PAST LIFE

EXT. OLD LEWIS RESIDENCE - DAY.

A JUNKIE WOMAN (40’s) sits alone in a car, shuts off the engine and sits in silence for a moment. Our focus is not on her identity, but rather, what is she after?

She is a rough woman, and a junkie. That much is clear.

The Junkie Woman pushes the car door open, steps out, and slams the door shut.

She slowly creeps up toward the house.

The Junkie Woman is holding a large, sharp kitchen knife. She briskly stomps up the yard towards the front door.

INT. OLD LEWIS RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS.

The Woman carefully enters home brandishing a knife.

She is tiptoeing upstairs. After gliding through the hallway, she carefully peeks through crack of door.

EXT. GIRLS’ ROOM - LEWIS RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS.

Three little girls are playing with dolls in the kids’ bedroom through the crack in the doorway.

The three daughters are all laughing, giggling, chatting indistinctly.

INT. LEWIS RESIDENCE - HALLWAYS - CONTINUOUS.

She stomps through the hallway like a woman on a mission. She busts down the master bedroom door.

INT. LEWIS RESIDENCE - MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS.

A MAN (30’s) flinches and nearly jumps out of his own skin. This man is tall, athletically built, and has dark hair. His face is strong and stern.

The Woman lunges at him with the knife, stabbing him in chest incessantly.

The Man lets out surprised yell, groaning in pain. He is gargling blood after multiple stabs.

The Woman slowly steps away, leaving the knife in his chest.
She breezes through the room and opens door to a baby room.

INT. BABY ROOM - LEWIS RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS.

We see her do this from the perspective of the crib.

The Junkie Woman gently moves to pick up A BABY BOY from the crib.

She carefully places the baby into a car seat.

INT. MAIN FLOOR - CONTINUOUS.

The Woman is now splashing around gasoline on the floor and walls of the house.

EXT. LEWIS RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS.

She scurries away from the home with a car seat in one hand, a flipped lighter in the other.

She tosses it over her head, behind her back.

The flame dances up to the house and ignites.

She meticulously places car seat in the back.

She then leaves the house ablaze in her wake.

SLAM TO DARKNESS.

OPENING TITLE: PAST LIFE

OPEN ON:

INT. HOSPITAL INFANT RECOVERY ROOM - DAY.

A BABY BOY is in a crib dressed in blue looking up to a DOCTOR.

The Doctor looks at the baby with pity.

The Doctor then approaches A MARRIED COUPLE.

    DOCTOR
    He’s stable, but we’re gonna keep him for at least a few more days.

The Married Couple looks at each other as their hearts sink.

    DOCTOR (CONT.)
    In the mean time, you can fill out the necessary paperwork. No time like the present.
BOTH nod in agreement.

    DOCTOR (CONT.)
    It’s really great what you guys are doing.

The Married couple looks longingly back at the baby.

    DOCTOR (CONT.)
    But, he doesn’t have to know. You don’t have to tell him.

The Married Couple looks back at each other, mulling it over.

    DOCTOR (CONT.)
    It’s entirely up to you. Obviously, you don’t have to let me tell you how to be his parents.

We slowly approach the baby in his recovery crib...

TRANSITION TO:

EXT. MARK AND TRACY’S HOUSE - DAY.

JEREMY LEWIS (CALDWELL) (20) is sitting at a picnic table, the wind slightly blowing his hair. Jeremy is a bit of a loner and has a silent curiosity and admiration of his surroundings. He’s of medium build, and has thick brown hair.

He looks into the distance, taking in the beauty of the day.

TRACY CALDWELL (40s), a thin, soft-faced middle aged woman is standing at the back patio door.

    TRACY
    Jeremy, honey, time to come in and eat!

Jeremy snaps his head back to her.

    JEREMY
    Okay.

Jeremy hops inside.

INT. MARK AND TRACY’S HOUSE - KITCHEN/DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jeremy mopes to the dinner table and slides into a seat without a word or even a glance.
MARK CALDWELL (late 40s) a dark-haired, handsome, younger-looking man for being almost fifty, cooks dinner. He fancies himself a tough guy, but is quirky and lame at heart.

MARK
Hey there, Jeremy!

JEREMY
Hey, dad.

MARK
What’s goin’ on?

JEREMY
Nothing.

Mark looks to Tracy and shrugs. She does the same.

MARK
So, uh-- anything happening at school?

Mark shoots a glance at Tracy. Hers suggests that he lay off it.

Mark shakes his head.

JEREMY
School’s school, you know?

MARK
Right, sure.

Mark’s face scrunches. Eek.

Tracy winks at Mark.

ARTICLE reads: "20th Anniversary of Cold-Blooded Familial Slayings"

JEREMY
Did you guys see this in the paper? What’s this all about?

Tracy approaches the table and looks down at the article with him.

Tracy snatches it away from Jeremy as quickly as she can.

TRACY
Oh, it’s a whole lot of nothin’!
JEREMY
Sure doesn’t look that way.

MARK
The news is awfully bleak, you don’t need that kind of negativity in your life.

TRACY
Yeah it-- it’s so...depressing.

MARK
I don’t even know why we even get the paper anymore.

TRACY
Yeah. Seems silly, doesn’t it, Mark?

Tracy tosses the paper in the trash.

JEREMY
What’s gotten into you guys? It’s just a story!

TRACY
And that’s all it is!

MARK
(softly to Tracy)
I still can’t believe it’s been 20 years, though. Can you believe that?

Tracy gives Mark a hard nudge of her elbow.

TRACY
(under her breath)
Would you shut it?

JEREMY
Yeah, that’s what it said.

Tracy shoots a sharp glance to Mark. Drop it.

Mark looks pleading to Tracy to put an end to all this. Yikes.

JEREMY
Guys, can you please tell me what that was all about? I’m old enough, I think I’ll manage.
MARK
That was never in question, Jeremy. I know you can handle it, but why do we need to talk about such--somber topics?

TRACY
Let’s-- steer away from stress if we can avoid it, huh?

Mark goes back to cooking. Tracy turns her back to Jeremy as well.

JEREMY
Okay. Maniacs.

An uncomfortable air fills the room.

EXT. DOWNTOWN AREA - NIGHT.

Jeremy drives down the street to the movies.

He parks across the street from cinema.

EXT. CINEMA - NIGHT.

Jeremy purchases a ticket from a smiling BOX OFFICE EMPLOYEE. She’s especially cute.

BOX OFFICE EMPLOYEE
Enjoy your show.

Jeremy nods to her as he grabs his stub.

JEREMY
Thanks, you too.

The Box office employee tries to stop herself from smiling. She cannot.

Jeremy strides away. She watches him go.

JEREMY
(whispering to himself)
What the fuck? Really, Jeremy?

INT. CINEMA - THEATER - NIGHT.

He takes a seat separate from crowd, quiet and reserved.

The Film begins after he misses an absurd amount of previews.

He makes himself comfortable.
EXT. CINEMA - NIGHT.
Jeremy now glides out of the theater after the movie ends.
He opens car door and enters.
He is sitting in contemplation in his car.
After a brief moment, he finally turns the key in ignition, and pulls away.

EXT. PARTY HOUSE - NIGHT.
Jeremy slows as he passes by a college party in his car, he seems noticeably interested.
He makes the quick decision to pass it by. Further on down the road, he eyes a library as he drives past.
He abruptly stops in the middle of the road in deep thought.

EXT. MARK AND TRACY’S HOUSE - NIGHT.
Jeremy carefully glides in the front door of his parents’ house.
He tosses his keys on the table and bounds up the stairs to his bedroom.
He lays on his bed, it’s noticeable that his thoughts are conflicting.
He apathetically checks his phone.
PHONE FACE: 9:38 PM. No text messages.
He lets out a long nose breath.
He then directs his attention to an arbitrary spot in his room as if to contemplate his life.
He is only thinking about the current crossroad of his night. What to do?
A KNOCK on the door is heard.
The door swings open after a moment. Tracy stands in the threshold.

TRACY
Back already, huh?
JEREMY
Yeah, just went to a movie.

TRACY
Oh, how was it?

JEREMY
It was okay.

TRACY
Alright, I thought you were going out.

JEREMY
I was, not sure about it now.

TRACY
Ok, hun. Just checkin in on ya!

JEREMY
Thanks, mom. I’m fine.

TRACY
Good night, sweetie.

JEREMY
Night.

Jeremy lets out another sigh.

INT. OLD LEWIS RESIDENCE - DREAM SEQUENCE

Jeremy creeps down a long, dark hallway.

A DOOR is closed at the end of it, with light inside of it, outlining the door.

Jeremy reaches the door, gently pushes down the door handle, and tiptoes inside.

Giggling and young female laughter can be heard.

Jeremy follows the laughter. He crouches down next to THREE YOUNG GIRLS (4,7&9). They do not address him.

The door suddenly SLAMS behind them. Jeremy’s head snaps back to the door. The GIRLS are not fazed whatsoever.

Jeremy looks back to the girls. The room is suddenly, but slowly dematerializing. Like a Polaroid photo turning to ash. One of the girls slowly turns to him.
GIRL
Don’t let us burn, Jeremy.

Jeremy’s face turns to horror. The room is now ablaze.

SNAP CUT TO:

INT. JEREMY’S ROOM – EARLY MORNING.

Jeremy SNAPS awake. He is horrified. Panting. Nearly hyperventilating. Holding back tears as he gathers his breath.

INT. KITCHEN – LATER.

Jeremy fishes out the NEWSPAPER from the trash. He studies it, in wonder.

INT. LIBRARY COMPUTER ROOM – DAY.

Jeremy sits alone at a computer, researching old newspaper articles about the crime.

ARTICLE FACE: "VEXING DETAILS OF MULTIPLE HOMICIDE LEAVE TOWN, POLICE IN SHOCK."

Jeremy’s blank stare at the computer screen.

Furious mouse clicking.

OTHER ARTICLE FACE: "MOTHER OF SLAIN HUSBAND AND CHILDREN CHARGED IN BRUTAL MURDERS AND ARSON."

JEREMY
(whispering to self)
No fucking way.

THIRD ARTICLE FACE: "MURDERING MOTHER OF FOUR MOVED TO PSYCH WARD AFTER PERPLEXING VERDICT."

Jeremy sighs through his nose.

He logs off, packs up his things, and ventures on out of the library.

EXT. INSANE ASYLUM – PARKING LOT – DAY.

Jeremy poses at a distance from the building.

Should I stay or should I go?

A BALD HEADED MAN wearing white scrubs pushing a cart outside the building eyes Jeremy from afar, suspicious-like.
After much contemplation, Jeremy shuffles away back toward his car for latter of the two.

INT. MARK AND TRACY’S HOUSE – LIVING ROOM – DAY.

Tracy is lounging on the couch, half watching TV, half distracted by something on her mind.

Jeremy abruptly paces through the room and makes a bee-line for the spot on the couch next to her.

Jeremy looks over at her, smiles, looks to the TV and puts it on mute.

JEREMY
Mom, was I adopted?

Tracy takes longer to respond than Jeremy would like.

TRACY
What brought this on?

JEREMY
That article. It’s got me wondering.

TRACY
We told you already, it’s nothing.

JEREMY
It all makes sense. I’ve put it together.

Beat.

JEREMY (CONT.)
I don’t look anything like--

TRACY
People don’t look like their parents all the time.

JEREMY
It’s uncanny. Those involved.

TRACY
If you want to waste your time chasing family trees, go right ahead. But it won’t change the fact that we are your parents.
JEREMY
See, but that’s exactly what adoptive parents would say!

TRACY
We raised you!

JEREMY
I have to find out--

TRACY
I don’t want you looking into this and that’s final.

JEREMY
You can’t--

TRACY
I can! You’ll never bring this up again. You understand me?

Beat.

JEREMY
Yeah, understood.

TRACY
Ok, good.

Tracy nabs the remote from him and unmutes the TV.

Jeremy looks over at her suspiciously. He swings himself off the couch and storms away.

Tracy looks back at him, then back to the TV. She sighs.

EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT.

Jeremy rolls on down the road with purpose.

EXT. PARTY HOUSE - NIGHT.

Jeremy parks his car across the street.

He eyes the party, with even more interest this time.

He slowly turns the keys to shut off the engine, but he does not swing the door open right away.

Jeremy carefully makes his way across the street to join the party.

Frat rats and other party animals are causing havoc outside with red solo cups, beer bongs, and other such nonsense.
A FRAT STAR stops his approach into the house.

    FRAT STAR
    Whoa, man. You can’t just go in there.

Jeremy stops dead in his tracks.

    JEREMY
    Can I buy a cup?

Frat star looks down at his wad of cash and cups.

    FRAT STAR
    Now you’re speaking my language.

Frat Star gives him a red solo cup.

Jeremy exchanges currency with the frat star.

He pumps the keg and fills his cup.

    JEREMY
    Thank you kindly.

Jeremy nods to him and takes a sip.

    FRAT STAR
    (smiling)
    My man.

Frat star gives him a green light inside with a nod of his head.

INT. PARTY HOUSE - NIGHT.

Jeremy makes his way through the crowd of people to find his best friend and partner in crime, JARED JESSUP (20). Jared is a short, messy black haired, stocky man. Anything short of party animal and crude would be a falsehood to describe Jared Jessup.

    JARED
    I’m not believing what I’m seeing right now.

Jeremy can’t help but smile.

They give each other a big bear hug.

    JARED (CONT.)
    I see you have some catching up to do!
JEREMY
I think that can be arranged.

JARED
This is unreal. I’m still processing.

Jared and Jeremy clink their cups together for a cheers.

JARED (CONT.)
It’s actually you. You crawled out of your hole!

JEREMY
It’s actually me. In the flesh.

JARED
Well, enough fuckin’ around. Let’s get you wasted off your ass!

SNAP TO:

EXT. PARTY HOUSE - MORNING.

Jared is leaned up against a log.
Jeremy is sprawled out on the ground next to him.
They are gathered around an extinguished fire.
Jared nudges Jeremy awake.
Jeremy groans as if these are his last days.

JARED
Hey, wake up morning glory-hole.

JEREMY
Jesus H. Christ. What in the living fuck?

JARED
I’m not sure, you tell me.

Jeremy leans up, rubs his head and eyes. As if that will make his hangover any better.

JARED
What made you to come out of your days as a hermit to a real college party with real human females?
JEREMY
I need your help with something.
If he wasn’t interested before, he is now.

JARED
What is it?

JEREMY
You know the murders that happened twenty years back? The one with the mom and the kids and the dad or whatever?

JARED
You mean, the one thing that our shithole town is actually known for?

JEREMY
Right, yeah. That’s the one.

JARED
What about it?

JEREMY
I think my biological family was involved.

JARED
Really?

Jared leans up and brushes himself off.

JARED (CONT.)
Why do you think that?

JEREMY
I put two and two together. It happened twenty years ago and I look nothing like Mark and Tracy.

JARED
You do realize that any twenty year old male could just say the same thing, right?

JEREMY
Right, I get that. But, I just have this feeling. I don’t know how to explain it.
JARED
Jeremy, hard evidence goes a lot farther than feelings.

JEREMY
That’s exactly what I aim to find. (beat)
Do you trust me on this?

JARED
Brother, you know I’d go to war with you. But you have to understand, this is the type of shit that you need to be really careful about.

JEREMY
What do you mean?

JARED
There could be all kinds of fucked up shit hidden beneath the surface here.

JEREMY
I know, it’s seven different levels of fucked up.

JARED
I just don’t want to see you deliberately putting yourself in danger.

Jeremy mulls this over a moment.

JARED (CONT.)
Well, let me just say that I warned you beforehand. If shit hits the fan.

JEREMY
Thanks for your support. I really appreciate the vote of confidence, bud.

JARED
Anytime.

Jared offers his fist for a fist bump. Jeremy stares at it. He does not reciprocate. Jared clamps his other hand over his fist.
JARED (CONT.)
Alright! Yeah. Fuck you, too.

Beat.

Jeremy leans away from Jared to puke his guts out.

JARED (CONT.)
Ata boy! Get it all out and rally, you slimy dog, you.

Jeremy spits.

INT. MARK AND TRACY’S HOUSE – AFTERNOON.

Jeremy slugs his way inside the house.

He flings his keys in the basket on the long table in the hallway.

Mark leans his head in the hallway from the kitchen.

MARK (O.S.)
Jeremy, is that you?

JEREMY
Yeah.

MARK (O.S.)
Oh, okay. How was your night?

JEREMY
Ugh.

He mopes up the stairs with a long drawn out groan.

MARK (O.S.)
Ah, I see. One of those nights.

TRACY (O.S.)
Poor guy. Must have been quite the bender, huh?

MARK (O.S.)
You bet your ass.

INT. MARK AND TRACY’S HOUSE – JEREMY’S BEDROOM – DAY.

Jeremy plops on his bed with his one hand on his forehead, the other at his side.

He lets out a tired, hungover sigh. And groans.

He looks out his window.
Jeremy

Agh, fuck it.

Jeremy labors his way out of bed.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY.

Jeremy has multiple newspaper clippings out on the table in front of him.

He looks like a whack-job conspiracy theorist.

ARTICLE READS: "FIRST OFFICERS RESPONDING TO THE SCENE WERE DETECTIVE MIKE HERMAN AND DETECTIVE HERB SHEPARD. OFFICER JEFF CONLEY CALLED IN THE ACCIDENT AT EVERGREEN POND. HE WITNESSED THE CAR CRASHING INTO THE SHALLOW WATER AND PROMPTLY RESCUED THE INFANT BOY, JEREMY LEWIS."

Jeremy’s eyes could not be bigger.

He pockets this cut-out article and swiftly scoots out of his seat.

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - DAY

Jeremy is sitting in class, barely paying attention to the lecture, when suddenly...

He can’t take his mind off of the cold case.

INT. OLD LEWIS RESIDENCE - DAYDREAM

THE THREE YOUNG GIRLS stand at the center of rubble and ash. A fire dances all around them. But they only stare directly forward.

We push in closer to them. They stare lifelessly through the flames.

Jeremy stands outside the flames, on the lawn. Staring longingly at his supposed SISTERS. He reaches out to them.

GIRL
Why did you get to live?

Jeremy is on the verge of tears.

JEREMY
(shuddering)
I don’t know.
GIRL
Can’t you help us?

JEREMY
I-- I can’t.

Jeremy breaks down.

JEREMY (CONT.)
I can’t!

The GIRLS suddenly dissolve into ash. The wind sweeps them away in their ashen form.

SNAP CUT TO:

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jeremy snaps out of it. He quickly stands to his feet after gathering his things and storms out of the classroom.

The whole class stares in confusion, but none more than the professor.

INT. JEREMY’S BEDROOM - DAY

Jared is sprawled out on Jeremy’s bed. Jeremy lounges back in his chair at his desk.

JARED
I heard you skipped class today. Nice.

JEREMY
I-- I couldn’t keep my mind off of the--

JARED
That’s not like you, man.

JEREMY
Take a look at this.

Jeremy slowly nods and hands him the article.

Jared scans the article.

JARED
Look, I’m all for this. But what you’re doing, it doesn’t seem healthy.
JEREMY
I have to know for sure if my real family was involved.

Jared, unsure what to say, pauses in silence. As does Jeremy.

JEREMY (CONT.)
I want to see whomever did this to my family be made accountable for their actions. What they’ve done needs to be brought to light.

JARED
You are beside yourself, my friend. You need to think about what’s really important. If this is getting in the way of your future—don’t you care about that?

JEREMY
Not until I’ve resolved my past.

Beat.

JARED
Look, I’ve been thinking.

JEREMY
Oh, no. That’s dangerous.

Jared lets out a little laugh.

JARED
Psh, yeah, I know. But listen. I really think that you should just take this up with the police. Who better than them, right?

JEREMY
You may be right, but I can’t help but think, did they even get this right in the first place?

JARED
There’s only one way to find out.

INT. POLICE STATION DETECTIVE’S OFFICES - DAY.

Jeremy approaches two detectives speaking with each other at their desks.
DETECTIVE SHEPARD (50’s) is leaning up against his desk, coffee in hand. He is a good ole country boy, balding with a mustache. He has a calm indifference about him, almost as if he is lazily jaded in his position.

DETECTIVE HERMAN (40’s) is kicked back with his feet on his desk, hands interlocked behind his head. He has slick, dirty blond hair. He has a sharp jawline with a confident determination about his face. Herman is a wise-cracker, but good-hearted.

Jeremy reaches their desks. They barely look up to acknowledge him.

JEREMY
Hello, officers, could I trouble you for a moment of your time?

DETECTIVE HERMAN
That’s detectives, to you. What’s your name, good citizen?

JEREMY
Uh, it’s Jeremy. Jeremy Caldwell.

DETECTIVE HERMAN
Glad to meet ya. I’m Detective Herman, this is Detective Shepard.

Detective Shepard gives a nod of his head and a cheers of his coffee.

DETECTIVE SHEPARD
Obliged.

DETECTIVE HERMAN
Now what can we do ya for? Nothing’s the matter, right? Nothing dire, I hope.

JEREMY
No, no. Nothing pressing. Just a cold case I’d like some clarity on, if at all possible.

DETECTIVE HERMAN
Cold case, huh? Don’t get many of those round here.

DETECTIVE SHEPARD
Only one’s that multiple homicide twenty years back. Family was slain and the house was a pile of ash and rubble. Messy business.
DETECTIVE HERMAN
Yeah, maybe a thing or two here and there. But that’s the big one. Our town’s only real claim to fame.

DETECTIVE SHEPARD
Sad to know your town is only on the map cuz of a massacre of that caliber, know what I mean?

Detective Herman lets out an emphatic chuckle in agreement.

DETECTIVE HERMAN
Chyeah, you’re not kiddin’.

JEREMY
Yeah, actually, that’s the one I wanted to talk to you about.

DETECTIVE HERMAN
Oh, well, not much really to discuss now, is there? That case was solved long ago. Wasn’t much of a case, let alone of the cold variety as you suggest.

DETECTIVE SHEPARD
Amen on that, preacher.

JEREMY
The reason I bring it up is because...I think I may have been the one who survived the crash.

Both Detectives taken aback.

JEREMY (CONT.)
The baby saved from the water. The car that plunged into the--

DETECTIVE HERMAN
Yeah, son! We’re familiar!

Detective Herman turns back to Detective Shepard in amazement.

He turns back around to face Jeremy.

DETECTIVE HERMAN (CONT.)
Wow! Is it really you?

Detective Shepard shakes his head as he takes a sip of coffee.
DETECTIVE SHEPARD
How do you know this?

Other police officers, detectives, and general office workers gawk at the sight and commotion.

JEREMY
I can’t really be sure.

DETECTIVE HERMAN
As I live and breathe. Wow, man. I’ll be fucked seven times over.

DETECTIVE SHEPARD
May as well spank yer ass and call ya Sally too while we’re at it, huh?

Detective Herman lets out another laugh.

DETECTIVE HERMAN
Well, shit son! You just never know what the day will bring.

JEREMY
I was hoping to find out as much as I could about the case.

DETECTIVE HERMAN
I’d imagine you’ve got a lot of questions on your mind.

DETECTIVE SHEPARD
Damn straight.

JEREMY
Right, I do. That’s why I’d like to get right to it.

DETECTIVE HERMAN
Well, let’s have at it! Lay it on me.

JEREMY
How did I survive the crash? It just doesn’t make any sense. That kind of an impact would be pretty intense, don’t you think?

Detective Shepard loudly laughs with a "HAH!"
JEREMY (CONT.)
Especially for an infant. I would have been, like—six months old at the time.

DETECTIVE SHEPARD
If it was really you.

DETECTIVE HERMAN
You’re telling us, buddy. That’s remained a mystery for everyone in this department for the better part of two decades, believe me.

JEREMY
Not to mention, someone would have had to fish me out of that pond... It just doesn’t seem likely.

DETECTIVE HERMAN
You don’t have to tell me that!

DETECTIVE SHEPARD
What are ya askin here, buddy? Some kinda divine intervention saved yer ass or what? I dunno.

Beat.

JEREMY
Who was the first on the scene of the accident?

DETECTIVE HERMAN
Well, you’re talking to the right men. We showed up to the home and apprehended the suspect on the front lawn. As for whomever saved your ass, that would be Jeff Conley. And if I’m not mistaken, he may even be here.

Detective Herman tries looking over his shoulder for him.

Detective Shepard shakes his head as he takes a sip of his coffee.

DETECTIVE SHEPARD
He’s on patrol. That area of town has been his route since long before that ever happened.
DETECTIVE HERMAN
Well, you heard the man. Shows how much I’m kept in the loop.

CHIEF (60s), an older gentleman sporting a large handlebar mustache, passes by and hears this. The Chief is gruff, jaded, and no-nonsense.

CHIEF
Need to know basis, Mike. You know too well how that is.

Detective Herman jabs a thumb at Chief.

DETECTIVE HERMAN
That I do, see what I gotta deal with?

Jeremy gives him a sympathy shrug.

DETECTIVE HERMAN (CONT.)
(clears throat)
Anyway, that’d be a good starting point. See if you can’t run him down. We may be able to call ahead to him so he knows that you’re seeking him out. Keep us posted on anything you find, I’d be interested to hear about any developments.

Detective Shepard scoffs.

DETECTIVE SHEPARD
Pfft, you kiddin’ me? This case was a slam-dunk. We caught her at the scene with--

Herman gives Shepard a nudge.

JEREMY
Well, thank you guys for pointing me in the right direction. I don’t expect to find very much, I just want to know more about it.

DETECTIVE HERMAN
Understandable, I would too!

Jeremy nods to both.
JEREMY
Take care.

DETECTIVE SHEPARD
Oh, we’ll probably be seeing more of each other.

JEREMY
You can count on it.

Herman notices the strange tension in the room.

DETECTIVE HERMAN
Well, thanks for dropping by. Nice meeting you!

Jeremy is halfway out the door by the time he says this.

The Detectives glance at each other, wide-eyed.

DETECTIVE HERMAN (CONT.)
Can you believe that?

Detective Shepard lifts the coffee to his mouth as he shakes his head.

EXT. EVERGREEN POND PARKING LOT - DAY.

Jeremy pulls into the parking lot and finds a spot to park.

He glances over to his left and sees a cop car patrolling around before coming to a resting spot down the line from Jeremy.

Jeremy motions to exit his car, but hesitates a moment.

EXT. COP CAR - CONTINUOUS.

TWO OFFICERS staring down at Jeremy in his car.

Jeremy finally decides to open his car door, hovers outside his car, slams the door, and strides over.

MOPEY OFFICER in the passenger seat rolls down his window a crack.

BITTER COP sits in the driver’s seat.

Jeremy has finally made his way over to the car.

MOPEY OFFICER
Get in.
JEREMY
I assume the detectives told you I--

BITTER COP
Just get in the damn car.

Jeremy puts his hands up as if to back off.

He then opens the door to get in the backseat.

INT. POLICE CAR – CONTINUOUS.

JEREMY
So, how are you doing, officers?

BITTER COP
Look, kid, we don’t have much time for this. What is it you want?

JEREMY
I was hoping I could discuss the details of a case back in--

MOPEY OFFICER
We know what case you’re referring to, what about it?

JEREMY
I’m guessing one of you is Officer Jeff Conley?

BITTER COP
I don’t know who that is.

MOPEY OFFICER
We’re not really supposed to discuss details of that case with anyone.

JEREMY
Wait, what? I’m sorry, you have me at a loss here. Then why did you--

BITTER COP
Listen, we were just doing what we’re told. We’re kind of at the will of these guys up the food chain.

MOPEY OFFICER
Plus, we owe Herman a favor or two. What else were we supposed to do?
JEREMY
This was a huge waste of my time if you aren’t willing to discuss this with me.

BITTER COP
Trust me, kid. Waste of our time too.

MOPEY OFFICER
For what it’s worth, Officer Conley is no longer with us. That much I will tell you. Beyond that, you’re on your own. You’re lucky I even told ya that much.

JEREMY
Hold on a second, how did he die? Was it because of the--

BITTER COP
Kid, come on. My partner just threw ya a bone. Why don’t you just take that and run?

JEREMY
You’re right. Thanks for your help, I appreciate it.

MOPEY OFFICER
Good luck kid, you’ll need it.

Jeremy opens the door to leave.

JEREMY
Thank you for your time.

EXT. COP CAR – CONTINUOUS.

Jeremy swings out of the car and gently shuts the door.

He then makes a bee-line for his own vehicle, not wasting any time at all.

INT. JEREMY’S CAR – CONTINUOUS.

Jeremy shutting the door as he slides into his seat.

He quickly pulls out his phone and dials JARED.

The line rings.
JARED
What’s up, fuckstick?

JEREMY
Where are you now? Can you meet?

EXT. PARTY HOUSE (JARED’S HOUSE) - LATER.

Jeremy swings his door shut and lazily shuffles up the path leading up to the house. He climbs the steps and lets himself in.

INT. PARTY HOUSE - CONTINUOUS.

Jeremy is about to approach the steps leading upstairs.

JEREMY
Jared? Where you at?

JARED (O.S.)
Upstairs, dickbag!

Jeremy scoffs, shakes his head, and labors up the stairs.

INT. JARED’S ROOM - PARTY HOUSE - CONTINUOUS.

Jared is striking a risque pose on his bed as he waited for Jeremy to enter.

As Jeremy opens the door and spins to enter while simultaneously shutting the door, he is smirking and shaking his head.

JEREMY
You know, the amount of time and effort you put into coming up with different insults for me is either sad or impressive. I’m not entirely sure which.

JARED
What did you find out? Anything?

JEREMY
You know how you told me to take it to the cops?

JARED
Yeah, should have been the first thing you did, but whatever. I’m flattered you came to me before that. But anyway, go on.
JEREMY
Well, I did that. And it turned out being sketchy as all get-out.

JARED
Yeah, you’d think it’d be the other way around. Strange. But sketchy how, though?

Jeremy nabs a chair, spins it around, and pops a squat.

JEREMY
Well, the cops were super hesitant to share information of any kind with me regarding the case.

JARED
That actually seems pretty normal to me.

JEREMY
One would think that’d be public knowledge though, right?

JARED
Like, in the papers and shit?

JEREMY
Yeah, it is in the papers. I’ve read up on it. But it doesn’t add up. But, one thing that really caught my attention. This officer, see, he--

Jared’s phone rings.

He reaches for it, and gives the "one sec" hand gesture to Jeremy.

JARED
(answering the call)
What’s goin on?

(beat)
Yeah?

(beat)
No shit?

Jeremy begins to get antsy.

He gestures to Jared to hurry it along.

Jared flys him the bird in return.

Jeremy shakes his head and looks away.
JARED (CONT.)
(still on the phone)
Well, I guess we can handle that many people. I mean, I don’t see why not.
(beat)
Fuck the cops, my boy Jeremy here has been keeping ‘em busy enough lately. I don’t foresee them being an issue tonight.

Jeremy throws his arms up in bewilderment mouthing "What?"

Jared shrugs him off.

JARED (CONT.)
Okay, yeah, let’s do it then! Don’t be such a limp dick pansy noodle about it. We’ll be fine.
(beat)
No, you don’t need to know why and how he’s been keeping them occupied. The less you know, the better. Believe me.
(beat)

Jared hangs up and tosses the phone to his side on the bed.

JARED
Ok, alright, you were saying?

JEREMY
Yeah, so, wait, what was that about?

JARED
Oh, nothing important. Our party we’re having later on this week is just gonna be a bit larger scale than expected. Nothing I can’t handle. Anywho, I’m focused now. I promise. What’s up?

JEREMY
What was that bit with me keeping the cops busy?

JARED
That was just a joke, thought you might appreciate it.
JEREMY
I didn’t. But anyway, this cop. One who was said, in the paper, to have been the first on the scene of the accident--

JARED
The scene of the accident? Or the scene of the crime?

JEREMY
It said he was the first responder to the car barreling into the pond. At Evergreen.

JARED
Right, that one. What about him?

JEREMY
The cops I met with said he was dead.

JARED
How’d he die?

JEREMY
I don’t know, that’s the sketchy part! They wouldn’t tell me.

JARED
Well, what were their names? Officer Sketchville and Sheriff Ratchet?

JEREMY
Might as well have been. I didn’t catch their names.

JARED
Well, shit, dude! How are you supposed to back up your story now? Didn’t college ever teach ya to cite your sources?

JEREMY
Look, it doesn’t matter now. The point is, the newspaper listed the wrong name in the story. Right there, already, it’s suspecy as fuck.
JARED
Dude, bro, no. The newspaper fucks shit up like that all the time. They said that the Cubs won in overtime last night.

JEREMY
So?

JARED
So?! Dude, they-- it’s called extra-- You know what? Never mind. Not important. My point is, newspapers have typos all the time. Can’t expect them to report it perfect every time.

JEREMY
Right, only when it comes to the latest blood drive or the exact date and time MarySue died playing shuffle board at the geriatric home. But not the biggest multiple homicide this county has ever--

JARED
Okay, okay I get it, Larry King. Message received. Accurate and precise journalism is very important to you. So, now what? What’s the next step?

JEREMY
Well, I was hoping you could answer that for me. But I was thinking I would confront the cops about it, tell them to get their story straight.

JARED
Well, that’s definitely risky. Calling law enforcement out on their shit. Right to their faces.

JEREMY
Someone has to do it.

JARED
I would consider other options first. You could ask people around town about it. People who lived in that neighborhood. That’d be cool, wouldn’t it? A trip down memory lane.
JEREMY
Although I have no memory of it.

JARED
Oh, right. Well, you could also seek out your mom.

Jeremy gives him a sharp stare.

JARED (CONT.)
Your real mom.

JEREMY
You really think that’s a good idea?

JARED
Not if she’s a whack-job, like they say.

JEREMY
I have no idea how that’s gonna go.

JARED
That’s one perspective on this whole thing that’s gonna change the game. You know that, right?

JEREMY
I’m not sure I can even face her, after all these years. I’ve never met her.

JARED
Look, bud, I know it’s gonna be tough. But I think it’s something that you’ve gotta do.

Jeremy nods slowly. Looks to Jared.

JEREMY
You’re probably right.

JARED
Of course I’m right, I’m always right.

Jeremy turns to leave.

JARED (CONT.)
Well, best of luck to ya. Hopefully she doesn’t chop your fingers off, or something.
Jeremy gives him a "fuck off" side-glare. Then finally swivels to march on out of the room.

INT. DETECTIVE’S OFFICES – DAY.

Jeremy storms up to the desks of Detectives Herman and Shepard who are in their usual posts.

DETECTIVE HERMAN
Back again, huh?

JEREMY
There’s something-- a lot of things that you guys aren’t telling me about this whole thing.

DETECTIVE HERMAN
We can’t tell you if we don’t know what you want.

JEREMY
The cop who was first on the scene of the accident, according to the newspapers. Jeff Conley. He’s dead.

Herman and Shepard share a glance.

JEREMY (CONT.)
(sarcastically)
Your cop friends were very helpful.

DETECTIVE SHEPARD
Glad to hear it.

JEREMY
What exactly happened to him?

DETECTIVE SHEPARD
Unaccounted for.

JEREMY
What do you mean by that?

DETECTIVE SHEPARD
Means we don’t know. What more do you want?

JEREMY
How did he die?

DETECTIVE SHEPARD
We don’t know.
DETECTIVE HERMAN
What are you asking?

JEREMY
I’m asking how he died. What does it sound like?

DETECTIVE SHEPARD
He disappeared. Gone. No one knows what happened to him.

JEREMY
Did he die as a result of the case or not?

DETECTIVE HERMAN
No one knows that either.

JEREMY
How does no one know? Do officers typically just "disappear" in this department?

DETECTIVE SHEPARD
Look, kid, we don’t really appreciate the inquisition--

DETECTIVE HERMAN
It remains a mystery to us, too. You’re asking us things that we don’t know either. We’re in the same boat on that one, believe me.

JEREMY
Alright, I just need you to be straight with me, that’s all.

DETECTIVE HERMAN
Fair enough. Now, was there anything else?

Jeremy hesitates a moment.

JEREMY
No, there doesn’t seem to be anything you guys know that will help me. Thanks anyway.

DETECTIVE HERMAN
You know where to find us!
DETECTIVE SHEPARD
(chuckles)
Heh. Ain’t that the truth.

EXT. SMALL TOWNHOME - DAY.

Jeremy approaches a townsperson’s home and timidly knocks on the door. An elderly woman answers.

ELDERLY WOMAN
Yeah, and what do ya want?

JEREMY
Hello, ma’am. My name is--

ELDERLY WOMAN
The hell do I care what yer name is?

JEREMY (CONT.)
--Jeremy Caldwell. I was hoping you might have time to speak with me about my father.

ELDERLY WOMAN
I don’t have a lot of time left.

Jeremy just stares blankly at her.

ELDERLY WOMAN (CONT.)
So whatcha want? Let’s get to it then.

JEREMY
Did you know my father? Trenton Lewis?

ELDERLY WOMAN
I thought you said your name was Caldwell?

JEREMY
It is possible to have different last names, ma’am.

ELDERLY WOMAN
Don’t get all wise-ass on me now.

JEREMY
My apologies. Won’t happen again.
ELDERLY WOMAN
You’re damn right it won’t.

Brief pause.

JEREMY
So, uh, did you know him by chance?

ELDERLY WOMAN
Know him? Who didn’t know the bastard?

JEREMY
Actually, I never knew him. Nor my mother. Which is why I ask.

ELDERLY WOMAN
Really?

JEREMY
No, ma’am.

ELDERLY WOMAN
Oh, wow. Well, how did that come to be?

JEREMY
They all died when I was very young. I don’t remember a thing about them. You knew them well?

ELDERLY WOMAN
Everyone knew them, honey.

JEREMY
What do you mean?

She steps outside, walks down her path leading up to the house, and looks to the horizon.

ELDERLY WOMAN
See that?

She points to a nuclear power plant way out in the distance. Jeremy sees it after a brief moment of looking hard.

ELDERLY WOMAN (CONT.)
Your father ran it for years.

JEREMY
I had no idea.
ELDERLY WOMAN
Oh but how could you? He’d been fucking us for years.

Jeremy turns sharply to her, in shock.

ELDERLY WOMAN (CONT.)
And now someone else is in his place. They’ve since continued the trend, so it doesn’t seem to matter who runs the damned thing.

JEREMY
Pardon me, but he was, as you say it, “fucking you”, um, in what way?

ELDERLY WOMAN
He was grabbing up our land, useful farm land. And now it’s barren. Nothing will grow here as long as this plant continues to run.

Jeremy looks down, acting like he’s taking notes so as to not face her.

ELDERLY WOMAN (CONT.)
Not to mention, he cut a deal with the local government to tax us more to fund that shit. That toxic filth came from our own money. Our paychecks, our health, our well-being, our way of life consumed by that poison.

JEREMY
I am truly sorry to hear about that.

ELDERLY WOMAN
Sorry to hear your father was a heartless monster or sorry for the irreparable damage he’s caused us?

JEREMY
What do you want me to say? This is all news to me. I had nothing to do with this.

ELDERLY WOMAN
But you will, whether you want it or not.

Jeremy now motioning to leave.
JEREMY
I’ll try to make this right.

ELDERLY WOMAN
It’s already been done. There’s nothing to make right.

Jeremy turns and scoots away.

The old woman turns back to pull open the screen door to her house.

ELDERLY WOMAN (CONT.)
(softly to herself)
It will never be the same again.

Jeremy lifts his head to see the Elderly Woman struggle back into her home. He continues on.

EXT. OLD RUNDOWN TOWNHOUSE - DAY.

Middle aged man answering a question asked by Jeremy.

MIDDLE AGED MAN
Oh, that was your father? I hate to say it, but he was part of some very scummy dealings. No offense taken, I hope.

JEREMY
No, not at all. I’ve been hearing that more and more lately. Can you be more specific?

MIDDLE AGED MAN
There was some back door politics going on for sure. I couldn’t get into the juicy details, but he was a pretty slimy fellow if I’m remembering correctly. It’s been decades, you know.

Jeremy, nodding, not surprised and not at all fazed responds.

JEREMY
I’m well aware. But is there anything more you could tell me? That’s not much to go on.

MIDDLE AGED MAN
Well, when I say back door, I really mean back-door.
Middle-Aged Man gives Jeremy a wide-eyed look.

MIDDLE AGED MAN (CONT.)
Fucked women in the ass and the like.

JEREMY
Okay, alright, that’s enough.

MIDDLE AGED MAN
YOU said you wanted to know this.
You asked, buddy.

Jeremy lets out an annoyed sigh.

JEREMY
So what, then? That’s what he was known for?

MIDDLE AGED MAN
Like I said, slimy dude.

JEREMY
Okay, I’ll bite.

Jeremy looks down to his pad and paper, begins scribbling notes.

JEREMY (CONT.)
So with whom, exactly? Do you know?

MIDDLE AGED MAN
That’s not the question, better question is who didn’t have a go at the guy?

Jeremy raises his head to make eye contact.

JEREMY
Really? That bad, huh?

MIDDLE AGED MAN
You’ve got no idea.

JEREMY
That’s why I’m asking.

MIDDLE AGED MAN
Mmmmm.

Jeremy scribbling, still.
JEREMY
So why am I supposed to believe you? How do I know you’re not just making this up?

MIDDLE AGED MAN
You tell me, son.

JEREMY
I’m not your son.

MIDDLE AGED MAN
You don’t know that.

JEREMY
What?

MIDDLE AGED MAN
Huh?

Both stare at each other in utter confusion.

MIDDLE AGED MAN (CONT.)
You’re the one askin’ questions so you either take my word on it or get the hell out!

JEREMY
Alright, fine. Maybe he was like that--

MIDDLE AGED MAN
He was.

JEREMY
Right. So, is that why everybody hated him? He just caught a bad reputation getting around town and back again?

MIDDLE AGED MAN
Everybody hated him because he always got his way. Whether that was with the nuke-u-lar plant or when he was beddin’ folks.

Jeremy scribbles away.

MIDDLE AGED MAN (CONT.)
Anyone he couldn’t have his way with were always able to be bought. This man always found a way to get people to speak his language.
Jeremy looks up, eyes narrowed on the man.

MIDDLE AGED MAN (CONT.)
Politician through and through.
Without actually being one if you’re catching my stench here.

Jeremy taken aback.

JEREMY
Odd way to put it, but yeah. I do.

MIDDLE AGED MAN
I’m surprised you’re his blood, you don’t seem it much.

Jeremy raises his head from his notepad.

JEREMY
Is there anything else you can tell me?

MIDDLE AGED MAN
What’s in it for me if I do?

JEREMY
You get the satisfaction of true justice being served at the end of it all.

MIDDLE AGED MAN
Justice has been done, my naive little friend.

Jeremy is noticeably upset by this comment, but doesn’t let it show in the tone of his voice.

JEREMY
Not in my eyes.

MIDDLE AGED MAN
Don’t matter one way or the next way. The only way has spoken. And it’s carved in stone.

Jeremy, a bit creeped out, inches away.

JEREMY
Yeah, uh, tha-- thanks for your time.
Jeremy, even more creeped out, looks suspiciously behind him as he now picks up his pace a little bit as he walks away.

INT. ABANDONED SHACK - NIGHT.

Jeremy nervously awaits Detective Herman’s arrival.

He sees headlights swing past the house and finally in a resting place straight ahead.

A car door shutting is heard.

The front door creeks open.

A shadowy figure enters.

It’s Detective Herman, his face shows in the dim light.

JEREMY
Thanks for agreeing to meet me.

DETECTIVE HERMAN
You need to drop this.

JEREMY
I’m so close to breaking through, I can’t quit now.

DETECTIVE HERMAN
I’m doing this for your own safety. Please, just--

JEREMY
I’ve heard that before. You’re just trying to protect and serve me, I get it.

DETECTIVE HERMAN
I wouldn’t be telling you this if I wasn’t absolutely sure.

JEREMY
What are you talking about?

DETECTIVE HERMAN
There’s forces at play here that you don’t want to test. You don’t want to delve deeper into this. Believe me.
JEREMY
I know that you’re trying to protect me, but my mind will always be on this. I have to figure it out now or else I’ll never stop thinking about it.

DETECTIVE HERMAN
Alright, well, if I can’t convince you--

JEREMY
You won’t, so don’t try.

Beat.

DETECTIVE HERMAN
I can promise you one thing. I won’t tell the Chief or anybody. But I can’t help you. I’m sorry.

Jeremy finally looks to him. He nods.

JEREMY
I understand.

Beat.

Jeremy turns to walk away before prompted to turn back around.

DETECTIVE HERMAN
Oh, and Jeremy?

Jeremy looks back behind him at Herman.

DETECTIVE HERMAN (CONT.)
No saying I didn’t warn you.

JEREMY
I know.

Detective Herman nods, his hard glance unwavering.

EXT/INT. PSYCH WARD - DAY.

Jeremy and Jared walk through the automatic doors at the entrance to the building.

He crosses the threshold, signs in at the front desk and indistinctly asks for his mother.

The RECEPTIONIST points down the hallway and mutters something to him.
Jeremy looks to Jared.

JEREMY
Wait right here.

Jared gives him a bitterly confused look.

JARED
(sarcastically)
As it pleases you, master.

Jeremy rolls his eyes and turns to stride down the hallway.

JARED (CONT.)
Jesus, like a fuckin’ dog.

He scoffs, shakes his head, and turns to grab a seat in the lobby.

The journey down the hallway is a long one. Is he really about to meet his mother?

Jeremy pauses at the door, staring at the name across the threshold.

DOOR FACE: "LEWIS - 1019"

A nurse slowly approaches and stands at a distance to his side.

NURSE
(nervously)
A-are you her son?

JEREMY
Uh--yes, yes I am. I mean, I think so.

Beat.

NURSE
You should let me go first. I need to administer some dr--uh meds.

Jeremy gives her a suspicious look.

JEREMY
I would like this exchange to be unadulterated. Please.

NURSE
That’s not the best idea. I don’t know how she would get.
JEREMY
Please, just let me do this. I’ve never met her before.

The nurse bows her head in agreement and reluctantly lets him pass through as she opens the door for him.

Jeremy softly tiptoes his way through the small entryway before the room begins.

His approach mirrors that of a man entering a haunted house, crossing into the great unknown.

His mother lies on the bed under the sheets, her head turned out towards the window.

Light shows through the partially drawn curtains. The lights are off, but the room is well-lit by natural light.

Jeremy finally reaches her side, kneels down in front of where she is looking. She does not recognize him and is perturbed as she must face this mystery guest.

MOTHER
Who are you? Who let you in?

Jeremy looks side to side, then looks down, and back up to her before answering.

JEREMY
You’ll never believe this. But, I’m your son. Jeremy.

Could it really be?

MOTHER
Impossible. How can this be?

Jeremy cracks a smile as his eyes well up.

JEREMY
It’s me, mom.

Short beat.

MOTHER
You’re lying. Tell me who you really are!

JEREMY
It’s really me, I promise!

She needs a moment to process this.
JEREMY (CONT.)
I didn’t think this day would ever come. And I had no idea my life would bring me here. I didn’t know this part of my life existed.

She tries her best not to be an emotional wreck.

JEREMY (CONT.)
I can’t believe that you were hidden from me for twenty years.

Jeremy’s mother is still having trouble with all this. It’s a lot to take in at once.

MOTHER
They told me you were dead. And that I had killed you.
   (shaking her head)
My life.
   (sniffles)
Our lives came crashing down in an instant.

She cannot hold it back any longer. She breaks down.

Beat.

MOTHER
Oh, but I’m so glad you’re here!
You came to see me!

The tears come flooding in as she pulls him close.

Jeremy pushes her off.

JEREMY
Mom, what they say about you--

MOTHER
I know, honey-- I know--

JEREMY (CONT.)
I want you to look me in the eye and tell me you didn’t kill them. Tell me it isn’t true.

MOTHER
You think I’m crazy!

JEREMY
(snapping)
I don’t know what am I supposed to think!
MOTHER
(sobbing)
You have to trust me!
(frantic)
I was set up! Now they keep me here
and-- It’s awful here, Jeremy.
(grabbing Jeremy)
You have to help me!

Jeremy pulls away from her grasp.

JEREMY
How am I supposed to believe you?!
I only just met you. You have to
understand.

She lets the sadness overcome her once again.

MOTHER
I don’t know. I don’t know, honey,
I don’t know what to do!

JEREMY
I have absolutely no reason to
trust you!

Jeremy’s mother puts her face in her hands, still sobbing.

MOTHER
(frantic)
You can’t just come here after
twenty years and start accusing me
like this!

JEREMY
What am I supposed to believe? The
truth, or your lies?!

MOTHER
You can’t just come in here and
call me a liar.

JEREMY
I don’t know what you are to me.

There is a long moment of silence before it is broken by the
Nurse in the doorway.

NURSE
Is everything alright in here?
JEREMY
We’re fine! Go away!

The nurse abides.

MOTHER
(softly)
Jeremy, honey, I’m not crazy. You have to believe me.
(whispering)
Please!

Jeremy thinks carefully a beat.

JEREMY
So if not you, who set you up then?

MOTHER
I don’t know.

JEREMY
So am I just to believe that this was all some sort of conspiracy?

MOTHER
This had nothing to do with me. I had just shown up by the time the house was ablaze. Everything crumbled to the ground as I sat there, I just--

JEREMY
You have to understand, this is a lot for me to take in right now.

His mother can’t speak past the tears.

JEREMY (CONT.)
Why haven’t you told anyone then?

MOTHER
You think I haven’t tried? They labelled me insane so I-- I’m stuck here. That is why you have to help me get out of here!

JEREMY
But what about dad? Haven’t you heard he’s the talk of the town? Everyone says you killed him because--
MOTHER
I don’t listen to that filth. And neither should you.

Jeremy hesitates a beat.

JEREMY
There has to be some truth to it, otherwise he wouldn’t have made so many enemies. Why would they lie about that sort of thing?

MOTHER
Anyone will say anything to discredit him and take down his organization. That was the whole idea!

JEREMY
What do you mean? I-- I don’t--

MOTHER
They wanted him dead so they could take over.

JEREMY
Yeah but who is they? You keep saying they!

MOTHER
I told you. I don’t. Know.

JEREMY
We can’t prove anything without--

MOTHER
It’s up to you. You have to uncover it. Reveal it to the world.

JEREMY
You honestly think the whole town would gang up on him like that?

MOTHER
You have to believe it because it is the truth.

Jeremy takes it all in.

Beat.
JEREMY
I have to go, mom.

Jeremy’s mother breaks down in a terrified cry. She shakes her head.

MOTHER
Jeremy, please don’t leave me!

Jeremy swings his head around before he leaves.

JEREMY
I’ll be back. I promise.

Jeremy strides on out the door.

We see Jeremy’s mother from the doorway with her arm reaching out towards Jeremy as he goes while he and the nurse trade places.

Distant cries from his mother can be heard.

INT. PSYCH WARD - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS.

Jared stands outside the door, waiting for Jeremy.

JEREMY
The hell, man? I told you to wait--

JARED
I know what the fuck you told me, dickshit.

Both begin to pace together back towards the lobby.

JARED (CONT.)
But here, check this out. Does the name Peter Beverly mean anything to you?

Jared presents Jeremy with a CHECK-IN LIST.

JEREMY
How did you--?

JARED
None of that matters right now. Answer the question.

Jeremy takes a gander at the list.
JEREMY
Well, no. I mean-- I have no idea.
I--

JARED
Apparently he’s been coming to see your mother. Quite a bit.

They both glance at the LIST again together.

Jared throws him a stare with a cheeky smirk.

JEREMY
Don’t-- don’t you even make that joke.

JARED
Just sayin. He’s the only one who’s ever come to visit her.

Jeremy continues to survey the list.

They’ve finally arrived at the front desk.

JARED (CONT.)
Until you.

Jared hands over the clipboard to the receptionist, without breaking his stare with Jeremy.

Jeremy looks cold now.

JARED (CONT.)
So the question remains. With no family left but you, who else would come to visit her?

JEREMY
And why?

Jared shrugs.

INT. DETECTIVE OFFICES - DAY.

Jeremy storms up to their desks.

DETECTIVE HERMAN
Looks like we’ve got ourselves a regular Rust Cohle here now don’t we?

Detective Shepard, not batting an eye, continues reading his newspaper.
DETECTIVE SHEPARD
I still don’t know what the hell you’re on about with that shit.

Detective Herman shrugs. Points his thumb over his shoulder at Shepard and leans in close to Jeremy.

DETECTIVE HERMAN
(whispering)
Uncultured swine.

Shepard leans up from his newspaper and gives a narrow glare to Herman.

Jeremy cracks a half smile.

Herman leans back away from Jeremy.

DETECTIVE HERMAN
Now, what brings you back here already?

DETECTIVE SHEPARD
(apathetically)
Dare we ask?

Detective Shepard glares at Herman.

JEREMY
Is there any possibility that my mother was wrongfully accused?

That got Shepard’s attention.

DETECTIVE SHEPARD
Alright, no, kid. We got her. It’s done. I’m all for helping you understand this case better. But you come in here making accusations like that. Uh-uh. Not a chance. I’m not gonna let that fly.

JEREMY
She says she was set up.

Chief looks up from his desk, eyes narrowing on Jeremy.

DETECTIVE SHEPARD
Set up? God, you really are her son.

ANOTHER DETECTIVE at a desk behind them chuckles.
JEREMY
What do you mean by that?

DETECTIVE SHEPARD
She’s crazy man! We locked her ass up and it didn’t take long before she was in the funny box. Or, what is it? What do they call it, Herm?

DETECTIVE HERMAN
The looney bin.

DETECTIVE SHEPARD
That’s the one! She was so outside her mind that they transferred her over to the Looney Bin!

Jeremy shakes his head and folds his arms.

DETECTIVE SHEPARD (CONT.)
Didn’t take much. Wadn’t no time at all.

JEREMY
But that doesn’t prove anything.

DETECTIVE SHEPARD
I mean, that’s the kind of people you’re dealin’ with. Crime of passion, or some sorts.

DETECTIVE HERMAN
See, exactly. That’s what really fascinates me about this case. I mean, what would drive someone to do something like that? It boggles the mind. What caused her to do some of the most fucked up shit imaginable?

Detective Shepard shakes his head, Jeremy shrugs.

DETECTIVE HERMAN (CONT.)
Like, I mean, was it some boring shit like infidelity? How vanilla is that? We get it all the time. That’s why wives are always killing their husbands.

DETECTIVE SHEPARD
Not always.
JEREMY
It’s probably not that simple.

DETECTIVE HERMAN
Or maybe it is! Who knows? We don’t know! Nobody does!

DETECTIVE SHEPARD
Your family’s case might not be as special as you want it to be. We may never know if your real mom actually turns out to be koo-koo! She’s the only one who would truly know what actually happened that day. The only other witnesses we could’ve had are ashes in the rubble.

OTHER DETECTIVE
(butts in, eavesdropping)
Ya hate to see that.

DETECTIVE HERMAN
Even if she wasn’t, why would she tell you the truth? You may never get a straight answer out of her.

DETECTIVE SHEPARD
She was hoping you’d never make it out of that pond.

DETECTIVE HERMAN
She was probably counting on it.

DETECTIVE SHEPARD
Look, clearly she wants you to think this was a set-up. She wants you to be in her good graces again.

DETECTIVE HERMAN
Exactly. Why would she ever admit to you what really happened? Odds are, she’s probably too afraid to even face you at this point.

DETECTIVE SHEPARD
I guarantee the prospect of you still being alive never even crossed her mind.

JEREMY
She never knew we were both pulled out of the car alive. I just went (MORE)
JEREMY (cont’d)
to see her and she had no idea I was even alive.

Chief glares up from his desk.

DETECTIVE HERMAN
She blacked out when you hit the water. She nailed the steering wheel on impact.

DETECTIVE SHEPARD
Right on the noggin.

JEREMY
But the timeline doesn’t match up! How can she be in two places at once?

DETECTIVE SHEPARD
Simple. She walked from the car to the house after dumping it in the drink. That’s where we found her.

DETECTIVE HERMAN
You have to understand. We found her. At the scene. The house was in flames. Murder weapon on the ground next to her. Blood still dripping off the damned thing.

DETECTIVE SHEPARD
She’s the killer. Beyond the shadow of a doubt. And she burned it all to ash—covering up her actions.

Chief has had enough. He scoots out of his chair and wades around his desk and the others to make it over to Shepard, Herman, and Jeremy.

CHIEF
Why are you so interested in this conspiracy theory, anyway?

JEREMY
Because my mother stands accused here. And I’ll not rest until I’ve proven her innocence.

CHIEF
Accused? She did it. Period. End of story.
JEREMY
She is trapped-- in a crazy home.
Against her will. Wrongfully
detained!

CHIEF
I won’t stand here and allow you to
tell us you think your know our
line of work better than we do.
We’ve been at this longer than
you’ve been alive.

Jeremy does not back down.

JEREMY
Is this how justice is done around
here? The true killer still may be
out there. And you all sit here so
convinced you did it right.

Beat.

JEREMY (CONT.)
You’re all pathetic. Do I really
have to do your job for you?

Detective Shepard chuckles before taking a sip of his
coffee.

CHIEF
The job’s already done, kid. It’s
over. We got her.

Detective Herman can’t help but smirk.

Jeremy takes note of this.

CHIEF (CONT.)
You must be crazier than her,
shooting off nonsense like this.

JEREMY
She was just at the right place at
the wrong time. And I’ll prove it
to you.

CHIEF
Now you look here, son. You’re
grabbing at straws here. It’s easy
to see you’re desperate to prove
your mama’s innocence. But, it’s
time to face the reality of it all.
She’s the killer. I’m sorry you
(MORE)
CHIEF (cont’d)

have to live with the fact that
your own mother is a murderer. I
get it. No one wants to be the
child of a criminal.

Chief leans in closer to him.

CHIEF (CONT.)

But give it a rest. Please don’t
waste your young years chasing
something that simply isn’t there.

Detective Shepard shrugs his shoulders and looks smugly at
Jeremy.

DETECTIVE SHEPARD

Man’s got a point.

Shepard lifts his coffee to his mouth.

Chief glares at Jeremy and wags his finger at him.

CHIEF

Now, I don’t want to ever see you
in here again. 9-1-1 exists for
emergencies, not bullshit.

Chief doesn’t allow anyone to say a word before he’s already
back at his desk.

DETECTIVE HERMAN

You do realize you were talking to
the Chief that way, right?

DETECTIVE SHEPARD

I hope not.

JEREMY

You two are the worst excuses for
cops I’ve ever seen. And you’ll
regret covering this up for people
who probably don’t even give a shit
about you.

Jeremy is pointing at them all the while, until he turns to
leave.

Before abruptly turning back around to face them again.

JEREMY

Oh, and one more thing.

Both look up at Jeremy.
JEREMY (CONT.)
The simplest explanation is good enough for those who want to believe in lies. But, the truth always finds its way.

Jeremy turns back to walk away.

Detectives Herman and Shepard but quickly glance up at one another.

Detective Shepard takes a sip of his coffee and goes back to reading his paper.

Detective Herman kicks back and tosses his feet back up on the desk and relaxes his hands behind his head.

Jeremy turns the corner. They watch him all the way. Especially Chief.

INT. JEREMY’S ROOM – NIGHT.

Jeremy laying on his bed staring at the ceiling.

Jared is kicked back in a chair, on leg on his desk, throwing a ball in the air and catching it with one hand over and over.

JARED
You must have some really fucked up desire to reside in a jail cell.

Jared shakes his head.

JARED (CONT.)
You can’t just challenge them like that.

JEREMY
That’s not at all what I did. Besides, someone has to call them out on their shit.

JARED
You know how in movies they had the kick me sign on their back and kids would kick the shit out of ’em? Even at school and whatnot? They didn’t give a fuck.

JEREMY
Yeah, what are you on about anyway?
JARED
Well, you just put a nice ‘fuck me right in the ass’ sign up on the small of your back for those detectives. And that police chief.

Jeremy shakes his head.

JEREMY
I’m keeping them in check.

A beat.

JEREMY
All I want is to do something right. If my mom is truly innocent, the world has to know.

Jeremy has a revelation.

JEREMY (CONT.)
I can’t believe this is happening. I’ll never have a normal life now. Not after this.

JARED
That was lost the moment you started digging up your past life. The life you never had.

JEREMY
I didn’t want this.

JARED
If you left this well enough alone, you could’ve kept living the way you wanted. Curiosity tends to get the best of us. We uncover secrets we wish we’d left buried.

Jeremy looks to him and throws his arms out in disgust.

JEREMY
So, what then? You’d have me remain ignorant?

JARED
This is your life now. You have no choice but to see this through.

JEREMY
I can’t keep going on like this. I don’t think I can do this anymore.
JARED
I don’t know what to tell ya, man. Honestly, you just have to solve this now. It’s the only way this will ever end.

Jeremy sits up in bed and gives Jared an empty stare.

INT. MARK AND TRACY’S PLACE - NIGHT.

Tracy, Mark, and Jeremy all sit at the dinner table.

MARK
Jeremy, we’ve noticed that you haven’t been the same lately. What’s going on?

JEREMY
I’m fine, really.

Tracy sees right through him.

TRACY
Jeremy, we know. You’d better just tell us now.

Jeremy remains silent, but wears his guilt.

TRACY (CONT.)
I told you not to look into this.

Mark waves her off. He leans in closer.

MARK
Jeremy, you need to leave the dead where they lie. They’ll never reach peace with you poking around like this.

JEREMY
I’ll never find my own if I don’t see this through to the end.

Mark and Tracy give each other a brief glance.

Beat.

TRACY
I can’t imagine what you’re going through right now. This has to be a lot to take in, and I know this isn’t what you want to hear right now, but the truth you seek just isn’t out there.
JEREMY
I need to know for certain. I can’t allow them to keep my real mother locked away in a pale white room treated like she’s some sort of psycho!

Mark calmly settles himself and looks at Jeremy intently.

MARK
Jeremy, it’s clear that your mother-- she-- the evidence is quite staggering. You have to see that.

JEREMY
That’s the thing, there is. No. Evidence. It all burnt up in the house fire! There are no witnesses!

Tracy looks deeply into Jeremy’s eyes.

JEREMY (CONT.)
No one knows the truth. I have to get it out there.

TRACY
Jeremy, honey, I’m sorry this happened. Truly, I am. But, we’re your family now. We always have been. You’ll do right by your blood to leave this alone.

MARK
You must. Please, don’t dishonor their memory by running around on this witch hunt. There’s no use.

JEREMY
I have to take the stain off my family name. I don’t want them remembered like this. Finding the truth is how I will honor their memory.

MARK
You don’t carry the burden of that name anymore. You lost that burden the day we brought you into our lives.

Jeremy gives a sharp glare to Mark.
JEREMY
My name isn’t a burden. It’s who I really am.

Jeremy gets up and slams his chair in.

He leaves the room, Tracy puts her face in her hands, and Mark watches in disbelief as he goes.

Tracy finally looks up at Mark.

TRACY
You have to tell him.

MARK
I know.

INT. JEREMY’S BEDROOM - NIGHT.

Jared is sitting on Jeremy’s desk. Jeremy is laying on his bed.

JARED
I’m sorry that this is the way it is. I’m sorry you have to live with the reality that this is what your family was.

JEREMY
Nothing to be sorry for. It’s not your fault, man. It’s no one’s, really. None but my father. And all who had a hand in fucking up my life.

Beat.

JARED
I was four when I lost my brother. We were just playing on the driveway. The ball went out into the street and he--

Brief pause.

JARED (CONT.)
I understand the feeling of not really knowing what it could be like if he was still here. I get it. Those who could make a difference in our lives given the chance. I know it’s hard. You think up moments, scenarios.
Jeremy shakes his head.

**JEREMY**
You think you know. You think you understand. But this is my entire family. This is three little girls who were prevented from truly experiencing anything. Everything! It isn’t about moments. It’s about living. It’s about life! They never had the chance. Any possibility they ever had, gone!

**JARED**
I didn’t mean-- I--

**JEREMY**
You can’t even imagine. There’s no way you could ever know--

**JARED**
Don’t act like you know! You lived! You have no idea either, same as me, same as anyone!

Beat.

**JARED (CONT.)**
So don’t pin this on me. Don’t take it out on me, okay? What happened was tragic. It’s disgraceful what they’ve done. So much that I barely have the words to describe it. Can we please get past the fact that I don’t know and couldn’t ever possibly know. I’m trying to help you in any way that I can. Because we are friends. Brothers, even.

Jeremy’s eyes well up.

**JARED (CONT.)**
I won’t stand here and allow you to tell me that I have no right to try to sympathize with what you’re going through. That’s all I can do. I’m doing everything I can, to the best of my ability to be a good friend. We’re gonna make this right.

A beat.
Jeremy shakes his head.

Jared hits the wall. 

JEREMY (CONT.)
Damn it.

Overhead view of Jeremy as we...

TRANSITION TO:

INT. JEREMY’S ROOM - MORNING. 

Jeremy is frantically typing on his computer.

Suddenly, there is a soft knock on the door.

Jeremy ignores it and continues on.

The knock is slightly louder this time.

JEREMY
I’m still not talking to you.
MARK (O.S.)
Please open the door. Let’s just talk.

Nothing from Jeremy.

MARK (O.S.)
Come on, Jeremy. There’s something I have to tell you.

JEREMY
Don’t wanna hear it.

MARK (O.S.)
I think you would if you knew what it was.

Jeremy’s eyes widen.

He shuts the computer off, slides out of his chair, opens the window, removes the screen, and climbs out onto the ledge.

MARK (O.S.)
Jeremy?

He struggles his way down and drops safely to the ground.

MARK (O.S.)
Jeremy!

Jeremy then glides across the yard towards his car.

INT. PSYCH WARD - MOTHER’S ROOM - DAY.

Jeremy sits beside his Mother who lies in bed.

Jeremy is holding her hand.

MOTHER
It’s so good to see you. I’m so blessed you come to see me.

JEREMY
Have they been treating you well?

His Mother takes a bit longer to answer than she should.

MOTHER
It’s okay.

Brief pause.
MOTHER (CONT.)
I’m okay, really.

JEREMY
Does anyone else come to visit you?

She can’t muster a response.

JEREMY (CONT.)
Other than me?

Mother shakes her head.

MOTHER
No. It’s just you.

Jeremy knows that’s bullshit.

MOTHER (CONT.)
And I’m thankful for that.

JEREMY
Mom, just tell me. I know that’s not true.

Mother sighs.

JEREMY (CONT.)
Who is it?

MOTHER
Someone comes in to check on me every so often.

JEREMY
What does he talk to you about?

MOTHER
He just asks me how I am. Just like you.

JEREMY
What else? Anything?

Beat.

JEREMY (CONT.)
Mom, what else does he ask you?

She shakes her head.
MOTHER
He asks if anyone else visits me.

JEREMY
Have you told him about me?

She looks to him, teary-eyed.

She shakes her head.

JEREMY (CONT.)
Mom, did you tell him I’ve been coming to see you?

She looks up, trying desperately to calm herself down and stop crying.

Beat.

JEREMY (CONT.)
Mom...

She finally looks to him.

MOTHER
He won’t let me keep anything from him.

He struggles to face her.

MOTHER (CONT.)
I’m sorry.

She can’t hold back the tears.

He looks toward the doorway.

JEREMY
Am I in any immediate danger?

Brief beat.

MOTHER
You were from the moment you decided to come here...

Jeremy is still not facing her.

MOTHER (CONT.)
The first time.

Jeremy finally makes eye contact.

EXT. ABANDONED SHACK - NIGHT.
Jeremy anxiously awaits the arrival of his guest in the creepy old shack.

Car lights pour in through the cracks between the wood and holes in the shack.

Jeremy is fidgeting as he waits for the man to enter.

A REPORTER (30’s) sneaks through the doorway, careful to make any noise or sudden movements.

The Reporter is young looking, skinny and fair haired.

JEREMY
Thanks for meeting with me.

Reporter extends his hand for a shake. They shake firmly.

REPORTER
Tell me I’m not wasting my time.

Brief pause.

JEREMY
I promise you, it can be your biggest story if you--

REPORTER
I read your message. (brief beat)
What do you have for me?

JEREMY
You know the family that was murdered about twenty years ago?

Reporter nods.

REPORTER
There’s not a single person in this town who doesn’t know every detail of that case.

JEREMY
Not every detail.

Beat.

REPORTER
Try me.

The Reporter fishes out a pad and pen.
JEREMY
My mother was set up in the whole thing. And I can prove it.

REPORTER
Go on...

EXT. PARTY HOUSE - NIGHT.

There is noticeably more party-goers at the house this time around.

FRAT RATS are getting wild out on the lawn.

STUDENTS file in and out the front door.

ASSORTED DRUNKARDS stumble for a few steps and fall to the ground.

INT. PARTY HOUSE - BAR - NIGHT.

Jared is having a grand old time, but looks like he is in control.

He counts a large sum of money in his hands.

He is juggling a cigar, drink, and his phone is pressed between his shoulder and ear.

JARED
Yeah, no yeah, it’s a banger.
(beat)
Yeah, you gotta get over here, man.
They’ve taken over. And I love it.
Bring on the chaos!
(beat)
Oh yeah, yeah. Just do it, man.
Don’t be a pansy.

PARTY-GOERS are ravenous.

Jared struggles to accommodate them all.

JARED (CONT.)
Alright, good. That’s what I like to hear!
(beat)
Alright, alright, gotta go! They’re all up in my business!

PARTY ANIMAL 1 spills a beer all over the bar.

Jared points at Party Animal 1 to draw attention to the crime she just committed.
JARED
Hey, now! That’s sacred grass water
you’re wasting over there! You hear
me? Cut the shit! Lest you wanna
make a beer run for me!

Jared extricates himself from the situation.

He weaves his way through the crowd, and emerges as if he
was suffocating.

JARED (CONT.)
Agh, Jesus. Fucking peasants! That
was perfectly good--

Jeremy has arrived. He stops Jared in his tracks with his
gaze.

JARED
Well, if it isn’t Douche-Face Jones
himself!

JEREMY
We need to talk.

INT. PARTY HOUSE - JARED’S ROOM - NIGHT.
Jeremy backs into the door, sealing it.
Jared is sprawled on his bed, bathing in his drunk.

JARED
What’s on your mind, dickbag?

JEREMY
First of all, I’m sorry.

JARED
Noted.

JEREMY
Secondly, we have a problem.

JARED
What kind of problem?

JEREMY
A big one.

JARED
(sarcastically)
I’m blown away. Tell me more.
JEREMY
It appears that--

JARED
Have you figured out who that Beverly fellow is yet?

JEREMY
Uh, no. I--

JARED
Now, before you tell me anything, we should pour some liquor down our throats.

JEREMY
This is not the time for--

JARED
This is precisely the time--

JEREMY
Don’t you realize what’s going on? Our lives are at stake here! I--

JARED
All the more reason to drink. Now, come on.

Jared gestures for him to follow.

JARED (CONT.)
Let’s go party our dicks off.

Jeremy reluctantly takes a step back, but begrudgingly abides.

JARED (CONT.)
Take our minds off this shit awhile.

Jared trows his arm around him as they make their way towards the party.

INT. PARTY HOUSE - JARED’S ROOM - MORNING.

Jeremy is face down on Jared’s bed.

Jared shakes him awake.

Jeremy groans.
JARED
Come on, get up. Big day for ya, Rick Blaine.

Jeremy shoos him away.

JEREMY
Ugh, what does that even mean?

JARED
You were really laying it on thick with the ladies last night.

JEREMY
Yeah, but he never-- forget it.

JARED
Seriously, what’s on the agenda?

JEREMY
There’s someone I need to talk to.

JARED
Who is it?

JEREMY
This is what I wanted to tell you last night.

JARED
Well, out with it then!

JEREMY
My mom, real mom, seems to think they murdered my dad to replace him at that power plant.

JARED
How can you be sure this guy will help you even if he does know anything?

Short beat.

JEREMY
I don’t.

Jared’s skeptical stare into Jeremy’s eyes.

EXT. NUCLEAR POWER PLANT – DAY.

Jeremy carefully pulls up to the parking lot and finds a spot.
He shuffles toward the offices.

INT. NUCLEAR POWER PLANT - OFFICES.

Jeremy glides on down the hallway towards the President’s Office.

The name tag on the door reads: "BRYAN CALDWELL - PRESIDENT OF OPERATIONS"

Jeremy knocks on the door.

BRYAN CALDWELL (40’s) answers the door. He is a spitting image of Mark.

    BRYAN CALDWELL
    Can I help you?

    JEREMY
    As a matter of fact, you can.

Bryan steps aside to allow him to come in the door. He shuts it behind him.

OTHER WORKERS down the hall stare from afar.

INT. BRYAN’S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS.

Bryan scoots around his desk and spins in his seat.

    BRYAN
    You know, it’s not very often I let strangers into my office.

Jeremy lands himself in a seat across from him.

    JEREMY
    Believe me, I’m no stranger.

Bryan is intrigued.

    BRYAN
    Who are you, then?

Jeremy waits a short beat.

    JEREMY
    Name’s Jeremy. I’m your nephew.

    BRYAN
    Mark doesn’t have a son.
JEREMY
It’s complicated.

BRYAN
What do you mean?

JEREMY
I’m adopted. You never knew?

Bryan shakes his head.

BRYAN
He never told me.

JEREMY
But how-- in 20 years he never--

Bryan leans back, now upright in his chair.

BRYAN
We haven’t spoken in 20 years.

Beat.

JEREMY
Do you know the name Peter Beverly?

Brief pause.

BRYAN
Who are you, really?

JEREMY
I just told you. I--

Bryan comes to a revelation.

BRYAN
You’re supposed to be dead.

JEREMY
What? I don’t--

BRYAN
Mark was--

JEREMY
Mark was what?

BRYAN
You need to leave. I’ve said too much already.
JEREMY
No-- You can’t-- I still need you to tell me--

Bryan rises from his seat, stomps over to Jeremy.

BRYAN
These are very dangerous men. I can’t--

Bryan picks up Jeremy by his shirt sleeve and lifts him to the door.

JEREMY
Who is dangerous? What men?

Bryan swings open the door.

BRYAN
I said you need to leave. Now.

Bryan shoves Jeremy out the door.

JEREMY
But won’t you testify? We can get these men!

BRYAN
They won’t let you run.

JEREMY
What?

Bryan slams the door.

INT. MARK AND TRACY’S HOUSE - NIGHT.

Mark knocks on Jeremy’s door.

MARK
Jeremy? Open up.

INT. JEREMY’S ROOM - CONTINUOUS.

Jeremy’s head snaps to the door.

Jared lying on his bed.

JEREMY
What do you want?
MARK (O.S.)
We need to talk.

Jeremy sighs, looks to Jared.

JEREMY
What about?

Beat.

MARK (O.S.)
It’s really important.

Jeremy throws his arms up. Rolls his eyes.

JEREMY
Can’t it wait?

EXT. JEREMY’S ROOM - CONTINUOUS.

Mark puts his head on the door and shuts his eyes.

MARK
No, Jeremy. It can’t.

INT. JEREMY’S ROOM - CONTINUOUS.

MARK (O.S.)
Please open the door.

Jeremy glares at Jared. He nods.

Jared nods back.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER.

Jeremy, Jared, Mark, and Tracy all sit at the table.

MARK
Are you sure? Even with--?

Tracy nods.

MARK (CONT.)
Jeremy. There’s something I have to tell you.

JEREMY
You lied to me.

MARK
What?
JEREMY
I went to see him.

Brief pause.

MARK
See whom?

JEREMY
Bryan.

Tracy looks to Mark.

JEREMY (CONT.)
Your brother.

Mark takes this in. Oh shit.

EXT. MARK AND TRACY’S HOUSE – CONTINUOUS.

SWAT Team exits van brandishing M4A1 Carbines.
They get in tactical positions outside the house.
All guns are trained on the house.

INT. KITCHEN – CONTINUOUS.

Mark leans in to speak.

MARK
This is exactly why I have to tell you this.

JEREMY
Tell me what?!

Mark waits a beat.

MARK
I was there. At the scene of the accident. The accident.

Jeremy processes this.

EXT. MARK AND TRACY’S HOUSE – CONTINUOUS.

SWAT LEADER and his men take up positions behind cars.
Swat Leader nods to them.

SWAT team proceeds to light up the house in a hail of gunfire. The sound is deafening.
INT. MARK AND TRACY’S HOUSE – LIVING ROOM – NIGHT.

Bullets toss about dishes, glasses, and furniture.

Mark dives in an attempt to protect Tracy.

Bullets rip through Tracy as she is tossed in the opposite direction of Mark.

Mark can only look on in horror.

INT. MARK AND TRACY’S HOUSE – KITCHEN – NIGHT.

Jared is urging for Jeremy to get down.

Both somehow find some cover.

All the while, shrapnel is flying every which way around them.

Jeremy and Jared are bracing behind cover and fragments scatter about.

INT. MARK AND TRACY’S HOUSE – LIVING ROOM – NIGHT.

Mark makes a desperate move to the kitchen before being peppered with .556 rounds.

He flails before he drops to the floor.

INT. MARK AND TRACY’S HOUSE – KITCHEN – NIGHT.

Jeremy sees the chaos unfolding before him.

He cannot help but hopelessly stare at the motionless bodies of Mark and Tracy.

JEREMY

(softly)

Fucking shit--

Jeremy fights off breaking down.

Jared makes a motion to Jeremy for them to move out the back of the house.

Both are covering their ears. They attempt to communicate, but to no avail.

The back sliding glass door shatters to the floor.

Jeremy and Jared make a run for the backyard running through their new opening.
EXT. MARK AND TRACY’S HOUSE – CONTINUOUS.

After a seemingly endless barrage of gunfire, the SWAT team approaches the house.

The SWAT team breaches the front door.

INT. MARK AND TRACY’S HOUSE – CONTINUOUS.

They clear the rooms on the main floor.

A team makes their approach upstairs.

Two SWAT members stake their claim over Mark and Tracy.

They know full well that they are dead, but they stand over their dead bodies all the same. Just in case.

    SWAT 1 (O.S.)
    All clear!

    SWAT 2 (O.S.)
    Clear!

    SWAT LEADER
    Sweep the floors! We cannot come back empty-handed!

    SWAT 3
    Roger that!

    SWAT 4
    Affirmative, sir.

SWAT 3 approaches SWAT LEADER.

    SWAT 3
    Nothing here, boss. Just the adoptive parents.

    SWAT LEADER
    Set a perimeter! No one in or out within a ten block radius! I want this done an hour ago!

    SWAT 4
    On it!

The Swat Leader approaches SWAT 1.

    SWAT LEADER
    Did you check the back.

Swat 1 can’t muster a response. He knows it won’t be good.
SWAT LEADER (CONT.)
You didn’t check the back, did you?

SWAT 1
Sir, no one could have escaped this. I mean, look at--

Swat Leader pistol whips Swat 1 in the face.

SWAT LEADER
Out the back! You--

Swat Leader points to Swat 2 and 3.

SWAT LEADER (CONT.)
--with me. Let’s go. Now!

SWAT 2
On you, sir!

SWAT 3
Right behind you.

Swat Leader, 2 and 3 all rush out the back patio.

Swat 1 lifts himself off the ground, clutching his face.

He heads to the kitchen for a paper towel under cold water.

Swat 4 heads down the stairs and posts up next to Mark and Tracy’s corpses.

EXT. MARK AND TRACY’S HOUSE – NIGHT.

Police cars swarm to the home.

Radio chatter is frantic.

OFFICERS exit their cars and take aim with their handguns at the home.

EXT. WOODS BEHIND NEIGHBORHOOD – NIGHT.

Jeremy and Jared desperately struggle to navigate through the woods behind the house.

SHOOT TO DARKNESS.

The sound of a door opening can be heard.

SMASH TO:

INT. INSANE ASYLUM – MOTHER’S ROOM – DAY.
The Nurse scoots in.

Mother looks up to Nurse and turns her head away.

INT. INSANE ASYLUM - HALLWAY - DAY.

TWO MEN in dark suits and identical shades pace the hallway on their way to a room.

INT. MOTHER’S ROOM - DAY.

The door suddenly opens.

Nurse and mother immediately raise their heads and direct their attention to the doorway.

AGENT 1 allows AGENT 2 to brush past him as he keeps the door open for him. Both have expressionless faces behind their shades.

The Nurse can only watch.

Mother’s expression never falters.

Agent 2 scoots across the room over to the corner near Nurse.

The Agents turn their attention to the Nurse, only briefly.

AGENT 2
Leave.

The Nurse frantically shakes her head and scurries away.

Agent 1 grants her safe passage through the door, promptly locking it behind her.

Agent 2 makes his way bedside.

Agent 1 now files into the room, takes up his place bedside, to the left.

MOTHER
Do it. I’m dead already.

Agent 1 and 2 both give each other a stern look.

Agent 2 suddenly holds her arms down.

Agent 1 shoves a rag down her throat and places his hand over her mouth.

They don’t stop until the struggling ceases.
Agent 1 removes the rag as soon as he’s sure.

Agent 2 pops open prescription pills on the nightstand and shoves them in her mouth.

He drops the empty bottle on the bed next to her motionless corpse.

INT. HALLWAYS - DAY.

Agents 1 and 2 swiftly glide on out of the room.

The petrified Nurse looks on from afar.

A name badge reveals a familiar name on it as Agents 1 and 2 pass by.

FBI BADGE FACE: "AGENT BEVERLY"

OTHER FBI BADGE FACE: "AGENT PETERS"

The nurse cautiously approaches the room.

The Agents have vanished.

The Nurse briskly tiptoes into Mother’s room once she’s sure she’s safe to do so.

Nurse escapes our view once she has let herself in the room.

She gasps.

INT. BRYAN CALDWELL’S OFFICE - DAY.

Bryan Caldwell sits upright at his desk, shuffling papers.

He sits briefly in thought, runs his hand over his face, and lets out a sigh.

His phone ringing shatters the silence.

He doesn’t miss a beat in answering.

He lifts the phone to his face.

BRYAN
Bryan Caldwell speaking.

VOICE ON PHONE (V.O.)
You shouldn’t have talked.
BRYAN
May I ask who--

Suddenly, a crack in the distance is heard.

A bullet whizzes through the back of his skull and out the front of his face.

A whole mess of Bryan ends up all over the desk, the floor, and chairs in front.

Bryan’s torso, head, and arms are sprawled out all across his desk.

He lies motionless next to the dial tone.

INT. JARED’S ROOM – DAY.

Jeremy sits at Jared’s desk, trying to occupy his mind. He is sifting through online articles. He attempts to read an article about the murders. He can’t muster enough strength to read any further. The thought of Mark and Tracy overcomes him. He breaks down.

Jared cannot bear to look at Jeremy any longer.

We still hear Jeremy sobbing from across the room.

EXT. EVERGREEN PARK – FLASHBACK – DAY.

A COP sits alone in his squad car.

Suddenly a car comes racing into the parking lot and heads directly for the pond.

The vehicle crashes into a block of concrete just between the parking lot and the pond.

The car bumps up and the front half is flirting with the pond. The back half is resting on the concrete block on the parking lot.

COP
(whispering)
What the actual fuck?

He quickly jumps up out of his car and races to the wreck.
He carefully opens the passenger door to find A BABY in the car-seat.

The baby is crying.

He gently unfastens his buckles when--

THE WOMAN in the driver’s seat wakes up.

She eyes the kitchen knife below her.

COP
Are you alright?

She swipes at him with the knife, slicing his arm.

He quickly, by reflex, draws his pistol and FIRES!

The bullet catches her forehead, she slumps over.

The Cop is Mark Caldwell!

MARK
Come on, buddy. We’ll get you out of here.

Mark is calculated with his approach bringing the baby out and carrying him.

He spins around the car onto the parking lot when--

BOOM!

Shotgun fire skims the back of the vehicle.

Mark staggers backward, cradles the baby boy even closer, and takes cover behind the wheel of the vehicle.

MARK
Shit!

An AGGRESSIVE COP is behind Mark’s squad car, pumping shotgun pellets into the car and all around him.

Mark softly places the baby back in the car.

Mark spins out of cover, raises his pistol, takes aim, and lets out a round.

Aggressive Cop ducks behind cover.

Mark retreats back.

Aggressive Cop lets loose his last round.
Mark doesn’t waste a second.
He lines up his shot.
He fires. The bullet smashes into his face.
Blood sprays as he flops backward.
Mark places the baby back in the car-seat and carries the whole thing back to his vehicle.

INT. MARK’S SQUAD CAR – CONTINUOUS.
He secures the precious cargo in the backseat.

MARK
Don’t worry, buddy. I’m gonna get you back safe. I promise, just hang in there!

The radio cues with static and faint voices.

CHIEF (O.S.)
3-1, come in. What’s going on over there? What’s your status?

Mark starts the car.
He reaches for the radio.

MARK
Chief, she took the boy. The infant.

CHIEF (O.S.)
Call me.

MARK
Copy.

Mark pulls out of the parking spot.
He calls the Chief on his massive cell phone.

CHIEF (O.S.)
The boy dies, Mark.

MARK
I don’t understand why we can’t just--
CHIEF (O.S.)
We cannot allow him to take over
the company when he comes of age.

MARK
But he’s just a--

CHIEF (O.S.)
His father should have thought
about his children before he fucked
the whole town. It’s for the best.

MARK
I don’t think I can--

CHIEF (O.S.)
This just ceased to be a request.

Chief hangs up. Dial tone.
Mark drives as quickly as he can, but under control.

EXT. PARTY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY.
Jared is laying on the couch, enjoying a beer.
The door suddenly swings open.
It’s Herman and Shepard.

JARED
Who the fuck? What are you doing in
my house?

DETECTIVE HERMAN
Where is he?

EXT. INSANE ASYLUM - DAY.
Jeremy is looking through binoculars.
He sees Two Agents striding away from the front doors.
Through a window, he sees Nurse panicking as two ASSISTANTS
in white scrubs checking the pulse on his Mother.
Jeremy lowers his binoculars and storms away.

EXT. LONG COUNTRY ROAD TO ABANDONED SHACK - DAY.
An undercover police vehicle driving on the road.
It is transporting Jared, along with Detectives Herman and
Shepard. Detective Herman is at the wheel.
The abandoned shack is barely standing with broken windows, wood 2x4’s hanging off, and showcases sizable holes in its roof.

INT. UNDERCOVER POLICE INTERCEPTOR - DAY.

JARED
Oh, because only good things happen in creepy abandoned old shacks.

DETECTIVE SHEPARD
Shut your mouth.

EXT. ABANDONED SHACK - DAY.

Detectives Herman and Shepard exit the vehicle and softly shut the doors in unison.

INT. ABANDONED SHACK - CONTINUOUS.

Jeremy nervously awaits the arrival of the Detectives.

He takes a few steps back, and stands in the middle of the bare room.

The door opens suddenly with a SLAM.

Jeremy flinches. He is confronted by Detectives Herman and Shepard.

Detective Shepard shoves Jared inside.

Detectives Herman and Shepard shuffle across the room so that they’re on either side of Jeremy.

Jared can only watch from the corner.

DETECTIVE SHEPARD
Anyone else here?

Jeremy shakes his head.

DETECTIVE HERMAN
You armed?

JEREMY
I’m not as dumb as I look.

Detective Herman nods to Detective Sherman.

Shepard waltzes over to Jeremy and pats him down.

Shepard nods to Herman.
He retreats to where he was.

JEREMY
If you’re gonna kill me, do it quickly. You’ve taken everyone closest to me. People I’ll never know. I’ve no one else left to lose.

He takes in a deep, shaky breath. He’s close to letting out a good cry, but fights it off.

JEREMY (CONT.)
No one but him.
(points to Jared)
Please, just leave him out of it.
He never did a thing. He’s just being a good friend!

Detectives Herman and Shepard give each other a side-eye.

Beat.

JEREMY
Just fucking do it already!

Herman inches forward, putting his hands out in an attempt to calm Jeremy.

DETECTIVE HERMAN
Relax, we wouldn’t be here if--

JEREMY
That’s exactly why you would be here...to kill me. That would solve a lot of problems for you.

DETECTIVE HERMAN
I need you to trust me. We are not going to kill you. We want to help get you out of here.

DETECTIVE SHEPARD
Hold on a minute, Herm. The hell d’you mean, help? Whose side are y--

DETECTIVE HERMAN
Now wait-- Just let me speak a moment.
DETECTIVE SHEPARD
--You on anyway? You know what we have to-- We have orders t--

Detective Herman lowers his pistol but swiftly shoots Detective Shepard in the leg.

Detective Shepard in a desperation attempt swings his pistol arm towards Herman and fires.

Shepard’s shot misses Herman, but lands somewhere else.

Herman just as quickly pops off two rounds. They hit Shepard square in the chest and head.

Shepard flops backward and lies motionless in a pool of his blood, skull fragments and brains.

DETECTIVE HERMAN
I believe you kid, something never felt right about this whole thing.

JEREMY
What, but wh-- I just don’t-- why did you--

DETECTIVE HERMAN
Never mind that now, you have to leave.

JEREMY
But, you didn’t have to.. He.. I--

Jeremy finally spots Jared. Dead. Blood spattered all up the wall behind him.

JEREMY
Jesus fucking--

Jeremy shaking his head, hopelessly holding back tears.

Herman spots Jared’s corpse propped against the wall.

After he’s processed what just happened, he looks Jeremy dead in the eye.

DETECTIVE HERMAN
Jeremy, I’m sorry about your friend. All this death...needless.

Herman shakes sense into him, forces him to make eye contact.
DETECTIVE HERMAN (CONT.)
But I need you to focus right now.
You will not make it out of this by
mourning your friend.

Jeremy shakes his head. On the verge of breaking down.

JEREMY
This can’t be happening--

DETECTIVE HERMAN
But it is happening. You need to
get this story out there. It’s the
only chance of ever--

BANG! A shotgun blast suddenly interrupts Herman, causing
him to come crashing down on top of Jeremy.

The walls behind Jeremy painted with Herman, including
Jeremy himself.

Herman’s deadweight pins Jeremy to the ground.

Chief comes busting through the hole in the wall he just
made brandishing a shotgun.

Herman’s pistol falls to Jeremy’s side.

Chief towers over Herman’s motionless corpse, and Jeremy’s
trapped body.

Jeremy quickly, gracelessly reaches for the handgun.

Chief racks in another load and takes aim down at Jeremy.

Jeremy grips the pistol, tilts it upward, and squeezes the
trigger as many times as it allows him to.

Most of the shots miss all around Chief until one finally
enters his forehead and whizzes out the back, painting the
walls and the ceiling red.

Chief topples to the floor.

Jeremy lets out a sigh of relief.

He finally lets his emotions take hold.

He lets out a brief cry to mourn the loss of his friend,
everything that’s happened.

But then he realizes what he must do.

The sound of police sirens flood the landscape.
Time to go.

Jeremy slowly turns toward the backdoor, cocks the pistol back, looks at the chamber, checks the magazine.

Empty.

Jeremy scans the floor for a fresh one.

He slams one home, pulls the slide forward, and makes his way toward the back. Away from the distant sirens.

Jeremy pinches the bridge of his nose, clearing the way for his eyes. Ridding himself of any excess tears.

Now looking determined, he paces toward a window.

EXT. ABANDONED SHACK - DAY.

Jeremy maneuvers out a window in the back.

He then start sprinting with determination, and tears in his eyes. He leaves the abandoned shack in his wake.

Sirens growing louder still...

SLAM TO DARKNESS.

The sound of Jeremy bursting through the front doors is heard.

SMASH TO:

INT. BROADCAST STATION LOBBY - DAY

Jeremy frantically approaches the front desk at a news media outlet...

JEREMY
This will sound nothing short of insane, but please hear me out.

A SECRETARY at the desk sits with her mouth agape.

SECRETARY
We’ve heard about your story.

JEREMY
I didn’t think anyone would believe me.
REPORTER (O.S.)
Oh, I think we might.

Reporter comes into view. He gives a smirk to Jeremy.

A SUITED MAN stands in the hallway leading up to the front desk. Arms folded.

He nods to POLICE OFFICERS who are standing outside, waiting to enter.

The Officers barge in and march across the room straight to Jeremy who clutch his arms from behind and restrain him.

JEREMY
No-- wait. What the f-- What are you doing?!

The Suited Man smoothly glides over to Reporter who is standing speechless as the officers take Jeremy away.

JEREMY (O.S.)
Stop! You can’t-- You can’t do this!

The Suited Man is the Reporter’s BOSS. He leans in.

BOSS
(to Reporter)
If you value your position at all, you will not publish this story.

The Reporter takes this in.

JEREMY (O.S.)
Somebody help me! Please!

Boss strides on back to his office.

Secretary covers her mouth with her hand.

JEREMY (O.S.)
Don’t let them take me!

The Reporter can only watch as the police shove Jeremy out the front doors.

SMASH TO DARKNESS.

The sound of jail cells slamming shut.

OPEN ON:

INT. INSANE ASYLUM – DAY.
Jeremy is showcasing a white jumpsuit while he is escorted down the halls flanked by TWO NURSES.

They briskly pace down the hallway until they show him to his cell.

Jeremy is scooted into solitary confinement. Straight jacket and all.

Jeremy’s blank, emotionless stare as we back away from the room, the door slams, latches shut, and we...

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END