

No Return

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No Return

Sounds of water dripping along with soft footsteps through a gentle stream of water can be heard.

OPEN ON:

INT. TUNNELS - DARK.

The silhouettes of TWO MEN tread carefully through a sewer tunnel. They are ARMED with SIX SHOOTERS and at the ready.

INT. LARGE OPEN ROOM - CONTINUOUS.

The two men carefully tiptoe into a large, dimly lit room. The light barely shows A MAN'S FACE.

This man is DETECTIVE EDWIN PEARCE (early 30's). He is short, but not to be underestimated. He has blue eyes, dirty blonde hair, and a five o' clock shadow.

He is not shocked to see what is before him, but it is rather disheartening.

A WOMAN is bound to a chair and gagged in the middle of the room. Whomever it is, she must mean a lot to him.

As Edwin and the MYSTERY MAN next to him tiptoe closer, TWO OTHER MEN appear from the shadows next to the WOMAN HOSTAGE.

Edwin and his COMPANION stop dead in their tracks.

Their pistols are now trained on the TWO SHADOWY FIGURES, cloaked in darkness.

PEARCE

Please don't involve her in this.
I'd like to see her unharmed.

Cold, dead silence.

SHADOWY FIGURE

There is no scenario in which she survives. A man in your profession must know that by now.

PEARCE

She'd already be dead if that were true. You must want something.

SHADOWY FIGURE

It's not about what we want. It's about what you want.

Pearce glances over to his partner (whom we still cannot see in the dark) and then back to the Shadowy Figures. He is not shy about where he's pointing his revolver.

PEARCE

I don't understand-- I don't know
how to help you.

SHADOWY FIGURE

You're right, you don't understand.
You're completely missing the point
of all this.

The Shadowy Figures now flank both sides of the Woman Hostage in the middle of the room. Light barely shines on them.

Pearce remains on edge. It's hard to get a read on his Partner.

PEARCE

Hiding behind her won't deter us.
Without her, you hold no bargaining
chip.

SHADOWY FIGURE

What is there to bargain for?

Pearce has had enough of this.

PEARCE

Just-- let her go!

BANG! Seemingly from nowhere, a weapon is fired. Where did it come from?

All we see is Pearce's dumbfounded face. He slowly lowers his pistol as he takes in what just transpired.

SLAM TO BLACK.

BANG! BANG! TWO MORE GUNSHOTS.

OPENING TITLE: NO RETURN.

FOLLOWED BY ANOTHER GUNSHOT...

END OPENING TITLE.

FADE IN:

EXT. RUN-DOWN APARTMENT COMPLEX - MORNING.

A cold, dreary morning. Barely a soul stirring.

ON-SCREEN MARQUEE: EAST HARBOR, CONNECTICUT. 1970.

A lone police vehicle sits outside a crumbling, unkempt apartment building. Two DETECTIVES sit driver and shotgun.

Our driver is Detective Edwin Pearce.

Sitting shotgun is his partner, DETECTIVE ISAAC MCPHERSON (40's). Compared to Pearce, he's been around the block. Battle hardened. He has short dark hair, fair complexion, and a shaggy beard.

Both slouch and lazily gaze upon the crumbling apartments, coffee in hand. It has seen better days.

INT. UNDERCOVER COP CAR - CONTINUOUS.

McPherson raises his coffee to his mouth, careful not to burn himself.

PEARCE

Do we even have a warrant for this prick?

McPherson savors the taste.

ISAAC MCPHERSON

White knights don't clean the streets without getting a little dirty.

PEARCE

We're no better than them if we're stripping him of his rights as we dance around the law.

ISAAC

You'd really let a ruthless killer roam the streets in favor of a little standard operating procedure?

PEARCE

Just a little structure would be nice is all. We can't uphold the law if we're too busy undermining it.

ISAAC

You think these guys care about protocol?

(MORE)

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Behind the scenes, you're waiting for your bureaucracy at work, all the while they're corrupting the society we swore to protect.

PEARCE

Be that as it may, we have a job to do. And that doesn't involve stooping to their level.

Short beat.

PEARCE (CONT'D)

I thought you were better than that, Isaac.

Isaac takes another sip.

ISAAC

When will you realize they don't give a shit about what code you live by? All of that nonsense goes out the window once bullets begin whizzing by your head.

Brief pause.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

And when the dust settles, does it really matter? Will your precious rules save you then?

Suddenly, there's commotion outside the apartments.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Here we go-- showtime.

TWO SUSPICIOUS MEN approach the entrance. One is carrying a bag.

RADIO static.

RADIO (V.O.)

Contact. Visual on two suspects, possibly armed. Advise caution.

The Suspicious man not carrying anything holds the door open for the other man holding the bag. He glides in. The man swings the door shut and spins in with it.

Pearce and McPherson don't flinch. They continue sipping on their coffee.

Isaac grabs the radio handle.

ISAAC
10-4. Eyes on. Proceed to
intercept, over?

Radio sounds off.

RADIO (V.O.)
Negative. Stand by.

Isaac scoffs.

He nabs the radio and squeezes.

PEARCE
Roger that. We'll sit tight.

Pearce places it on the hook. He relaxes in his seat.

ISAAC
To hell with that, let's move in on
these cocksuckers!

Isaac attempts to fling the door open.

Pearce stops him in his tracks.

PEARCE
We're not doing shit.

Staring contest.

Isaac waits a beat before making himself comfortable again.

Pearce can relax.

EXT. APARTMENTS - CONTINUOUS.

Muffled voices can be heard inside.

A bit of commotion. Nothing drastic.

Suddenly, shouting. A couple loud BANGS on the walls.

INT. UNDERCOVER COP CAR - CONTINUOUS

RADIO (V.O.)
The fuck was that? 2-1, please
advise.

Isaac snatches the radio up.

ISAAC

Yeah, this is 2-1. We're moving to intercept. Out.

PEARCE

What do you think you're doing?

Isaac shuffles to exit the vehicle.

ISAAC

What we should've done to prevent this whole thing.

He draws his service weapon.

PEARCE

Shit!

Pearce follows suit.

EXT. UNDERCOVER COP CAR - CONTINUOUS.

Isaac and Pearce, weapons drawn, scurry up to the entrance. They form up at the door to breach.

Pearce nods, Isaac manhandles the door with a harsh kick.

INT. APARTMENTS - CONTINUOUS.

Pearce and Isaac march in checking their corners.

He then gives a motion with his head to Isaac to proceed up the stairs.

They swiftly tip toe up the stairs.

INT. APARTMENTS - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS.

The Detectives cautiously navigate down the hallway.

They see a GANG MEMBER down at the end of the hallway outside the last apartment on the left.

Pearce and Isaac eye each other and nod.

Muffled voices can be heard muttering, and occasionally shouting.

They raise their pistols at the oblivious Gang Member who is lighting up a cigarette, staring out the window.

PEARCE
Don't move!

ISAAC
Let's see 'em!

The Gang Member reaches for something in his pocket.
As quickly as he grasps at it, the two SHOOT! POP! POP!

EXT. APARTMENTS - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS.

Out Gang Member goes through the window, cascading to the pavement.

INT. APARTMENTS - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS.

Detectives Pearce and McPherson stack up on the left side of the broken down door.

The two look to each other and nod for the go-ahead.

INT. APARTMENTS - GANG MEETING ROOM - CONTINUOUS.

Edwin and Isaac swiftly glide into the room, tactically.

PEARCE
Nobody move!

ISAAC
Everybody shut the fuck up! Get the fuck down!

The three GANGSTERS briefly stop scuffling for a moment.

The WHITE PAPER BAG that was brought in lies on the table between the three.

They look to each other. They grab at their weapons.

GUNFIRE ERUPTS. Pearce and McPherson let loose a salvo of rounds.

Two GANGSTERS immediately fall to the ground. A STUBBORN GANGSTER desperately barrels into cover.

The Stubborn Gangster is hiding behind a large couch, the same couch that Pearce is behind on the other side.

Pearce and McPherson hopelessly miss every attempt.

They proceed to find cover of their own.

Empty magazines are exchanged for fresh ones.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Give it up, shitbird! It doesn't
have to go down this way!

STUBBORN GANG MEMBER

Fuck you, blue! I'm not going back!

Isaac looks to Pearce.

ISAAC

No saying I didn't offer.

Pearce shrugs, rolls his eyes.

Stubborn Gang Member rises and lays down suppressing fire on
both of their positions.

Pearce and McPherson crouch deeper into their cover.

A light bulb pops into Pearce's head. He looks to Isaac.

They nod to each other.

Pearce pushes the couch into Stubborn Gang Member.

The Stubborn Gang Member falls backward into a closed door.

An open target for Isaac. He takes aim and squeezes the
trigger. Twice. BAM, BAM!

The shots land. Chest and head. Stubborn Gang Member falls
motionless to the ground.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Nice move.

PEARCE

A little ingenuity goes a long way.

Isaac lightly chuckles.

Pearce smiles.

EXT. APARTMENTS - LATER.

Police vehicles clog the roads. It's controlled pandemonium.

EXT. UNDERCOVER COP CAR - CONTINUOUS.

Pearce and McPherson lean up against their vehicle.

Another police vehicle rolls up next to them.

It's the CAPTAIN, BARRY DONALDSON (50's). He is rugged, very matter-of-fact, and doesn't take shit from anyone. The job seems to have aged him, and not well.

BARRY DONALDSON
Pearce, solid work. Isaac, we're
not gonna talk about it.

Isaac scoffs and raises his arms in disgust.

BARRY (CONT.)
There's something else.

Pearce is intrigued.

INT. PEARCE RESIDENCE - LATER

Pearce enters his home, tosses his keys aside, and gently seals the door behind him.

PEARCE
Rach?

He then struts about the house, searching for his wife.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
Rach, hon, I'm home.

INT. KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Pearce pokes his head in, looks side to side. Nothing.

INT. STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

He then trots up the stairs, his search controlled, but internally frantic.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The door swings open to Pearce standing in the doorway. He looks upon an empty bedroom. Everything in place.

PEARCE
Hmm.

INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Pearce makes a pass through the room. Nothing is out of place, except the fact his wife is not here.

INT. BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

Pearce jogs down the stairs, turns on the light to reveal a whole lot of nothing.

PEARCE
(softly)
What the hell?

He scans the room as if she'll just present herself.
Once he's satisfied, he stomps back up the stairs.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Pearce is on the phone with someone.

PEARCE
I can't find her anywhere.

MAN ON PHONE (V.O.)
Sounds like a personal problem.

PEARCE
Dick. Any idea where she might be?

MAN ON PHONE (V.O.)
I think you know your wife better
than I do.

Beat.

MAN ON PHONE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Have you ever considered that she
might still be working?

PEARCE
No, she's usually home by now.

MAN ON PHONE (V.O.)
You know she has a life too.

PEARCE
I'm well aware. But this isn't like
her.

MAN ON PHONE (V.O.)
People change. Maybe if you paid
attention once in a while, you'd
know that.

PEARCE
Don't be an ass, Jason.

JASON (V.O.)
Giving it to you straight doesn't
make me an ass.

PEARCE
Hmm.
(short beat)
Can you meet?

JASON (V.O.)
I'm at the diner every day during
lunchtime.

PEARCE
I'll see you then.

JASON (V.O.)
Perfect.

Pearce hangs the phone on the receiver.

He collects his thoughts.

Where could she be?

INT. POLICE STATION - DETECTIVE'S OFFICES - DAY.

Detective Pearce sits at his desk, still astounded.

Where the fuck is she?

OFFICERS, DETECTIVES, and other DESK WORKERS are scattered
about, shuffling papers, and furiously typing.

Pearce is in his own world, oblivious to his surroundings, in
a trance. Not a good one.

Isaac marches up to his desk, slaps him on the shoulder.

ISAAC
How ya holdin' up?

Nothing from Pearce.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
Look, we'll find the guy, alright?
He can't have gotten far.

Pearce is a statue.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
I'm sorry about all this, but we'll
find her. We--

PEARCE
Even if we do, it could be too
late.

Isaac could smack him.

ISAAC
Don't say that.

PEARCE
I just-- I don't understand. Where
do we even start?

Isaac hesitates a short beat.

ISAAC
It's not for us to understand. Our
only job is to bring her back.

Pearce rises and slides on his coat.

PEARCE
I can't wait around like this. I
need to be out there.

Isaac hesitates briefly.

ISAAC
About that, Captain wants to talk
to you. Says it's urgent.

Pearce thinks twice about leaving.

INT. CAPTAIN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS.

Pearce opens the door and slips into a chair.

Barry hardly looks up. He gestures to Pearce.

BARRY
I'm gonna need ya to close that
door for me.

Pearce obliges.

PEARCE

What's on your mind, Cap'n?

Heavy nose breath from Barry.

BARRY

I can't have you on the case, Ed.

Pearce in disbelief.

PEARCE

The hell I'm not! This is my--

BARRY

Ed, please don't make this any more difficult than it needs to be. I just can't abide it. It'll blind your judgment.

PEARCE

And how do you know that? I'm the best you've got--

BARRY

It doesn't matter if I have Sherlock fucking Holmes on this! My hands are tied. It goes further up the chain than you or I could see.

PEARCE

I won't allow myself to sit idly by while someone-- who knows what they could be doing to her?!

BARRY

Look, Pearce, I just can't do it! That's it!

PEARCE

You can't, or you won't?

BARRY

This is not open for discussion. It's beyond our control.

PEARCE

All the more reason I need to be involved!

A staring contest.

BARRY
I'll hear no more about it from
you. My decision is final.

Pearce can't bear to look him in the eye.

Beat.

BARRY (CONT'D)
Hey, listen to me. We're gonna find
her, okay? I won't rest until we
do. You have my word on that.

Pearce shakes his head.

BARRY (CONT'D)
Take a leave of absence, paid. I
need you back with a clear mind.
Otherwise, what good are you to me?

PEARCE
This is--

Pearce is fuming. He rises from his seat.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
You'll regret this.

He turns to leave.

BARRY
I hope you didn't just threaten me.

Pearce turns back around at Barry.

PEARCE
I think you'd know if I did.

A staring contest.

BARRY
I'm gonna need you to leave now.

Pearce spins towards the door.

He's about to reach for the door handle when...

BARRY (CONT'D)
One more thing...

Pearce turns back around to face him.

BARRY (CONT'D)

If I see you looking into this case
at all-- there will be hell to pay.
Do I make myself clear?

Pearce nods, turns around, swings the door open, storms out,
and slams the door.

SLAM TO BLACK.

INT. FLASHBACK - PEARCE RESIDENCE - NIGHT.

DISSOLVE TO:

Edwin Pearce and his wife, RACHEL PEARCE (early to mid 30's)
sit together at a dinner table, sharing a meal and nice
conversation. Rachel is a beauty in her own right. Brunette,
but partially dyed dark red hair, blue eyes, petite and has a
soft face.

RACHEL

So then I told him, 'There are
several accounts missing from these
ledgers. You're either cooking
these books or you're just stupid.'
Either way, he's a total dipshit.
Sometimes I wonder how they even--

She scoffs.

Pearce finishes chewing his large bite.

PEARCE

Is it really that much of a
surprise to you that you're the
smartest person in the room every
day over there?

Rachel shakes her head.

RACHEL

It's not much of an achievement,
believe me. I feel like a diamond
in the muck most days.

Pearce chuckles a bit.

She takes a swig of her water.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

I swear, one of these days you
ought to bring 'em in.

Pearce glances up at her from his food.

PEARCE
Just say the word, I'll have the
whole precinct come down on their
asses.

Rachel giggles.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
You enjoy it though, right?

RACHEL
Nobody really enjoys what they do,
I mean, do they?

Pearce is silent as a crypt.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
I don't know, sometimes it really
gets to me. I feel like you can
only handle so much stress in one
lifetime.

Pearce directs his chewing to the side of his mouth.

PEARCE
There's enough to go around in my
line of work, trust me.

RACHEL
You can't possibly enjoy what you
do.

Beat.

PEARCE
No, it just runs in the family,
right?

RACHEL
That's not what I meant. All that
running around, chasing criminals.
Putting your life on the line
everyday. It's gotta get old.

Pearce still looking down at his food.

PEARCE
The rush will always outweigh the
toll.

Rachel stares in his eyes a moment.

RACHEL
I'm just saying, there doesn't seem
to be any joy in valor.

Pearce finally looks up at her.

He continues picking at his plate after a brief moment.

TRANSITION TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - DETECTIVE'S OFFICES - DAY.

Pearce shuffles his way towards commotion around his desk.

A WHITE BOARD shows a list of leads which is largely made up of empty space, a timeline for his wife's disappearance, known associates and her PHOTO at the center.

The leads are a whole lot of nothing.

The detectives are all huddled around each other chatting indistinctly and laughing sporadically.

Pearce notices his partner is amongst them. He strides up to Isaac to pull him aside when...

DETECTIVE BLACKMON
Well, I mean, you know, I'm not
saying I would go out of my way,
but if she was lying naked on my
bed waiting for me, I wouldn't say
no!

The other detectives burst with laughter.

Detective Blackmon is joining in the laughter.

He is really enjoying himself before Pearce comes from nowhere and clocks him dead in the jaw.

The other detectives are caught gawking, but Isaac doesn't miss a beat as he holds a lunging Pearce back.

Detective Blackmon staggers to the side, hand pressed against his face.

Organized chaos ensues.

Captain emerges from his office, furious.

BARRY
Hey hey hey! Knock it the fuck off!

He turns his attention to Pearce.

BARRY (CONT'D)
You-- you're not supposed to be here.

Pearce hasn't stopped his dick measuring with Blackmon.

PEARCE
I just came to get my stuff.

He shrugs Isaac off of him.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
I'll be on my way.

Captain is still fuming.

BARRY
(pointing at Pearce)
You're damn fuckin' right. I'll be seeing your badge on my desk. Immediately.

He finally snaps his head to Barry.

Barry directs his attention to Blackmon.

BARRY (CONT'D)
And you, we'll talk later.

BLACKMON
I didn't do shit, Cap. This fuckin' guy comes in and--

BARRY
(raising his voice)
I'll not hear another word about it! The show's over, get back to work. All of you!

Pearce sharply points to Barry.

PEARCE
You better start looking for my wife!

BARRY
What do you want? Missing posters? Go home, Pearce.

Barry spins to storm back into his office.

BARRY (CONT'D)
(his voice softer now)
I've had it with this bullshit
circle-jerk.

Pearce turns to march on out of the building, but his eyes remain glued to Blackmon, Isaac at his side.

SLAM! Captain's door practically rattles the entire building.

Pearce tosses his badge over his shoulder. Not a care in the world where it lands.

Isaac proceeds to escort him out.

ISAAC
Just what the fuck was that back
there?

Pearce still looking around for Blackmon.

PEARCE
I need you to keep me up to date on
the case.

Isaac turns back around to look for the Captain, and then back to Pearce.

ISAAC
Do you even realize what will
happen if I'm caught speaking with
you about this?

Pearce looking sharply at Isaac.

PEARCE
There's gotta be something you can
tell me.

ISAAC
We've all been instructed to escort
you out on sight. They'll have my
dick on a platter for this. You
know that, right?

PEARCE
Isaac, please.
(pointing to the white
board)
There's nothing on that board over
there. I have even less than that.
Do you know what they say about the
first--

Pearce fights off getting choked up.

Isaac unsure how to respond just yet as he places his hand on his shoulder.

ISAAC

I can't imagine what you must be going through. But I'm not even supposed to be seen with you.

Isaac attempts to leave.

PEARCE

Isaac-- wait.

Pearce reaches out to try to pull him back.

ISAAC

He expects me back. I'm sorry, I have to go.

Isaac shrugs him off and turns to shuffle back to the offices.

PEARCE

Come on, Isaac. Please, just--

Pearce scoffs. He stands still a moment and takes in what just happened.

He then swivels to bitch slap the door as he storms out.

INT. DINER - DAY.

A TALL SKINNY MAN sits alone in a booth enjoying a meal and drinking coffee. This MAN is JASON KINCADE (early 30's). He is young looking, has dark hair and dark eyes.

Pearce shoves the front door open, scans the room, finds Jason, glides on over, and slides into the booth opposite him.

JASON

You're late.

Pearce rolls his eyes, but doesn't miss a beat.

PEARCE

I don't have to be on time for anything anymore.

Jason gives him an inquisitive look as he sips his coffee.

He digs back into his food.

JASON
The hell's that supposed to mean?

Pearce looks out the window.

PEARCE
I was taken off the case.

JASON
And you're surprised by that...why,
exactly?

Pearce shakes his head.

PEARCE
I just feel so helpless. How am I
supposed to find her?

JASON
You know what you have to do.

Pearce's eyes wander out the window.

A tall and gorgeous WAITRESS suddenly appears at Pearce's side, giving him a glance as if he should have already been ready to order yesterday.

PEARCE
Coffee, please.

The Waitress scribbles on her pad.

WAITRESS
And?

PEARCE
That'll be it.

WAITRESS
Okay, I'll be right back with that
for ya!

She vanishes.

Jason waits a beat.

JASON
Any idea who it might be?

PEARCE
How the fuck am I supposed to know
that already?

JASON

You're a detective. You must have made some enemies along the way.

The Waitress glides on by, pours him a mug full, and scoots away.

PEARCE

You mean to tell me I have to know all the enemies I've made over the years?

JASON

If you don't know who your enemies are, they've already won.

Pearce takes a sip of his coffee.

PEARCE

Now I wouldn't be very good at my job if I couldn't find out, now would I?

Jason shrugs, and gulps down the rest of his coffee.

He smirks.

The Waitress is already there to refill his mug.

PEARCE (CONT'D)

You don't think I'm a good detective, do you?

JASON

(to the waitress)
Thanks, hun.

Jason now directs his attention to Pearce.

JASON (CONT'D)

You don't want me to answer that.

Pearce huffs, shakes his head, and takes another sip.

PEARCE

I mean, something like this, where do you even begin?

JASON

You're supposed to be the detective here and you're asking me?

PEARCE
I need all the help I can get at
this point.

Jason chuckles.

JASON
Never thought I'd see the day. I
gotta say, I'm flattered.

Pearce has had enough of this shit already.

JASON (CONT'D)
You know, it takes a lot to admit
that you need help.

Pearce finally meets his eyes.

JASON (CONT'D)
I admire that.

PEARCE
What would you do?

JASON
(sarcastically)
Sorry, I'm just taking it all in.
It's a lot to process.

Pearce scoffs.

PEARCE
Would you just--

JASON
Okay, alright.

PEARCE
--already.

Jason pours in cream and sugar in his coffee, stirs, and
sips.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
(shaking his head)
Jesus.

A brief beat.

JASON
Look, I know I don't see much
action behind my desk over there--

PEARCE
Just, get to the point.

Jason leans in closer.

JASON
You have to look at who would
benefit from this. Who profits?

PEARCE
Hell if I know.

Jason covers his mouth from the side, leans toward the window, as if to shield himself from other patrons.

JASON
Have you ever considered the
possibility that she kidnapped
herself?

Pearce looks at him like he's a fool.

PEARCE
Never. She would never do that.

Beat.

Jason leans back and upright, folds his arms.

JASON
And just how well do you think you
know your wife?

PEARCE
Well enough to know that she
wouldn't go to such lengths.

Jason is amused by this.

JASON
Does anyone know their own spouse
that well?

Pearce glares as he sips his coffee.

Jason lets a smile slip through.

INT. PEARCE RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Pearce sits alone at his kitchen table.

He babysits a beer as he just stares blankly at the wall.

Suddenly, a KNOCK at the door.

Pearce strolls to the front door. He swings it open.

Isaac stands alone on his front door step.

He raises his eyebrows and shrugs as if to invite himself in.

Pearce nods his head to summon him. He abides.

Isaac follows behind as Pearce takes his perch back up and sips on his beer.

His partner remains standing as Pearce just eyes him.

Both just stare at each other a brief moment.

ISAAC

Well, aren't you gonna ask me why
I'm here?

PEARCE

I thought you-- Why are you here?

Isaac smiles.

ISAAC

Glad you asked. May I sit?

Pearce shrugs.

PEARCE

Country may not be entirely free,
but my home is.

Isaac grins. He snags a seat next to him.

ISAAC

I got a lead.

PEARCE

And?

ISAAC

Guy I used to know. Sort of. Goes
by the name of Dustin. He runs some
operation out of the docks.

PEARCE

If we know about his operation,
then why haven't we moved on him?

ISAAC

Haven't caught him in the act yet.

PEARCE

How does this relate to the case?

ISAAC

Well, he may just be running drugs,
but who knows what else?

Pearce shrugs and takes a sip of his beer.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

There's also a rumor floating
around that he may be joining
up with the most powerful crime
ring in the city.

PEARCE

What would a drug runner want with
my wife?

Isaac shrugs.

ISAAC

Beats the fuck outta me.

Beat.

PEARCE

So, if this is all just hear-say,
then why do you think he may have
snagged her?

ISAAC

Wouldn't hurt to ask him.

PEARCE

I think I know what he would tell
me to do with myself.

Isaac chuckles lightly.

ISAAC

If nothing else, he may be able to
point you in the right direction.

PEARCE

And how would he know that?

Isaac shrugs.

ISAAC

I'm just telling you. Could be a
good starting point. Could end up
being nothing. I don't know. It's
for you to find out.

PEARCE
Why can't you?

ISAAC
Because you told me to keep you in
the loop.

Pearce rolls his eyes and sips his beer again.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
I'm only doing what you said.

PEARCE
I know, I know. Thanks.

Isaac nods.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
Wouldn't it be better for you to
pay him a visit? You said you knew
him.

ISAAC
Sort of.

PEARCE
Better than not at all.

Isaac shakes his head.

ISAAC
I can't raise any suspicion with
the boss man. It's gotta be you.

Pearce turns to his beer for help.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
Look, I know this is difficult for
you. But sometimes, the only way is
to get your hands a little dirty.

PEARCE
You expect me to just confront a
gang of criminals I know nothing
about after losing my badge?

Beat.

ISAAC
You need to ask yourself, how badly
do you want to find your wife?

Pearce takes another gulp of beer. He lets that one sink in.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - DAY.

Pearce steps out of his car, guides the door shut, and strides on down the pavement to a large, open WAREHOUSE.

Armed guards are scattered about, on edge.

Some make an effort to pay him no attention.

Some clutch their rifles and shotguns.

Pearce is a bit uneasy, but manages to maintain somewhat of a poker face.

He approaches a man he believes to be their leader.

GANG LEADER

You've either got a lot of guts or
no sense coming down here alone.

Pearce scans the room, purposefully not making eye contact.

PEARCE

If I wanted to cause trouble, I
wouldn't have come without help.

Gang Leader chuckles a bit to himself.

He lights a smoke, and looks around to his friends.

GANG LEADER

Do I at least get the pleasure of
knowing your name?

Short beat.

PEARCE

We'll see how useful you are first.
I'm looking for someone.

GANG LEADER

(huffs, smiles)

Hmm. Isn't that how it always
starts?

Pearce shifts his weight to his other foot and folds his arms.

GANG LEADER (CONT'D)

You a cop?

Pearce shakes his head.

PEARCE

Not anymore.

Gang Leader nods, unconvinced.

GANG LEADER

And why's that?

Pearce glances up to the catwalks.

Armed guards stop patrolling from the catwalks, clutching their rifles. Staring intently at Pearce.

PEARCE

I stopped being a cop the day they sentenced my wife to die.

They both attempt to read each other a beat.

GANG LEADER

You still haven't told me your name.

PEARCE

Neither have you.

Gang leader huffs.

GANG LEADER

Let's not forget who was the first to ask.

Short beat.

GANG LEADER (CONT'D)

I'd hate to lose my patience.
Trigger fingers grow heavy with
each passing moment.

Pearce eyes his surroundings.

PEARCE

Name's Pearce. Detective Edwin
Pearce.

GANG LEADER

Former Detective now, I suppose.
(short beat)

Name's Dustin. If I had the luxury
of time, I'd introduce all my
associates here. But it appears you
share the same sentiment.

PEARCE

Right to the point. I think we'll get along just fine, assuming you answer my questions truthfully.

Dustin gives a half smile as he backs up, and spins to walk the other way.

DUSTIN

I think you can handle walking and talking, would I be correct in that assessment?

Pearce lunges to follow.

PEARCE

You would.

Dustin motions to a few of his men to guide them on their flanks.

DUSTIN

So, what do I have to do with your supposed marital problems?

EXT. SHIPPING YARD - CONTINUOUS

They march through the warehouse and out into the shipping yard.

PEARCE

It's my understanding you and a rival gang are no longer in conflict, but have, instead, formed some type of alliance.

DUSTIN

And you would be so closed-minded as to label us, gangs?

PEARCE

We deal in the business of labels.

DUSTIN

I thought you just established it wasn't 'we' anymore...

PEARCE

It's organized crime no matter how you slice it. Labels or not.

DUSTIN

We don't care for that label.

PEARCE
I don't give a fuck.

DUSTIN
Were you coming to a point or what?

They stop in their tracks.

PEARCE
I'd like to know what else happened
at this meeting. Was anything
exchanged?

DUSTIN
You expect me to believe you've
left the force, and are now asking
me the intricate details of my
business transactions?

Pearce looks out toward the sea for a beat.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)
It doesn't work that way.

Pearce inches closer to Dustin.

PEARCE
I don't care how it works.

Dustin does not back down. He sizes him up.

DUSTIN
You've got a lot of nerve coming on
my territory, asking favors, and
making threats.

Pearce looks around at the guards.

Guards look to each other, antsy.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)
I would be very careful about what
you say to me next.

They stare each other down a beat.

PEARCE
What was the purpose of this
meeting? Besides making new
friends.

Pearce finally shuffles back a couple paces slowly.

DUSTIN

I fail to see what any of this has
to do with your wife.

Pearce looks down for a brief beat, then looks back to him.

PEARCE

I was hoping you would tell me.

Dustin paces.

DUSTIN

I have a hard time seeing that my
newfound partnership has any
interest in missing wives.

PEARCE

I aim to find out if it does.

Dustin nods. They continue marching onward further on down
the shipyard.

DUSTIN

How can you be so sure you're
looking in the right places?

PEARCE

I'm not.

DUSTIN

I suppose that's the essence of
detective work, isn't it?

PEARCE

Gotta start somewhere.

DUSTIN

Fair point, but I'm gonna go out on
a limb and say that she's gone for
a reason. Wives up and leave their
husbands in search of a better life
all the time! Who's to say your
situation is different?

Pearce reaches out to grab Dustin to halt him, but he shrugs
him off.

One guard grasps Pearce's arms and pins them behind his back.

His other guards each rack in a load and aim right for
Pearce.

Pearce stops dead in his tracks.

Dustin lifts a finger to him.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)
You don't get to do that again.

Pearce glances around him, at each of the guards.

He puts his hands to his sides.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)
Now, tell me. What makes you think
you can just waltz down here, start
making demands, and I'll just help
you?

PEARCE
I told you. I'm not a badge
anymore. We can help each other.

DUSTIN
I think you're useless to me
without your badge.

Short beat.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)
So, let's say I do help you. Then
what?

Pearce ponders for a moment.

PEARCE
I can make sure there won't be any
more heat on you.

Brief pause.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
But, we have to have an
understanding here. No withholding
of any information.

DUSTIN
Sounds a lot like empty promises to
me.

Beat.

PEARCE
We both share a mutual friend on
the force.

DUSTIN
And just who might that be?

PEARCE

Isaac McPherson. He's my partner.

Dustin laughs.

DUSTIN

You should have led with that.

Pearce scoffs, annoyed. Figures.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)

So, I'm guessing Isaac wants to remind me I owe him a favor or is keeping tabs on me. Either way, you're just an errand boy, aren't you?

Pearce wants to lunge at Dustin, but remembers what will happen if he does so.

PEARCE

This has nothing to do with him. I have no interest in what you've got going on here. I just want to find my wife.

Pearce fights off some tears creeping up on him.

PEARCE (CONT'D)

My wife is out there somewhere. She could be dead for all I know.

Dustin side-glances to his guards on either side of him.

PEARCE (CONT'D)

You will tell me, and that will be it.

Dustin looks to his henchmen before he answers.

DUSTIN

I don't know his name. Only that people refer to him as The Conduit. Any product smuggled through the city, it goes through him. Doesn't matter what it is. If you try to run your business under his nose without his knowing about it, without cutting him in, you'd better make yourself scarce. And quick.

Pearce inches toward Dustin.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)
He controls it all. Everything.

PEARCE
How do I find him?

DUSTIN
You think that's a wise idea?

PEARCE
I never said it was wise.

Beat.

DUSTIN
You can't seek him out. If someone makes enough noise, he follows the echo.

PEARCE
Not good enough. I have to find him.

DUSTIN
That seems a hopeless task.

PEARCE
What choice do I have?

DUSTIN
I'm guessing you want my help with that, as well?

PEARCE
You just have to trust me.

DUSTIN
And you have to understand, placing trust in a cop is a big ask for someone like me.

PEARCE
I no longer have any allegiance to the force. They made sure of that with their indifference.

Dustin has a moment of contemplation.

DUSTIN
These words, they mean little to me. When you make the actions in your words come to life, that's when we have an understanding.

Pearce nods.

Dustin extends his hand.

Pearce hesitates a moment before meeting his hand, interlocks, and shakes.

EXT. PEARCE RESIDENCE - DAY.

Pearce stands alone outside his house on a cold, dreary day.

He scans the yard arbitrarily, hoping to find something of use. He looks around his house in a silent desperation.

Then, it dawns on him.

EXT. NEXT DOOR NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS.

Pearce gives a timid knock on the door. He awaits the door to swing open. It does not.

He gives it another go.

A CROTCHETY OLD MAN answers the door.

CROTCHETY OLD MAN
Can I help you?

PEARCE
Hello, sir. Uh-- My name's
Detective Edwin Pearce. I actually
live next door. Could I trouble you
for a moment of your time?

The Old Man is hesitant.

CROTCHETY OLD MAN
What do you want?

Pearce struggles to find the words to say a moment, before he finally does.

PEARCE
My wife-- she, uh-- went missing. I
was hoping you might have seen
something.

CROTCHETY OLD MAN
And this comes as a surprise to
you?

Brief pause.

PEARCE

Excuse me?

CROTCHETY OLD MAN

I was wondering when she'd finally pull the trigger. A little late if you ask me, but always better than not at all.

PEARCE

Is there something I'm missing here, sir?

CROTCHETY OLD MAN

It was right in front of your face the whole time. But I saw it.

PEARCE

Sir, what exactly are you saying?

CROTCHETY OLD MAN

Women don't tend to stick with shouters and wife beaters.

PEARCE

Wife beaters, huh?

CROTCHETY OLD MAN

I won't help the likes of you, bastard.

PEARCE

Ok, let's start over here--

CROTCHETY OLD MAN

Oh, I'd bet you'd like to, wouldn't you?

PEARCE

I don't understand--

CROTCHETY OLD MAN

I heard you two. It was a screaming match. Thought about calling the cops myself.

Pearce's heart sinks.

CROTCHETY OLD MAN (CONT'D)

Marriage couldn't have been very stable after something like that.

Pearce slowly raises his eyes to meet his.

CROTCHETY OLD MAN (CONT'D)
Well, you would know better than
anyone.

PEARCE
When did you hear this, shouting?
As you say.

CROTCHETY OLD MAN
Couldn't have been more than three
days ago. I remember it well.

PEARCE
I doubt you remember much of
anything these days.

CROTCHETY OLD MAN
Ah, that would be mighty convenient
for you, wouldn't it?

Beat.

CROTCHETY OLD MAN (CONT'D)
I don't help people like you. So
you can go on wasting your time if
you'd like.

PEARCE
I imagine you can't waste much time
these days, can you, old timer?

Beat.

CROTCHETY OLD MAN
Hopefully she's long gone by now.
And the further she is from you,
the safer she will be.

Pearce looks like he could kill an old man right now.

But the door is sealed shut before he can make any moves.

EXT. OLD LADY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Pearce gives a light knock on the door of his other next door
neighbor.

He impatiently waits as he tries to keep warm in the bitter
cold.

The door squeaks open revealing a SHORT, NICE OLD LADY.

Her faces lights up as soon as she sees it's Pearce.

OLD LADY
Good day to ya dear!

Pearce returns the smile, half-assedly.

PEARCE
Hi there.

OLD LADY
Well, come on in. It's freezing out there!

Pearce doesn't miss a beat.

PEARCE
(chuckles a bit)
Yeah, it is.

The Old Lady shuffles out of the way so Pearce can hop in.
The door eases its way shut behind them.

INT. OLD LADY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS.

The Old Lady wobbles into the kitchen.

OLD LADY (O.S.)
You want some tea?

Pearce creeps into the living room and parks himself in the middle.

PEARCE
Uh, no thank you.

Pearce still attempts to make himself warm.

OLD LADY (O.S.)
Well, I've never known anyone to pass on a warm beverage on a day like today. I'm gonna whip some up anyway, you tell me if you change your mind.

PEARCE
I'm good, thanks.

Old Lady makes periodic noises as she prepares the tea from the kitchen.

OLD LADY (O.S.)
I hoped you'd be here as a suitor
seeing as you're young and in your
prime. It's been ages.

Pearce is caught off guard.

OLD LADY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I'm afraid I'm not ripe for the
taking anymore. It's all for
naught.

She shuffles back in the room after the kettle was placed on
the stove.

OLD LADY (CONT'D)
I'd imagine there's something
you're after, but you don't have to
humor me.

He stares blankly for a beat.

She smiles.

OLD LADY (CONT'D)
Oh, dear. I'm only giving you the
business. I couldn't torture you
any longer.

She chuckles.

He half smiles, huffs.

OLD LADY (CONT'D)
What is it you need, my son?

Pearce hesitates a moment before he begins.

PEARCE
I'm here about my wife. She went
missing just this week.

OLD LADY
Good heavens.

PEARCE
You wouldn't happen to know
anything about that, would you?

OLD LADY
How dreadful, my dear. I am
terribly sorry.

PEARCE

Thank you.

She cranes her neck back to the tea pot.

Still not ready.

She turns to her furniture.

OLD LADY

Please, have a seat. Make yourself at home.

Pearce nods and grabs a spot on the sofa.

She parks herself in her chair.

PEARCE

So, I was hoping you may have seen something. Anything.

She makes herself comfortable before becoming fully attentive.

OLD LADY

Not that I can think of. Um, eh. My memory fails me more often than I'd like these days.

Pearce nods.

OLD LADY (CONT'D)

Come to think of it, I did--

She's interrupted by the squealing of the tea pot.

OLD LADY (CONT'D)

Oh, please. Just one second.

The Old Lady raises herself with all her might and feebly scoots into the kitchen.

She prepares her tea and takes her sweet old time planting herself back in her chair and gets situated.

PEARCE

You were saying?

She places her tea next to her on the coffee table.

OLD LADY

What was-- ah yes. So I did see something the other day. Didn't seem anything out of the ordinary.

PEARCE

What was it, exactly?

OLD LADY

She didn't seem to be in any sort of distress. Seemed like she knew the guy, as if they was familiar.

PEARCE

So, she seemed fine?

OLD LADY

Yes, she was speaking with the man she was leaving with. I didn't think anything of it. I figured it was you, if I'm being honest.

PEARCE

Did you get a good look at the man?

OLD LADY

No, not really. Unfortunately, my mind isn't the only thing that's starting to go.

PEARCE

What was his appearance like? Can you describe him for me?

OLD LADY

Oh, he was a non-distinct white man. I dunno.

PEARCE

No, I mean, what was his stature? Was he a big man? Little? Young? Old?

OLD LADY

Well, he certainly wasn't older than me.

Pearce chuckles a bit.

OLD LADY (CONT'D)

Coulda been in his 40s, but hell if I know. Like I said, my eyes don't see like they used to no more. Age takes its toll.

PEARCE

I understand.

OLD LADY

Like I said, I thought he was you.
I'm sorry I couldn't be of more
help there, honey.

PEARCE

That's quite alright.

OLD LADY

I'm not one for detective work.
I'll leave that to you. My
observation skills are dwindling by
the day.

Pearce smiles to her.

PEARCE

Is there anything more you can tell
me?

OLD LADY

Apologies, my dear. That's the only
thing I saw that day. I just can't
tell you how awful I feel.

PEARCE

I appreciate your concern.

OLD LADY

It just looked normal to me, so I
didn't think anything of it. And to
tell you the truth, she probably
didn't suspect a thing either.

Pearce's cold, blank stare to the Old Lady.

He looks down and away. Unable to muster a single word.

INT. PEARCE RESIDENCE - MORNING

Suddenly, the phone ringing blasts through the silence.

Pearce lifts the phone off the receiver.

PEARCE

This is Edwin Pearce.

ISAAC (O.S.)

We need to meet.

Pearce considers whether this is a wise idea or not.

PEARCE
What's this about?

ISAAC (V.O.)
Not over the phone.

PEARCE
Okay, then where?

SNAP TO:

INT. APARTMENTS - DAY.

Pearce paces into the Apartments where he and Isaac had their first bust.

He then struts on down the hallway and past the crime scene tape into the room.

Isaac is waiting for him.

PEARCE
Why here, of all places?

ISAAC
It's the one place I knew no one would think to look.

PEARCE
You really think they wouldn't expect us to come back here?

ISAAC
Why would we?

PEARCE
To meet in secret.

Isaac huffs, half smiles, and scoots to the window.

ISAAC
The last place Captain would expect is the scene of a crime.

PEARCE
Depends on the crime.

Beat.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
So, do you have anything for me?

ISAAC
We've been looking into her father.
Quentin Walsh.

PEARCE
I know who he is, Isaac. I've been
married to his daughter 11 years
for Chrissake.

Beat.

ISAAC
I caught wind of his involvement in
this crime ring.

PEARCE
How do you know it's him?

ISAAC
We've been looking into him for
awhile now.

PEARCE
And you never thought to tell me?!

ISAAC
I didn't want to tell you. I know
how you get when--

PEARCE
What the hell is that supposed to
mean?!

ISAAC
You can get-- a bit-- defensive.

Pearce looks as if he's about to pounce at any moment.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
You can't deny it, Ed. You know
it's true.

Pearce will not back down.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
Alright, look. My intent here is
not to get you all worked up. I
knew that you would want to defend
your family, which is fine. I get
it.

Isaac slowly approaches him.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
I just wanted to let you know--
he's a suspect.

Pearce turns his back and paces toward the door.

PEARCE
Everyone is a suspect.

Beat.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
Why did you wait until now?

ISAAC
The time was right.

PEARCE
Where do you think Dustin fits in
to all this?

ISAAC
I don't know, didn't you ask him?

PEARCE
He didn't give me much to go on.

ISAAC
Sounds like him.

PEARCE
That lying sack of shit-- if he's
involved at all--

ISAAC
We don't know that for certain.

Pearce stares him down a beat.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
I'll talk to him--

PEARCE
Let me talk to him again. I swear
this time I won't be so--

ISAAC
I will talk to him.

Short beat.

PEARCE
You know you could have told me
this right from the start.

ISAAC
I know, I'm sorry.

Beat.

PEARCE
If her father was-- was she caught
up in any of this?

ISAAC
I thought you of all people would
know that.

Short beat.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
Maybe she never knew, Ed.

Pearce sighs and shakes his head.

PEARCE
(whispering)
His own family.
(softly)
It doesn't make any sense.
What would drive him to do this?

ISAAC
I don't know, Pearce.

Pearce paces the room.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
Sometimes it's those closest to you
whom you can't always trust.

PEARCE
You think he'd be dumb enough to
kidnap his own daughter?

ISAAC
Is there any reason he would hold
her over you like this?

Pearce is alone in his thoughts a moment.

PEARCE
One way to find out.

Suddenly, he turns his heel toward the door and bolts out the
door.

ISAAC
Pearce.

Pearce freezes in the doorway.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
I urge you not to do anything
drastic.

Pearce darts out the door.

SLAM TO BLACK.

Indistinct shouting over the darkness.

SNAP TO:

INT. PEARCE RESIDENCE - FLASHBACK

Rachel and Pearce engaged in an intense argument.

RACHEL
I've given you everything! And in
return, you've given me nothing!

PEARCE
What do you want me to do? Huh? You
can do whatever the fuck you want!
What do I care?

RACHEL
You married me.

PEARCE
Because you told me it was the one
way we could be together!

RACHEL
I made that possible for you, and
what have you done for me?!

PEARCE
I didn't ask you to do that, you
said you were willing to make that
sacrifice!

RACHEL
Marriage is suppose to be give and
take. All you've done is take what
I've given you!

PEARCE
I don't know what you want from me!
Just tell me what--

RACHEL
I never expected to fall in love
with you!

It's almost as if time freezes for a minute.

PEARCE
You what?

Pearce takes in this revelation a beat.

RACHEL
(calmly)
Yes. I love you.

Pearce struggles with the words to say for a moment.

PEARCE
I'm sorry, I didn't know.

Pearce can't face her.

Rachel could break down at any moment.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
But I can't--

RACHEL
Ed, please! You can!

PEARCE
You knew what you were getting
into!! You're not the only one in
love, you know!!

RACHEL
(terse)
I did that for you, in case you
haven't forgotten.

PEARCE
(pointing at her)
You chose this for us. This was
your doing!

RACHEL
You two would be nothing without
me.

PEARCE
We don't need you to be anything--

Rachel swiftly SMACKS him across the face.

As she storms away, she bumps him into the wall.

Pearce's head snaps back and collides with the wall behind him.

Rachel stands in the doorway, bundling herself with her coat.

RACHEL
I'll tell everyone.

Rachel swings the door open lunges out and slams it behind her.

Pearce stands in the doorway, furious.

EXT. WALSH RESIDENCE - DAY

Pearce stands on the door step of Rachel's father's house.

He is hesitant to knock on the door, but does so. Timidly.

After a beat, QUENTIN WALSH (50's) answers the door.

Quentin is a large, tall, powerful man. His presence is domineering. He is red in the face, grey of hair, and utterly terrifying.

QUENTIN
What do you want?

PEARCE
It's nice to see you too.

Quentin is a brick wall. Pearce gets nothing from him.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
May I come in?

QUENTIN
I always knew she never should've
married you.

PEARCE
Look, we can argue over this, or we
can find her.

Beat.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
You know a man named Dustin?

QUENTIN
What's it to you?

PEARCE

Just think he might have a hand in all this.

Quentin mulls this over a beat.

QUENTIN

Do you know why she married you?

PEARCE

What does that have to do with anything?

QUENTIN

You really have no idea, do you?

PEARCE

You don't know why she married me. All that matters is that I do.

QUENTIN

You're oblivious. That's exactly why she's gone. And you can't help her.

PEARCE

I know why she married me, and you don't know a thing about it.

QUENTIN

I ought to kill you for losing her.

An uncomfortably drawn-out stare-down between them.

PEARCE

You know, I didn't want to believe it. But I'm not writing you off as a suspect.

QUENTIN

You really think that's your best course of action?

Pearce rises from his seat.

PEARCE

We'll see about that now, won't we?

Pearce limbers toward the door. Quentin watches him all the way.

INT. PEARCE RESIDENCE - LATER THAT NIGHT.

Pearce shuffles through the doorway, hangs his coat, and mopes over to his kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS.

Pearce opens his fridge and scours through until he fishes out a beer bottle for himself.

Once he closes the fridge door, he's startled by a SHADOWY FIGURE in his living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS.

The Shadowy Figure sits on a love seat with his legs crossed, also lifting a beer to his mouth.

It's Isaac McPherson.

ISAAC

Sorry if I startled you, didn't mean to.

PEARCE

What-- what are you doing--

ISAAC

I let myself in.

Pearce switches on the light.

PEARCE

Yeah, I got that.

He shakes his head as he mopes on over to take a seat.

PEARCE (CONT.) (CONT'D)

You know you can just ask.

ISAAC

Can't take any risks right now. Not even over the phone.

Pearce drops himself in a seat across from him.

PEARCE

You're gonna make me waste a pair of underwear or two if you keep this up.

Isaac chuckles a bit to himself.

A short beat.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
What do you want?

ISAAC
I don't want anything. Just paying
you a visit.

PEARCE
I don't need visitors.

ISAAC
Sure you do. This house became a
whole lot lonelier recently.

Pearce throws him a look.

PEARCE
Seriously, why did you break into
my home tonight? Aren't you
supposed to be doing something?

Isaac takes a swig of his beer.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
Other than stealing my beer.

Pearce twists off the cap of his beer.

ISAAC
Sorry about that too.

PEARCE
Just tell me or your ass is out on
the street.

ISAAC
Alright, Jesus. Can't your partner
just come over and console you?

PEARCE
I don't need your sympathy.

Isaac rolls his eyes at that one.

ISAAC
(sarcastically)
Please.

Isaac takes another drink.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

How was your marriage before she left?

PEARCE

A very pointed question.

ISAAC

An important one at that.

PEARCE

Why is that important?

ISAAC

Don't you get it? This could help us find her!

PEARCE

It doesn't explain anything--

ISAAC

It explains everything!

Both sit in silence a moment in a staring contest.

Pearce finally loses and drinks.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Look, I'm sorry. You and Rach were on the rocks. It's alright. Happens to everyone. Maybe she--

PEARCE

I think I know how my own marriage was.

ISAAC

I never said you didn't. I'm just saying it could explain her timeline.

PEARCE

So then, where do you think she would go? Huh?

Isaac spreads his arms out. Duh.

ISAAC

Where do you think?

Pearce mulls this one over.

PEARCE

My in-laws.

Isaac shrugs.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
I'm sure it's not that simple.

Isaac leans forward.

Pearce takes a big gulp of beer.

ISAAC
People hide in plain sight all the time.

PEARCE
That's a massive oversight on our part.

ISAAC
It's part of the job. Even the best detectives miss the simplest--

Pearce shakes his head.

PEARCE
You don't have to tell me how to do my own job.

ISAAC
I'm only trying to help.

Pearce looks down into his beer, as if it has answers.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
Look, all I'm saying is if you can retrace her steps, it could lead you right to her.

PEARCE
Don't you think that's what I've been doing?

ISAAC
You have to explore every possibility. No matter how unlikely.

Beat.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
Pearce. I know how badly you want to find her.

Pearce nods, and takes another swig.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
Just promise me you'll be careful.

Pearce nods, but doesn't face him. He avoids eye contact so as to not show his tears.

EXT. OLD WALSH RESIDENCE - MORNING.

Pearce cautiously approaches the front door.

It's another brisk day. Overcast.

Pearce looks around to make sure no one is looking...as if he will find anyone.

He hesitantly knocks on the door. Nothing.

He tries again. Still no one.

Pearce then beats the door, louder this time.

Not a soul around.

He attempts to look in the window. It's pitch dark in there.

PEARCE
Hello? Ms. Walsh?

He bangs on the door once more.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
It's me, Ed.

He looks in the window again, as if it will change this time.

Barren.

He lets himself in, finally.

INT. OLD WALSH RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS.

Pearce is careful with each step as he tip toes through the house.

He now has his pistol at the ready.

He scans the family room as he walks in. Bare. Nothingness.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS.

He raises his pistol as he scans the room. Not a soul to be found.

INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS.

His eyes desperately search for something. He finds nothing.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS.

An awful stench fills his nostrils. He is brushed backward by the waft.

AN ELDERLY WOMAN is sprawled out on the bed.

Blood spatter is thrown from her head up and to the side. Its path leads up the bedspread.

The Elderly Woman is MIRIAM WALSH, Rachel's mother. She's a frail, old woman. Even moreso now that her body has been rotting for days.

Pearce covers his nose with his shirt as he searches her body for anything of use.

In her hand lays a .38 special handgun.

He sees it, but is unconvinced.

He can't look anymore.

EXT. PHONE BOOTH - LATER.

Pearce stands alone in a phone booth, enters quarters, and awaits a pickup through the dial tone.

The other line picks up.

ISAAC (O.S.)
(voice-over through phone)
McPherson.

PEARCE
It's me.

ISAAC (O.S.)
Yeah? What did you find? Anything?

PEARCE
She's dead.

A brief beat.

Isaac sighs.

ISAAC (O.S.)
Ed, I am so sorry. I--

Pearce shifts positions in the booth.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
Where did you find her? Was she--

PEARCE
She was at her place. On her bed,
with a gun. Not convinced it was a
suicide though. Not with the way
the gun sat in her hand.

ISAAC (O.S.)
My God, that's awful.

PEARCE
No sign of Rachel there, though.

ISAAC (O.S.)
Wait, what?

PEARCE
Yeah, I didn't find her there. May
be at her dad's place, I dunno.

ISAAC (O.S.)
You mean, she--

PEARCE
What?

ISAAC (O.S.)
Oh.

PEARCE
Isaac. What.

ISAAC (O.S.)
You meant her old lady was dead.

PEARCE
Yeah, what'd you--?

ISAAC (O.S.)
Oh, thank God. She could still be
alive.

PEARCE
Of course--

ISAAC (O.S.)
Jesus, man. You had me goin--

PEARCE
You thought--

ISAAC (O.S.)
Right. Awh, man. Don't do that!

PEARCE
(laughs)
I'm sorry! That's my bad.

ISAAC (O.S.)
You bet your god damn ass yeah your
bad!

PEARCE
I didn't even realize--

ISAAC (O.S.)
Fuck, Pearce!

PEARCE
Sorry.

ISAAC (O.S.)
Alright, well I'm still sorry for
your loss, I mean-- my condolences
for your--

PEARCE
Yeah, no, it's okay. Just,
considering--

ISAAC (O.S.)
I know. It's good. I mean, it's
terrible. Still sucks about
your...you know. But--

PEARCE
A bit of a relief.

ISAAC (O.S.)
Exactly. Oh man.

PEARCE
Yeah.

ISAAC (O.S.)
Well, alright. I'll keep lookin' on
my end.

PEARCE
Me too.

ISAAC (O.S.)
So, just-- let me know.

PEARCE
Same to you.

ISAAC (O.S.)
Ok.

Pearce hangs the phone on the hook.

He lets out a deep sigh.

Then, finally he scoffs, shakes his head as he leaves.

EXT. APARTMENT LOFTS - DAY

DOOR FACE: #329

BANG BANG BANG! Pearce knocks heavily on the door.

A moment later, a shade is pulled down, then yanked back up.

The door opens revealing CHELSEA ROBINSON (Early 30's). She has a symmetrical face, dark hair, and dark eyes. A beauty in her prime, maybe. But maybe only for some now.

She pulls her hair behind her ear. She does not open the door too much, just enough to see her.

CHELSEA
You've got some nerve.

PEARCE
I need your help.

CHELSEA
And why would I help you?

PEARCE
You'd be helping her, too, you
know.

Her eyes dart to the floor, hesitates a moment, then look back up to him.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
You do want to help her, don't you?

CHELSEA
Of course I do. I would do anything
for her.

PEARCE
You know I would t--

CHELSEA
Don't you dare.

Pearce is bitten by a sting of shame.

PEARCE
Chels-- Please.

Chelsea looks like she could murder someone. Probably him.
Beat.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
When was the last time you saw her?

CHELSEA
She came to see me. After your
fight.

Pearce finally attempts to make eye contact.

CHELSEA (CONT'D)
Sobbing.

Pearce snuffles. Nods. Looks to her.

PEARCE
Do you know where she went after
that?

CHELSEA
She probably went to apologize. To
you.

Pearce can't face her.

CHELSEA (CONT'D)
As if you deserved an apology.

PEARCE
Ok, I get it. I fucked up, alright?

She scoffs.

CHELSEA
Fucked up-- Yeah. That doesn't even
begin to--

PEARCE
I know! I'm trying to make it
right.

Brief beat.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
The only way I can do right by her
is to find her. And I can't do that
without your help.

She contemplates this a moment, then gives a nod of her head
inviting him in as she cracks the door open enough to allow
him entry.

He squeezes through.

INT. CHELSEA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS.

Chelsea stomps to the kitchen to grab herself something to
drink, but doesn't offer anything to Pearce.

He understands.

Pouring liquid can be heard from the kitchen.

Pearce does not take a seat. He's kind of afraid to.

CHELSEA (O.S.)
Sit.

He obeys right away.

She finally comes back with a cup of something, we're not
sure what.

PEARCE
Ok, Chelsea, look, I can explain--

CHELSEA
I don't even wanna hear it.

Beat.

PEARCE
Is there anything you can tell me
that would be of any help to me?

She takes a sip of her beverage and looks out the window.

CHELSEA

She frequented a bar whenever you were on your long nights. When cases kept you late.

PEARCE

What was-- what's the name of the bar?

CHELSEA

I can't believe you didn't know this.

PEARCE

Can we please..just..not?

She takes another sip.

CHELSEA

Catty-Corner's.

PEARCE

Ca-- Catty Corner's?

She might smack him.

CHELSEA

Did she not take you there?

Pearce's expression is blank. No one's home.

CHELSEA (CONT'D)

You honestly never went there together...

PEARCE

I-- No.

She shakes her head.

He shrugs.

CHELSEA

Oh my god. Seriously, you guys are the worst couple--

Pearce bounces up from his seat.

PEARCE

Thanks, Chels.

He kisses her on the cheek, and is out the door before she even knew what hit her.

EXT. CATTY-CORNERS BAR - LATER.

Pearce nervously approaches the front door.

He bumps it open and pushes inside.

INT. CATTY-CORNERS BAR - CONTINUOUS.

Pearce slowly inches his way to the bar.

The crowd is geriatric as all get-out, and they're all staring at Pearce.

A BARTENDER resides behind the bar, drying a pint glass. His stare never breaks away from Pearce.

Pearce manages to find an open seat, and plops down in it.

All the BAR PATRONS still have not let their collective stare die down.

Pearce cannot stand the limelight. Though, the light isn't very appealing right now. Nor is it lime-colored.

The Bartender's gaze remains unwavering.

BARTENDER

What can I do ya for, young man?

PEARCE

What's your strongest cocktail?

The Bartender's scowl has not lost its bite. You must be new at this, kid.

BARTENDER

Everclear. Neat.

Nice one, old man.

PEARCE

Just make it an Old-Fashioned.

The Bartender doesn't move an inch.

BARTENDER

How do ya want it?

Pearce can feel that all the eyes in the room are still glued to him.

PEARCE

On the rocks, if you would. Thanks.

Bartender throws a side-glare as he prepares his drink.

BARTENDER
Never seen you around before.

Pearce glances around to see if the judgmental crowd has let up. It hasn't.

PEARCE
I don't drink much.

Short beat as the Bartender tries to process this.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
In public.

The Bartender has not changed his expression.

OTHER BAR PATRONS sitting next to Pearce at the bar are also staring at him as if he had just been beamed down there from an alien dropship.

BARTENDER
So, what do you want?

Pearce is distracted, but this breaks his inattentiveness.

PEARCE
I'm sorry, what?

Slight pause.

BARTENDER
Outsiders don't just show up here for a drink. There's always an ulterior motive.

Staredown.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
So, what is it?

Pearce eyes the patrons again. Uneasy.

PEARCE
I came to ask about my wife.

This flips a switch with the Bartender.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
She's gone missing. I fear she's been kidnapped.

The Bartender grumbles.

BARTENDER
Fear? Or know?

Pearce shrugs. More or less.

He checks his surroundings again. Everyone seems to have calmed down. For now.

PEARCE
Pretty sure.

BARTENDER
Hmm.

Bartender slides the Old Fashioned down to him.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
(nodding to him)
Gonna need that.

Pearce clasps his hand around it, nods, and takes a swig.

The Bartender looks inquisitively at him.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
So, who's the lady in question?

Pearce grimaces as he taps the drink on the bar and places it down on the napkin.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
The good ole ball in chain?

Pearce lets out a sigh.

PEARCE
Rachel Pearce.

Nearly everyone in the bar turns to face him once again.

Indistinct murmurs throughout the bar.

Pearce's curiosity of the commotion gets the best of him. What is going on here?

BARTENDER
Hmm. She's had a lot to say about you.

This grabs Pearce's attention.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
There was always something.

PEARCE

What? What do you mean?

Bartender shrugs as he continues with his busy work behind the bar.

BARTENDER

Didn't take much. Just a couple glasses of wine down the shoot. And off she went.

Pearce shakes his head.

PEARCE

I don't understand.

Bartender stares him dead in the eye.

BARTENDER

No, you wouldn't, would you?

Pearce can feel it. Something's not right here...

BARTENDER (CONT'D)

You never appreciated her.

Pearce leans back in his chair.

The Bar Patrons have yet to take their eyes off him.

He glances over his shoulder at them, then back to the Bartender who remains overbearing.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)

(stern)

Why she would marry something like you, I will never know.

The Bartender is holding a sawed-off shotgun low behind the bar, out of Pearce's sight.

If not for the bar, it'd be pointed right at him.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)

Now--

Dread overcomes Pearce. It might be time to leave.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)

Get the fuck out of my fucking bar.

Pearce's eyes dart around the room.

He slowly slips out of the bar stool.

The Bartender has not taken his finger off the trigger.

The Bar Patrons follow his every move.

Pearce slowly paces his way through the tables. Finally reaching the door.

He turns back.

No one has lifted their gaze.

You could hear a pin drop.

The Bartender maintains his fierce stare.

Pearce slowly backs out the door.

EXT. CATTY-CORNERS - PEARCE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS.

Pearce swiftly makes for his car, swings the door open and slides in.

INT. PEARCE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS.

Pearce shudders as he places his hands on the wheel.

Tight grip. He turns the key.

He lets out a sharp breath.

He pinches his eyes and brushes his hands across his face.

He takes a deep breath. What was that all about?

EXT. SHIPPING YARD - DOCKS - LATER

Pearce makes his way down the docks.

Dustin is smoking a cigar at the end of the pier.

Pearce stands over to the side, looming over him.

Dustin takes a puff, lets the smoke be caught in the frigid air and taken away by a brief, but sharp howl of the wind.

Pearce manages to remain silent.

Dustin knows he's there.

DUSTIN
Back again, detective?

He glances over his shoulder up at Pearce.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)
Or, no. Not anymore. So what should
I call you now?

PEARCE
Doesn't matter.

Dustin looks back into the distance and takes another long puff.

DUSTIN
I suppose not.

PEARCE
You have anything for me?

Dustin takes his time, enjoying the taste. The view.

DUSTIN
In time, my friend.

PEARCE
Who said anything about friends?

Dustin lets out a light chuckle. He smiles and looks back to him.

DUSTIN
You certainly wouldn't want to be
enemies.

Pearce's glance unwavering.

Dustin looks a bit more serious now.

PEARCE
I don't care for time wasted.

Dustin turns back around, swinging his legs back and forth off the edge of the pier like a giddy kid.

DUSTIN
Nor do I, my good man.

Pearce lets out a sigh. It's too cold for this.

PEARCE
Should I come back another time?

DUSTIN
I know a place.

Dustin still not making eye contact.

PEARCE
Who's place? Where?

Dustin smirking, takes in another drag.

DUSTIN
It's closer than you think.

PEARCE
Who owns it?

Dustin glances back over his shoulder to face Pearce.

DUSTIN
Who owns everything?

He throws Pearce a shit eating grin.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)
Did you not learn a thing from me?

Dustin flicks up a folded note with his fingers, open for the taking.

Pearce snatches it right up.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)
Not to worry, you don't have to
thank me.

Pearce is practically gone before he can.

Dustin chuckles a bit to himself and smirks as he continues to look out into the horizon and puts the cigar up to his mouth again.

EXT. BROKEN DOWN RANCH - LATER

Pearce pulls up to a house across the street on a cold, dreary morning.

Pearce exits his vehicle, and attempts to close his car door as softly as he can.

He leaps and bounds across the street and then slowly approaches the house.

He lightly knocks on the door.

No answer.

He peeks in, seeing nothing.

Pearce looking down at the door knob.

He looks around first before carefully turning the knob.

Softly, he pushes the door forward.

Slowly, he raises his pistol from his holster.

INT. BROKEN DOWN RANCH - CONTINUOUS.

Pearce paces around the empty entry way.

The house feels abandoned.

Pearce slowly, carefully pans the room.

He tiptoes into the kitchen.

Still bare.

INT. BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS.

A LARGE GROUP OF GANG MEMBERS wearing FILTERED MASKS are working tediously on packaging some sort of PRODUCT.

They all have their own individual work station.

Soft footsteps are heard above.

The Gang Members all look up in unison.

They begin working faster. More frantically.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS.

Pearce approaches a door just outside the kitchen.

Pistol still raised, he looks curiously at the door.

He creeps forward with extreme caution.

Pearce is about to reach for the door handle when...

ISAAC (O.S.)
(whispering)
Ed.

Pearce spins to face Isaac.

PEARCE
(whispering sharply)
Jesus!

Isaac shows himself, brandishing a pistol.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
(whispering)
You can't fuckin' do that to me!

Isaac motions his hands downward so as to tell Pearce to "keep it down."

ISAAC
(softly)
Apologies. Had to come and help
once I knew.

Pearce gesturing for him to follow.

INT. BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS.

The door drifts open.

The basement is dark, save for the natural light showing through the few windows.

Pearce creeps down the stairs. Isaac follows closely.

Pearce peeks through the opening between the railing on the stairs and the wall separating.

Empty tables and chairs are scattered about the room.

Shelves full of various packages line the walls.

Pearce and Isaac spread out to investigate the scene.

A light dusting of powder is left behind, visible on the tables.

Pearce leans in closer to examine this.

Isaac shuffles through some of the packages on the shelves.

Most are empty.

Pearce rubs the powder on his fingers. Sniffs.

PEARCE
Isaac.

Isaac looks over his shoulder at Pearce.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
Come take a look.

Isaac obeys. He does the same.

They nod to each other and continue searching the room.

Pearce approaches a steel double-door cabinet against the wall.

He tries to open it. Unsuccessful.

Isaac glances at a mystery substance on the wall.

Pearce eyes a sledge hammer in the corner of the room.

Isaac gives it a closer look. Touches it. Grimaces.

Pearce gives a mighty swing and WHAM! Knocks off the locked handle.

Isaac is startled by the sudden noise.

The Cabinet door squeaks open. It leads outside.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
Hmm.

ISAAC
What?

PEARCE
Somebody was just here.

ISAAC
How do you figure?

Pearce points to what he's looking at.

Isaac glides over to join him.

He looks into the cabinet-sized hole leading outside.

PEARCE
We may have just missed 'em.

Isaac gives him a concerned look.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
Call it in. It has to be you.

Isaac nods, looks down, then back outside.

Pearce makes like the wind.

Isaac looking more inquisitively at the makeshift exit.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - LATER

Pearce trots back to his car, skirts the outside, swings open the door, enters, and slams the door shut.

He turns the ignition as he's about to pull away.

Another VEHICLE sits several houses down.

We are not particularly focused on the other vehicle, but rather, the squad of COP CARS that enter the neighborhood behind it.

This is just as Pearce scoots away in his car in the same direction, but out of the neighborhood away from the cop cars.

The cop cars pass on by the other vehicle as they make their way to the broken down ranch, where Isaac remains.

INT. PEARCE RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Pearce sits alone at his table, picking at his dinner.

INT. PEARCE RESIDENCE - FLASHBACK

Ed and Rachel share dinner together in the dining room.

Both are eating, chatting, laughing.

Rachel is happier than ever.

Ed leans back in his chair, fork in hand with food on it, mouth full, laughing.

We cannot hear what they are saying, but they could not be more happy.

INT. PEARCE RESIDENCE - PRESENT.

Pearce, elbows on the table, face in hands.

He abruptly, aggressively shoves his plate aside against the wall. Plate, glass, and silverware crashing, breaking.

Fists clenched, he is shaking, on the verge of a breakdown.

INT. PEARCE RESIDENCE - FAMILY ROOM - FLASHBACK.

Rachel and Ed are playfully shoving each other on the couch.

The TV is on in the background, but they pay it no mind.

Rachel is on the edge of the couch kicking at Ed.

He laughs as he returns the playful kicking back.

They wrap one another in each other's arms.

INT. DINING ROOM - PRESENT.

Pearce, face in hands once again, white knuckled, pounds his fist on the table.

He can't hold back the tears any longer.

EXT. PEARCE RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS.

We see the faint glow of light from the dining room and hear only the angered yelling of Pearce as we...

TRANSITION TO:

INT. POLICE BALL - FLASHBACK.

Dozens are gathered inside a multi-purpose room for a Police Ball.

Many are dancing, gathered around food, sitting at tables, and mingling.

Rachel and Pearce are standing next to one another, chatting.

Pearce's gaze is towards Jason across the room who is pecking at some hors-d'oeuvres.

Rachel attempts to bring his attention towards her.

RACHEL

Ed, how much do you love me?

Ed turns to face her, finally.

PEARCE

Is this some sort of test?

Rachel chuckles to herself.

RACHEL

Do you love me with all your heart?

She looks over at Jason.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Or just part of it?

PEARCE

Rachel, you've always had my heart.

Rachel is unconvinced.

PEARCE (CONT'D)

All of it.

She smiles and proceeds to wrap her arms around him.

RACHEL

Ed, you don't have to hide anything from me anymore.

Rachel begins to sway him from side to side.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Honey, I know.

Pearce has now seen a ghost.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

I see the way you look at each other.

Pearce scoffs. He reluctantly moves with her.

PEARCE

Don't be ridiculous.

Rachel stares deep into his eyes.

RACHEL

You have nothing to worry about. I fully support you.

She lets a silent moment pass.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Ask me to marry you.

PEARCE

What?

RACHEL
You can continue to see each other
as if nothing's changed.

She is beaming. He's not.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Your secret is safe with me. I
swear on my life.

Pearce matches her gaze, then looks to Jason.

Jason smirks at him, raises his glass.

Pearce smiles and nods to him.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
I want you to be happy.

He looks back to Rachel. She mirrors his gaze and smile.

His smile fades.

PEARCE
But what about you?

She somehow smiles even larger.

RACHEL
Don't worry about me. This is what
I want. For you. And for him.

Rachel is almost in tears of joy.

She somehow maintains her smile, even through the tears.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
This is the best thing I could've
ever given you.

Pearce is at a loss for words.

A short beat.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Ed. Propose. And no one will
suspect a thing.

We are focused on Ed processing this information as we...

TRANSITION TO:

EXT. DUSTIN BOWMAN'S RESIDENCE - MORNING.

Isaac, his new PARTNER, and two other OFFICERS silently trot up to Dustin's house.

They stack up outside the front door to breach.

Isaac nods to give the go-ahead.

His teammates prepare to breach, Isaac blasts the door hinges off with TWO BANGS of his shotgun.

His partner smacks the door in with a mighty kick.

THREE LACKEYS are frozen on the couch, except for their initial flinch backward from the noise.

Dustin immediately jumps up, scurries to the corner of the room.

The officers spread out as they clear the room.

Isaac barges in, shaking his head at Dustin.

ISAAC

Don't--

Dustin reaches for his pistol on a coffee table in the corner of the room.

BOOM! Isaac lets loose a warning blast of his shotgun above the weapon.

A STARTLED OFFICER accidentally pops off a round immediately following Isaac's warning shot.

The round paints the wall red behind the other LACKEYS.

AN UNFORTUNATE LACKEY slumps lifeless to the floor.

SURPRISED LACKEY

What the fu--

FRIGHTENED LACKEY

Jesus!

Dustin freezes in his tracks. He slowly raises his hands in surrender.

Isaac turns to the Startled Officer and gives him a soul-piercing glare.

The Startled Officer is in just as much shock as Dustin's lackeys.

Dustin is quite dumbfounded himself.

DUSTIN
That was hardly necessary. He
wasn't going to--

Isaac raises his shotgun to him.

ISAAC
Not another word. I warned you.

Isaac scoots over to Startled Officer.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
(softly)
Why don't you get rid of that body
and wait outside, huh?

Startled Officer is still scared shitless. He nods and obeys.

Isaac watches him drag the body all the way past him. He ignores him once he's behind him and struggling with the door.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, Dustin. He didn't need
to die.

The sound of the door closing is heard as Startled Officer makes his way outside.

Dustin looks to the blood spatter on his wall.

DUSTIN
Do the fine gentlemen of East
Harbor PD offer a free cleanup
service just for taxpayers, or...?

Isaac lets a smile creep through. He shakes his head.

ISAAC
Best not to hold out hope for
government efficiency.

Dustin can't help but smile too, but it's quickly wiped away.

DUSTIN
What do you want?

Isaac sighs.

The officers still have their weapons trained on the lackeys on the couch.

Isaac turns his attention to the officers. He motions to the door.

ISAAC
I'd like a word with him. Alone.
Why don't you bring them outside?

The officers nod, grab the two lackeys, and shove them out the door.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
I understand Ed met with you
recently, somewhat off the record?

DUSTIN
Officially, I'm sure.

ISAAC
What exactly was discussed?

Dustin smirks.

DUSTIN
Who needs to know?

ISAAC
I'm here as a friend, not as a cop.

Dustin looks out the window, at the officers, and his men.

DUSTIN
He's looking for his wife, but I'm
sure you knew that already.

ISAAC
He's not supposed to be looking
into this, technically.

DUSTIN
And you're telling me you wouldn't
in his position?

Isaac thinks on that one a beat.

ISAAC
I'm the one who told him to see
you.

DUSTIN
Should've known. May I sit?

Isaac looks to the couch.

ISAAC

Do you really need to ask that in your own home?

DUSTIN

You brandishing that shotgun sure changes things.

Isaac huffs and smirks.

Dustin moves to the couch. Isaac grabs a seat on a wide coffee table that sits before it.

Isaac places the shotgun across his lap.

Dustin eyes the shotgun, then makes eye contact.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)

So, what makes you think I'll tell you anything after Johnny Law just killed a good friend of mine?

ISAAC

He wasn't your friend.

Dustin can't help but smirk.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

What else did you talk about?

Dustin leans back on the couch.

DUSTIN

You're a smart guy. I think you can figure that out.

ISAAC

Stop playing games. Just tell me.

Dustin chuckles, shakes his head.

DUSTIN

He asked me if I knew who did it.

ISAAC

And do you?

Dustin smirks like an asshole.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

What do you know? Clearly it's something I don't.

DUSTIN
Why does everyone think I know
everything?

ISAAC
Takes scum to know scum.

Dustin leans forward, a bit more serious now.

DUSTIN
You really think I have something
to do with this?

ISAAC
I'm not ruling anything out at this
point.

DUSTIN
You're likely already too late. And
looking in all the wrong places.

ISAAC
Then, why don't you point me in the
right direction?

Dustin composes himself.

DUSTIN
If you knew about any of the crime
that goes on around here, you would
know the first person--

Dustin leans back on the couch. He folds his arms.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)
--the only person who would know.

Isaac's eyes are intent on learning the truth.

ISAAC
And just who might that be?

Dustin leans forward. Eyes trained on Isaac.

He smirks his patented smirk. What does he know?

INT. PEARCE RESIDENCE - LATER.

Pearce sits alone in his kitchen, sipping on some coffee.

Suddenly, BAM! BAM! BAM! A knock on the door is heard.

Pearce's head jolts towards the door.

EXT. PEARCE RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS.

Captain stands outside the door, waiting impatiently.

OFFICERS flanking him on either side.

Captain has his hands on his hips, looking down.

He raises his fist to pound on the door again.

INT. PEARCE RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS.

Pearce lifts himself from his seat and slowly scoots down the hallway.

BANG! BANG! BANG! Captain's knocks become louder and more ferocious.

Pearce attempts to look through the hole, but it's no use.

He swings the door open.

Captain looks up to him, feigning a pleasantness.

Pearce only looks to him, pays no mind to the OFFICERS.

BARRY

Pearce.

Pearce nods.

PEARCE

Captain.

Captain hesitates a moment.

BARRY

Sadly I didn't come here for
pleasantries. Or to reinstate your
badge.

Pearce's eyes dart to the other Officers.

PEARCE

Well then, what did you come here
for?

Barry takes a deep breath.

BARRY

I gotta take you in.

Pearce takes a step back.

BARRY (CONT'D)
For questioning.

Pearce's eyes are searching for answers.

PEARCE
Wha-- I-- I don't understand.

Barry sighs.

BARRY
We're pursuing all possible
avenues.

Pearce still gawking...

BARRY (CONT'D)
I never wanted it to come to this,
but...

Barry steps aside to reveal...

BARRY (CONT'D)
We have to look into everyone.

The Crotchety Old Man behind him.

BARRY (CONT'D)
And he has a lot to say about you.

Pearce's mouth is agape.

The Officers take a step forward and reach for Pearce.

Pearce quickly slams the door on them, crushing one Officer's
hand in between.

The Officer yelps in pain.

INT. PEARCE RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS.

Pearce bolts down the hallway, past his kitchen, and through
the back door.

EXT. PEARCE RESIDENCE - BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS.

Pearce sprints through his backyard and swiftly hops the
fence through other backyards and alleyways.

He seamlessly vaults over other fences.

Pearce does not break stride as he comes upon a neighborhood road.

A NEIGHBOR sits alone in his car, about to stick his key in the ignition.

Pearce taps on the driver's side window with his handgun.

The Neighbor turns his head to Pearce, frightened.

Pearce motions for him to roll his window down.

He hesitates, but finally abides.

PEARCE

East Harbor P.D. Get the fuck out
of the fucking car!

Pearce is frantic, trembling.

So is the Neighbor.

NEIGHBOR

I will not. I don't see no badge--

Pearce, without hesitation, slams his head on the steering wheel.

PEARCE

Out of the car. Now!

He aims the pistol at his head.

The neighbor is frozen in his seat.

Pearce opens the door from the inside and slides him out of his seat and onto the ground.

He then climbs in the car, turns the key, and screeches off.

The Neighbor lifts himself off the ground, throws his arms in the air, and scoffs in disgust.

INT. DUSTIN'S HOUSE - LATER.

Dustin lounges alone on his couch watching TV.

He scours the table for a cigarette to light and enjoy.

Dustin then kicks back, puts his feet up on the table, and places his hands behind his head.

EXT. DUSTIN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS.

A LARGE, BROODING MAN approaches his house, brandishing a shotgun.

His approach is slow, methodical, calculated.

We do not see his face, only the back of his head.

INT. DUSTIN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS.

Dustin lights up and blows out a puff of smoke.

Suddenly, the door bursts open.

Dustin flinches and practically kicks up his entire body.

The large, brooding man stands in the doorway, but we still do not see him.

We are only focused on Dustin's petrified face as he slowly approaches.

He knows exactly who it is.

DUSTIN

I gave him nothing. I swear to you,
I--

THE CONDUIT

It's always been difficult for you
to separate the truth from lies.

The Conduit continues approaching him, slowly, softly.

His voice is deep, guttural, booming.

THE CONDUIT (CONT'D)

I suppose I could teach you the
difference--

The Conduit is now standing over him.

THE CONDUIT (CONT'D)

But none of that matters where
you're going...

Dustin's horrified face as The Conduit racks in a load of his shotgun.

INT. NEIGHBOR'S CAR - LATER.

Pearce continues to drive, but less frantic now.

EXT. DUSTIN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS.

Pearce pulls up close to Dustin's house, but far enough away so as to not raise any suspicion.

He pulls the keys from the ignition and raises himself from the vehicle.

Pearce is apprehensive as he approaches the damaged front door.

He lifts his pistol and boots the door softly open.

INT. DUSTIN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS.

Pearce tiptoes inside and scans the room.

He immediately finds Dustin's limp body with his blood and brains scattered about the floor, couch and walls.

Pearce, flabbergasted, practically pounces on his body.

He searches his body for any sort of clues, finding nothing of interest.

Pearce's eyes dart about the room.

He raises himself from a crouch and carefully approaches Dustin's phone.

INT. DETECTIVE'S OFFICES - LATER.

Isaac sifting through paperwork, occasionally writing things down.

Suddenly, his phone rings.

He lifts the phone from the receiver to his head.

ISAAC
McPherson.

INT. DUSTIN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Pearce, still in shock, on the phone.

PEARCE
Isaac, Dustin's dead.

INT. DETECTIVE'S OFFICES - CONTINUOUS

ISAAC
What?

PEARCE (V.O.)
Yeah, I'm at his place. I just
found his body.

ISAAC
Fucking Christ. What happened?

INT. DUSTIN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Pearce looks over to his body, as if it will lead him to an
explanation.

PEARCE
That's what I aim to find out.

ISAAC (V.O.)
What were you doing at his place,
anyway? Is he a suspect?

PEARCE
You know how I feel about suspects.

INT. DETECTIVE'S OFFICES - CONTINUOUS

Isaac raises his eyes to the ceiling.

ISAAC
Captain agrees with you on that.
Yourself among them.

PEARCE (V.O.)
I know, he paid me a visit.

ISAAC
And?

INT. DUSTIN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

PEARCE
Our conversation wouldn't be over
the phone, it'd be between bars had
I gone with him.

INT. DETECTIVE'S OFFICES - CONTINUOUS

Isaac leans over his desk, closer to the receiver.

Brief pause.

ISAAC

You're in a world of shit. You know that, don't you?

Isaac looks around to make sure no one is listening in.

PEARCE (V.O.)

Can we speak beyond the obvious here?

Isaac huffs.

ISAAC

You know that there's some rumors going around about you. In the office.

(softer now)

Rachel married you to keep you close. Quentin would have a cop in his pocket. Better for business.

INT. DUSTIN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Pearce goes pale.

ISAAC (V.O.)

You know, keep the heat off his operation.

Pearce is doubting himself. Did Rachel marry him for that purpose?

PEARCE

Are you really gonna believe what people are saying about me now??

ISAAC (V.O.)

Of course I trust you, but I don't know what to believe anymore.

PEARCE

I haven't done a thing for him. You know that.

INT. DETECTIVE'S OFFICES - CONTINUOUS

Isaac wants to believe him. Maybe he does?

ISAAC

What do you think it could be,
then?

INT. DUSTIN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Pearce mulls this over a bit.

PEARCE

I don't know. Dustin may have
grabbed her to get to Quentin.

ISAAC (V.O.)

I know him. He wouldn't do that.

PEARCE

I'm not ruling that out just yet.
I'm starting to think I may not be
able to trust anyone at this point.

ISAAC (V.O.)

But, I thought they were working
together.

PEARCE

Could've gone sour.

ISAAC (V.O.)

I don't know. None of this makes
any sense.

PEARCE

It does to me.

INT. DETECTIVE'S OFFICES - CONTINUOUS

ISAAC

You have no proof that any of this
happened!

Isaac looks around to make sure no one is watching or
listening in.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

(softer now)

The only thing we can prove is that
Quentin is involved in moving these
drugs.

INT. DUSTIN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Pearce is listening intently, but growing annoyed.

ISAAC (V.O.)

That house we raided, his property.
He owns the land for that house and
many other throughout the city. But
there's no way to connect him to--

PEARCE

I'm bringing him in.

INT. DETECTIVE'S OFFICES - CONTINUOUS

ISAAC

What?? Are you actually fucking cr-
-?

Isaac spies a SUSPICIOUS DETECTIVE eyeing him as he glides
by.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

(softer now)

With no evidence? No badge??

PEARCE (V.O.)

Citizens arrest.

ISAAC

You've gone outside your mind.

PEARCE (V.O.)

I know he did it, Isaac.

Isaac thinks on that a beat.

ISAAC

Alright. Well, before you do
anything stupid, Jason said he
needs to talk to you.

INT. DUSTIN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

ISAAC (V.O.)

Says it's important.

Pearce gives this some thought a moment.

He places the phone closer to his ear, cups the speaker to
his mouth, increasingly interested.

PEARCE
Do you know what about?

ISAAC (V.O.)
Didn't say, but it seemed urgent.

Pearce is silent a moment.

PEARCE
I gotta go.

ISAAC (V.O.)
I know. Hey, stay safe out there.

PEARCE
Always.

Pearce hangs up the phone.

He lets out a deep breath.

EXT. DUSTIN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS.

Pearce swings open the Neighbor's car door and throws himself in.

He fires up the engine and peels off.

The Conduit's car is back at a safe distance...

EXT. PHONE BOOTH - LATER.

Pearce is on the phone with Jason.

JASON (O.S.)
Jason Kincade speaking.

PEARCE
I heard you had something for me.

JASON (O.S.)
Did I? Or maybe I just wanted to talk.

PEARCE
Seriously, what is it? Time isn't exactly on my side right now.

Jason pauses.

JASON (O.S.)
I know where to find Rachel.

Pearce is in a trance.

PEARCE
How do you know that?

Brief pause on Jason's end.

JASON (O.S.)
She's safe. That should be your
only concern.

PEARCE
Where is she?

Jason's soft breath as he chuckles a bit.

JASON (O.S.)
Maybe I'm the better detective
afterall.

PEARCE
Fuck you.

Jason laughs.

JASON (O.S.)
Where are you now? I'll meet you.
We'll go together.

PEARCE
I'm a few blocks from the docks.

JASON (O.S.)
You're actually pretty close then.

Short beat as Pearce mulls this over.

PEARCE
We can't call for backup. They're
after me.

JASON (O.S.)
I know. I'll come alone.

PEARCE
Make it quick.

Pearce gently sets the phone on the receiver.

He takes it all in.

Pearce looks calm on the outside, but internally he's
shaking.

INT. LARGE OPEN ROOM - SEWER TUNNELS - DARK.

We return to Pearce, his partner, the Shadowy Figures, and the Woman Hostage who is RACHEL PEARCE.

PEARCE
Hiding behind her won't deter us.
Without her, you hold no bargaining
chip.

SHADOWY FIGURE
What is there to bargain for?

Beat.

PEARCE
Just let her go!

BANG! The shot came from Pearce and his partner's side of the room. The flash illuminates his partner's face for a brief moment.

It is Jason Kincade!

Pearce hesitates a brief moment, but comes to.

He then raises his pistol.

BANG! BANG! With two swift shots of his pistol, he takes out the two men flanking Rachel.

Rachel slumps in her chair.

The two men topple to the floor.

One man is whimpering. He's not quite dead yet.

BANG! Pearce sees to that right away.

Pearce slowly approaches Rachel who sits lifeless still bound to the chair.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
What have you done?

Jason shuffles to his side.

JASON
Isn't this what you wanted?

Pearce shakes his head.

PEARCE
You're a fool if you believe I
wanted her dead. I loved her!

JASON
I thought there was only one you
loved.

Pearce still admires her face a beat.

Then finally looks up to him.

PEARCE
Her's was a different sort of love.
You have no idea what she did for
me.

JASON
I know exactly what she did for
you, but this was the only way we
could be together!

Pearce stares through his soul.

PEARCE
Tell me this wasn't your doing.

Jason looks away.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
Tell me it isn't true.

Jason finally faces him.

JASON
I can't tell you that.

EXT. PEARCE RESIDENCE - FLASHBACK

Jason guides Rachel out of her house towards his car.

JASON (V.O.)
I asked her to lunch. Said we could
talk it over.

INT. OLD LADY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The Old Lady looks out her window at the walkway leading from
Pearce's house to the street. She senses movement.

Old Lady POV:

Jason, with his hand on her shoulder, opens the shotgun door to his car and helps her inside.

JASON (V.O.)
See if we could work it out.

End Old Lady POV.

The Old Lady adjusts her glasses and closes the shade.

INT. JASON'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

A MASKED MAN raises himself in the backseat and swiftly shoves a BLACK BAG over Rachel's head.

She desperately tries to pull it off, to no avail.

JASON (V.O.)
It was the only way, Ed. She would tell everyone.

Jason zip ties the bag around her neck to secure it in place.

She is still frantic in her attempts. It's no use.

JASON (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I decided to do something about it.

The Masked Man bashes the back of her head with his pistol.

Rachel slumps in her seat motionless.

Jason nods to the Masked Man who transfers her to the trunk.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LARGE OPEN SEWAGE ROOM - PRESENT.

Pearce beside himself.

PEARCE
How could you be so reckless?!

JASON
I did what I had to do! I thought this was what you wanted!

PEARCE
You have no idea what I want!

Jason is on the verge of tears.

JASON
No, I don't. Please enlighten me,
what do you want?!

Pearce can't stand the sight of Jason right now.

Beat.

JASON (CONT'D)
People like us, Ed--

Pearce eyes him over his shoulder, but keeps his back to him.

JASON (CONT'D)
You know they would never let us be
together.

Jason tries to embrace him from behind, Pearce shrugs him
off.

PEARCE
Do you realize what kind of shit
you've left us in?

JASON
Do you realize I did this for us?
You have to understand, my
intention was never to--

PEARCE
It doesn't matter what your
intention was!! We'll never stop
running from this.

JASON
So we'll run!

Pearce furiously shakes his head. He paces with uncertainty.

JASON (CONT'D)
Don't be so cynical. We've made it
through far worse than this.

Pearce grabs Jason by the collar.

PEARCE
Nothing we've endured can possibly
be worse than this.

Pearce shoves him aside as he stomps away.

JASON
How can you be so sure we won't
escape this?

Pearce still with his back turned.

PEARCE
We've reached the point of no
return. You've left us with no
choice but to escape.

Jason ponders that a moment.

JASON
I don't suppose you have a genius
plan.

Pearce turns to him.

PEARCE
Clearly you're the mastermind. I'll
leave that to you.

JASON
Look, I know you're upset--

PEARCE
Upset?!

Pearce stomps over to Jason's face. Domineering.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
You couldn't possibly know how I
feel right now.

Short beat.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
You just took my best friend from
me.

JASON
And what does that make me?

Pearce is still staring daggers into his heart.

Beat.

JASON (CONT'D)
Give me a chance to make it right.

Pearce clutches his throat, but not enough to choke and kill
him.

PEARCE
There is nothing in this world that
will undo what you've just done.

Pearce somehow moves in closer than he already was.

PEARCE (CONT'D)
It will never be right again.

JASON
You said it yourself. The point of
no return. We have to continue on.

Finally, he reluctantly, but sharply loosens his grip.

PEARCE
Fine. Let's go.

Jason attempts to regain his breath.

JASON
(surprised)
Where?

PEARCE
Anywhere. As long as it's away from
here.

Pearce slowly sets out to make their escape, then storms out.

Jason lets the moment sink in before he follows suit.

EXT. PIER - MORNING.

It's bitter cold, dreary, overcast. The wind blows softly,
but it's an unforgiving chill.

Pearce and Jason glide on down the boardwalk towards Jason's
sailboat.

Jason begins preparing the boat for cast-off.

Pearce unholsters his pistol and raises it behind Jason's
head.

It takes a beat before Jason finally notices.

JASON
Wha-- what are you doing?

PEARCE
I told you, no matter what you do,
I'll never be able to forgive you.

Jason shakes his head, he's on the verge of tears.

JASON
Please-- please Ed. I just-- I--

Jason breaks down.

JASON (CONT'D)
I love--

BANG! Pearce lets loose a round through his skull.

Jason topples over the edge of the pier and into the sea.

Pearce, satisfied enough, holsters his weapon.

He wipes away a tear. Sniffles. Turns to strut on back down the boardwalk when--

Quentin, The Conduit, is charging down the boardwalk towards him. He is wearing a flawless tailored suit.

He fishes out a six shooter from his breast pocket and takes aim--

Pearce desperately swipes for his holster, he doesn't pull it up.

Quentin POPS off around that pounds Pearce in his left shoulder.

Pearce staggers back and fumbles for his pistol.

Quentin lets off TWO MORE rounds into Pearce's chest.

Pearce falls to his knees. He swoops his pistol from his holster and extends his arm to take aim--

Quentin kicks it from his hand and it falls into the water.

He towers over Pearce, his pistol at his side, for now.

PEARCE
(weakly)
Quentin, I--

Pearce checks his wounds. They're probably fatal.

QUENTIN
How could you let this happen to her?

PEARCE
(shaking his head)
I'm sorry, I didn't know--

QUENTIN

Is it worse that you didn't know or
that you failed to protect her?

PEARCE

I loved her. I truly did. I--

Brief pause.

PEARCE (CONT'D)

(fighting back tears)

I-- I never meant for any of this
to happen.

QUENTIN

She never loved you.

Quentin raises his pistol. It's aimed right at his forehead.

Pearce props himself to his knees.

PEARCE

No! Please! Quentin. You don't have
to-- I--

BANG! The bullet rips through Pearce's brain.

His head flies back and he slumps to the ground.

Quentin slowly lowers the pistol.

He meticulously slides the gun into his breast pocket.

Quentin is about to turn to leave before...

CRACK! A shot is heard from a distance.

The bullet zips through Quentin's neck.

Quentin barely has time to clutch at his neck and gurgle
before he trips and falls into the water.

EXT. HILL OVERLOOKING PIER - CONTINUOUS.

Isaac, bearing a scoped, high caliber rifle smoking at the
barrel, raises his eye from the scope.

Isaac slowly lifts himself from the ground, swings the rifle
over his shoulder and struts towards his car.

He swings the door open, slides his rifle into the passenger
seat, turns the key in the ignition, shifts to drive, and
glides away.

EXT. PIER - CONTINUOUS.

Our focus is on the boardwalk with Pearce's dead body and the endless horizon of the Ocean as we...

FADE TO BLACK.