

Lonesome Thunder

an original screenplay
by Jonathan Malone

contact: Jonathan Malone
(870) 403-2062
jonathan-malone@att.net

FADE IN:

EXT. OLD RUNDOWN NEIGHBORHOOD CALLED WHITEHALL -- DAY

Afternoon sun flickers through autumn leaves above a ratty little house, which despite its poverty-stricken condition is orderly and well-maintained. Within the enclosure of a knee-high picket fence painted blue, gaudy decorations brighten up the front yard, a pink flamingo and a plastic daisy the size of a paper plate, which is designed to turn in the wind like a pinwheel. In the background, an ominous thunderhead flickers with lightning.

JESSE CALDER, a handsome though scruffy and sullen youth emerges upon the front porch, wearing a dark-colored T-shirt under a dark-green wind-breaker. Handcuffed behind his back, he is being escorted by TWO POLICEMEN (POLICEMAN 1 and POLICEMAN 2) from the porch to one of three police cars.

A BLACK SHADE-TREE MECHANIC in the yard of a similiarly delapidated cottage across the cul-de-sac witnesses the arrest while listening to ALBERT KING's "BORN UNDER A BAD SIGN" on his portable radio.

Jesse is placed in the back seat, his GRANDMOTHER following, crying with a cigarette in her hand.

GRANDMOTHER

Fingerprints? That's ridiculous!
Those were supposed to have been
destroyed when his record was
expunged. He was only a child!

Before getting into their respective vehicles, the policemen quickly converse (Policeman 1 dismissing the policemen of the other cars and their goodbye).

Grandmother gazes longingly with tears in her eyes at the departing police cars.

INT. POLICE CAR -- CONTINUOUS

POLICEMAN 2 -- PASSENGER SEAT

Better take the Interstate. We don't
want to get snarled up in school
traffic.

EXT. OLD RUNDOWN NEIGHBORHOOD CALLED WHITEHALL -- CONTINUOUS

Three-Baker-7, the police car containing Policeman 1, Policeman 2, and Jesse Calder, turns left at an intersection, which accesses the Whitehall neighborhood. The other two police cars turn right.

INT. POLICE CAR -- CONTINUOUS

POLICEMAN 1 -- DRIVER
Call the station, and let 'em know,
will you?

The conversation between Policeman 2 and the Dispatcher is eclipsed by Policeman 1's questioning of Jesse.

POLICEMAN 2 -- PASSENGER SEAT
Yeah. 3-Baker-7 . . .

DISPATCHER
Go 3-Baker-7.

POLICEMAN 2 -- PASSENGER SEAT
10-17 Jesse Calder. 10-19 I-30.
We're going around school traffic.

DISPATCHER
Okay.

Policeman 2 replaces the mike on the dashboard.

POLICEMAN 1 -- DRIVER
What possessed you to kill your
brother, Jesse?

Jesse is unresponsive, looking out the window.

POLICEMAN 1 -- DRIVER (CONT'D)
No comment, huh?

Policeman 2 had overhead the question of Policeman 1 while replacing the microphone.

POLICEMAN 2 -- PASSENGER SEAT
Well, save it for the judge. You
look like an intelligent kid. How
they go bad Got your whole
life ahead of you.

POLICEMAN 1 -- DRIVER
Innocent until proven guilty. Then
again, its hard to defend against
bloody fingerprints.

POLICEMAN 2 -- PASSENGER SEAT
I wonder how it will hold up in court.
I mean, they were supposed to have
destroyed those prints, if his record
had been expunged.

POLICEMAN 1 -- DRIVER
Everyone knows they don't do that.
Besides, they're pretty resourceful
about getting around . . .

POLICEMAN 2 -- PASSENGER SEAT
What, the law?

POLICEMAN 1 -- DRIVER
Technicalities. Anyway, they'll dig
up some other evidence, one way or
the other.

POLICEMAN 2 -- PASSENGER SEAT
You mean exonerating him or . . .

POLICEMAN 1 -- DRIVER
Yeah.

END TITLE CREDITS.

EXT. INTERSTATE -- CONTINUOUS

Half a mile ahead, a 1995 Ford Crown Victoria, which is
approaching from the opposite direction, swerves. The driver
must be drunk.

Barreling across the median, it plows through oncoming
traffic. Cars swerve to avoid collision. Some wreck.

INT. POLICE CAR -- CONTINUOUS

POLICEMAN 1 -- DRIVER
What the hell!

Fishtailing back and forth awkwardly, both rear quarter-panels
of the Crown Victoria are alternately exposed to oncoming
traffic. One of the dodging vehicles inadvertently strikes
its left-hand side, sending it spinning.

The momentum of the old luxury sedan is reduced as a result.
Eventually, it comes to rest by slamming sideways against a
2013 Subaru Legacy Stationwagon, which has also, in attempting
to avoid catastrophe, skidded sideways. Fortunately, both
vehicles had almost stopped before they collided, reducing
the damage.

POLICEMAN 2 -- PASSENGER SEAT
Good Lord.

Two vehicles closely following the stationwagon contribute
to the pile-up.

POLICEMAN 1 -- DRIVER
Get on the horn.

POLICEMAN 2 -- PASSENGER SEAT
3-Baker-7.

DISPATCHER
Go 3-Baker-7.

POLICEMAN 2 -- PASSENGER SEAT
 11-79 at I-30 . . . pile-up . . . at
 least five vehicles involved. 10-99
 and 901.

DISPATCHER
 Copy that, 901. 10-20?

Turning on the flashing lights, Policeman 1 decelerates, gradually approaching the accident scene. He parks the police car on the shoulder of the Interstate.

POLICEMAN 2 -- PASSENGER SEAT
 . . . at mile marker 42, northbound.
 10-2000.

DISPATCHER
 10-4. Contacting highway patrol.

Policeman 2 replaces the microphone.

Simultaneously, both policemen open their doors and begin to get out.

POLICEMAN 1 -- DRIVER
 (addressing Policeman
 2)
 No, you stay put.

DISPATCHER
 3-Baker-7.

POLICEMAN 2 -- PASSENGER SEAT
 3-Baker-7.

DISPATCHER
 9-01 10-77 eight minutes.

POLICEMAN 2 -- PASSENGER SEAT
 10-4.

Dexterously, Jesse draws his legs to his chest in a fetal position and begins slipping the handcuffs in front of his body.

EXT. INTERSTATE -- CONTINUOUS

Policeman 1 sticks his head in the window of the station wagon.

POLICEMAN 1 -- DRIVER
 Are you okay?

Groggily, a THIRTY-SOMETHING WOMAN shakes her head affirmatively, the TODDLER strapped in the safety-seat behind her unharmed.

Policeman 1 discovers that the vehicle responsible for the accident is manned by an ELDERLY WOMAN who apparently died of natural causes at the wheel.

INT. POLICE CAR -- CONTINUOUS

ACTION CONTINUED. Houdini in the back seat maneuvers the handcuffs to the front of his body.

Meanwhile, Policeman 2, distracted, anxiously stands beside his open door. He resumes his former position in the passenger seat.

EXT. INTERSTATE -- CONTINUOUS

Conscientiously returning to direct the oncoming traffic, Policeman 1 happens to notice something ominous beyond the two columns of cars who have correctly stopped for the traffic jam.

INT. POLICE CAR -- CONTINUOUS

Policeman 2 turns around in response to his partner's worried facial expression but his view is obstructed by a fourteen-wheeler, which has stopped directly behind the police car.

POLICEMAN 2 -- PASSENGER SEAT

Shit!

EXT. INTERSTATE -- CONTINUOUS

Another vehicle is racing up from behind.

INT. NEGLIGENT DRIVER'S CAR -- CONTINUOUS

The NEGLIGENT DRIVER is texting-while-driving and stuffing his mouth with fast-food.

Upon raising his eyes, he gasps, surprised at the traffic jam ahead. He slams on the brakes.

EXT. INTERSTATE -- CONTINUOUS

His car dramatically skids. For the purpose of avoiding a rear end collision with the cars of the traffic jam, he considers his options. Unfortunately, a less hazardous departure into the median on his left-hand side is obstructed by traffic, which is decelerating and becoming somewhat congested in the passing lane. Therefore, he swerves to the right-hand side.

Despite his best intentions, the Negligent Driver's car smashes the right taillight of the last car in the column. Undeterred, it continues onward, racing along the shoulder of the Interstate, tottering, as it were, along the edge of the embankment.

Attempting to keep from careening down the embankment, the Negligent Driver swerves back onto the Interstate.

His vehicle sideswipes the right-hand side of the police car containing Jesse.

INT. POLICE CAR -- CONTINUOUS

Instantaneously, the Negligent Driver's car appears around the semi-trailer truck and is plowing into the police car.

Policeman 1's head strikes the buckling support member, which separates the front and back doors.

Exploding glass showers Jesse. He cringes as the right-hand side of 3-Baker-7 caves in.

EXT. INTERSTATE -- CONTINUOUS

The Negligent Driver's vehicle rebounds off the police car and slides sideways down the embankment, plowing into the marshy slue forty feet below.

INT. POLICE CAR -- CONTINUOUS

Jesse shakes his head and reconnoiters the situation, unharmed.

EXT. INTERSTATE -- CONTINUOUS

Momentarily stunned, Policeman 1 gapes incredulously but quickly sprints toward the sideswiped police car to attend to his unconscious partner and the unguarded prisoner.

INT. POLICE CAR -- CONTINUOUS

Jesse checks the jugular pulse of Policeman 1.

JESSE

You'll live.

He shinnies through the broken back window, somersaulting awkwardly out of it, plopping onto the shoulder of the Interstate.

EXT. INTERSTATE -- CONTINUOUS

Scrambling to his feet, he begins running.

POLICEMAN 1 -- DRIVER

Hey! Hold it!

Jesse detours down the embankment. He practically skies upon the slippery grass.

Policeman 1 jumps into the police car and grabs the CB microphone.

INT. POLICE CAR -- CONTINUOUS

POLICEMAN 1 -- DRIVER
3-Baker-7. 10-double-zero! -- 10-
23!

DISPATCHER
Repeat that Baker-7.

POLICEMAN 1 -- DRIVER
Code 30! We've been involved in a
traffic accident. 10-23!

DISPATCHER
10-4. What direction?

POLICEMAN 1 -- DRIVER
I think it must be Pine Hollow
residential -- northeast.

EXT. INTERSTATE -- CONTINUOUS

OFF-ROAD

Jesse debouches into an

INTERSTATE SLUE.

Strenuously, he wades through the waist-deep water.

Upon emerging, he runs through a

LITTLE GROVE

into an older though upscale neighborhood, which is adjacent
to more modern suburbs, sunlight streaming through its
multicolored oaks.

EXT. PINE HOLLOW, OLD SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD -- CONTINUOUS

Through this neighborhood, Jesse flees, FOUR CHILDREN and a
white LABRADOR RETRIEVER playing nearby. NERVOUS SUBURBANITES
who have been enjoying the pleasant autumn weather can't
help but notice that he is handcuffed.

Veering between houses, he emerging upon an adjacent street.
Immediately, another police car appears, whipping behind
him, giving Chase.

POLICEMAN 3 -- LOUDSPEAKER
Hold it!

Jesse diverges again between houses. Peering around a fence,
he catches his breath.

JESSE

(mumbling)

They don't waste any time, do they?

Slamming the newly arrived car into park, POLICEMAN 3 jumps out and pursues on foot.

Jesse zigzags between houses, cutting across backyards, attempting to throw the pursuer off his trail.

Clabbering desperately over a hedgerow, he accidentally tumbles to the ground. He scrambles to his feet, off-balance. For the purpose of clearing a TRICYCLE, which happens to laying capsized before him, he leaps again but does so clumsily, tripping.

Unfortunately, the house's owner has presumably been preparing to pour a concrete slab. A rectangular area, 8' X 14', has been excavated, the corners of which are defined by wooden stakes connected here and there by the batten-boards for the footing. Falling headlong, Jesse impales himself on one of them, this particular stake having been inadvertently sharpened, accidentally split during hammering.

Lifting himself off of it, the youth notices that he is grievously injured, a ragged wound piercing his right side, from which blood is pouring.

Meanwhile, Policeman 3 continues along a fruitless trail nearby, failing to notice him.

Getting to his feet again is difficult, but Jesses manages to do so, applying direct pressure to his bleeding side. He trots diagonally across the remainder of that particular frontyard.

A SNOOPY NEIGHBOR, a retired man, sees Jesse diving over a waist-high hedgerow separating two backyards, his own and his neighbor's, the Hardage's.

Scrambling on the ground, Jesse obliquely notices on his left-hand side an open access door to the crawlspace under the Hardage's two-story colonial house, which has a conventional foundation.

Sheltered against the hedgerow, he peers back through the branches and sees the Snoopy Neighbor gaping.

Immediately, he grabs a broken brick lying nearby, which had evidently been used in the border of a flower garden at one time and throws it diagonally across the backyard striking a sapling.

The Snoopy Neighbor sees the little tree flouncing shortly after having seen Jesse jump the hedge.

Jesse scrambles through the access hole in the framed skirting of the Colonial house.

TWO OTHER POLICEMEN arrive.

SNOOPY NEIGHBOR
He ran through that backyard! Beyond
that little tree!

POLICEMAN 4 AND POLICEMAN 5 follow the trail of Jesse's clever ruse.

INT. CRAWLSPACE UNDER HARDAGE'S COLONIAL HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Jesse catches his breath in the comparative darkness of the crawlspace, which is three feet six inches high, collecting his thoughts.

INT. HARDAGE'S COLONIAL HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

DINING ROOM

A little LAP DOG, a POMERANIAN, sniffs the hardwood floor, sensing something suspicious below.

FOYER

CLARK HARDAGE and EMMA HARDAGE are walking through the golden lamplight toward the front door, accompanied by their teenage daughter, BRIANNA, and their YOUNGER SON, COULTER.

BRIANNA
Don't worry about anything. We'll
be alright. I'll take Coulter to
Hunter's right now.

EMMA HARDAGE
You can have Missy over if you want
to, Bri. In fact, I would rather
you did that. Why don't you call
her now?

BRIANNA
I'll be alright. Don't worry.

CLARK HARDAGE
Bri, baby, we're coming straight
home tomorrow after lunch . . .

BRIANNA
Oh, stay and visit a while!

CLARK HARDAGE
No . . .

BRIANNA

You only get to see them every few years.

CLARK HARDAGE

We're coming home. If we don't leave by 2:00 it will be 10:00 before we get home. I don't want to drive another night, and I don't want to pay for another night in the motel, either.

EMMA HARDAGE

We're certainly not going to stay at Marsha's again. That was too weird. You remember what happened last . . .

CLARK HARDAGE

Take care of your sister, hot rod. Be good for the Colby's. What about swimming practice?

COULTER

Bri's going to take me in the morning.

EMMA HARDAGE

We've got it worked out, Clark.

CLARK HARDAGE

(addressing Coulter)

You're taken care of then? Okay.

Clark Hardage opens the front door carrying a suitcase. He and his family exit, stepping onto the front porch.

EXT. FRONT PORCH, HARDAGE'S COLONIAL HOUSE -- LATE AFTERNOON

They notice the commotion below, neighbors congregating, murmuring, and the flashing lights of police cars.

EMMA HARDAGE

What in the world?

On their left-hand side, the Snoopy Neighbor leans over the adjoining hedgerow, addressing the Hardage family.

SNOOPY NEIGHBOR

An escaped convict ran through here!

Clark Hardage's demeanor immediately becomes serious.

CLARK HARDAGE

That's it. We're not going.

EMMA HARDAGE
 (addressing the Snoopy
 Neighbor)
 What . . . ? Who is it?

SNOOPY NEIGHBOR
 They won't tell us anything yet, but
 he escaped from a police car, which
 was involved in an accident up on
 the Interstate.

EMMA HARDAGE
 (addressing her husband)
 I told you I heard some crashes.

CLARK HARDAGE
 Move son. Let's take this stuff
 back in the house.

BRIANNA
 Dad . . . don't be so hasty . . .

CLARK HARDAGE
 I'm not going to leave my daughter
 alone with an escaped convict running
 through the neighborhood!

BRIANNA
 You're being paranoid. What are the
 odds?

EMMA HARDAGE
 He's right, Bri.

BRIANNA
 What if I go to Missy's to spend the
 night?

Clark Hardage ruminates. He and Emma look thoughtfully at
 one another, deliberating.

CLARK HARDAGE
 Will you do that?

BRIANNA
 Yes. Sure. Y'all go have a good
 time.

EMMA HARDAGE
 I don't know. I don't have a good
 feeling about this.

BRIANNA
 Mom!

EMMA HARDAGE
 Well, you haven't asked her parents.

BRIANNA
Are you kidding? They love me.

EMMA HARDAGE
You leave right now, after you drop
off Coulter.

BRIANNA
Okay.

Emma and Clark Hardage look at one another. Clark shrugs
reluctant assent.

CLARK HARDAGE
Whatever you think.

EMMA HARDAGE
Go get some clothes.

BRIANNA
I've got warm ups in the car.

EMMA HARDAGE
Bri!

BRIANNA
Will you guys go on already. We're
right behind you.

INT. CRAWLSPACE UNDER HARDAGE'S COLONIAL HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Having crawled on his stomach to the front of the house,
Jesse, peering through the framed skirting of the porch,
watches the family members walking toward their respective
vehicles in the driveway.

Clark Hardage speaks briefly with Policeman 4 who has returned
from his excursion and is opening the driver's side door of
his particular police car.

EXT. STREET BEFORE HARDAGE'S COLONIAL HOUSE -- EVENING

Clark and Emma Hardage's vehicle departs first, immediately
followed by Brianna's candy-apple red Ford Mustang V6 Coupe.

INT. CRAWLSPACE UNDER HARDAGE'S COLONIAL HOUSE -- EVENING

Holding his bleeding side, Jesse crawls back to the centermost
part of the house.

EXT. STREET BEFORE HARDAGE'S COLONIAL HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

The remaining two police cars depart Pine Hollow.

INT. CRAWLSPACE UNDER HARDAGE'S COLONIAL HOUSE -- EVENING

From between the floor joists three feet above him, Jesse removes handfuls of fiberglass insulation, ripping it down and coughing.

He maneuvers onto his back, lifts his legs, and proceeds to kick the hardwood floor.

INT. HARDAGE'S COLONIAL HOUSE -- EVENING

DINING ROOM

The Hardage's Pomeranian lap dog is barking at a dining room closet.

Jesse crawls through the resulting hole in the floor of the closet. He emerges fending off the snarling little dog.

He seizes the yapping dog by the scruff of the neck and locks him in a bathroom.

Jesse searches the house. Having located the

PARENT'S ROOM,

He immediately begins pilfering through the nightstand and dresser until he finds what he is looking for.

The .38 Caliber revolver is loaded. It is a snub-nosed, five-cartridge Amadeo Rossi handgun.

In the closet of the parent's room, he also finds a 12-gauge Remington shotgun and five double-ought buckshot shells.

He LOADS the shotgun and PUMPS it.

INT. KITCHEN -- NIGHT

While eating a peanut-butter sandwich at the kitchen table with his shirt off, Jesse dabs his wound grimacing; guns lying on the table.

He hears a car drive up and runs to the kitchen window to see Brianna exiting her red Mustang in the driveway, talking on her cell-phone.

With the sandwich hanging out of his mouth, Jesse grabs the guns and runs toward the mid-section of the house.

INT. HARDAGE'S COLONIAL HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

FOYER

Brianna enters the front door talking on her cell-phone.

BRIANNA

All right. It will take me about twenty minutes. So I'll pick up the pizza, and see you in a bit. Is there anything else, Your Highness? Drinks? Why didn't you order them with the pizza? Okay, okay. That's one reason I like you. You're frugal. Bye.

DINING ROOM

Through the SLIT in the closet door where he has hidden himself, Jesse sees Brianna stop and, with a quizzical expression, turn her ear this way and that, attempting to determine where the BARKING of her dog is coming from. Normally, he would have run to greet her.

BATHROOM

Brianna releases the dog, which has been imprisoned in the bathroom, and scoops him into her arms.

BRIANNA (CONT'D)

How did you get in there?

Pensively, she wrinkles her forehead.

He continues barking and squirming in her arms as if he wants to be released so that he can pursue something.

BRIANNA (CONT'D)

Goodness. What's gotten into you. Will you stop it? You're freaking me out.

KITCHEN

She walks into the kitchen, opens the exterior door, and puts the dog outside, in the backyard.

BRIANNA (CONT'D)

Do your thing. I'll let you in in a few minutes.

The Pomeranian continues barking.

She is distracted from noticing the open peanut-butter jar and bread on the counter by a beeping summons from her cell-phone. She accesses the incoming TEXT MESSAGE. It is From "Kirk," KIRK ROSTON.

INSERT

Text message reads, "U can run but U can't hide."

Miffed, she spastically types, "Stop hassling me, or I'm going to the law," and sends the message.

DINING ROOM

On her way to the stairs, Brianna doesn't notice the BLOOD DROPS gleaming on the hardwood floor outside the closet. Nor does she notice Jesse's eye peering through the interstice.

INT. BRIANNA'S ROOM AND ADJOINING BATHROOM UPSTAIRS -- NIGHT

As she takes off her clothing, Brianna turns on a television set. She listens with interest to the report on the evening newscast regarding Jesse's escape while being taken to the police station as a suspect in a murder, which had transpired the night before.

DURING THE FOLLOWING NEWSCAST

Brianna gets into the shower. While she showers, Jesse enters the room.

NEWSCASTER

Now the latest in some breaking news regarding the murder of a Little Rock man we reported to you last night. The suspect of that murder was apprehended this afternoon and was enroute to the police station when he escaped during a freak accident, which detained the police car carrying him on Interstate 30. The suspect's name is Jesse Calder, the brother of last night's murder victim; and was last seen running through the Pine Hollow community headed for Maumelle. A manhunt is underway and everyone in the Pine Hollow and Maumelle communities are encouraged to stay in their homes and report any suspicious behavior. Although Jesse Calder is presumably still handcuffed, he should be considered dangerous.

Jesse's hand turns off the television.

Twice Jesse looks from the girl bathing behind the frosted glass of the shower stall to Brianna's portrait in a picture frame on the vanity. A quizzical expression comes upon his face.

He goes to her computer, which is already booted up, opens an Internet browser, and types something.

MINUTES LATER

Having put on some panties and wrapping her head in a white towel, Brianna approaches, entering the bedroom.

Upon seeing Jesse sitting insouciantly against the opposite wall, she gasps. She whips the towel off her head and covers her breasts.

Jesse's breathing is labored as he balances the guns on his lap with his right hand and holds his profusely bleeding side with his left, handcuffed.

Brianna glances at the television, which has been turned off. She bites her lip and begins to tremble.

Shotgun precariously balanced upon his lap, Jesse retrieves a book from the nightstand. He slightly brandishes it.

JESSE

Is this yours?

BRIANNA

(gulping)

Yes.

JESSE

Adventures in Bolivia. What's this about?

BRIANNA

Foreign Missions.

JESSE

Hummm . . . very interesting . . .
exotic, too.

He replaces the book. Brianna doesn't respond.

JESSE (CONT'D)

And a King James Bible . . . ?

Brianna becomes terrified.

Jesse struggles to stand. Blood spills onto the carpet, a copious handful of it.

JESSE (CONT'D)

(sheepishly)

Sorry about that. I seem to have
injured myself pretty good.

He walks toward the window, which is opposite the main doorway of the bedroom. On the way, he notices Brianna trembling.

DURING THE FOLLOWING DIALOGUE

He lifts one of the slats of the Venetian blinds, peering stealthily below while maintaining Brianna in his peripheral vision.

JESSE (CONT'D)

Don't worry. I'm not a Columbine psycho. My grandmother's a Christian. You could do a lot worse than her. Of course, she wasn't always so . . . respectable. Not like she is now. Used to be a honky-tonk queen.

(absently)

But she could dance the Cotton-eyed Joe like nobody's business. Least that's what they tell me. You go to Maumelle, don't you?

BRIANNA

Yes.

Awkwardness.

BRIANNA (CONT'D)

You go to Little Rock High?

JESSE

Left behind in the white flight. But I'm not complaining. Not me.

(whispering)

Wouldn't do any good anyhow.

Awkward lull.

BRIANNA

You're running from the police?

JESSE

Duh!

BRIANNA

You committed murder?

JESSE

Why would I murder my own brother? He was one of the only friends I had in the world!

Brianna cringes.

JESSE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. You couldn't know any different. I was set up. Look, whatever your name is . . . What is your name, anyway?

BRIANNA

Brianna.

JESSE

Brianna, I've got to get these shackles off. I've gotta plug up this hole in my side and get out of here. And I'm gonna need your help to do it.

BRIANNA

(vaguely protesting)

What can I . . . ?

JESSE

A hacksaw for starters . . .

BRIANNA

I don't know any My dad's got some tools in the garage. Maybe . . .

JESSE

(lost in thought)

Or maybe a hammer and chisel.

(deadly serious)

Look, I don't intend to harm you; but don't test me. But I do intend to get out of here; in one piece if possible. I'm not in the mood for any funny business -- you understand? They'll be back with dogs in no time.

BRIANNA

Can I put on some clothes? They're right there.

JESSE

Make it snappy.

Brianna retrieves the clothing and starts to return to the bathroom.

JESSE (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

BRIANNA

To change.

JESSE

No you don't. Right there. I'm too tired and exasperated to chase you.

BRIANNA

But --

JESSE

Right there! Get to it.

Brianna starts putting on her clothing.

BRIANNA

What is your name.

JESSE

Didn't you hear? Suppose I'm known state-wide by now.

BRIANNA

No. Sorry, I wasn't paying attention.

JESSE

Yeah, you were in the shower. Well, it isn't a crime not to know . . . My name? Jesse.

BRIANNA

If you're innocent -- er -- Jesse . . . you'll be vindicated . . .

JESSE

Don't count on it. Somebody planted my fingerprints on the murder weapon. That takes a little know-how. I sure can't imagine the yahoos my brother was selling drugs to being able to do it.

BRIANNA

But carrying those guns . . . if you try to shoot it out with the police, they'll kill you on sight. Sorry, but that's kind a' crazy! You're sure to be exonerated if what you say --

JESSE

I won't fire on the police.

BRIANNA

Well, what are those for?

JESSE

My brother's killer! -- Hell, I don't know! It's instinct, I guess. Do you always ask so many questions? Just hurry up.

BRIANNA

The police won't know that --

JESSE

Look, don't worry about it. As bad as I would like to abduct a beautiful girl like you, I can't afford a kidnapping charge on top of everything else.

BRIANNA
That's not all of it.

JESSE
I certainly don't plan on starting a
shootout -- whether you're around or
not.

BRIANNA
I mean . . . you're liable to bleed
to death if you don't get to a doctor.
(emphasizing her
statement)
Really.

Grimly, Jesse looks through the Venetian blinds again.

BRIANNA (CONT'D)
Is it a gunshot . . . ?

JESSE
No. I fell on a damned stake in
somebody's yard.
(maundering)
Don't they know that its dangerous
to have sharp objects . . . with all
these kids around?
(preoccupied, talking
more deeply with
himself)
But his supplier was connected with
the law. That's somebody who would
have the expertise to do it. The
fingerprints, that is. And Josh
owed him money. You see, I can't
trust them. Somebody in the law is
behind this.

Jesse walks across the room to Brianna's computer table.

JESSE (CONT'D)
One of the most miserable things
about this stinking world is that
it's crawling with snakes; everywhere,
snakes, speak'n with forked tongue.

Jesse presses the computer keyboard and rotates the monitor
so that Brianna can see it from her position.

JESSE (CONT'D)
Hypocrisy's everywhere.

A Youtube video begins playing: Brianna stripping, wearing
only pink panties.

JESSE (CONT'D)
I knew I had seen you somewhere.

Brianna becomes mortified.

JESSE (CONT'D)

Quite sexy, I thought. Oh, relax. You don't look like any snake I've ever seen. I'm a pretty good judge of people. Besides, I wouldn't have remembered it at all, if you weren't so damn beautiful. Funny, how desperation makes you bold. I never would have had the guts to tell a strange girl that before. It may interest you to know . . . I can't even afford the Internet. I have only seen this maybe three times all totaled. You are quite memorable.

BRIANNA

I pleaded with my ex-boyfriend to not put that on there.

JESSE

Thousands of girls work hard just to get their striptease on there.

BRIANNA

Well, not me. When he refused to remove it, I broke up with him.

JESSE

What? Say that again?

BRIANNA

If I had pressed the issue and sued him in civil court or something like that, my parent's would have found out. I decided to leave well enough alone. But it turned into an outrageous scandal anyway. The whole school knows about it now.

JESSE

Your boyfriend?

BRIANNA

I can't believe someone hasn't told my parents yet. Uh-huh . . . ex-boyfriend.

JESSE

When did he post this video?

BRIANNA

Six months or so ago.

JESSE

Six months ago, Kirk Roston was bragging about having posted this video of his girlfriend.

BRIANNA

Yeah! You know Kirk? That's him, Kirk Roston.

(sneering)

Party-animal . . .

Brianna's eyes widen with realization.

BRIANNA (CONT'D)

. . . stepson of Police Chief Roston.

JESSE

You gotta be kidding me. Of all the houses in the world I could have stumbled into.

INT. POLICE STATION -- NIGHT

POLICE CHIEF ROSTON enters the common floor space of the Police Station, coming from his office. He quickly pulls a paper cup from the dispenser and pours some water from a bottle; turns, walking snappily, and is immediately joined by POLICEMAN 6.

POLICEMAN 6

Captain. We've had some trouble getting a hold of James Goodfellow, but we finally got 'em. They're headed to Pine Hollow now.

POLICE CHIEF ROSTON

The objective is to get the dogs on a hot trail . . .

(mumbling)

Not a cold one.

POLICEMAN 6

(mumbling)

Tell it to your prize-winning boys.

POLICE CHIEF ROSTON

What was that?

POLICEMAN 6

Goodfellow was at the bar.

POLICE CHIEF ROSTON

Good grief . . .

INSPECTOR MERRITT

Chief?

POLICE CHIEF ROSTON
Yeah, what have you got?

INSPECTOR MERRITT
As we suspected -- it was pretty clear -- the place where the body was discovered in Whitehall definitely was not the murder scene. But that's not what I wanted to show you.

POLICE CHIEF ROSTON
Okay. What is it?

Police Chief Roston swallows some medication and washes it down with his cup of water.

INSPECTOR MERRITT
We need to get an expert to look at this. Something's troubling me about these prints.

POLICE CHIEF ROSTON
What is it?

INSPECTOR MERRITT
I've seen this before. I could be mistaken, but these bloody fingerprints -- they seem to have been transferred. You can see here what appears to be the edge of some celluloid or something. If I'm correct, when we analyze this, we'll find extraneous residue, probably carbon, as in the carbon of a toner cartridge.

POLICE CHIEF ROSTON
A printer?

INSPECTOR MERRITT
Yes. But not just everyone can do it. In fact, they really need software like . . . like . . .

POLICE CHIEF ROSTON
Well, spit it out.

INSPECTOR MERRITT
Like what we have here. I suppose a jake-leg could do it, but it isn't than easy . . . even to do badly.

EXT. ABANDONED MULTISTORY WAREHOUSE -- NIGHT

Brianna's sporty Mustang drives up outside an abandoned warehouse on a desolate side of town.

It slowly enters a craterous rent in the exterior wall, half of which extends over retractable loading-bay doors, which have been crumpled.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE --CONTINUOUS

Brianna's vehicle glides across the gleaming concrete, the broad open space upheld here and there by concrete columns, some of which are excised so that the reinforcement rods are exposed. Moonlight streams through an expansive wall of broken windows before it, three stories tall.

ELEVATED OFFICE

Before the broad window, which surveys the warehouse floor where Brianna's car glides right-to-left two stories below, tattered clothing moves. Presumably, the shadowy figure who drifts before the console of dust-covered control panels is departing the office.

STORAGE BAY

Brianna's Mustang coasts to a stop, the battleship-gray wall, which contains the elevated office window, twelve yards on its left-hand side. The nine-foot tall portion of the exterior wall supporting the moonlit fenestration is illumined in its headlights.

Brianna and Jesse get out of the vehicle, both wearing wind-breaker jackets.

JESSE

The Onlies will be showing up soon.

BRIANNA

Who's that?

JESSE

The homeless folk that live down here.

On their right-hand side, fifty yards across the warehouse, a little crowd of mendicants indeed begin congregating. Tentatively, some of them begin creeping through the open door toward Jesse and Brianna.

JESSE (CONT'D)

Y'all got no business with us. You might as well go on. Go on, I said!

Jesse brandishes the .38 revolver in the air.

JESSE (CONT'D)

Go on!

He discharges the handgun into the air. The repercussion is deafening, tremendous.

Brianna cringes, and several BATS within the girders becomes excited. The Onlies flee back the way they came.

BRIANNA

Are you not concerned that the police will show up?

JESSE

Of course; but trouble from these homeless could be worse. The Lost Boys will be show'n up soon.

BRIANNA

Lost Boys, huh? You people have a pet name for everything.

JESSE

They're out raiding now; foraging, trying to eke out a living. Usually don't come back until two or three o'clock in the morning . . . as far as I know.

Jesse retrieves several items he had appropriated from the Hardage's house and walks around the front of the Mustang. He spills them on the driver's side of the hood, along with the .38 Caliber handgun. Having cleared himself a place to sit by shoving the items across the hood, he turns around and jumps a little, nestling his butt on the hood directly in front of the driver's side of the windshield.

Brianna watches as he raises his T-shirt and pours rubbing alcohol on the wound in his right side. He clenches his teeth, groaning, and trembles in prolonged agony.

INT. POLICE STATION -- NIGHT

Police Chief Roston comes out of his office and sees his stepson, Kirk, Brianna's ex-boyfriend, leaning over the ASSISTANT INVESTIGATOR's desk, presumably discussing a case with him.

POLICE CHIEF ROSTON

Kirk, what are you doing?

KIRK

I wanted to check on the status the Calder escape. But I see you haven't caught him yet.

POLICE CHIEF ROSTON

What's your interest in the case?

KIRK

Well, it seems like I might have known him. Just curious.

(MORE)

KIRK (CONT'D)

Anyway, if I'm ever going to be an investigator, I need to start following cases like these, don't I?

POLICE CHIEF ROSTON

How would you have known Jesse Calder?

KIRK

Oh, I don't know. I could be wrong. But he may have showed up at the frat house last year . . . drunk and causing problems.

POLICE CHIEF ROSTON

Well . . . he's still at large. But, according to some of the Pine Hollow folks, he's wounded --

KIRK

Is he shot?

POLICE CHIEF ROSTON

I don't think so. Not by us anyway. He probably injured himself running from the patrols. It's just a matter of time.

KIRK

Has Merritt come up with any other evidence?

POLICE CHIEF ROSTON

Not yet. Look, we're busy. You go on home now.

(on second thought)

Say, will you do me a favor?

Withdrawing his wallet and opening it, he removes a grocery-store coupon, which he extends to Kirk.

POLICE CHIEF ROSTON (CONT'D)

Will you pick up some chicken on the way home? It's on sale at the Happy Mart.

KIRK

(scowling)

I didn't plan on going home --

POLICE CHIEF ROSTON

If you would, before you go. Your mother's waiting on me . . .

KIRK
 (incredulously)
 Sam! What a damn drag. We've got a
 frat meeting tonight.

Police Chief Roston extends some money to Kirk.

POLICE CHIEF ROSTON
 -- but I'm going to be running a
 little late.

Kirk looks at his stepfather stone-cold, as if he were crazy
 for imposing upon him so. He doesn't take the proffered
 money.

POLICE CHIEF ROSTON (CONT'D)
 (exasperated but trying
 to be understanding)
 Well, forget it then. I'll get it
 later.

KIRK
 Come on. Give it to me.

Kirk reluctantly takes the money.

KIRK (CONT'D)
 Can I use the phone in your office,
 first?

POLICE CHIEF ROSTON
 What's wrong with your cell-phone?

KIRK
 Battery's dead. Well, I need to
 tell the Sig-Esps that I'm going to
 be late.

POLICE CHIEF ROSTON
 . . . don't make a habit of it.
 (afterthought)
 It's the ten-pound bag, Kirk. The
 Patriot's Pride brand. Can you
 remember that?

KIRK
 Patriot's Pride. Got it.

POLICE CHIEF ROSTON
 It's on the coupon.

INT. MAYOR'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Golden lamplight hovers in the Mayor's plush Victorian study.

MAYOR

I told you never to call me; much less at home.

The Mayor slams the phone on his enormous desk.

HEINDRICK

Don't tell me. Well, maybe you better tell me. Was that Kirk?

MAYOR

Yeah.

HEINDRICK

That boy has some nerve.

MAYOR

He's trying to ingratiate himself. Stupid idiot! Thinks he's a bigshot calling from the Police Station. He's liable to ruin everything.

(under his breath.)

To think he had the gall to worm in on our operation! Little shit . . . thinks he can blackmail me.

HEINDRICK

Mayor, there's something we might need to talk about. Are you aware that there was a boy murdered last night at Whitehall?

MAYOR

I heard something about it . . . but who pays attention? It's a battleground over there.

HEINDRICK

He was one of Kirk's pushers.

MAYOR

I don't suppose you're kidding?

HEINDRICK

I wish I was.

MAYOR

Well, there's always going to be collateral damage in this business . . . we just have to hope that such things don't expose us . . . and do everything we can to prevent it.

HEINDRICK

Precisely.

(MORE)

HEINDRICK (CONT'D)

I wasn't going to say anything about it until I had an opportunity to investigate it. But I know this much already. The kid owed Kirk money.

MAYOR

They have a suspect, though, don't they?

HEINDRICK

Yes, but he escaped today. And although that's not particularly a concern of ours, that's not all. There are problems with the fingerprints.

MAYOR

What are you talking about? What do you mean, "Problems"?

HEINDRICK

You heard me on the phone a few minutes ago? It seems Merritt is not convinced that the fingerprints are genuine. It looks like a shoddy setup.

MAYOR

That loose cannon probably killed the Whitehall boy! Damn! He's been a liability all along.

HEINDRICK

You know my thoughts on the subject.

The Mayor gulps his last swig of cognac.

MAYOR

Well, the time has come. We need to clean house. Make sure he never makes any mistakes again.

HEINDRICK

It's been a long time coming.

Unexpectedly, the VOICES of squealing children erupt from beyond the open double doors of the study. TWO LITTLE CHILDREN run through the foyer, which can be seen through the double doors. Around the grandfather clock and the oak banister of a stairway, they race, scurrying across the vermilion rug.

CHILDREN

Grandpa! Grandpa!

They scamper into the library, a LITTLE BOY chasing a LITTLE GIRL. Each of them clutches one of the Mayor's legs.

MAYOR'S GRANDDAUGHTER
It's supertime, Grandpa.

MAYOR'S GRANDSON
Izzy made lasagna.

MAYOR
Sounds good.

A HANDSOME YOUNG WOMAN appears in the foyer, leaning backward around the stairwell wall, which is covered in wallpaper with crush-velvet motifs of ochre-colored paisley.

MAYOR'S DAUGHTER
It's time to eat, Daddy.

MAYOR
Be right with you, baby.
(addressing the
children)
You too. Y'all go on. I'll be with
you in a second.

MAYOR'S GRANDDAUGHTER
Hurry, Papaw. You don't want it to
get cold.

MAYOR
No I don't.

Children exit.

MAYOR (CONT'D)
He had balls enough, but he didn't
have shit for brains. I don't want
to know anything about this,
Heindrick. You're resourceful enough
to handle this alone. Make it seem
natural; without any loose ends.

HEINDRICK
Don't worry about anything.

EXT. HARDAGE'S COLONIAL HOUSE -- NIGHT

Following Jesse's trail through the Snoopy Neighbor's yard, THREE POLICEMEN are being pulled along, holding the leashes of straining dogs. Crossing the driveway, approaching the hedgerow over which Jesse had disappeared into the Hardage's backyard, they are being pulled along by the sniffing and barking dogs.

Policemen and dogs all clamber over the hedgerow and follow the blood trail to the access hole in the framed skirting of Brianna's house. The dogs bark excitedly.

POLICEMAN A and B release their dogs from their leashes. Sniffing and barking, the animals scour the crawlspace without finding the murder suspect.

Meanwhile, POLICEMAN C goes to the back door, his canine barking wildly. Obligatorily, he knocks.

He and his partners who have just arrived bust down the door and infiltrate the house with weapons drawn.

INT. HARDAGE'S COLONIAL HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

They follow various clues; the kitchen food, the blood-drops on the hardwood floor in the dining room, blood drops leading up the carpeted steps to the second floor into Brianna's room. The Pomeranian lap dog is going berserk.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE -- NIGHT

Insouciantly, Jesse is leaning against the windshield of Brianna's car. His bare chest gleams from the fluorescence of a battery-operated shop light, which he had requisitioned from the Hardage's garage, his handcuffed hands raised above his head. From his elbows to his wrists, his dark-colored T-shirt is bunched up, his wind-breaker laying beside him upon the hood.

Brusquely, he rises from his supine position, stiffening from pain, grimacing.

Brianna pierces a needle through the pleated flesh in Jesse's side, which she pinches between her fingers, drawing a thread through it. Jesse grimaces more, groaning.

BRIANNA

Nursing classes . . . haven't gotten to this point yet.

JESSE

Don't worry about me. Just do what you have to. But quickly --

BRIANNA

I can't -- I've got to concentrate.

JESSE

Don't second-guess yourself is what I mean. Just do it!

BRIANNA

I don't know if we have cleaned this good enough. Besides that, you probably need a tetanus shot.

JESSE

I'm serious, though, Brianna. You're innocent in all this. Just tell them the truth -- OOWW!

BRIANNA

I don't know why you don't let me saw those cuffs off. This would be a lot easier.

JESSE

I'm in enough pain now without having a broken hand too. Besides, you don't want to be complicit in aiding and abetting a suspected murderer, do you? Linal should be here in a minute . . .

BRIANNA

Broken hand?

JESSE

With this injury, I don't have the strength to keep the chains taut enough to saw it. Well, I probably do, but straining will make me bleed too much.

BRIANNA

Okay. Hold still. Just about through.

(incidentally)

You're gonna let me go, Jesse?

JESSE

Soon as Linal gets here.

BRIANNA

In that case, since he should be here soon I suppose I should start trying to talk you out of taking the law into your own hands.

JESSE

Good luck.

BRIANNA

Given, of course, that what you say is correct.

JESSE

What do you mean? -- that I'm tell'in the truth? You take a lot of chances, girl.

(affected)

Oh, it's correct.

BRIANNA

For some reason . . . I don't doubt that . . . but any fool knows that an escaped murderer -- I mean, suspect -- one who is armed, no less -- doesn't have a snowball's chance.

JESSE

Maybe not.

BRIANNA

Several years ago, maybe. But not now, Jesse . . . with all the video surveillance and whatnot.

JESSE

Don't think I don't appreciate your trying, Brianna. I do. No one has ever cared for my soul . . . except [my Grandmother] . . .

BRIANNA

What about Lionel?

JESSE

Whaa . . . ?

BRIANNA

You call this guy, and he wastes no time coming, even though you're a fugitive?

JESSE

Oh yeah. Lionel too.

BRIANNA

Let's not have a pity-party. That's what desperate types always do, romanticize their . . .

JESSE

Their what?

BRIANNA

Stupidity.

JESSE

(smirking)

You take a lot of chances.

(seriously)

Look, I appreciate your attempt, Brianna; in spite of the insults. I know I seem crazy, but don't jump to conclusions. Vengeance is one thing, and, I admit, right now I'm not above it.

(MORE)

JESSE (CONT'D)

But vindicating myself is another. I'm too screwed up to sort it all out right now, but I'm not stupid. I know Joshua was messing with the wrong crowd. I told him a thousand times he was asking for it. But I also know this: I am going to try to clear my name. And now's the time to do it, while I can.

EXT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

LIONEL's car circles off the street and enters the warehouse.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

JESSE

There he is now.

Lionel's 1993 Plymouth Duster covered with splotches of gray primer pulls up beside Brianna's car.

Jesse lowers his arms.

BRIANNA

Wait. I'm not through.

He quickly slices the thread Brianna is tightening with a kitchen knife and doesn't concern himself with tying off the loose end of it.

JESSE

It's good enough.

From the newly arrived Duster steps a BLACK LINEBACKER, two years older than Jesse. He circles around the hood of Brianna's car.

Jesse has difficulty pulling his T-shirt down.

LIONEL

Could you make any more stink? They've called out the National Guard on you!

JESSE

Surely, your kidding.

LIONEL

(guffaws)
What's the difference between them and a thousand po-lice?

JESSE

Thanks for coming.

LIONEL
 (mumbling)
 Wouldn't miss it for the world.

BRIANNA
 He's injured.

LIONEL
 You're lucky, though. I almost didn't
 answer because I didn't recognize
 the pay-phone number.

BRIANNA
 He needs a doctor.

JESSE
 Don't mind the crusader.

LIONEL
 Are you going to be okay? Have you
 been shot?

JESSE
 No . . .

BRIANNA
 He fell on a stake.

JESSE
 I'll survive. Linal, I need your
 help to --

BRIANNA
 He's already lost a lot of blood, I
 tell you!

JESSE
 Linal, Brianna. Brianna Linal. She
 goes to Maumelle.

LIONEL
 Yeah. Well, what are you going to
 do?

JESSE
 Get out of these cuffs for starters.

LIONEL
 Jesse, you got to come clean! I
 know you didn't do this. And what
 about this girl, anyway?

Jesse withdraws the .38 pistol from his back pocket and
 extends his handcuffed hands.

Lionel looks at them concernedly, grimly. He then looks
 concernedly at Brianna.

LIONEL (CONT'D)
 (speaking to Jesse)
 Have you kidnapped this girl? My
 God, man, have you lost your mind?

Brianna looks at Jesse, but he continues looking steadfastly at Lionel.

JESSE
 I suppose you could say so. But
 we're going to let her --

LIONEL
We're! What are you talking about,
 "We're"? There ain't no "We're"!

JESSE
 Okay. I'm going to let her go.

LIONEL
 You're damned right! You're damned
 right!
 (Exasperated)
 "We're" . . . Gett'in a little fresh
 with implicatin me, aren't you?

JESSE
 . . . as soon as I get these cuffs
 off.
 (seriously)
 Somebody faked my prints on the murder
 knife, Linal. Besides that, I don't
 have an alibi. I was alone at Hobbit
 Land until three o'clock in the
 morning.

BRIANNA
 (mumbling)
 Hobbitt Land?

Jesse turns to retrieve tools from the car once again but is interrupted by a SHRILL OUTBURST.

SHANNAH
 Jesse!

Fifty yards away, where the shadowy crowd of Onlies had entered earlier, another small group of them are huddling. From within this group, a voluptuous YOUNG BLACK GIRL bursts forth and sprints across the open floor space of the moonlit warehouse toward Jesse and his companions.

To Brianna's astonishment, SHANNAH throws herself onto Jesse, embracing him, smothering his face with kisses.

LIONEL
Get off him, girl! Can't you tell,
he's injured.

She looks down and notices the handcuffs on Jesse's wrists.
Horrified, she also sees blood on his T-shirt.

SHANNAH
(shrieking)
You been shot! You been shot! Mama!
Mama, he's been shot!

By this time, a HEAVY-SET BLACK WOMAN, Shannah's mother, has
arrived on the scene with five other Onlies, including a
WEATHERED BLIND MAN whom she is escorting.

MERYLEE
There, there, baby . . .

LIONEL
He'll be all right. Damn! Simmer
down.
(muttering)
. . . wake the dead.

MERYLEE
Jesse, are you all right?

JESSE
I'll live, Merylee.

MERYLEE
We heard on the radio . . . you
escaped . . .

JESSE
Yeah, well . . . don't worry. I'll
be gone soon.

MERYLEE
We're not worried about that, Jesse.
But you can't fight the law. You
can't win in a situation like this.
You know what happened to us. I
lost Brendon like this! You're liable
to get killed, too!

SHANNAH
No, Mamma! No! Don't even say it!

Shannah again impulsively embraces Jesse, visibly rubbing
her voluptuous body against his, profusely kissing his face.

SHANNAH (CONT'D)
I love you, Jesse!
(weeping)
I love you!

JESSE
Merylee, please . . .

Merylee pries Shannah from Jesse's body.

MERYLEE
Why don't you come down to the Bodocks
with us, Jesse?

JESSE
I don't have time for that.

WEATHERED BLIND MAN
The Lost Boys could show up any time.
They always keep a lookout up here.
I imagine they've already reported
you.

JESSE
Then the sooner y'all shag on, the
sooner I can get my business done
and get outta here. Y'all go on
outside, okay? Please, go on. I
got to get outta these cuffs.

MERYLEE
(addressing Shannah)
We can't do no good here. You got
to see him. God-willing, he'll come
back to us.
(addressing Jesse)
Be careful, Jesse.

SHANNAH
Come say goodbye to me, Jesse . . .
before you go.

Onlies exit.

JESSE
(muttering)
Don't hold your breath.
(to be heard)
Brianna, get the chisel and hammer.

INT. POLICE STATION -- NIGHT

Hanging up his cell-phone and addressing Investigator Merritt.

POLICE CHIEF ROSTON
He never left Pine Hollow community.
He was hiding out in Clark Hardgrove's
house. I know them because Kirk
dated his daughter. There was blood
in girl's room, and the scene suggests
that he could have taken her hostage.

Kirk overhears the news as he is exiting the large office.

KIRK

Did you say, he has Brianna?

POLICE CHIEF ROSTON

Possibly. Pam, get Clark Hardage's cell-phone number. Contact him, and determine the status of Brianna.

(addressing

Investigator Merritt)

Get the girl's phone records, will you? And see if she has a GPS account.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE -- NIGHT

Brianna and Lionel watch Jesse exit through a doorway in the wall of broken windows.

LIONEL

Shannah? No. They got put out of their rent-house in our neighborhood and ended up here. Jesse and me been try'in to help the best we could . . . bringing 'em food and whatnot.

BRIANNA

So they're not . . . ?

LIONEL

Jesse and . . . ? No. He's had other things on his mind. He's all business, Jesse. All he wants to do is start a business. Got big plans. Some innovative green technology. He got to thinking about it originally because he was worried about the Onlies drink'n sewer water. You know, sometimes they end up having to use that drainage water. He wants to get a government loan and hire these other companies to make the parts. He could probably do it, too -- make us all rich. If I don't make us rich first.

(smirks; then becomes pensive)

If he ever gets through this, that is.

(pause)

I don't think there's much Jesse couldn't do.

BRIANNA

You grew up in the same neighborhood?

LIONEL

Yeah, same school, rode the bus together. Same issues . . . a lot of drug problems. Both of us were pretty heavily involved ourselves until we eventually made a pact to try to get ourselves clean. I guess you could say we were a support group for each other; but it hadn't been easy because, well . . . we've both had a hell of a time with our own -- weaknesses . . . a lot of backsliding. I had a promising career in football, myself, but I guess I wanted to do drugs more. I'm going to college on loans now. I'm going to try it again.

(smirking)

If he don't drag me down with this situation, I'll probably wind up in the pros.

Brianna and Lionel begin moseying outside.

BRIANNA

You can't let him, Lionel. You can't let him drag you down. I'm afraid of the outcome of this.

LIONEL

I am too. Not only for him, but for myself -- and you, too! For us. Jesse knows better, though. We've seen this kind a desperation all our life. We always commented on how stupid it was.

BRIANNA

You can still leave, Lionel. I mean, you've been a Good Samaritan by getting him out of the cuffs.

LIONEL

(thoughtfully)

Yeah.

BRIANNA

If he knows how hopeless it is, then there is still hope of getting through to him . . . if you will help, and continue to dissuade him.

LIONEL

There's just one difference in Jesse's situation, though. He's innocent. I don't doubt it, at all.

BRIANNA
 (whimsically)
 . . . and he doesn't think he can
 trust the police.

LIONEL
 That's right. Jesse's brother wanted
 out of the drug business too; but he
 wasn't as committed as we were. He
 started doing stupid things . . .
 lending money; the money that was
 due his supplier, that is. He wasn't
 doing it as a money-making scheme,
 though. He really wanted to help
 people. As though selling them all
 those drugs was do'in 'em any good.
 But they couldn't pay him back. His
 drug supplier just happened to be --
 very few people know -- the son of
 the Police Chief.

BRIANNA
 I know.

LIONEL
 What do you mean?

BRIANNA
 I used to date him.

LIONEL
 Who? Kirk?

BRIANNA
 Uh-huh.

LIONEL
 What do ya know? The world is a
 small place.

BRIANNA
 Its more than that.

LIONEL
 . . . too much. What are the odds?

BRIANNA
 I think it's providential.

LIONEL
 Why would you date a prick like that,
 anyway? Wha . . . providential?
 What's that?

BRIANNA
 Destiny. I think it must have been
 God's plan.

LIONEL
 (skeptically)
 Uh-huh.

BRIANNA
 I finally figured out what a prick
 he was.

LIONEL
 You be careful girl. This is one
 coincidence that can get you killed.

EXT. POLICE STATION -- NIGHT

Walking across the parking lot of the Police Station at a snappy clip, Kirk Roston is joined by his companion, a university thug named CHASE who throws down a cigarette butt, suggesting that he has been loitering outside, waiting on Kirk.

CHASE
 What'd you find out?

KIRK
 Calder has abducted Brianna.

CHASE
 Brianna who? Not Hardage?

KIRK
 None other.

CHASE
 Well, how in the world . . . ?

KIRK
 Your guess is as good as mine.
 Apparently, he just wandered into
 their house when he was escaping.

CHASE
 You don't figure . . .

KIRK
 Good thing I put that GPS device on
 Brianna's car.

They climb into Kirk's yellow and black 2010 Chevrolet Silverado monster truck.

INT. KIRK'S MONSTER TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

Jumping into the passenger seat.

CHASE
 The advantage of being a control
 freak.

Behind the driver's wheel, Kirk Roston fiddles with the dashboard lights.

KIRK

You know it.

Chase readies his Heckler & Kosh MP-7 submachine gun with a twenty-round magazine. Kirk activates tracking controls and puts the vehicle in drive.

EXT. BEHIND THE ABANDONED WAREHOUSE -- NIGHT

Brianna gasps at the incredible scene unfolding before her as she and Lionel walk onto the expansive veranda.

Thirty yards away from her, Jesse is surveying the small squatter's canyon beneath the full moon. Gigantic drainage pipes emerge from an embankment on his left-hand side, beyond the eastern end of the warehouse. (The warehouse from which they had just emerged projects from the side of this very embankment.) Above the embankment, skyscrapers in the distance rise like Saturn rockets, illumining the northern sky with variously colored neon.

Opposite the skyscrapers, the river of sewage coming from the drainage pipes runs onto lower elevation barren hills covered with garbage. The campfires of a shantytown called "the Bodocks," which stretches into a dark forest, are burning there. An old railroad trestle spans part of the shantytown, circling at a gentle gradient downhill until, after spanning also the contaminated river, it disappears into the forest.

JESSE

This is where we part ways, Brianna. Contact the police, and tell them I let you go.

BRIANNA

Where are you going?

JESSE

I really don't know; but even if I did, I wouldn't tell you. They would only press it out of you.

BRIANNA

You don't think much of my . . .

JESSE

That's not it, Brianna. You got grit. But you don't need to be tortured, either.

BRIANNA

Tortured?

JESSE
 What do you think an interrogation
 is?

Lionel approaches.

LIONEL
 Shannah's willing to lead them on a
 false trail if they come here.

JESSE
 Good idea. Work something up with
 her, will ya? But hurry back. We
 need to be out of here in five
 minutes.

Lionel departs.

BRIANNA
 I'm sure Shannah will do whatever
 you ask.

JESSE
 (exasperated)
 She's only fourteen.

BRIANNA
 It's so beautiful.

JESSE
 Everything's beautiful in the
 moonlight. But it can be deceptive.
 Those whitish hills of the Bodocks? --
 they're industrial by-products from
 the Tectum plant, some kind of pressed-
 paper stuff use in making acoustical
 ceiling panels, I think. I don't
 know if its dangerous, but there are
 plenty of things down there that are
 . . . like all that garbage.

BRIANNA
 I only knew about people living this
 way vicariously . . . from the news.
 It's pitiful. How can people ever
 turn this sort of life around?

JESSE
 My life hasn't been this bad, but
 I've tried with all my might, and I
 haven't been able to do it.

BRIANNA
 What? Oh, you're talking about
 poverty?

JESSE

But now they're tryin' to lock me up
and throw away the key. This is the
last straw.

BRIANNA

Let's not get paranoid now.

JESSE

Paranoid?

BRIANNA

They, they, they. Who are you talking
about?

JESSE

Does it matter? Anybody who would
write me off. I'm not going to sit
on death-row for twenty years waiting
on appeals over something I didn't
do.

BRIANNA

It doesn't have to come to that.

KIRK

Don't tell me you actually have faith
in this system?

BRIANNA

I'm not putting any faith in it.
But, your supposed lack of faith
could really just be a lust for
revenge! Oh, Jesse, I understand
how you're compelled to do this, but
. . . it's not the way. It's a
vicious trap.

JESSE

And I already told you, Brianna;
that's not all my motivation. There's
justice, too.

BRIANNA

That's what they always say . . .

JESSE

Not that I'm so righteous
Not only for my brother but for
myself.

BRIANNA

But it's a lie.

JESSE

Why should I be strung up as a murder?
(MORE)

JESSE (CONT'D)

Lost in the system . . . ?

(sighing)

I believe what you say, Brianna . . .
 . . . I also understand [that you are
 developing feelings for me]. . . .
 All I ever wanted was a girl like
 you, Brianna.

(whispering)

Another place, perhaps . . . another
 time. How strange it is. It seems
 like almost everything people do --
 no matter how lofty their intentions --
 compounds the tragedy. I mean, to
 act at all complicates thing.

BRIANNA

The road to hell is paved with good
 intentions.

JESSE

Action itself seems to multiply evil.

BRIANNA

Oh, it's not that bad. To do good
 is not wrong.

JESSE

Must we resolve to do nothing, though?
 But that's tragic too.

(belated response to
 Brianna's last words)

Who really knows what the good is?
 (thoughtfully)

And who can straighten out this
 pretzel of a world if they did?

(directly addressing
 her again)

Brianna, I don't want to be on some
 runaway train to tragedy. I promise,
 I don't. But, God help me . . .

(grimly)

I can't see any other course.

BRIANNA

I can.

Brianna attempts to hold Jesse's hand romantically, but he
 pulls away an instant before she could touch him. Whether
 he was aware of her overture or not, Brianna is not sure.

JESSE

Anyway . . . I'm sorry for putting
 you through this. I really am.
 It's just that . . . well, I'm winging
 this, ya see.

(MORE)

JESSE (CONT'D)

Perhaps you can tell that I'm a little desperate. Not one of my better days. Anyway, Lionel's waiting. It's time for us all to leave. I could never forgive myself if you got hurt.

INT. KIRK'S MONSTER TRUCK -- NIGHT

Cruising down a well-lighted boulevard, Kirk monitors the GPS tracking device.

CHASE

(thoughtfully)

Kirk, if we get through this issue? --

KIRK

When. You got to be positive.

CHASE

Okay, when. When we get through this . . . problem; . . . if, er -- when, we navigate through this successfully, we're gonna expand, aren't we? I mean, maybe trade with the Florida market like I told you . . . with my brother.

KIRK

Don't know why not. We might even buy a mansion in Florida.

CHASE

Fort Lauderdale?

KIRK

Why not? You deserve it.

(pause)

Since I'm thinking about it, I might as well . . . give you this.

Kirk opens the console between the two seats and withdraws a sheathed Boker Special Operations leather-handle Bowie knife. He hands it to Chase who is astonished.

CHASE

What's this?

KIRK

It's for you. Never say I never gave you anything.

CHASE

Are you kidding? You're giv'in this to me? Really?

KIRK

You saved my life. I don't forget loyalty, Chase. Besides, I kind a' felt bad about you loos'in your knife. It's the famous Vietnam-style, ya know?

CHASE

I know.

KIRK

Well, go on. Put it on.

CHASE

It's against the law, I think, to wear --

KIRK

What law? -- my stepfather is the Chief of Police. Besides, it couldn't be much worse than carrying that machine-gun. Sheesh. Go on, try it on. You might need it tonight, anyway.

(thoughtfully and
preoccupied)

Even so, it's a shame; that . . . you had to stab Josh.

CHASE

He was all over you! What was I supposed to do? Hell, I thought he might kill you.

KIRK

I'm not questioning what you did, Chase. Hell, I appreciate it. You proved yourself to me. But, it's a shame, nonetheless. Stupid ass! Why didn't he just take his whipp'in?

CHASE

Some guys don't know how far you're going to take 'em, I guess.

KIRK

Yeah. I suppose you can only assume they're going to kill you. But, damn! It was just eight hundred dollars. He should have known. Sure put us in a bad position. Besides that, we lost a dealer.

Contemplative lull.

CHASE

Kirk, do you think that the Mayor will expand our territory? . . . if we keep bringing in the dough?

KIRK

I don't know why not. But I'm sure he's still pissed because I got heavy-handed with him.

CHASE

It was a chancy, what you did to get into his syndicate, I'll tell ya that. He's gotta be pissed about you threatening to expose him.

KIRK

You're not doing a good job of setting my mind at ease.

CHASE

Well a fact's a fact.

KIRK

What he doesn't know is that he was already in trouble. Better me than somebody else.

CHASE

Yeah, well, Mandy never could keep her big mouth shut.

KIRK

Good thing she'll do whatever I say. Anyway, you'd think he'd be looking for enthusiastic guys. Maybe all the money we're bringing in will smooth it over.

CHASE

Yeah. He'll forget all about it, eventually.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE -- NIGHT

HALLWAY

A grubby finger presses the "PLAY" button of a boom-box.

One of THE LOST BOYS, CORNELL by name, hoists the Boom-Box onto his shoulder and begins strutting down the bombed-out hallway, which is crowded with other parading Lost Boys, tatterdemalions all.

Leading the triumphal march in the moonlight, which is streaming through periodic windows on the right-hand side, PHILLIP carries a newly killed DEER upon his shoulders like

Robin Hood. Bodyguards regally stand on either side of the hallway, and attendants carry torches.

STORAGE BAY

From the support joists of the ceiling three stories above, shadowy figures crawling like Spiderman observe Jesse, Brianna, and Lionel standing around their two vehicles below.

Jesse, Brianna, and Lionel hear commotion coming from a hallway, which separates the battleship-gray wall where the control-room window overlooks the warehouse and the exterior wall of the moonlit windows.

Methodically, Jesse draws the .38 caliber revolver from his back pocket.

Occupied looking at the hallway, Lionel doesn't notice one of the Lost Boys swinging up behind him on a cable like Tarzan. The TARZAN CHARACTER wallops him on the back of the head with a pipe, thrusting the linebacker headlong to the floor. Beyond him, toward the control-room wall and the emerging hallway, the assaulter continues swinging. He leaps gracefully from the cable onto the floor.

Jesse raises the .38 Caliber revolver, aiming at the attacker who had just struck his friend. Instantaneously, the flagellum of a leather whip wraps around his hand. Upon being yanked by the WHIP-HANDLER, the handgun flies from Jesse's fingers.

The .38 caliber spins across the alternately gleaming and corroded floor. Ravenously, the Tarzan character pounces upon it, retrieving it, gleefully embracing it to his bosom, displaying his rotten teeth.

TORCH-BEARERS and bodyguards emerge from the hallway first, two abreast. These are immediately followed by Phillip bearing the twelve-point buck. Disheveled lieutenants walk on either side of the leader of the Lost Boys who is followed by his clannish retinue, fifteen STREET-URCHINS resembling survivors of a post-apocalyptic wasteland.

One of the savage youths who diverges opposite them, on Phillip's right-hand side, is an eccentric character. Flea-bitten and gangling, EARL has drawn his hands under his armpits and is strutting. High-stepping, scratching with his toes, and bobbing his head, he clucks like a barnyard chicken.

Jesse dives to Lionel's side and cradles him in his arms.

Behind Brianna, one of the SPIDER-CLIMBERS lowers to the warehouse floor on a cable-pulley system bearing a block-and-tackle connected to another cable in his hands. Immediately, he snags Brianna's belt, at the small of the back, with the hook of the block-and-tackle.

He looks to the sidelines, gesturing thumbs-up.

In the northwest-frontal corner of the warehouse, fifty yards away, LOST BOY 2 pulls on a vertical cable.

Brianna soars into the air, her blue jeans tightly drawn into her groin and between her buttocks, a terrific wedgie.

She screams. Paralyzed by indecision, Jesse doesn't move from his kneeling position holding Lionel.

Squirming two stories above, Brianna watches Phillip march directly toward her red Mustang GT and flip the huge deer over his shoulders onto its hood.

Meanwhile, with Lionel's blood on his hands, Jesse rolls his semiconscious friend onto the concrete, stands, and braces to encounter Phillip and his malicious crew.

Spidermen above drop the torches they have just lit with cigarette lighters. The torches land in a large semicircular pattern around Jesse, partially enclosing the vehicles as well.

CHOREOGRAPHED FIGHT SEQUENCE:

Three Lost Boys, each with improvised weapons (one after the other as well as in combination), attack Jesse. After hair-raising setbacks, Jesse dispatches two of the assailants. He doesn't emerge from these difficulties unscathed, however.

Lost Boys gather around for the festivities, some cheering the gladiatorial arena, some stone-faced. Lionel rouses to consciousness and begins rising from the floor.

Brianna squirms as two Lost Boys poke her with long poles.

CHAIN-SWINGER steps forward circling his weapon as Jesse springs to his feet. Lionel rises ominously behind this formidable foe, silhouetted against moonlight, his face terrible with vengeance. When Chain-swinger makes an ostentatious display of his skills as a swinger of chains, enlarging the circular swiping motion so that the chain whips behind him, on either side of his body, Lionel grabs it. Pulling on the chain has the effect of turning Chain-swinger around. Lionel punches him in the face, the barbarian dropping ostensibly unconscious to the floor.

PHILLIP

Bravo! Bravo. Give 'em a big round of applause, boys!

Lost Boys applaud.

PHILLIP (CONT'D)

(addressing Jesse)

Don't I know you?

CORNELL
That's Joshua's brother.

PHILLIP
(addressing the
sycophant)
Are you telling me, Cornell, that,
of all the people in the world who
could have stumbled into our humble
domain, we find in our very hands,
as if by some miracle, the escaped
murderer of our own good friend?

EARL
Got to be him! Cluck, cluck, cluck
. . . Got to be, cause -- look at
his hands!

Jesse's wrists still have the manacles of the handcuffs on
them although the chain has been severed.

EARL (CONT'D)
SQUAWK! Did that when I was prisoner
of the CIA. Cluck, cluck . . .

CORNELL
(informing Jesse)
Earl says they shot him up with
chicken DNA.

FLEECY
But he escaped to warn everybody
'bout their plans to take over the
world.

PHILLIP
Aren't y'all forgettin somethin?
This joker killed our buddy.

CORNELL
Yeah!

JESSE
I haven't killed anyone, least of
all my own brother.

PHILLIP
Probably try'n to horn in on his
business . . . huh? Izzat what it
was?

From the northwest-frontal corner of the warehouse comes a
cry.

LOST BOY 2
Phillip! What am I supposed to do?

PHILLIP

Let her down.

LIONEL

He didn't do it, Phillip . . . and you probably know it. He was setup. We're gonna try to prove it. Now, you could help us . . . by tellin us --

PHILLIP

Why do I want to help a Benedict Arnold like you?

FLEECY

(whispering to Cornell)
Who's Ben-i-dict . . . ?

CORNELL

I don't know, but it ain't good.

PHILLIP

Well, let me see. Maybe I can tell. I don't know, and tell me if I'm wrong, but . . . I'm look'in at you right now, and I'm think'n, 'Dang, I'm look'in at a damn fool!'

CORNELL

Yeah, he's a fool.

PHILLIP

I can't tell if he's a murderer, but I'll be damned if he's not a fool.

EARL

Find out, Phillip. Cluck, cluck, cluck . . .

FLEECY

Yeah, let's find out for sure, Phillip.

PHILLIP

What have you got in mind, Earl?

CORNELL

Earl can read minds. Shock-treatments by the CIA gave 'em special powers.

LOST BOY 3

Yeah, he can do it. 'Member? We seen him read Bozzy's mind.

LOST BOY 2

Shit, my hair stood on end.

LOST BOY 4

Bozzy started cry'in and gave up Phillip's gun in no time. I know he got the ESP!

PHILLIP

Huummm . . .

EARL

SQUAWK!

Not only is Earl's squawking loud, but he seems to be horrifically tormented, crying to the skies, the paper-thin skin of his neck sucking around exposed tendons and veins.

EARL (CONT'D)

Women's most impressionable. Cluck, cluck . . .

JESSE

We've already told you the truth!

Insolently, Jesse pushes one of the Lost Boys out of the way.

The snub-nosed .38 caliber revolver lowers in his face, a grubby thumb cocking the hammer and advancing the next cartridge. Cornell sneers nastily.

Five spears converge upon Lionel's heart, the points hovering only inches above his chest and back.

LIONEL

Easy, you guys. Damn . . . we don't want any trouble.

PHILLIP

But we gotta get to the bottom o' this. Either you murdered our good friend -- brother or no -- in which case, we gotta kill ya. Or . . . you are be'in setup . . . in which case; well, you'd be like us, wrongly accused a be'in a problem child. If that be the case, we need to find his real killer. And since there is no other way to know the truth about y'all . . . since we can't very well just take your word for it, we simply must rely upon Earl's exceptional abilities -- well-trained in the doomology -- which, through no good intention of the damned-able CIA, have done him --and us -- in good stead on a number of occasions.

(MORE)

PHILLIP (CONT'D)

Therefore, I deem it necessary, though dangerous in the utmost, that Earl should undertake this endeavor with all the acumen at his command.

FLEECY

(whispering)

What's . . . a-cu-men . . . ?

CORNELL

Don't have a clue.

PHILLIP

Earl, what do you require?

EARL

Cluck, cluck, cluck . . . just gotta touch the subject . . . cluck, cluck . . . to get . . . a clear read'in. SQUAWK!

PHILLIP

By the power invested in me by the Lost Boys of Doom, I grant you the free exercise of whatever you need to get the stated information. Now, do you have a problem with that? What part o' that did you not understand? It wouldn't be the part where I called you a fool right to your face, would it?

CORNELL

Yeah! You're a dumb-ass!

PHILLIP

Shut up, Cornell! Proceed!

Two Lost Boys hold Brianna's arms. The others become very attentive as Earl draws near her.

Brianna cringes with revulsion as Earl, quietly clucking now, touches her forehead gently with his grubby fingers.

EARL

(quietly)

Cluck, cluck . . . been kidnapped .
. . .

CORNELL

(whispering)

I could'a told ya that.

Earl moves his newt-like fingertips over Brianna's temples, onto her plump cheeks.

JESSE

Alright, now.

EARL

Jesse . . . SQUAWK!

Brianna jumps with fright, drawing her shoulders around her ears. She starts trembling.

Down Bianna's throat, Earl's cruddy fingers move.

BRIANNA

Jesse . . . ?

EARL

Cluck, cluck . . . Jesse's running .
. . she . . .

Inching his dirty fingernails down Brianna unbuttoned collar toward her cleavage, Earl smiles, snaggle-toothed.

The Lost Boys take voyeuristic delight in the seance as well.

It's now or never. Impetuously, Jesse elbows the particular Lost Boy who has been holding his arms. His rescue attempt is thwarted, however. A black youth called BRUISER nearby punches him in the stomach.

Jesse doubles, coughing.

BRIANNA

Jesse!

While Jesse dry-heaves, Lionel shoves Bruiser and is himself doubled by a 2' X 4' to the stomach.

Earl's eyes expand giddily.

EARL

Moment of truth . . . cluck, cluck .
. .

BRIANNA

That's as far as you go, you
charlatan.

LOST BOY 2

(whispering)

What's a . . . char-la-tan?

Brusquely, Earl squeezes both of Brianna's breasts, one in each of his dirt-cruste'd hands.

EARL

SQUAWK!

Without further ado, Brianna slaps Earl, sending him sprawling across the floor.

Simultaneously, all the Lost Boys erupt into hysterical laughter.

EARL (CONT'D)
Prophetess! Prophetess!

Their ribald laughter becomes more uproarious upon hearing Earl call Brianna a "prophetess" simply because he had fondled her breasts.

PHILLIP
Prophetess, my ass! You are one horny chicken!

The Lost Boys laugh more.

EARL
I'm serious! -- SQUAWK! --
Prophetess, I tell ya!

PHILLIP
Well, what did you learn, charlatan?
(chuckling)
Besides the fact that she's a prophetess.

EARL
Cluck, cluck, cluck . . . It's true.
Cluck, cluck . . . What they say is true.
Jesse didn't kill his -- SQUAWK! -- brother.
Cluck, cluck, cluck . . .

PHILLIP
Well, well, well . . . What do ya know.
Earl is infallible. It's a proven fact.

LOST BOY 4
Does that mean we don't fight anymore, Phillip?

PHILLIP
That can only mean, that as bad as I hate to, I am obliged, by the code of the Lost Boys, to release these fugitives to their own curious form of doom.
(addressing Brianna and chuckling)
Sister, you're a riot.

LIONEL
Just like that? No tricks?

PHILLIP

Well, you will be required to pay
the ransom-price, of course.

LOST BOY 3

We've got these cars, Phillip.

PHILLIP

The police are hot on their trail,
boys. It's best if they don't come
sniffing around too much in our
direction.

JESSE

What's the ransom?

PHILLIP

What 've ya got?

Lecherously, the eyes of all the Lost Boys gravitate to
Brianna, who becomes nervous as a result.

BRIANNA

I -- I -- I've got forty dollars in
my car.

PHILLIP

(slapping his hands
together)

We'll take it! Consider it the toll
of the Lost Boys . . .

LOST BOY 2

What's a toll?

PHILLIP

Even though I am personally offended
by the presence of such fools and
would love nothing more than to take
a shit on a piece of newspaper and
rub it in your teeth . . . we can't
be detained any longer.

CORNELL

Yeah, we have a very important date.

PHILLIP

You croggly like it, though . . .

CORNELL

We gotta butcher this deer.

PHILLIP

Don't ya, lover boy?

LOST BOY 2

We're gonna have a feast with the
Onlies tonight.

LOST BOY 3

Maybe a dance!

CORNELL

(proudly)

I killed that deer! You shoulda
seen it com'in up outta the woods --

PHILLIP

Who shined the light on 'em, huh?
Who knew where he crossed? Who cut
his throat? You better watch
yourself, Cornell. Didn't nobody
ask you anyhow.

EARL

SQUAWK!

PHILLIP

Shut up, Earl! I can't hear myself
think!

INT. HENDRICK'S VEHICLE -- NIGHT

Hendrick opens a pristine briefcase containing a disassembled
rifle, scope, and other accessories. His cell-phone rings.

HEINDRICK

Yes?

(pause)

What are you saying? -- that Kirk
is probably on the trail of the
escaped boy? Well, how would he
know how to track her?

(pause)

Her car, huh?

(pause)

You're right. It's definitely a
possibility.

(pause)

Okay. Chow.

Pressing a button on the console --

HEINDRICK (CONT'D)

Okay, Kirk where are you?

A GPS tracking interface enlivens on the dashboard.

HEINDRICK (CONT'D)

It's a full-time job just mopping up
these damn renegades.

INT. POLICE STATION -- CONTINUOUS

An ATTRACTIVE DISPATCHER terminates her cell-phone call. Furtively, she glances at Police Chief Roston and Investigator Merritt in the background.

EXT. ABANDONED MULTISTORY WAREHOUSE -- NIGHT

Phillip, Earl, Cornell, and the other Lost Boys have gathered outside the cavernous opening in the retractable door of the warehouse, standing upon the driveway. Lionel's Duster diverges left, departing westward into the night.

CORNELL

Do you think they'll find it?

PHILLIP

I gave good directions.

BRUISER

Linal's been out there before. I
been out there with 'im.

Brianna's red Mustang turns right onto the service road that runs parallel with the frontage of the warehouse, ascending the slight gradient.

PHILLIP

She didn't like what you said about
Billy Graham one bit, did she?

EARL

True though . . . cluck, cluck . . .
tied in with the ILL and the Big M.
(pause)
SQUAWK!

PHILLIP

(exasperated)
Damn, Earl.

Phillip turns to walk back into the warehouse.

The other Lost Boys happen to notice, forty yards before Brianna's car as she is driving up the hill, seventy-five yards away, upon the hilltop which overlooks the canyon of giant drainage pipes, a monster truck coming from the northern direction of the metroplex, slowing for the intersection.

From a rolling stop beside the lone streetlight there, it turns onto the service road, heading down the hill toward the warehouse.

CORNELL

Phillip?

INT. KIRK'S MONSTER TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

CHASE

There she is!

Kirk turns the steering-wheel counter-clockwise, swerving toward Brianna.

INT. BRIANNA'S CAR -- CONTINUOUS

BRIANNA

Kirk . . . ? What the hell are you doing?

EXT. ABANDONED MULTISTORY WAREHOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

The Lost Boys witness the monster truck swerving into the oncoming lane.

CORNELL

What the hell?

Presumably, reacting to avoid a collision, Brianna's red Mustang veers right, smashing into the guardrails. These guardrails begin at the furthest eastern corner of the warehouse, which overlooks the canyon of the drainage pipes, cordoning traffic from the edge of the embankment.

PHILLIP

Cornell, get the bombs. Help him, Bruiser.

CORNELL

Yeah. Disrupters assemble!

PHILLIP

Fleecy, take some guys across the street.

Fleecy's little crew of urchins scurries across the street.

PHILLIP (CONT'D)

Earl, you're with me.

EXT. BRIANNA'S WRECKED CAR AND SERVICE ROAD -- CONTINUOUS

The right front wheel of Brianna's car has busted through the guardrail and is dangling over the cliff, the giant drainage pipes and contaminated river sixty-five feet below.

Brianna groggily rouses herself, her lip bleeding.

From the driver's side of the monster truck, Kirk jumps out wielding a .45 Caliber IMI Desert Eagle handgun with matte-black finish.

Brianna angrily struggles to open her door.

KIRK

Brianna!

BRIANNA

Kirk, what the hell are you doing?
You could have killed me!

Meanwhile, Chase has jumped from the monster truck, leaving the passenger-side door open. Cautiously yet expeditiously, he approaches Brianna's Mustang, his Heckler & Kosh MP-7 SMG ready. He peers through its windows roundabout, searching.

CHASE

He's not here.

Defensively, he steps behind Brianna's car bracing his machine gun as if, at any moment, he expects Jesse to fire upon them from the warehouse, which is thirty yards away.

KIRK

What are you doing?

Looking apprehensively over his shoulder as he helps her from the car.

KIRK (CONT'D)

Is anybody else in there? Where is he? Where's that murderer?

BRIANNA

What are you talking about? Get your hands off me!

KIRK

The Calder boy. We thought that he was forcing you to drive. We were gonna try to throw him off-balance . . . We know he abducted you --

BRIANNA

Wait a minute -- how did you find me?

KIRK

Brianna, we're here to rescue you? I'm sorry for wrecking you but I thought it was the best way to throw the kidnapper off. He's dangerous. Anyway . . . you're not hurt, are you?

BRIANNA

It seems the only thing I have to worry about is being run over by you. Let go of me, Kirk!

KIRK
Where did he go?

BRIANNA
On the trail of his brother's killer,
I suppose. But you wouldn't know
anything about that, would you?

KIRK
What are you talking about?

BRIANNA
(dismissively)
. . . What are you doing here, anyway?

KIRK
Don't tell me we've got a Patti Hurst
complex going on. He brainwashed
you with that cockamamie stuff . . .
in two hours?

BRIANNA
(angrily)
Nobody brainwashed me.
(mumbling sheepishly)
I don't know . . .
(more directly)
I have just been so mad at you, Kirk --
(grievously)
Look at my car! --
(continuing her
original train of
thought)
. . . for not removing that video,
for humiliating me; all while you
pretended to care for me . . .

KIRK
I've been trying to call you for
days, baby. We'll patch this up.
Of course, I'll remove the video.
Come on. We need to get you home.

BRIANNA
What about my car?

KIRK
We'll take care of it. Chase, get
the keys out of Brianna's car, will
you? Don't worry, baby, the police
will get a wrecker.

BRIANNA
No, I can drive home, Kirk . . . if
I can just get it backed up.

KIRK
Get in the truck. You're suffering
shock . . . and probably a concussion.

BRIANNA
I feel fine. Really. I'll go by
the police station first and report
all this. Don't worry.

KIRK
No, you're going with us.
(attempting to mollify
his brusqueness)
You probably need to be checked out
at the hospital.

BRIANNA
I appreciate your concern, Kirk, but
really, I'm okay.

Kirk lifts Brianna onto the driver's side seat.

KIRK
Wait one second. [I] want to secure
your car.

He leaves Brianna sitting in the monster truck with the
driver's side door open and walks toward Chase as if he wants
to discuss the disposition of Brianna's vehicle. Upon
deducing that Kirk wants to have a meeting, Chase also closes
the distance.

KIRK (CONT'D)
What do you think?

CHASE
She knows too much.

KIRK
I think you're right. This is a bad
situation getting worse all the time.

Meanwhile, Brianna glances at some TRASH on the floorboard
of the monster truck. Discreetly, she kicks some of the
loose paper-trash out of the truck, onto the blacktop.

Unexpectedly, from the roof the warehouse, two flaming Molotov
cocktails soar through the air. In rapid succession, they
explode on the pavement between the monster truck and
Brianna's car. Kirk and Chase are effectively separated
from the monster truck by the resulting curtain of flames.

KIRK (CONT'D)
Whaa -- ?

Chase opens fire, peppering the roofline of the three story
building with machine-gun fire.

CHASE

Local punks.

Brianna recoils for cover within the monster truck, flames dancing before the open door.

From the slightly elevated thicket on the northern side of the road, FLEECY emerges. He climbs into the passenger-side door of the monster truck and grabs Brianna's hand, pulling her back the way he had come.

Firing his Desert Eagle at the rooftop, Kirk glimpses out of the corner of his eye, through the flames and before the front end of the monster truck, Brianna absconding with Fleecy.

KIRK

Chase! Brianna . . . ? Cover me!

Circling around the flames, on the exterior of them which is exposed to the warehouse, he breaks into a sprint chasing Brianna.

Silhouetted upon the warehouse roof, Earl cranes his head heavenward, squawking the mother of all squawks.

Two more Molotov cocktails catapult from behind the concrete edge of the rooftop, which is being spalled off by machine-gun fire.

EXT. SQUATTER'S CAMP -- CONTINUOUS

Merylee has stepped behind Shannah who is looking concernedly toward the warehouse, wrapping her arms around the girl. In a familial triad with the wizened Blind Man who stands behind Merylee's right shoulder, they are looking northward, toward the warehouse and the cityscape beyond.

Two hundred yards away, they see the fireworks at the right-hand end of the warehouse. Two tiny flames fly from the rooftop in streaming arcs.

EXT. BRIANNA'S WRECKED CAR AND SERVICE ROAD -- CONTINUOUS

Kirk zigzags between two explosions as he runs down the backtop after Brianna and Fleecy.

Meanwhile, LOST BOY 3 from Fleecy's detachment sneaks up behind the monster truck. He is dragging an iron hook, which is attached to a cable. Crawling under the bed of the truck, he threads the hook, wrapping it around the axle, securing it.

Finally, Fleecy detours up the embankment on the right-hand side of the road and begins to scurry into the coppice there. Kirk snags Brianna's belt as she scrambles on all fours up the little hillside.

Immediately, Lost Boys emerge from the foliage with heavy sticks upraised and begin bludgeoning Kirk. The first blow bloodies his head and almost knocks him unconscious, but he tenaciously clenches Brianna's pants. She also buffets the abductor.

Blindly and incoherently, Kirk fires his handgun into the thicket, dispersing the Lost Boys.

Chase sees Kirk returning up the hill in front of the monster truck like Conan the Barbarian, Brianna thrown over his shoulder. Furiously, the freebooter marches, undeterred by the flames.

KIRK

Let's get out of here.

He throws the gargantuan vehicle in gear and squalls tires down the service road.

Twenty-five feet from its starting point, just when the momentum of the monster truck is gaining, its rear end jerks, leaping tremendously, the cable, which had been attached by Lost Boy 3, having been drawn taut. Rather than ripping the rear end out from under the truck, however, the streetlight to which it had been attached gives way.

First, the loop of the cable begins to slide up the pole, lifting the rear end of the monster truck. Then, the light pole bends, the looped cable slipping down the length of it until the light pole bends fully ninety degrees. Eventually, it is a small matter for the monster truck, which is scooting forward at this point, to snap off the lamp. Flopping this way and that, it drags behind the monster truck.

KIRK (CONT'D)

(addressing Brianna)

You're running with a rough crowd these days.

CHASE

What about those punks?

KIRK

We'll take care of them later.

EXT. ROOFTOP OF ABANDONED WAREHOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Phillip is cradling Earl who is gurgling blood.

PHILLIP

(pained)

Oh, Earl . . .

Cornell runs up behind Phillip.

CORNELL

Oh my gosh . . .

PHILLIP

(addressing Cornell)

Ssshhh . . .

(addressing Earl)

Earl, can you hear me?

Several other Lost Boys arrive.

Earl opens his eyes.

EARL

Did we save the prophetsess?

PHILLIP

Sure, man. We always save the day.
You know that.

EARL

(thoughtfully, with
labored breathing)

She was so beautiful . . .

(looks back at Phillip)

Wasn't she?

PHILLIP

Yes.

(eyes tearing up)

She was.

EARL

Most beautiful . . . Maybe I
shouldn't a' said anything about
Billy Graham.

PHILLIP

(sniffling and laughing)

She didn't like that one bit.

EARL

Phill -- ip . . . Look, Phillip.
I'm finally free o' the chicken DNA.
Ironic . . .

(groaning)

Now I cain't enjoy it . . .

Earl dies.

Burning agony contorts Phillip features. He clenches his
teeth, gazing fiercely toward the metropolis.

EXT. COUNTRY HIGHWAY -- NIGHT

Lionel's vehicle takes a right-hand turn off the highway
onto a dirt driveway.

EXT. TRAILER -- CONTINUOUS

The Duster stops with its headlights shining upon a ratty house trailer, the seventy-foot wide barren lot of which is otherwise vaguely illumined on its left-hand side by the yellowish light of a sodium-vapor lamp on a telephone pole beside the bordering oaks. The place seems to be deserted -- there are no other vehicles there -- but there is lamplight within the house trailer.

INT. LIONEL'S CAR -- CONTINUOUS

JESSE

Are you sure this is where Phillip said . . . ?

LIONEL

I remember it now. This is where Josh used to pick up drugs. Its just a pick-up point, though, as far as I know. I don't think she's directly involved in the drug business -- wouldn't expect automatic weapons, but . . .

JESSE

We need to be careful just the same.

Jesse hands Lionel the shotgun.

JESSE (CONT'D)

It's ready to go, with five shells. After firing, pump it like this. What? Brothas don't know anything about shotguns, do they?

LIONEL

(nodding)

I've seen Westerns.

JESSE

Well, I won't be able to hide the shotgun. I'm going to the door. You cover me from the corner.

LIONEL

But the brothas know about handguns, huh?

JESSE

You said it.

LIONEL

All this time, I thought you were against the rednecks . . .

EXT. TRAILER -- CONTINUOUS

Jesse gets out of the car, determined. But he walks cautiously toward the trailer, tucking the .38 caliber revolver in his back pocket. Lionel reluctantly accompanies him, diverging to the left-hand side, trotting.

LIONEL
(whispering)
If you see any roughs, high-tail it.

JESSE
(humorously)
High-tail it?

Lionel hides at the corner of the trailer, covering Jesse who approaches the door. Without stepping onto the raised platform of the wooden porch, Jesse raps lightly on the aluminum.

After protracted seconds, he knocks again.

A woman's VOICE from within responds tentatively.

PATTY MCGUIRE
Who is it?

JESSE
Jesse. Jesse Calder.

PATTY MCGUIRE
Don't know any Jesse Calder. Go away. I'm not going to open this door -- and you need to know that I'm armed!

JESSE
Patty?

PATTY MCGUIRE
How do you know my name?

JESSE
Patty McGuire? We have a . . . mutual acquaintance.

PATTY MCGUIRE
Who's that?

JESSE
I don't know really . . . Phillip? One of the homeless guys who stays at an old warehouse on the south side.

PATTY MCGUIRE
Never heard of him!

JESSE

. . . a guy named Bruiser, maybe?

PATTY MCGUIRE

Now get out o' here before I open up on ya!

JESSE

I'm just looking for answers. I don't want any trouble.

PATTY MCGUIRE

Then go away. Ain't got no answers! Too late at night for visitors unless they're up to no good.

JESSE

I promise, we don't mean any harm. I just need some information. You may can help me.

(pause)

Did you happen to see a blond-headed guy around here last night . . . ?

PATTY MCGUIRE

No! Ain't seen nobody.

JESSE

. . . dirty-blonde? I'm not expecting you to speak with me for nothing, Patty. I'll pay you.

PATTY MCGUIRE

It's too late at night to be messin with you! Get out of here before I lose my temper.

JESSE

My brother was murdered last night, Patty! The police have the wrong suspect, and I can't let the killer's trail go cold! If you know anything, you gotta help me.

PATTY MCGUIRE

(quavering)

What's that to me? I don't know nothin!

(pause)

Say -- you escaped from jail today! Stay back, or I'll shoot! Go away, I say! I'm calling the police!

JESSE

Lady, you gotta help me!

(MORE)

JESSE (CONT'D)

(pause)

Okay. Go on, and call the police -- just to show you that I don't mean you any harm. I didn't kill my brother! Maybe you know something that can help me find his murderer, though.

PATTY MCGUIRE

I don't know nothin, I told ya!

JESSE

I've been wrongly accused!

PATTY MCGUIRE

What's that to me?

JESSE

Somebody framed me.

PATTY MCGUIRE

That's what they all say.

JESSE

I don't want to implicate you at all. I certainly don't intend you any harm. Just need five minutes of your time, that's all.

PATTY MCGUIRE

What makes you think I know something?

JESSE

My brother, Josh, the one who was murdered; he's been here before -- picking up drugs.

PATTY MCGUIRE

I don't deal drugs!

JESSE

I don't doubt that.

(pause)

But . . .

PATTY MCGUIRE

Say he was blond-headed, huh?

JESSE

Yes. Darkish.

PATTY MCGUIRE

. . . last night?

JESSE

Yes.

After protracted seconds, the door tentatively opens.

PATTY MCGUIRE

I'll probably regret this till the day I die.

Patty McGuire is not quite thirty years old but her face is haggard, her left eye terribly bruised. Clutching onto her leg, her dirty-faced SEVEN-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER also peers fearfully out the door.

INT. KIRK'S MONSTER TRUCK -- NIGHT

Brianna broods between Kirk, who is driving, and Chase, holding his MP-7 SMG.

CHASE

He was farming out some of the dealing through them, though.

KIRK

So if Calder didn't already know about Patty's, then he may have found out from the punks, huh? I think your right.

(addressing Brianna)

You don't have anything to add to this conversation, do you? You know, you could confirm our hypothesis one way or the other.

(pause)

I didn't think so.

(addressing Chase)

One thing's for sure, that basket-case will crack under the slightest pressure -- er, a --

(affectation for
Brianna's sake)

She'll tell him whatever he wants to hear, that is. Yeah, murderers will try to pin their crimes on anyone they can. Desperate, ya see.

BRIANNA

Oh, cut the shit, Kirk.

KIRK

What? Finally, the little lady decides to talk.

CHASE

What went on at that warehouse, anyway, Brianna? Did he threaten to hunt you down to keep ya ly'in?

KIRK

Well, his time is coming.

(addressing Brianna)

Perhaps, you need to decide whether you're on the side of law or whether you are going to continue in weak-minded sympathy with that . . .

INT. TRAILER -- NIGHT

Within the cluttered living room, in golden lamplight, Jesse, sitting on the couch, and Lionel, on a threadbare chair, lean anxiously forward listening to Patty McGuire's story. She has drawn her knees up beside her chin, smoking a cigarette and pulling on a can of cheap beer. Her ragamuffin daughter has squeezed into the chair beside her. Her FIVE-YEAR-OLD SON sits apprehensively on the other end of the soiled sofa looking steadfastly at Jesse.

PATTY MCGUIRE

Ever since I heard about that boy -- your brother, I guess -- dying -- being murdered -- I been bothered. It upset me something terrible, cause . . . well, I thought there might a' been a . . . relationship to what I seen the other evenin.

JESSE

What's that?

PATTY MCGUIRE

Yeah. I think it was him that had been out here a few times. Seemed to be a good kid, your brother. Josh was it? But why he'd be mixed up with the likes a Kirk, I don't know.

LIONEL

Kirk Roston?

PATTY MCGUIRE

(downcast)

Yeah.

JESSE

Did he give you that shiner?

PATTY MCGUIRE

(simplers pathetically)

I figure if he knew I was talkin to you now, he'd kill us all dead as a doorknob.

(MORE)

PATTY MCGUIRE (CONT'D)

(sighing)

He met Josh out in the front yard .
 . . last night, I guess it was.
 Kirk started yelling, and Josh was
 arguing back. Well, anyway, I was
 try'in not to pay attention and keep
 my kids occupied when I heard some
 scufflin. When I looked out the
 window, I saw Kirk and one of his
 roughneck college boys -- guy named
 Chase somethin or other -- draggin
 'em into the woods.

JESSE

Which way?

PATTY MCGUIRE

Back yonder. Some nights it's like
 Grand Centra Station over there. I
 figure they're mov'in a lotta drugs,
 but I don't wantta know nothin about
 it. Kirk scared my kids to death
 threaten 'em to stay away from over
 there.

EXT. SQUATTER'S CAMP -- NIGHT

Merylee, Shannah, and the withered Blind Man have been
 watching the flashing of Police lights from beyond the eastern
 end of the warehouse where Brianna's car is still hanging
 over the edge of the cliff. Together they turn around.

Solemnly ascending the papier-mâché hills in the moonlight,
 only twenty feet behind them, Phillip, who is bearing Earl's
 corpse, leads the funeral procession of the Lost Boys. He
 looks at them mournfully, and then beyond them at the distant
 flashing.

EXT. ABANDONED MULTISTORY WAREHOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Two Police cars, which had evidently just arrived upon the
 scene, circle into the driveway of the warehouse, joining
 two others and an Assault Team van.

Upon the hilltop in the distance, several police cars with
 lights flashing are stationed around Brianna's car. Policemen
 there are combing the area.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Police Chief Roston and Investigator Merritt are both wearing
 bullet-proof vests.

POLICE CHIEF ROSTON

They were here . . .

INSPECTOR MERRITT
We need to search the squatters'
camp down the hill as well.

POLICE CHIEF ROSTON
Yeah.

Turning toward a Sergeant.

POLICE CHIEF ROSTON (CONT'D)
Bill, take five men and quietly --
repeat quietly -- search the
shantytown below. Don't provoke a
standoff. Ask around and see if
anyone knows anything.

The SERGEANT issues the order to five policemen wearing bullet-
proof vests, and they trot toward the exterior door in the
three-story fenestration of broken glass.

POLICE CHIEF ROSTON (CONT'D)
Not that way! Might as well wear a
billboard! Go around the long way --
from the ground.

The squadron turns around and trots back toward the
retractable door, the direction from which they had come
upon entering the warehouse.

POLICE CHIEF ROSTON (CONT'D)
(addressing
Investigator Merritt)
What about this blood?

INSPECTOR MERRITT
Look.

Investigator Merritt displays a tuft of hair.

POLICE CHIEF ROSTON
Just like what we found on the hood
of Brianna's car.

INSPECTOR MERRITT
Deer, I'd say. Probably the homeless
folks . . .

THREE ASSAULT TEAM POLICEMEN emerge from the hallway in the
background and approach Police Chief Roston.

OFFICER HATLEY
Chief, there's plenty of evidence of
homeless people living up there, but
we haven't found anyone. Evidently,
they fled.

(MORE)

OFFICER HATLEY (CONT'D)
But we found a stash of Molotov cocktails and newly spilled blood on the rooftop. There's evidence of gunfire on the edge of the roof. Probably came from the service road where we found the casings. One thing's for sure. Someone is either dead or wounded.

POLICE CHIEF ROSTON
We might need your guys to surround the dump, Hatley.

OFFICER HATLEY
Just give the order.

INSPECTOR MERRITT
I don't think they're here, though, Sam. Calder, I mean.

He shines his flashlight on the concrete floor.

INSPECTOR MERRITT (CONT'D)
See these tracks?

Tracks of Lionel's Duster.

From the direction of the retractable bay-door, a VOICE calls out.

POLICEMAN D
Chief!

Police Chief Roston and Investigator Merritt turn to respond as the last man of the single-file assault team trots past Policeman D.

POLICEMAN D (CONT'D)
We've got something.

Policeman D approaches and hands Chief Roston a slip of paper.

POLICEMAN D (CONT'D)
We found this not far from the Mustang on the hill. It's a handwritten receipt. It had blown into the ditch, but it could have come from the big truck that burned the rubber.

INSERT

Receipt reads, "\$800.00 Received from Kirk Roston for November rent, 2015, 431 Chamford Avenue."

Aggrieved, Police Chief Roston hands the receipt to Investigator Merritt.

INSPECTOR MERRITT
He overheard about the Hardage girl's
kidnapping.

POLICE CHIEF ROSTON
But these tracks aren't from his
vehicle.

INSPECTOR MERRITT
No. Someone else is helping Calder.

POLICE CHIEF ROSTON
(exasperated, muttering)
Now Kirk's become a damn vigilante!

INSPECTOR MERRITT
What about his phone?

POLICE CHIEF ROSTON
He said the battery was dead . . .
but we'll find out. He's also got a
GPS system in his truck.

INT. TRAILER -- NIGHT

The little conclave, which consists of Jesse, Lionel, Patty McGuire, and her two Children, hears the RUMBLING of a vehicle driving up outside, headlights shining through the living room window.

Jesse peers through the dingy curtain.

JESSE
It's Kirk!

LIONEL
The shotgun's outside.

PATTY MCGUIRE
Great!

JESSE
(addressing Patty)
I'm sorry about this.

Yelling come from outside.

KIRK
Calder!

EXT. TRAILER -- CONTINUOUS

Headlights shining.

KIRK
(addressing Chase)
Shoot anybody coming out the backdoor.

Chase trots toward the right-hand side of the monster truck, circling into the edge of the woods.

KIRK (CONT'D)

Calder?

(pause)

Patty, are you okay? Patty? Don't worry. We're gonna get you out of here.

(pause)

Calder? You got some nerve, boy.

(pause)

This guy killed his own brother, Patty. If that low-life has hurt you . . .

Brianna quickly scurries from the passenger side, out the driver's side door, and accosts Kirk.

BRIANNA

That's a lie!

Kirk backhands Brianna, bludgeoning her to the ground.

KIRK

How can we rescue this woman if you complicate the issue? Be quiet.

INT. TRAILER -- CONTINUOUS

LIONEL

[It's] Brianna.

Jesse and Lionel look at one another concernedly.

JESSE

. . . The other guy's covering the backdoor.

Crawling below the trajectory of the window, Jesse maneuvers to the backdoor, where he intends to test his theory. He gradually opens the door. When it is pried no more than four or five inches from the doorjamb, a bullet rips through its flimsy aluminum!

Everyone within the trailer ducks. The quietness that follows results from the absence of any more gunfire. Simultaneously, both Children burst into screaming.

JESSE (CONT'D)

(addressing Patty)

You need to hide.

PATTY MCGUIRE

Come on, babies!

She ushers her children to the master bedroom.

MASTER BEDROOM

She shoves them under the bed.

LIVING ROOM

Jesse turns off a lamp. Lionel breaks another one, so that they are in darkness.

EXT. TRAILER -- CONTINUOUS

Groggily upon the ground, Brianna hears the children SCREAMING.

KIRK

Calder? We've already called the law. Now, you need to let Patty and her children go, and stop terrorizing them. Need to give it up, Calder! Come on out.

The screaming of the Children is amplified. Impulsively, Brianna leaps onto Kirk's right-hand shoulder, ineffectually buffeting him with her fists.

BRIANNA

[You son of a bitch!]

After tussling with Brianna for a moment, Kirk manages to get her in a headlock with his left arm, brandishing his .45 caliber handgun with the right.

KIRK

(huffing and puffing)
Have you lost your mind? This is a hostage situation.

BRIANNA

You're a liar!

Brianna elbows Kirk in the groin. Twisting out of his arms, she scrambles up the driveway toward the highway.

Kirk wheels and snags her belt, which he promptly and powerfully yanks backward, craning her from the ground, returning her between himself and the trailer.

KIRK

All of this for a murderer?

BRIANNA

He is not!

KIRK

[Kinda sweet on him, huh?] Uh-huh.
(addressing Jesse)
Calder! Look what I got.

INT. POLICE CHIEF ROSTON'S CAR -- CONTINUOUS

INSPECTOR MERRITT

I hope Kirk doesn't try to play the hero.

POLICE CHIEF ROSTON

It wouldn't be so bad if he played the hero.

INSPECTOR MERRITT

What are you saying, Sam?

POLICE CHIEF ROSTON

Kirk's crazy. How did he find Brianna? I appreciate you not bringing it up, but you know as well as I do . . . I've tried the best I could, but there's only so much a stepfather can do. It's been a source of a lot of embarrassment for me. Made me a nervous wreck, actually. He always was a brawler . . . getting into trouble at school, being a bully. Once, when he was twelve or so, we caught him torturing a cat. I took it to the vet to try to save its life, but they couldn't . . .

INSPECTOR MERRITT

It's not your fault, Sam.

POLICE CHIEF ROSTON

I've had reason to suspect that there have been other incidents like that, but I haven't been able to prove it. He did knock a kid's teeth out in high school, though. It was dismissed as self-defense, but I had my doubts. Under the circumstances as I understood them . . . I never would have done anything like that.

INSPECTOR MERRITT

You've done the best you could.

POLICE CHIEF ROSTON

How do you know?

INSPECTOR MERRITT

I wouldn't be worth my salt if I wasn't a good judge of character. Besides, from time to time over the last couple of years I've heard the scuttle-butt.

POLICE CHIEF ROSTON
Yeah, the laughing-stock of the --

INSPECTOR MERRITT
Not at all. Everyone has been very sympathetic. It doesn't take a brain-surgeon to tell that Kirk has sociopathic tendencies.

POLICE CHIEF ROSTON
A fortune in schools and therapy . .
. Why do sociopaths gravitate to law enforcement, anyway?

INSPECTOR MERRITT
It's a control issue . . . power-trip. But -- no offense -- Kirk seems to be a more extreme case. Must be genetic. Particularly with him, I mean.

POLICE CHIEF ROSTON
I don't want to downplay his responsibility; but I think it is. I mean, he was always twisted. His reasoning was all screwed up. I kept hoping that he would grow out of it, that it was an adolescent thing.

(pause)
And what's with that damn monster truck? He can't afford that thing; not off his management job at the Sporting Goods. Everyone thinks we're financing him, but how could I afford that thing off my salary? I stopped Linda from giving him money a year ago. And I'm confident that she's not sneaking him any.

(pause)
One thing's for sure, I'm going to resist every effort he makes to go into law enforcement.

DISPATCHER
Unit 1.

POLICE CHIEF ROSTON
Unit 1. Go ahead.

DISPATCHER
We've got the GPS information you requested.

EXT. METROPOLITAN AVENUE -- CONTINUOUS

Leaving the streetlamps, the first police car in the cavalcade turns on its flashing lights. One by one, the others do likewise and disappear single-file down a dark highway.

INT. TRAILER -- NIGHT

LIONEL

One of us has got to make a break for it.

JESSE

We'd be gunned down.

LIONEL

We can't do anything hemmed up in here!

EXT. TRAILER -- CONTINUOUS

Manhandling Brianna back to the monster truck.

KIRK

I've had enough of this! Everybody in that trailer is expendable!

BRIANNA

No! Not the woman!

He crams Brianna into the driver's side door, then cranes around, yelling over the hood.

KIRK

Chase, watch out! Ready or not, here I come!

INT. KIRK'S MONSTER TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

KIRK

Patty? Hell, no one'll miss that road-whore! Nobody even knows she's alive!

BRIANNA

(weeping)

I do! They're children in there!

KIRK

Little half-breeds.

Cupping his hands, mocking her by affecting maudlin sadness.

KIRK (CONT'D)

Cry me a handful.

Brianna's tears become smoldering bridle. Surreptitiously, behind her back, she jiggles the door handle; but it is locked.

Kirk throws the monster truck into reverse gear.

KIRK (CONT'D)

As for you, holy-roller, you've been kidnapped by a murderer. If you're never seen again, they'll only assume that he killed you . . . or skipped the state. If you're a good girl, I might let you be my sex-slave!

Looking through the back window of the cab, Kirk spastically rams the monster truck backward fifteen feet or so up the dirt driveway, toward the highway.

EXT. TRAILER -- CONTINUOUS

The monster truck pulls forward, zigzagging a little to its right-hand side. Now centered on the trailer, it stops, the small wooden porch ten yards ahead of it spotlighted in the headlights.

INT. TRAILER -- CONTINUOUS

JESSE

He's going to ram the trailer.

LIONEL

Shoot him through the window when he gets close!

INT. KIRK'S MONSTER TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

KIRK

Yeah, play your cards right . . . I might set you up with your own house trailer.

(more coherently)

Look at the bright side. There are advantages to being a missing person. You'll have the freedom to be as wild as you want.

Brianna desperately yanks on the door handle, but Kirk has locked the door using the child-protection control.

KIRK (CONT'D)

. . . finally let your damn hair down . . .

Inching the monster truck forward.

KIRK (CONT'D)

(mumbling)

Wouldn't want to hit them too hard .
 . . might go clean through that flimsy
 thing. Now we wouldn't want to go
 into the ravine, would we? Best to
 just push 'em . . .

BRIANNA

Don't, Kirk! Don't do this! You'll
 regret it. How can you hope to get
 away with this?

JESSE

Are you kidding? This is working
 out better that I could have ever
 planned.

The bumper-guard rails on the monster truck bump the porch.

INT. TRAILER -- CONTINUOUS

LIVING ROOM

Seismically, the house trailer shudders.

MASTER BEDROOM

Patty huddles with her Children who squeal all the more.

LIVING ROOM

Jesse rips the curtains back and fires through the living-
 room window.

EXT. TRAILER -- CONTINUOUS

Kirk ducks below the dashboard as the .38 caliber bullet
 pierces the windshield of the monster truck.

INT. KIRK'S MONSTER TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

Brianna has withdrawn as far against the passenger door as
 she can, gasping horrified at Kirk who is apparently slumped
 over dead.

Kirk raises slightly, blood streaming beside his right temple,
 ear, and sideburn. He dabs his fingers in it and looks at
 the blood, coming to the conclusion that he had only been
 grazed.

KIRK

You didn't tell me he had a gun.

INT. TRAILER -- CONTINUOUS

Meanwhile, Jesse has been busting the glass from around the living-room window.

He can only see Kirk obliquely from his vantage point because the psychopath is bent over, but he targets what he can see.

EXT. TRAILER -- CONTINUOUS

Chase, who has been watching the monster truck ram the porch from the eastern end of the trailer, that is, on Jesse's left-hand side, obliquely sees Jesse standing before the living-room window, aiming his pistol. He unleashes an autoburst.

INT. TRAILER -- CONTINUOUS

Jesse fires.

INT. KIRK'S MONSTER TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

Simultaneously, the fleshy portion of Kirk's waistline and the driver-side seat explode.

INT. TRAILER -- CONTINUOUS

Bullets rip through the living-room window, one of them striking Jesse in the left leg, spinning him to the floor.

INT. KIRK'S MONSTER TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

Brianna attempts to grab the .45 caliber pistol that Kirk had set down, but she fumbles in doing so.

Kirk wrests it from her. He slaps her against the passenger door.

INT. TRAILER -- CONTINUOUS

No sooner has Jesse flopped to the floor than Lionel casts an old television set he has hoisted over his head through the trailer window. He does this as Kirk is firing his .45 Caliber.

EXT. TRAILER -- CONTINUOUS

Crashing through the window of the monster truck, the cumbersome TV knocks Kirk senseless, striking him simultaneously in the face and chest, coming to rest in his lap.

INT. KIRK'S MONSTER TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

Discombobulated, Brianna is not fully conscious that she is, in fact, seeing Kirk's mouth bleeding profusely.

EXT. TRAILER -- CONTINUOUS

Chase wheels around more frontally, toward the monster truck, peppering the living room with machine-gun fire.

INT. TRAILER -- CONTINUOUS

Lionel flattens against the floor. He crawls to Jesse's side.

LIONEL

Jesse! Jesse! Are you okay?

JESSE

Put something against the door.

Lionel drags a chest of drawers against the door, Chase firing through it.

EXT. TRAILER -- CONTINUOUS

Jettisoned from the windshield of the monster truck, the television flies through the air.

INT. KIRK'S MONSTER TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

Kirk's pistol is lying on the floorboard between his legs.

Brianna dives for it only to find herself wrenched backward; Kirk's mighty hand clutching her hair.

EXT. TRAILER -- CONTINUOUS

Chase skips up the steps and kicks the front door, quickly withdrawing himself for cover beside the door. His attempted invasion is thwarted by the obstacle Lionel had dragged into place. He kicks again, however, trying to dislodge the obstacle, quickly stepping sideways as before.

INT. TRAILER -- CONTINUOUS

Jesse is tearing an afghan, which had been covering a corner of the couch, to make a tourniquet for his leg.

JESSE

Pss!

Lionel hearkens.

Jesse casts him the .38 caliber revolver.

JESSE (CONT'D)

Only two left.

Lionel stands up and fires once through the door.

EXT. TRAILER -- CONTINUOUS

The .38 caliber bullet whistling dangerously close, Chase leaps from the porch and scurries for cover.

KIRK

That does it! The gloves come off!

Furiously, Kirk revves the engine and plows the monster truck forward.

Toppling off its cinder-block piers, the house trailer groans.

Before it even touches the ground four feet below, it is already tumbling over the wooded precipice of the ravine.

The electrical supply cable stretches taut, bending the short telephone pole beside the trailer's eastern end. The brackets securing the cable to the trailer begin to snap.

Nevertheless, the end of the trailer to which the brackets are attached is tethered for a moment and does not fall as swiftly as the other end. This momentary tethering has the effect of causing the trailer to tumble cumbrously.

Eventually, the electrical cable breaks and, whip-like, starts sparkling. The crackling energy of the frayed end sets the autumnal leaves, which are covering the ground, ablaze.

Before this has happened, however, the electrical cable also pulls away from the telephone pole on the opposite end of the lot, its western end. With the sodium-vapor site-light DISABLED, the plateau is plunged into darkness.

INT. TRAILER -- CONTINUOUS

Everyone within the house trailer plummets topsy-turvy like astronauts in weightless flight, furniture bumping against them, Children screaming.

EXT. TRAILER -- CONTINUOUS

Eventually, after having fallen twenty-five feet, the trailer becomes wedged between the embankment and some pine trees, which are growing from an earthen outcropping.

It is laying sideways, the front door and living-room window facing directly upward.

INT. TRAILER -- CONTINUOUS

Moonlight streams upon Jesse and Lionel who are lying among sundry furniture.

Bloodcurdling screams from the master bedroom shatter the silence.

MASTER BEDROOM

Patty McGuire comforts her ragamuffins.

EXT. SEVENTY-FOOT LOT WHERE TRAILER WAS -- CONTINUOUS

The monster truck pulls backward several yards.

Kirk gets out of the driver's side of the monster truck holding his pistol.

KIRK
Serves you right, you . . .

BRIANNA
What have you done? What have you
done?

Brianna scrambles out behind him. Running to the edge where the trailer had disappeared, she peers over the precipice at the capsized trailer below, bluish in moonlight. Chase joins her, followed by Kirk.

CHASE
(addressing Kirk)
Are you all right?

KIRK
Do I look all right? Now what are
we gonna do? He shot the damn
windshield out!

BRIANNA
Jesse! Jesse! Lionel, can you hear
me?

KIRK
Shut up! Do you want the neighbors
to hear?
(more composedly
addressing Chase)
How are we gonna explain this?
(sighing)
Well . . . it could be worse, I
suppose. He coulda killed me.

INT. TRAILER -- CONTINUOUS

Discombobulated, Jesse and Lionel rouse as Patty and the weeping children, stumbling here and there, crawl toward them.

JESSE
Are y'all okay? Is anybody hurt?

PATTY MCGUIRE
We're okay.

JESSE

Linal, open the back door.

Lionel does so, and it flops down from gravity.

LIONEL

Looks to be about six or seven feet to the ground.

JESSE

Patty, y'all got to go through the woods, and get to the highway, and start walking toward town.

PATTY MCGUIRE

What if Kirk sees us?

JESSE

Lionel's going with you.

LIONEL

Then you're coming, too.

JESSE

No, I can't leave Brianna.

Jesse spies the .38 caliber handgun laying among the disordered affects of Patty's living room. He seizes it, checks it's chambers.

He places the pistol in Lionel's hand.

JESSE (CONT'D)

There's one shot left. I'll create a diversion in the event they spot you. I bet they haven't discovered the shotgun yet. It's probably lay'in on the ground right where you left it.

LIONEL

This is crazy.

JESSE

Look, Lionel. I'm responsible for getting Patty into this -- not to mention you. Y'all've got to get to safety. Maybe you can get some help. If anybody comes up behind you, jump into the woods. You ought to be able to tell which is a monster truck. But, for sure, flag down the oncoming traffic.

PATTY MCGUIRE

(addressing her children)

PATTY'S LITTLE BOY
I'm scared, Mama.

PATTY'S LITTLE GIRL
We can do it, Mama.

PATTY MCGUIRE
(addressing Jesse and
Lionel)
We can do it.

JESSE
Good. All right, then.
(addressing Lionel)
Lower the children down.
(addressing Patty)
Patty, maybe you better go first.

Jesse picks up a dark-colored blanket laying nearby and hands it to Lionel.

JESSE (CONT'D)
You might want to cover up with this.

LIONEL
It's not that cold.

JESSE
So they won't see light-colored
clothes in the woods.

EXT. SEVENTY-FOOT LOT WHERE TRAILER WAS -- CONTINUOUS

PRECIPICE

BRIANNA
Now you've started a forest fire!

KIRK
Yeah, this is working out fine.
Maybe it'll burn the trailer up and
everybody in it.
(addressing Chase)
But if you see anybody come out of
there, kill 'em.

Kirk drags Brianna, struggling, back to the

MONSTER TRUCK

Where he places his Desert Eagle .45 caliber upon the hood. He tethers her hands behind her back with some nylon cord, which he retrieves from under the driver's seat, and then secures the remaining length of cord to the bumper-guard.

Rubbing his face pensively and forgetting the handgun, Kirk moseys back to the

PRECIPICE

CHASE

Kirk, how do you think we ought to deal with Brianna?

KIRK

You haven't seen anybody yet?

CHASE

No . . .

KIRK

I don't think that fall would have knock 'em all unconscious. We may need to go down there . . .

CHASE

What about Brianna?

MONSTER TRUCK

Brianna attempts to retrieve the Desert Eagle upon the hood of the monster truck, but she cannot reach it.

PRECIPICE

KIRK

We don't have many options. I mean, she's not liable to keep her mouth shut about all this.

CHASE

Kirk, I don't want to have anything to do with --

KIRK

Chase. Sometimes things are required, unpleasant things, but they must be done, nonetheless.

CHASE

I don't want anything to do with it, ya hear. I always liked that girl. It's not right, I tell ya.

KIRK

Just a damn second! You killed Josh like it was nothing. And I'm quite sure you didn't shed any tears over that.

CHASE

This is different. She's completely innocent.

(MORE)

CHASE (CONT'D)

(pause)

Can you not think of anything better than this?

KIRK

Well . . . if you want to know the truth, I've always dreamed about having her as a prisoner. But it's too much trouble --

CHASE

Let's do it. Let's do it, Kirk. I'll help. We can keep her in the bunker.

KIRK

(sighs)

I'll try. Never heard of keeping a prisoner forever, though. I'll see what she thinks about it -- not that it really matters . . .

Kirk schleps toward Brianna.

KIRK (CONT'D)

Might ought to take her anyway and decide later. We don't have time to worry with your bad conscience. This whole place is going up in flames, and the fire department is bound to be here soon.

MONSTER TRUCK

KIRK (CONT'D)

We're as good as married now. Oh, don't look so disappointed. I can promise, you wouldn't like the alternative. So, what'd ya say we seal it with a kiss? On second thought, you might try to bite me. Well, let me put it this way. If you try to bite me, we'll forget the marriage and go straight to the alternative.

Disgusted, Brianna squirms in his embrace.

PRECIPICE

Meanwhile, as Chase is watching for movement from the wreckage below, a gloved hand promptly slits Chase's throat with a knife.

In one circular motion, the assailant then buries the blade into Chase's back, piercing his heart.

Effortlessly, he slips the machine gun from the college boy's hand before he can convulsively discharge it.

Chase's lifeless head, his wide-open eyes and gaping throat, plops upon the ground beside the embankment, blue moonlight and rising flames coloring his clammy features.

Flames behind Chase's corpse are engulfing an OAK TREE as well as much of the foliage on the embankment where the trailer has fallen.

MONSTER TRUCK

With a besotted look, Kirk emerges from the kiss. Brianna, however, is fuming.

EXT. WOODED PRECIPICE -- CONTINUOUS

Skillfully, Jesse scales the crumbling cliff by moonlight, pulling himself up on tenacious ROOTS. He climbs toward the right-hand side, expecting to emerge upon the tableland above approximately where the shotgun should be found, on the left-hand side of the seventy-foot wide lot as seen from the road.

EXT. SEVENTY-FOOT LOT WHERE TRAILER WAS -- CONTINUOUS

MONSTER TRUCK

KIRK

It really doesn't have to be so bad.
We can have good times. Idn't that
right, Chase? Chase?

Upon turning, Kirk notices someone whom he immediately recognizes to be Chase lying on the ground. He trots diagonally across the lot.

PRECIPICE

Rolling Chase's corpse over, he becomes horrified.

He returns to the

MONSTER TRUCK

Quickly unties Brianna, and manhandles her through the driver's side door, into the cab. He fumbles for the keys, but they have been removed from the ignition.

Panicking, he remembers the .45 caliber handgun, which he had left on the hood. Looking through the shattered windshield, he visually searches for it.

KIRK (CONT'D)

Where is it? Where's the gun?

BRIANNA

I don't know. Do you think that I
would be here if . . . ?

PRECIPICE

Scanning the seventy-foot wide lot from the edge of the precipice, flames climbing up behind him, Jesse notices, twenty yards away, Kirk's hysteria. Kirk has gotten out of the monster truck and is searching the ground roundabout.

Glancing to his left-hand side for the purpose of determining Chase's whereabouts, Jesse finds himself at a loss. Chase is nowhere to be seen.

Taking opportunity when Kirk turns his back, Jesse stands up enough to see Chase's lifeless body lying on the ground, a huge oak tree behind him now completely engulfed in flames.

Jesse spies the shotgun lying upon the ground, fifteen feet away. Kirk is still oblivious of his presence.

Crouching and trotting, he scoops the shotgun up and swings wide, running toward the forest's edge on his right-hand side, which is also now being engulfed in flames. He circles toward Kirk who is unaware of his approach.

MONSTER TRUCK

KIRK

-- the other car. Brianna . . . !

He lunges to begin sprinting toward Lionel's Duster when --

EXPLOSIVE SOUND. Jesse fires the shotgun, blasting a hole in the radiator of the monster truck and quickly pumps it again, chambering more buckshot.

Kirk freezes, tentatively raising his hands.

BRIANNA

(ecstatic)

Jesse!

She scrambles out of the monster truck and runs toward him. Behind his protective shoulders, she is shielded.

KIRK

What are you gonna do?

BRIANNA

There's some cord over there, Jesse.
We can tie him up.

(pause)

Okay?

(tentatively)

Here, I'll get it, okay?

Brianna trots toward the front of the monster truck where she attempts to untie the nylon cord from the bumper-guard, which Kirk had used to bind her.

HEINDRICK

That won't be necessary. Drop the gun, Calder.

Hendrick stands behind Jesse, holding him at gunpoint.

Jesse lowers the shotgun. Setting the butt of it on the ground, he lets it topple.

KIRK

Hendrick! What are you doing here?

HEINDRICK

I thought you might could use a little help.

Kirk glances nervously at the well-nigh decapitated body of Chase twenty yards away.

HEINDRICK (CONT'D)

Oh, don't worry about him, Kirk. Whatever problem we may have had over this Calder fiasco has just been satisfied.

KIRK

(ecstatic)

Oh Hendrick, he really did kill Josh. Chase was the one that did it. He got carried away . . .

HEINDRICK

I knew there must have been a logical explanation.

KIRK

Yes, yes there is. Chase brought all this trouble.

(more thoughtfully)

But what do we do now?

HEINDRICK

Now, you get to take care of these loose ends.

Hendrick picks up the shotgun, letting his sniper's rifle hang from its strap on his back.

HEINDRICK (CONT'D)

Brianna, you come here.

(MORE)

HEINDRICK (CONT'D)

Come to me . . . if you don't want to be responsible for getting Jesse's head blown off. You boys come on out here, both of you. Come on Kirk. Move out this way, toward the trees a little. There you go. You come back this way too, Calder.

The youths comply, squaring off with one another in a line parallel with the tree line on the western side of the property, ten yards apart.

BRIANNA

Who are you?

Hendrick takes Brianna hostage, holding her in a headlock.

JESSE

This is Kirk's drug supplier.

HEINDRICK

Not exactly.

KIRK

What do you mean . . . these loose ends?

HEINDRICK

What do you think I mean?

KIRK

Well, give me my pistol back.

HEINDRICK

No, we're not going to do it that way. That wouldn't be fair. Don't you think Calder deserves a little hope? After all, you've been victimizing him all along? But, don't worry, Kirk. You shouldn't have any problem. Why you're a giant in comparison.

KIRK

What do you have in mind?

HEINDRICK

You boys are going to fight it out, hand to hand. To the winner the spoils.

JESSE

(mumbling)

Somehow, I don't think so.

HEINDRICK

I perceive that you are a very intelligent youth . . . quite different than Kirk, who doesn't have any redeeming qualities whatsoever. But you mustn't jump to conclusions. No, I intend to be fair. You fighting for your integrity . . . and revenge, of course. And Kirk, fighting for his life . . . to keep from going to prison for murder, that is. This should prove interesting.

BRIANNA

No!

JESSE

It's okay, Brianna.

KIRK

(disgruntled)

Okay, Hendrick. If that's the way you want it.

HEINDRICK

It's the way it's got to be. And don't get any wise ideas. I can plug you before you flinch.

KIRK

Okay . . . okay. Say when.

HEINDRICK

When.

Kirk and Jesse begin stalking around one another.

EXT.

EXT. COUNTRY HIGHWAY -- CONTINUOUS

Patty McGuire and her children clabber onto the moonlit berm of the highway. Huddling like a scraggly hen and the chicks under her wings, they look to their left-hand side, eastward, down the cavernous road and then behind them, down the embankment from which they had just emerged.

Lionel urges them onward. He watches from the branches below as they shamble toward town. Then he turns and plunges into the wooded depths again.

EXT. SEVENTY-FOOT LOT WHERE TRAILER WAS -- CONTINUOUS

Kirk and Jesse predatorily circle one another.

HEINDRICK

You might as well explain it to him, Kirk. I would be interested to know, myself.

KIRK

Several months ago, I got your prints off a glass at Josh's. I haven't just gotten yours, of course. I've been building a catalogue of prints. You never know when they'll come in handy. Yours sure did. But how could I have known when I was lifting your prints that I would have been using them to frame you for your own brother's murder? No . . . but at the very moment I was lifting them from the glass I remember thinking that, if I ever did have to frame you for anything, it would serve you right. I could tell from the first time I saw you that you were sneering down your nose from your high-horse -- as if you were consecrated! You! -- just a rabble boy. I just hate that we were so rushed. Could have done a more perfect job of it, I suppose. We were improvising, after all. I had never transferred prints like that. And there was an added difficulty . . . we had to do it quickly. By the time we loaded Josh and got the prints from my files, his blood was already congealing. Do you know how hard it is to juice up a body that's been dead for a couple of hours?

Jesse attacks.

CHOREOGRAPHED HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT SEQUENCE.

Brianna tries to interfere. Hendrick slaps her down where she remains.

GRUNTING and BREATHING within an arena encircled by thirty-foot high flames.

Jesse has smashed the back of Kirk's head against a half-buried rock several times so that he is incoherent. Jesse is strangling him.

BRIANNA

No! Jesse! He isn't worth it. You'll never get this out of your life. Not for this psycho's entertainment!

Jesse slowly comes to his senses. He stands, letting Kirk slump, presumably unconscious, to the ground. He glowers at Hendrick defiantly. Ignoring him, he walks toward Brianna.

Kirk rouses. Hendrick tosses the Desert Eagle .45 caliber sidearm upon the ground before him.

Quizzically at first, Kirk looks at the pistol. Then, he seizes it and blasts Jesse in the back.

Jesse crumples before Brianna who is sitting upon the ground, almost falling into her arms.

Without another thought, Kirk wheels the pistol around thirty degrees, pointing it at Hendrick, and pulls the trigger: CLICK.

Hendrick's hand is extended. His palm contains five gleaming Federal Hydra-Shok cartridges. Hendrick flings them into the flaming woods behind him.

HEINDRICK

It would be a gross understatement to say that he was a better person than you, Kirk. Hell, I would have let him live if there had been any way. I wanted to. I really did. I was wondering how it might be possible. But it would be taking too many chances. As for you, your fate was sealed the moment you stuck your presumptuous nose in business that didn't concern you.

KIRK

No, Hendrick. I'll be good. I'll --

HEINDRICK

Too late for that.

Hendrick blasts Kirk's chest with the shotgun.

Approaching Brianna who is cradling Jesse in her arms, weeping.

HEINDRICK (CONT'D)

As for you -- this was all very interesting -- your experience with Kirk has only confirmed to me just how miserable women really are; that they -- you, in this case -- could ever have been enamored with such a senseless brute. If men like Kirk are beastly automatons, driven about by their basest urges without any rationality whatsoever, then what shall we say of the women that -- ?

BRIANNA

I never loved him!

HEINDRICK

How mechanistic they are, predictable in the extreme, nothing but puppets really? -- puppets of their basest instincts, predisposed to succumb to the most ridiculous seductions . . . a well-rehearsed line here, a fancy vehicle, perhaps, there; something that speaks, however deceptively, of money. Pull a string and they jerk, puppets of the puppets. Don't look so dumbfounded, as if my cynicism were the ramblings of some alien. Killers are always misogynists. We know, for example, that, despite their assumption that women should represent love, they are actually nothing but puppets, controlled by sensuality and materialism, degrading themselves like complete fools, allowing themselves to be degraded. How can anyone plead their case with a straight face?

Hendrick slowly raises the barrel of the shotgun, pointing it at Brianna.

HEINDRICK (CONT'D)

But you can take some solace in the fact that life doesn't have any animosity against you. It really doesn't. It's not personal. It's completely impartial. Collateral damage comes by a roll of the dice. Unfortunately, you got snake-eyes this time around. You crapped out.

Unexpectedly, Hendrick's right-hand side, just under the armpit, explodes from a gunshot. He dodders and falls to the ground dead.

Brianna turns toward her left-hand side to see Lionel, thirty feet away, lowering the .38 Caliber that Jesse had given him.

Approaching across the seventy-foot wide lot, the ambiance of which is orange from the forest fire roundabout, he takes inventory of the carnage. He kneels beside Brianna.

LIONEL

Oh, Jesse . . .

EXT. COUNTRY HIGHWAY -- CONTINUOUS

Patty McGuire and her Children are blinded by the procession of headlights that whiz past them, even as she is waving them down.

POLICE CHIEF ROSTON

Ten-24.

DISPATCHER

Which unit?

POLICE CHIEF ROSTON

I don't know. All of 'em.

DISPATCHER

Go ahead, Chief.

POLICE CHIEF ROSTON

Unit 1. Somebody pick up that woman.

The last police car in the cavalcade pulls over onto the shoulder of the highway as the taillights and flashing lights of the others disappear into the cavernous darkness. Patty and her Children shuffle toward it.

EXT. SEVENTY-FOOT LOT WHERE TRAILER WAS -- CONTINUOUS

LIONEL

Brianna . . . I need to get out of here. I don't think they will know that I was here . . .

With his own T-shirt, Lionel wipes the prints from the .38 caliber revolver and throws it on the ground between the bodies of Hendrick and Jesse.

LIONEL (CONT'D)

The fire fighters and police will be here soon . . . so you'll get rescued . . . Don't worry about that.

Brianna is catatonic.

Secondly, Lionel wipes the prints from the shotgun. Afterward, he presses Hendrick's hands upon it, transferring the assassin's prints to it.

LIONEL (CONT'D)

But you might need to move up to the highway to get away from these flames.
(pause)
God, I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry.

Lionel abandons Brianna. He runs to his Duster, starts the engine, and departs upon the dark highway, turning right, westward, away from town.

Brianna, alone now, looks into the blue porthole of the sky, which is surrounded by vortical flames raging around her.

BRIANNA

This is insane. What was I supposed to learn from this? I had nothing to do with it. Jesse was largely innocent, too. I can't believe that it was just a coincidence . . . that Jesse wandered into my life, and he knew Kirk . . . and Kirk . . . had killed his brother. It's too improbable. So it was obviously a test. But what's the test? Is it a test of my faith? But what . . . ? Why? Just to see if I won't curse you to your face? I can't believe that you would allow such random and senseless evil . . . against me -- against me! With no meaning! But if you do -- if you have -- my mind might snap. God help me! And I could probably even suffer through that. But would you rip out my heart, too -- and leave me desolate? Can't you see that I have fallen in love with Jesse?

EXT. MOONLIT SKY AND COUNTRYSIDE -- CONTINUOUS

In the western sky, an approaching thunderhead amasses quickly, lightning flickering within.

EXT. SEVENTY-FOOT LOT WHERE TRAILER WAS -- CONTINUOUS

The cavalcade of flashing police cars turn onto the dirt driveway, each finding a place to park.

With Jesse in her arms, Brianna looks into the sky as large raindrops begin to fall.

THUNDERCLAPS.

The downpour extinguishes the forest fire.

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE AMONG TREES -- NIGHT

The rain is slackening.

Lionel turns the headlights of his vehicle off as he ascends a moonlit country road. He kills the engine, exits, and walks to the edge of precipice, which is partially screened with trees.

From an adjacent mountain north of Patty's trailer, he is surveying the scene below, one hundred yards away. Police cars and an ambulance are departing the scene.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

In addition to the murders and forest fire, police discovered --

EXT. BUNKER DOOR -- NIGHT

The rain is stopping.

Police Chief Roston quietly motion for the policemen accompanying him to break down the metal doors in the side of the embankment in the woods.

They shuffle past Investigator Merritt, invading the bunker.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

A bunker nearby, which served as a --

INT. BUNKER -- CONTINUOUS

Within the bunker, the policemen find a well-lighted facility, 60' by 60', with full-grown marijuana plants filling a sunken area surrounded by a ground-level balcony. In the back wall, a hallway-tunnel can be seen, ostensibly leading to other chambers.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

Greenhouse for marijuana and a warehouse for other drugs. Automatic weapons were also found. But this wasn't the astonishing thing.

Table with ledgers, a laptop computer, and a personal computer. Investigator Merritt confiscates the ledgers and computers.

EXT. GRAVEYARD -- MORNING

GRAVESIDE

The MOURNERS of a funeral service are gathered around a grave on a slightly overcast windy autumn.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

Ledgers and computers were also confiscated. Most of the computer files were encrypted. Fortunately, the police were able to break the encryption code.

Brianna crying.

Jesse's Grandmother crying.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Within these files, several references to --

EXT. COURTHOUSE -- DAY

News footage of Mayor Hendley being escorted handcuffed down the steps of the courthouse, assailed by REPORTERS.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

Mayor Hendley were found. Because one of the men presumably killed in the gun-fight at the site of the drug dealing, Hendrick Sorenberg, is the well-known personal assistant of the Mayor, evidence is mounting that the Mayor may be complicit. He was indicted this morning for being involved in the drug syndicate in question. After the hearing, the District Attorney said that the case against the Mayor is strong.

EXT. GRAVESIDE -- MORNING

Brianna and the Grandmother look at one another and become emotional. Lips quivering, they step toward one another and embrace, weeping.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

As a result of the scandal caused by the death of his stepson in the shootout at the scene of the drug-dealing, Police Chief Roston also resigned earlier today, although there have been, as yet, no allegations of wrong-doing on his part. Several advocates in the police department and city government have come forward to plead his case in this matter.

(volume lowers)

One of which is the long-time . . .

Lionel takes off his boutonniere and throws it upon the casket, which is being lowered into the grave.

Lionel lifts the headphones from around his neck and puts them on his ears. He presses the "PLAY" button of the MP3 player in the pocket of his formal jacket.

Lionel looks down at the headstone, which reads: "JOSHUA CALDER, 1996-2015."

When he steps out of the way, Jesse appears, raises his head where he is standing. He is wearing a navy-blue suit, the jacket hanging from his shoulders because his right arm is immobilized in a white sling.

Brianna and Jesse's Grandmother smile.

ROLL CREDITS.

As the mourners depart, Jesse wraps his left arm around Brianna. His Grandmother wraps her arm around his waist, on his right-hand side. Following closely, Lionel embraces Merylee with his left arm and Shannah with his right.

PARKING LOT

Investigator Merritt steps from his vehicle and approaches Lionel carrying a file folder. Lionel notices that the official visitor intends to address him. Resolving to inquire about the presence of the Investigator, he takes off his headphones, places them upon Shannah's head, and excuses himself from the two women who join the other mourners.

Jesse and Brianna notice Lionel speaking with Investigator Merritt at a distance.

Shannah watches Lionel speaking with Investigator Merritt.

Standing together beside Lionel's 1993 Plymouth Duster, Investigator Merritt withdraws an 8 1/2" X 11" piece of paper. He bends over slightly laying the paper against the back tire, comparing the tread pattern on the piece of paper to that of the tire-tread of Lionel's car. They are identical.

Lionel becomes worried. Investigator Merritt begins relating a FLASHBACK.

SERIES OF SHOTS

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE -- NIGHT

Lionel is struck by the Lost Boy who is swinging up behind him on the cable. A bloody tuft of scalp flies from the back of Lionel's head.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE -- NIGHT

Kneeling, Investigator Merritt picks up the bloody tuft from the gleaming concrete with tweezers and inspects it.

EXT. GRAVEYARD -- MORNING

PARKING LOT

Investigator Merritt withdraws another notebook-sized paper from the manila folder.

INSERT

A Comparative DNA Test. The results are circled at the bottom: 100% PROBABILITY -- LIONEL RODMAN.

Investigator Merritt pats Lionel's shoulder and hands him the manila folder and its contents.

Before departing in his own vehicle, he mouths the words,
"Keep your nose clean."

END CREDITS.

FADE OUT:

THE END