they must know this whole thing is
bullshit.

BOOKER
Exactly.

GREER

And they're playing right along with it. But why? It doesn't make any sense.

BOOKER

If I'm right, those muddy shoes belong to Ronnie. He's got feet like a girl and he's the only one here not wearing shoes.

GREER

So you think Ronnie is the killer?

BOOKER

Not only do I think Ronnie is the killer, I think Scott's either in on it or knows about it.

GREER

This is all fine and dandy but you've got nothing on them. Any of them. Without a positive ID on the body, this all seems really futile if you ask me. You can't connect them to a murder if you don't know who the victim is, now can you?

BOOKER

I don't know. Maybe we can. One thing's for sure. I'm sure as hell not leaving here until I at least try. But so far so good. I think we got them.

Greer shakes his head "no" as he shimmies back and forth on his feet.

GREER

No. They're onto us. Everything they tell us from now on could be a lie. What good will that do? Ever think of that?

BOOKER

You're right. All we gotta do is play along until they eventually give us something we can use. If I'm right, it's just a matter of time before those two girls in there recognize that scrunchie and give us some names.

(beat)

Are you in or are you out?

(MORE)

BOOKER (CONT'D)

But I'm telling you right now that I can't do this without you. From here on out, it's all or nothing.

Greer lets out an exhausted sigh.

GREER

Okay, so what's the game plan boss?

Booker smiles, stares over his shoulder and through the sliding glass door at Jocelyn, who quickly ducks out of sight.

LIVING ROOM - LATER

Scott and Jocelyn are at the kitchen counter-top, jotting down the names of all their party guests.

Travis and Craig sit, exhausted, on the couch as Lainee also jots down a few names on a sheet of paper.

Greer sits on the bottom step of a staircase as Booker wanders back and forth on the carpet, waiting.

BOOKER

Time's up. Let's see them.

Lainee stands, walks her list to Booker. Scott also walks their list to Booker as all the friends take a seat back on the couch.

BOOKER (CONT'D)

Okay, let's see what we have.

Booker takes a look at the first list.

BOOKER (CONT'D)

On Scott and Jocelyn's guest list we have...

(reads)

Karen and JD. Britt, Jade, Mike and Tony and some girl Tony brought.

(to Jocelyn)

What girl?

Booker checks with Jocelyn.

JOCELYN

I don't know her. I mean, I can't remember her name. We went to school together a long time ago. She didn't say much.

Lainee flips through an old high school yearbook.

LAINEE
Her name is Claire Voss.

Lainee hands the yearbook to Booker.

LAINEE (CONT'D)
That's her with the curly hair. Her
grad photo was three years ago.

CRAIG
(to Lainee)
You would know her name. You was
flirting with her man all night.
(to Booker)
Tony's her ex.

Greer and Booker share a quick look.

LAINEE
Why don't you shut the fuck up?

Travis shoots Craig a deadly look.

TRAVIS
That would be a real good idea.

CRAIG
Come on, man. You even said you
caught her texting him and shit.

JOCELYN
Come on, guys. This isn't helping
any. Let's just stick to the game
plan and get this over with. The
sooner we cooperate, the sooner
he's out of here.

Scott grows anxious and paces in a circle, rubs down his wavy
hair. Greer notices.

BOOKER
On Lainee's list we have a Sarah,
Michelle and Deana.

LAINEE
Sarah and Michelle are friends of
mine from work.

BOOKER
And Deana?

CRAIG

Deana's Laine's lesbian fantasy.
Keeps her around in case she gets
frisky and wants a little three way
action. Isn't that right, Laine?

Laine flips Craig a quick bird as Booker smiles and slowly
struts his way over to Laine.

BOOKER

Interesting. And you didn't by any
chance slip a little something in
her drink tonight?

LAINEE

Please. If I wanted Deana, it
wouldn't take more than a few shots
and an empty bed.

Laine grows tired of Booker's intrusive stature and jumps
from the couch and to the kitchen for another stiff shot of
Jack.

BOOKER

So, we're up to ten. Who all are we
leaving out?

In unison, the group of friends turn to Ronnie.

JOCELYN

All that leaves are those two girls
Ronnie brought back. Kaylee and
Nicole. And their friend they
called up to come to the party.

Booker walks to Jocelyn, now intrigued.

BOOKER

Friend? And what was her name?

JOCELYN

Ask Ronnie. He was the last one to
see her.

Booker quickly turns his eyes to Ronnie.

BOOKER

How about it, Ronnie?

Ronnie avoids him, arms folded, head still rested on the
couch. Scott, now irritated with Ronnie, walks over and kicks
at his motionless legs.

SCOTT

The man asked you a question.

RONNIE

Shit, man. I don't know. I'm trying to remember, alright? I had a lot to drink tonight if you hadn't noticed.

Greer rises from the bottom step, gets back in Ronnie's face, hopped up and mad.

GREER

He remembers. It was Sandra. Wasn't it?

RONNIE

I told you, man. I can't remember.

BOOKER

Well what can you remember? I'd suggest you start thinking real hard.

Ronnie rubs at his sore temples.

RONNIE

Man, the last I remember is me and those girls were chillin in the hot tub. One of them, I think it was Kaylee, calls this friend of hers from her cell. Next thing you know, this other chick shows up. Didn't say her name, didn't say shit to me. Just told the girls she had to talk to them about something. Next thing you know, all three of them grab a beer from the cooler and head down to the lake.

Booker fights a growing smile as he stares down Ronnie.

RONNIE (CONT'D)

What, dude?

BOOKER

And you didn't maybe slip some "x" in this girl's beer?

RONNIE

No, man. I'm trying to tell you what happened. That's it.

BOOKER

So they went down to the lake? And you didn't see them again after the hot tub? That what you're telling me?

RONNIE

No, man. This chick shows up and totally cock blocks me, man. All crying and shit. It's a done deal with these two chicks and this other chick shows and blows the whole thing, bro.

Greer paces the floor, shaking his head and huffing and puffing like an angry father.

GREER

She was crying. It was her. It was Sandra.

BOOKER

How do you know?

SCOTT

Yeah, how do you know?

GREER

We had gotten into a fight earlier about her going out with this boy. I sent her to her room. She was balling most of the night. Up until the point she snuck out.

Greer shoots Ronnie an accusatory stare. Booker follows his look. Both men now staring hiim down.

BOOKER

So how about it, Ronnie? Was it her or wasn't it? Sure sounds like she had some plans tonight.

RONNIE

Shit, dude! I don't know, man! Alright?!

GREER

What do you mean, you don't know?! You saw her picture! Was it her or not?!

Greer kicks at his feet.

GREER (CONT'D)

Answer me!

RONNIE

Hey, bro! Watch it!

Booker laughs.

BOOKER

Shit, Ronnie. You better start telling this man something.

Craig grows nervous, bites at his fingernails, sweats. The other friends notice.

GREER

It was her! Say it! Just say it!

Craig gets in between Greer and Ronnie.

CRAIG

It wasn't her, alright! Her name was Shelby!

Jocelyn and Lainea are both shocked. Travis and Scott also share a quick look.

BOOKER

How you know that, Craig? Thought you didn't remember their names.

CRAIG

I never said I didn't remember. So don't tell me what I said.

BOOKER

Okay, great. Good for you. Something you wanna tell me about her?

CRAIG

No! Okay?! No!

Craig walks off, away from the pestering Booker who follows behind, unwavering.

BOOKER

You got nothing to tell me? So why all the secrecy? This man's looking for his daughter. I need you to be straight with me when I ask a question.

Craig walks to the countertop, pours himself a tall one.

CRAIG

Fine. I just told you her name.
What else do you want from me?

BOOKER

I don't know, Craig. What else do
you know?

Booker, the girls and Scott and Travis all await his answer.

CRAIG

Nothing! Quit staring at me like
that!

BOOKER

You don't know nuthin. Is that it?

CRAIG

That's right.

BOOKER

So you and this Shelby didn't have
a few drinks tonight? Get a little
crazy?

CRAIG

No, man! Alright, we had some
drinks when she got here, but she
was already trashed.

(to others)

You guys all saw her. Stumbling
around. Say something.

BOOKER

So she was stumbling around, blind
drunk and you decided to mix her a
few more drinks. That what you're
telling us, Craig?

CRAIG

Hey, you're not gonna pin this on
me. It's a party, okay? Everyone's
drinking too much. That's what you
do at parties.

BOOKER

What if I told you your friend
Shelby crashed her car, three
streets down from here? That she
was so loaded she couldn't see
straight.

(MORE)

BOOKER (CONT'D)

That the cops are gonna be doing a tox screen on your girl to see what all she had to drink or ingest tonight? You wouldn't have anything else to tell me?

Travis charges after Craig, hopping mad.

TRAVIS

You gave it to her, didn't you? You little shit!

CRAIG

Fuck you, man. You gave it to me. I didn't even want the damn thing.

TRAVIS

I didn't tell you to slip it in some drunk bitches drink without her knowing!

CRAIG

Look, it's not my fault she got in an accident. She wasn't even supposed to be driving!

Booker and Greer share a confused look.

BOOKER

Why not?

Craig angrily points at Scott.

CRAIG

Ask him! He was in charge of everyone's keys! Was supposed to fuckin...put them all in a bowl until morning! Instead, he shuts down the party and kicks everyone out! You guys wanna kick someone's ass, kick his!

Booker turns to Scott who avoids his stare.

BOOKER

Is that true? You shut down the festivities?

SCOTT

Look, there were too many people. Those chicks Ronnie brought were drinking too much, pissing everyone off so I shut it down.

BOOKER

So you sent everyone home drunk? It must've been quite the scene.

JOCELYN

Just tell him what happened, Scott. It's not a big deal.

BOOKER

Yeah, Scott. Just tell me what happened.

JOCELYN

Fine. I'll tell him. There was a fight. Down by the lake.

Ronnie shoots Scott a quick look. Greer notices.

BOOKER

A fight? With who?

JOCELYN

I don't know. Scott won't tell me about it. I've been asking him all night. He just said it was bad. And that he was tired and pissed and wanted everybody gone. So I sent everyone on their way.

BOOKER

Okay, Scott. What's she talking about?

SCOTT

Craig was down at the lake with the girls. I come outside for a smoke and walk in on the conversation. He's trying to talk them all into skinny dipping.

The girls turn to Craig, grossed out. Craig smiles.

CRAIG

I was only playing is all. No biggie.

GREER

Let him finish his story.

LAINEE

Pig.

SCOTT

And this guy shows up in a pick up. All fuckin pissed off, screaming something about his girlfriend being with another guy. I guess he saw her with Craig and flipped.

BOOKER

Which one was his girl?

SCOTT

I don't know. Shelby, I think. He says he wasn't leaving without her. That's when I told him if he didn't leave, I was calling the cops. Since you were nowhere to be found, as usual.

BOOKER

And? Then what?

SCOTT

He wouldn't leave. That's when he started charging after Craig, like he was gonna knock him out. I had to stand between them. To keep him from kicking Craig's ass. But Craig kept taunting him, making shit worse.

Craig shoots Scott an ugly stare.

CRAIG

Why don't you just tell the story, okay?

SCOTT

I am. The story is, you gotta big ass mouth. And it almost got you fucked up.

Lainee grabs Craig's arm, holds him back.

LAINNE

Calm down.

BOOKER

So what happened then?

SCOTT

Then he says he's gonna kick my ass if I didn't get out of the way. By then, I could see he was pretty wasted. Stumbling on the grass.

(MORE)

SCOTT (CONT'D)

So I took a swing at him. Knocked him down. That's when I told him to take him and his drunk bitch home. By that point, I was pretty fuckin pissed off, so I shut it down. Sent everyone home. I was gonna call the cops but by the time I came back outside, him and his girl were both gone.

BOOKER

How about it, Craig? Is that how it went down?

SCOTT

Yeah, Craig. Is that how it all went down?

Craig is hesitant.

CRAIG

Yeah. That's it.

Lainee shakes her head, eyes squinted, in deep thought as something doesn't quite add up in her mind.

LAINEE

Wait a second. You said a teenage girl crashed her car. If she was with this guy, she couldn't have been driving.

BOOKER

She could if she left without him. Like maybe she took his keys when he wasn't looking and split. He gets into a tustle with Scott and Craig and she takes off in his truck as soon as his back is turned.

LAINEE

If that's true, what happened to the guy? The drunk boyfriend?

Ronnie once again shoots Scott a stare.

BOOKER

That you'll have to ask Craig and Scott. One of them knows what really happened. It's just a matter of one of them coming clean.

CRAIG
We just told you what happened.

BOOKER
No. You told me your version of what happened.

CRAIG
What other version is there?

BOOKER
Tell me, Travis. When Scott came back in, all hopped up and pissed off, was Craig with him?

TRAVIS
I guess. Maybe. I don't remember. Why?

CRAIG
Yeah. What're you getting at, man?

BOOKER
You know, I think Scott was pissed because you can't control your mouth. That much is obvious. Something tells me you couldn't let things go after Scott punches this guy out.

Craig checks with the others, who are all staring right at him, awaiting his answer.

BOOKER (CONT'D)
Tell me I'm wrong.

CRAIG
Okay, so maybe I kicked him a few when he was on the ground. I was wasted. I'm sorry.

Booker checks with Scott, arms now folded, angry and tired.

BOOKER
That's not all you did. You see, Scott knows what you did, but he's keeping his cool. He's waiting for you to cut your own throat.

These words hit home with Scott.

BOOKER (CONT'D)
What's the matter, Scott? I say something wrong?

The crew of friends watch Scott with suspicion.

SCOTT

Nah, man. I'm just listening.

Booker and Greer share a smile. Booker turns back to the crew of friends.

BOOKER

Tell you what. It's been a long night. I think maybe we should all step outside. Get some fresh air. Wadd'ya say?

JOCELYN

Yeah. I think that's a good idea.

EXT. SMALL POND - NIGHT

Booker tosses some rocks into the water as the crew of friends all stand around, anxious, confused, waiting on him.

TRAVIS

Okay, so now what? We've been standing here for three minutes, saying nothing. You got something else to ask us? Ask. I'm tired already.

Booker walks up a deep slope, smiles at Travis.

BOOKER

I was right about you. You're the hot head of the group. Here I am, pointing fingers at Craig. But if anyone's the fighter, it's you.

The friends now turn to him for answers. He grows nervous and anxious by their look.

TRAVIS

What are you talking about, bro?

BOOKER

I'm talking about what happened out here by the water. Some drunk asshole shows, yelling and screaming. Something tells me you weren't hiding inside, waiting on Scott to take charge. I bet you were the first one out here.

LAINEE

He was inside with me.

Lainee smiles at Travis who returns with a sly wink. He is real cocky about it too as we hear the braggadocio in his voice.

TRAVIS

Let's just say I had better things to do then fight with some drunk asshole. Besides. From what I hear, it was over before it started.

Jocelyn cracks a laugh.

JOCELYN

Yeah, I heard the same about you, Travis.

The whole group laughs in unison. Travis flips her a bird.

TRAVIS

Fuck you very much.

Booker watches the friends all laugh and carry on. He quickly puts a stop to it.

BOOKER

You know, something's been bothering me all night. I just couldn't piece it together. Not until a few minutes ago.

SCOTT

Yeah? What's that?

BOOKER

I keep coming back to that scrunchie in Ronnie's pocket.

Ronnie and Scott share another look.

SCOTT

Yeah? What about it?

BOOKER

I couldn't help but notice how you guys reacted when I found it. Kind of like...disbelief.

BOOKER (CONT'D)

You wanna tell me about it, Ronnie?

SCOTT

Answer him.

RONNIE

I told you. I was in the hot tub with those girls. I don't know. One of them must've taken it off and left it by the tub. I guess I just grabbed it by mistake.

BOOKER

You guessed you grabbed it? Which is it?

Travis laughs and walks in circles.

TRAVIS

Come on, bro! He was fuckin wasted! He told you he can't remember shit. Why you keep pushing it?

Jocelyn rolls her eyes at the sound of Travis's voice.

JOCELYN

Let him answer for himself.

TRAVIS

Okay, fine. Tell them you can't remember, Ronnie. It's obviously not sinking in that you're out of your mind wasted.

RONNIE

Like he said, I can't remember.

BOOKER

You can't remember. Okay, how about a recap?

RONNIE

What do you mean?

BOOKER

I'm gonna walk you through it since you can't remember.

(beat)

Travis was getting laid. Craig's down at the lake with not one, but all three of your girls. He talks them all into taking a skinny dip.

(beat)

You find the scrunchie on the beach and put it in your pocket. Only you don't find Craig or the girls.

(MORE)

BOOKER (CONT'D)

Everyone's gone inside. You're so gone you don't know what the hell is going on.

Ronnie turns to Travis for help.

BOOKER (CONT'D)

Don't look at them. It's just you and me here.

(beat)

Anyways, back to the story.

(beat)

And there's this drunk asshole screaming and yelling. He spots you down by the water and confronts you. And he's real good and pissed off from Scott taking a swing and Craig giving him a few kicks while he's down. So he's coming for you. And coming hard because he wants a piece of somebody's ass. Something tells me in your current state, you didn't put up much of a fight. Explains all the cuts and bruises on your legs.

Booker points them out. Ronnie quickly takes a look for himself.

RONNIE

I don't know what you're talking about.

TRAVIS

You heard him. Look at him, he's so confused, he don't know what's going on. Now back off.

JOCELYN

Let him answer!

Booker shoots Ronnie an accusatory stare but Ronnie is strangely silent. He stares at his friends for help but getting nothing.

BOOKER

(to friends)

Come on. I got something to show you guys.

Something real interesting.

INT. WOODS - NIGHT

Booker shines his flashlight at the dead body, starting from the feet and all the way to the bloody head and red, sticky leaves surrounding it.

We start with Lainee's face, and then to Jocelyn, Scott, Travis, Craig, and finally Ronnie.

LAINEE

Who is he?

JOCELYN

Who do you think? It's the guy. The drunk.

Booker shines the bright light in all of their faces.

BOOKER

That's right. And as you can see, he's very much dead.

Lainee immediately gives Travis a discerning look.

LAINEE

What the hell did you do?

TRAVIS

Fuck are you looking at me for? I was with you? Remember?

Jocelyn smiles.

JOCELYN

Yeah, it was real memorable. I can tell.

BOOKER

That's right. Bad sex or not, Travis has an alibi. He was inside all night long. So that leaves us with Craig and Ronnie. Craig being the obvious choice since he was confirmed as the last one to be seen with our dead guy.

Booker quickly turns the light on Ronnie.

BOOKER (CONT'D)

Ronnie's whereabouts still unknown. But what do we know about Ronnie? We know he got completely obliterated drunk and has been puking most of the night.

(MORE)

BOOKER (CONT'D)
 Me personally, I think something's
 gnawing away at his guts and I
 think it's more than jager.

Ronnie turns to Scott for help.

RONNIE
 Are ya'll gonna let him talk to me
 like that?

Scott steps in Booker's face, between him and Ronnie.

SCOTT
 Don't say anything, Ronnie. He's
 not even a real cop. If you want, I
 can call you a lawyer.

Travis also intervenes as he steps to Scott.

TRAVIS
 Hey, fuck you, Scott. Let him talk.

Scott is visibly nervous as he watches Ronnie with an unsure
 look about him.

BOOKER
 What's the matter, Scott? Am I
 getting warmer?

SCOTT
 No, man. I'm just tired of your
 face. You come up in our house,
 accusing us. And you're the one who
 found the body. For all we know,
 you did it.

The crowd all turn to Booker, now giving him an accusatory
 stare.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
 Go on! Ask him! Ask him where he
 was two hours ago! I bet you he
 doesn't have an alibi!
 (beat)
 He probably mouthed off to him and
 rent-a-cop here cut his throat!
 They don't let him carry a gun!
 Probably has a nice little pocket
 knife in his boot for the right
 occasion! Just waiting to use it!

Greer seems affected by Scott's words as he also watches
 Booker with suspicion.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Yeah, you! Why else hasn't he called the cops?! He's stalling! Looking to pin it on someone else! He's got nothing and he's hoping one of you give him something he can work with!

Booker seems annoyed and put on the spot as he watches everyone's stare.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Yeah. How's it feel? Everyone accusing you of murder. Not so good, huh?

Lainee seems unsure of something. She watches Scott closely.

LAINEE

How did you know it was two hours ago?

The friends all turn to Scott, waiting.

SCOTT

What?

Lainee walks to Scott, slowly and with a purpose.

LAINEE

You said ask him where he was two hours ago. How did you know he was killed in the last two hours?

SCOTT

I don't. I guessed.

TRAVIS

That was some guess, bro.

CRAIG

Yeah, no doubt.

Scott laughs and shakes his head with disgust as his friends all give him a hard stare.

SCOTT

He thinks it's one of us! We've been in the house for hours! Two hours, three hours, whatever!

Scott struts around the field, angry and ready to explode.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Look at us! He's turned us all
against one another! He wants us to
think it was one of us!

CRAIG

Maybe it is.

Ronnie scoffs at Craig.

RONNIE

What're you talking about, man?

CRAIG

I'm talking about it's the woods.
Plenty of places to ditch the body.
He could've buried it a hundred
different places, put him on the
train tracks. But he didn't. He
left him where he found him. A
guilty man wouldn't do that. A
guilty man would panic. Try to
cover his tracks.

Greer thinks it all over. He finally breaks.

GREER

He didn't find the body. I did.

Booker can hardly believe it. Greer has just turned on hiim.

GREER (CONT'D)

Booker was passed out drunk when I
came to his door.

CRAIG

What're you saying, man? You think
Booker did it?

Greer watches Booker closely. He tries to read his eyes as
Booker doesn't blink, giving him nothing in return.

GREER

I don't know. Maybe.

BOOKER

Something you wanna ask me, Thom?

GREER

No. I'm just saying. I am the one
who found the body. Not you.

(MORE)

GREER (CONT'D)

Maybe you were just waiting for the right opportunity to stumble upon the body, take credit for the discovery and cover your ass with the cops. It's feasible.

Booker moves for Greer, all bowed up and ready to slug him in the face.

BOOKER

It's feasible that you're an idiot.

Greer steps back a few paces as Booker gets closer.

GREER

Yeah? Maybe that's what you were counting on.

Scott nods in agreement.

SCOTT

Tat's right, man. Maybe it's time you answered some of our questions.

GREER

Yeah, I think that's a good idea. We've put these kids through enough for one night. If it wasn't you, you've got nothing to worry about.

BOOKER

You half-pint little bastard.

TRAVIS

(to Booker)

What's the matter, bro? Losing your temper?

Booker turns to Travis, a deadly stare that could burn a hole in anyone's stomach.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

Back off.

Booker just smiles and turns back to Greer.

BOOKER

I killed one guy. What makes you think I won't kill you?

Scott and the rest of the crew all turn to each other in shock as Booker's just admitted to the killing.

GREER
Is that a threat?

BOOKER
Care to find out?

JOCELYN
Somebody call the police.

Lainee digs in her pocket, nothing.

LAINEE
Shhhhit. I don't have my phone.

JOCELYN
Since when do you not have your
fucking phone?

TRAVIS
(to Booker)
Get away from him, bro. I'm not
gonna tell you again.

CRAIG
Beat his ass, Travis!

Booker pulls a long six shooter from out of his coat and
shows it to the friends.

BOOKER
There goes that theory of me not
carrying a gun.

Travis attempts to sneak up on him.

BOOKER (CONT'D)
Hold it right there, Big Ben.

Travis stops in his tracks.

TRAVIS
Shhhhit.

BOOKER
Nobody calls the cops and nobody
moves. If I see any of you so much
as twitch, I start cutting my
losses.

JOCELYN
You're crazy.

CRAIG

Told you, man. Homeboy pissed him off so he cut him.

LAINEE

Shhhit. Somebody do something! Travis, Craig! Grab it or something!

BOOKER

No, no. They know better than that. Don't you fellas?

Scott shakes his head at Travis, keeping him calm and from doing something stupid.

JOCELYN

Why did you do it?

BOOKER

I don't think you need to worry about that now. If I were you, I'd be more worried about what I'm gonna do with you.

JOCELYN

Scott. Scott, do something!

Scott is frozen stiff. He attempts to take a step but his feet won't let him.

SCOTT

He's bluffing. He's not gonna hurt you.

Booker is unwavering as he stares Greer down with the most evil grin you ever saw.

GREER

He's not bluffing. He's gonna shoot us.

All of us.

SCOTT

He's not gonna shoot anybody. So just calm down.

TRAVIS

And how you know that, bro?

Scott seems reluctant to answer. He breaks.

SCOTT
Because it's not his gun.

They all turn to Scott, surprised.

JOCELYN
What're you talking about?

RONNIE
Fuck, man. What did you just do?
You fucked me, bro!

SCOTT
Just shut up, Ronnie! Don't say
shit!

JOCELYN
Scott, what's he talking about?!

BOOKER
Tell her, Scott.

Craig watches Scott, hands still in the air.

CRAIG
What's happening? Are you gonna
shoot us or not?

SCOTT
He's not gonna shoot you, so just
shut up!

Scott avoids the others as he turns his back, hands on his
hips and huffing with frustration.

JOCELYN
Where are you going? Get back here!
What's Ronnie talking about?

Scott keeps his back turned, shakes his head.

SCOTT
Shhhhhhit.

JOCELYN
Scott, what's he talking about?!

SCOTT
Shit, man. We didn't have a choice.
He was crazy!
(to Craig)
You saw him!

JOCELYN

A choice to do what?

RONNIE

Don't say anything, Scott. Not one more word.

TRAVIS

About what, bro? You got something to tell us.

Both of you better start talking.

SCOTT

He was gonna shoot us. Me and Ronnie. I had to stop it. We had to do something!

Booker and Greer exchange a smile and a nod as Booker approaches Scott.

BOOKER

Okay, Scott. If you had to do it, you had to do it. Now's your chance to plead your case.

Scott sweats like a pig and holds back his tears as all of his friends watch on.

Ronnie also tears up.

BOOKER (CONT'D)

No more bullshit. The cat's out of the bag. You want a fair shake, you be straight with me and don't leave out any details.

(beat)

When all's said and done, I'll see what I can do for you. Deal?

Scott can't stop whimpering. Greer also approaches.

GREER

Nobody here wants to hurt you, son. If we wanted, we could've called the cops hours ago. Consider this your best option.

Scott wipes his tears.

JOCELYN

It's okay, baby. Just tell them what happened.

Scott checks with the others.

CRAIG
We got your back, bro.

Scott turns to Booker, a quick nod.

SCOTT
Deal.

CUT TO:

EXT. SMALL POND - HOURS EARLIER - NIGHT

A drunken Ronnie comes stumbling toward the lake, looking for the girls. He spots what looks like a pink scrunchie laying on the beach near the water.

EXT. BACK PORCH - HOT TUB - NIGHT

Scott opens a sliding glass door and spots an empty hot tub.
No

Ronnie.

SCOTT (V.O.)
After me and Craig got into it with this guy, I went back inside to shut things down for the night. I went out back, looking for Ronnie but he was gone.

EXT. SMALL POND - NIGHT

Ronnie, still by the water, confused.

RONNIE
Where'd ya'll go??? Yo, Craig!

He bends down, picks up the wet scrunchie.

SCOTT (V.O.)
I figured he went down to the lake, looking for the girls, so I thought I'd peak my head out and make sure this guy wasn't still out there starting shit.

DRUNK GUY (O.S.)
Hey!

Ronnie turns and spots a long haired drunk hurrying toward him with what looks like a pistol in his hand.

SCOTT (V.O.)

But it was too late. He already spotted

Ronnie, down by the water.

The drunk raises his pistol at Ronnie.

RONNIE

Shit, bro! What I do, man?

DRUNK GUY

Tell your boys to get their asses out here! You don't do it, man, I'm gonna fuck you up too!

Ronnie holds his hands in the air.

RONNIE

Come on, man. You know I can't do that, bro. Let's just cool out and talk it over.

Scott spots them from the driveway and hurries toward them.

DRUNK GUY

You think I'm fuckin playing with you, asshole? What do you think this is?

Ronnie steps back a step or two and trips in the mud as he falls to the wet ground.

The drunk offers him a few swift kicks to the stomach.

DRUNK GUY (CONT'D)

Get up, man! Fuckin pussy!

The drunk stuffs the gun in the back of his pants and walks to the edge of the woods. He quickly unzips and starts pissing into the trees.

DRUNK GUY (CONT'D)

Don't you fuckin go anywhere!

Scott hurries toward Ronnie, still curled up on the ground and twisting in pain.

SCOTT

What the hell, bro. You okay?

RONNIE
Crazy bastard's got a gun, man.

SCOTT
What?

Scott turns to the drunk still pissing in the woods. He spots the gun in the back of his trousers.

RONNIE
You gotta grab it, man. He's gonna shoot us.

He's gonna shoot all of us.

Scott spots a pocket knife in Ronnie's pants and quickly snags it up. The drunk looks over his shoulder and spots both Scott and Ronnie on the ground.

DRUNK GUY
You stay where you are!
Sonofabitch!

RONNIE
You gotta do something, man! He's crazy!

Scott opens the blade and moves for the drunk. His lips and eyes twitching and quivering.

Before the drunk knows what's up, Scott reaches the blade around his neck and SLICES IT OPEN.

The drunk stumbles around, hands on his throat. A spray of blood SHOTS from the open wound. He slowly falls to the grass, chokes and dies.

CUT TO:

EXT. SMALL POND - NIGHT (PRESENT DAY)

Scott and Ronnie, both in tears. The girls in shock and Travis and Craig relieved it's not them.

RONNIE
Man, I'm sorry!

Scott collapses to the dirt, crying like a little kid. Jocelyn takes a seat next to him, throws an arm around his shoulder.

CUT TO:

INT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jocelyn and Laine on the couch, hugging and crying. Craig and Travis sit at a dining room table, both in shock.

The FLASHING of RED and BLUE LIGHTS is visible through the front window and curtains. In walks Booker.

BOOKER

I just wanted to thank everyone for their cooperation. I know this is all really sudden.

(beat)

But he's gonna be okay. It's a clear case of self defense. I think he's got a good chance at beating it.

The friends all share a not so convinced look.

JOCELYN

You don't know that.

BOOKER

You're right. I don't. Dumb thing to say, I'm sorry. I'll let myself out.

Booker heads for the door. Travis follows behind.

TRAVIS

You knew it was Scott. Didn't you? You knew all night and you didn't say anything.

Booker cracks a smile.

BOOKER

I had my suspicions.

CRAIG

Do you believe them?

BOOKER

Who?

CRAIG

Scott and Ronnie. Do you believe their story?

Booker thinks it over.

BOOKER

I don't know. You?

CRAIG

I don't know. If the guy's back was turned seems to me all they had to do was grab his gun. He didn't have to kill him.

(beat)

None of this shit makes any sense.

Booker is at a loss for words. He finally snaps out of it.

BOOKER

Did I tell you guys I used to be a cop?

Craig and Travis both turn to the girls. The girls also look surprised.

CRAIG

I guess that explains a lot.

BOOKER

Aren't you guys gonna ask me why I'm not a cop anymore?

None of them ask. They just turn and stare at one another.

LAINEE

Okay, I'll bite. Why are you not a cop anymore?

BOOKER

I had an alcohol problem.

(beat)

I have an alcohol problem. Since my wife got killed in a car accident early last year, it's gotten a lot worse. Anyways, my drinking started clouding my judgement. One night I got into it with this punk who just robbed an all night pharmacy. Just happened to stumble on this robbery, you see. Took a hundred or so bucks from the til and booked it out the front door.

(beat))

My...anger got the best of me. Ended up beating the shit out of this guy for a good five minutes straight. He was halfway fuckin dead before I even realized what was happening. I had completely lost control over my actions. The whole concept of right and wrong.

(MORE)

BOOKER (CONT'D)
 Reality and fantasy. Never even
 occurred to me. Not for a second.

Jocelyn scoffs with disgust.

BOOKER (CONT'D)
 I guess the moral of the story is,
 alcohol is a hell of a thing.
 Anyways, given this evening's
 circumstances, I thought that might
 be relevant.

Craig and Travis both look confused. Booker smiles as he
 heads for the door.

BOOKER (CONT'D)
 Or maybe not. You guys take care of
 yourself just the same.

TRAVIS
 Yeah, let's not do it again
 sometime.

Booker walks out, shuts the door behind him.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Booker meets Greer by the security car.

GREER
 Well. I think I've had enough
 excitement for one month.

BOOKER
 Oh, come on. You know you had fun.

Booker sparks up a smoke, hands one to Greer who also lights
 one up. They both take a nice long drag.

GREER
 Maybe.

Booker stares him down. An oh come on kind of look.

GREER (CONT'D)
 Okay, okay. Maybe I had a lot of
 fun.

BOOKER
 Don't get used to it. I work alone.

Greer checks his watch.

GREER

Well. The wife is probably wondering where I've been for the last two hours. Or then again maybe not.

Booker opens his car door, but stops before crawling in. In deep thought as he stares at the asphalt.

BOOKER

I miss it, ya know. The job.

GREER

Yeah, I kind of got that sense from you. What you did tonight. That was really something. Never saw anything like it. Not even on TV. Columbo would be proud.

Booker is lost in thought. He slowly cracks a sly grin. And then a slight chuckle.

BOOKER

I guess maybe I was long overdue for that.

GREER

Yeah, I could tell.

(beat)

You ever think about going back?

Booker takes one last drag, stomps out his smoke.

BOOKER

What? And miss all this excitement?

Booker smiles, crawls in his car. Greer smiles back as Booker drives home.

And then, a sudden and shocking realization hits him like a wet bag of sand.

GREER

Bear?

Greer turns to the pond, and all around him.

GREER (CONT'D)

Bear? Come on, girl!

Greer stands in the street, whistles for his dog to come out of hiding.

FADE OUT.

THE END