

TRAJECTORY

by
Marty Howe

Phone: +61 432 296 086
Email: marty.australia@hotmail.com

OVER BLACK

DISPATCHER (V.O.)
9 1 1, what is your emergency?

CALLER (V.O.)
Somebody needs to get out here right
now, there's gunshots next door.

DISPATCHER (V.O.)
What's the address, ma'am?

CALLER (V.O.)
1 3 7 Norwood Lane. Ya'll need to get
over here fast --

DISPATCHER (V.O.)
Stay calm, we have help on the way.
Do you see anybody?

CALLER (V.O.)
No. I aint exactly sure if he's still
in the house, or...

FADE IN:

EXT. EAST BALTIMORE - SUBURBAN STREET - HOUSE - NIGHT

A derelict single-level home, one section of roof covered by
tarpaulin. Graffiti, trash, dilapidation - bad neighborhood.

Two uniformed COP'S, 20's, fresh-faced and eager, cautiously
approach the front door, guns drawn. It's quiet.

Cop 1 peers into a partially boarded window.

COP 1
I got a little girl.
(pause)
You see her?

ON BODYCAM

Through a curtain, JEMMA, 10, forlorn, lost, sits on the
floor watching TV. Colors dance on her catatonic expression.

BACK TO SCENE

Cop 2 equips his radio, voice trembling, adrenaline pumping.

COP 2
Two four six, we're on the front
porch. One young female visible
inside, 'bout to force entry.

COP 1
If there's a shooter, shoot him.

COP 2
Got that right.

INT. HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Tattered floral wallpaper, ramshackle furniture. They SMASH inside, pistols primed, hearts pounding.

COP 1
Police department!

COP 2
(overlapping)
Police!

ON BODYCAM

The corpse of METH DAD, 30's, chest blood-soaked, is slumped on the floor next to a handgun.

To their left, the living room. Jemma remains motionless, back turned, oblivious to their presence.

BACK TO SCENE

Moving further in, another body - METH MOM, 30's, sprawled in a sea of red. An ajar back door CLATTERS in the breeze.

They secure the interior - 2 bedrooms, kitchen, bathroom.

COP 1
Clear!

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A raggedy sofa, clothes, blankets. The flickering glow of a TV screen the only light source.

Cop 2 steps inside, gently holsters his weapon.

COP 2
Hey, sweetheart. You ok?

Jemma offers no response.

He steps around a discarded video game controller, kneels in front of her.

Their eyes meet.

JEMMA
Will they respawn?

INT. HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

A team of ANALYST'S in jumpsuits dusting prints, capturing photos, swabbing surfaces.

Camera shutters CLICK.

A reserved looking fellow wanders hesitantly inside. It's HARPER, 40's, a forensic ballistics savant. Socially timid, munching on chewing gum to conceal his fatigue.

An identification specialist is examining Meth Dad's bullet entry wound. LAYNA, 20's, selfless, focused, straightens up from a crouched position.

LAYNA
Up and at 'em, Harper.

Gloves bloodied, she hands him a wet-wipe from her kit. He ditches the candy, gestures to a bruise above her eye.

HARPER
That's new.

She smirks, adjusts her fringe to hide it.

LAYNA
Minor lab mishap.
(pause)
Want to see something cool?

INT. HOUSE - PARENTS BEDROOM - DAY

A sunken spring double bed, decrepit decor. A closet is wide open, top shelf ransacked. A chair sits adjacent.

Detective KERENSKY, 50's, is inside. A boisterous, arrogant man. Brutish yet tailored.

He flips the lid open on a lockbox with a Montblanc pen.

Inhales its scent.

Harper and Layna enter.

KERENSKY
Here he is.
(pause)
Lone shooter. Ignored cash and two wallets to take whatever was in this.

HARPER
Product?

KERENSKY
That's my assumption.

Harper looks at the closet. His scrutiny shifts to the chair.

HARPER
Was the chair here?

KERENSKY
Nothings' been moved.
(pause)
Clear the room, Harper wants to
interrogate the furniture!

LAYNA
Just show him, Kerensky.

INT. HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

The three congregate.

KERENSKY
Entry via a rear unlocked door.

He motions to the 2 carcasses on either side of them.

KERENSKY
Victim 1 has exited the kitchen,
bang, she's down...

They stroll, careful not to stand in blood or brains.

KERENSKY (CONT'D)
...victim 2, who was in the living
room, has confronted him, he's next.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Striding, surveying.

KERENSKY
With the kid, he hesitated. Orders
Jemma to turn around and get on the
ground.
(pause)
Shoots her once in the back of the
head. Junks the weapon, nabs the dope
and bails.

Kerensky signals ANALYST 1 to hand him something.

KERENSKY
Only she's not dead.

He holds up a clear plastic evidence bag containing a hair
barrette with a bullet lodged in it.

Harper snatches it away. Rotates the item, aligning it with how it would be worn.

Shines a penlight.

LAYNA
Billion to one, huh?

HARPER
Try a googolplex squared.

Hands it back, walks away.

HARPER
Is this Jemma's statement?

KERENSKY
Would be if she wasn't mute.

LAYNA
What's her status?

KERENSKY
Concussion from the impact. Other than that, not a scratch.

HARPER (O.S.)
Where was she sitting?

Kerensky turns, points to the floor.

Harper nestles cross-legged in the same spot, facing the TV which is off. There's a game console, disc tray open.

HARPER
Was the T V on?

KERENSKY
Everythin' was on. Why?

Harper breathes meditatively, closes his eyes.

OVER BLACK

Recreating the crime scene in his mind, running intricate calculations, estimating trajectory. Gunshots ring out.

BANG

BANG

Beat.

BANG

EXT. BALTIMORE CITY - POLICE HEADQUARTERS - DAY

An imposing grey-brick structure overcast by the afternoon sun, classic architecture conveying authority and history.

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

ON SECURITY CAMERA

Cold, white walls stretch beneath a stark ceiling light.

Jemma hugs a teddy bear, sitting at a table with paper and crayons. A concerned COUNSELOR, 30's, is questioning her.

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY

A dimly lit, soundproof space equipped with chairs, desks and high-tech audio\video monitoring.

Kerensky stands, observing empathetically through a one-way mirror.

A swipe-card reader BEEPS, Layna walks in.

LAYNA

Get a cozy blanket, we're holding her. Harper's brief just took precedence.

The Detective already knows, staring ahead.

KERENSKY

Maybe I've had my run.

She frowns, thwacks him on the arm.

LAYNA

Still got some fire in you.

Motions for Kerensky to follow.

LAYNA

Come on.

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - BALLISTICS LAB - DAY

Shelves, microscopes, tools. Bullet pattern diagrams line the walls, a projectile recovery water tank in the corner.

Harper's workspace features a large monitor plastered with post-it notes, a reversible sign reads: 'Bulletproof coffee break in progress'

A thick dossier SLAMS down on a table. Harper, Layna and Kerensky gather around it, take a seat.

Harper sifts through the pages, chewing gum. Slips out a photo of the barrette annotated with ballistics data.

HARPER

Alright, Jemma's height when seated is ninety one point four centimeters. Analyzing the major and minor axis of the bullet, I determined an impact angle of twenty point seven degrees with the assailant being three hundred and fifty three inches away from her...

Kerensky holds his head in his hands.

HARPER (CONT'D)

...however, based on parents one and two, the suspects height is approximately one hundred and twenty two centimeters tall with a shoulder height of around one hundred and six centimeters. Obviously, this does not correlate with --

KERENSKY

Harper.

(exasperated)

Just...walk us through it.

HARPER

Uh...

Layna nods encouragingly.

A moment.

HARPER

Jemma wants to play video games, but mom and dad say no...

KERENSKY

(correcting him)

Stepdad.

HARPER (CONT'D)

...she proceeds to their bedroom closet, positions a chair, enabling her to retrieve a lockbox from the stop shelf containing a .22 Colt. Shoots dad, shoots mom, relinquishes the firearm and uh...sits down to play Nintendo.

Layna and Kerensky look at each other, clearly disturbed.

HARPER (CONT'D)

But, before dad expires, he collects the dropped weapon and, from a prone position, discharges one round, lodging in Jemma's hair clip, protecting her occipital region.

KERENSKY

Expires? You're a freak, Harper.

HARPER

A bullets trajectory doesn't lie.

Layna reclines, sighs deeply.

LAYNA

What kind of world are we living in?

More a statement than a question. The Detective gets up, grabs his jacket.

KERENSKY

I'm gonna mull on that over a beverage.

Layna gives Harper a congratulatory half-smile. He looks down, avoiding eye contact.

EXT. BALTIMORE HARBOR - NIGHT

A BUSTLING waterfront, illuminated bars and restaurants. The DING of faraway trams ECHO through the lively atmosphere.

EXT. BALTIMORE HARBOR - BOARD GAME CAFE - NIGHT

A festively adorned floor-to-ceiling window set within a concrete facade. A neon sign reads: 'Critical Hit Cafe'

INT. BOARD GAME CAFE - NIGHT

Library-esque shelves house thousands of neatly stacked game boxes. Teeming with activity, 90's hits BLAST over speakers.

Harper, Layna and Kerensky are at a corner table, engaged in a wild-west themed card game.

Harper drinks one obligatory beer, slowly to make it last.

The other two are tanked.

LAYNA

...haha, that's messed up. How old were you?

KERENSKY

I dunno, must've been...nineteen?

LAYNA
Thankfully you've evolved into a
more...refined gentlemen.

Kerensky takes a mock bow.

KERENSKY
(to Harper)
Your turn, freak-boy, weirdest sexual
encounter.

Awkward silence.

LAYNA
Actually, it's my turn.

She takes a quick sip. Swipes a card from the deck, adds it
to her hand. Strategizing, grooving to a tune in her chair.

LAYNA
Hold on to your hats.
(to Harper)
My plus one scope out-guns your
Schofield.

Lays down her trump.

INSERT - PLAYING CARD

A cartoonish gunslinger shooting a rifle. 'BANG!' is
emblazoned over the muzzle flash.

An ethereal RICOCHET rings out.

LAYNA (O.S.)
You're dead, pardner.

BACK TO SCENE

HARPER
You got me.

Harper's cellphone CHIMES, it's his daughter ALEXIA, 15,
artistic, ambitious.

ON PHONE SCREEN

ALEXIA (ON TEXT)
Can Jace come ova?

BACK TO SCENE

Harper rises, a bit tipsy.

HARPER

Uh...if you'll excuse me, I have to consult with the porcelain oracle.

SOMEONE'S POV

Outside, watching the group at their table, breath PANTING. The stare lingers on Harper, tracking his every move as he heads to the bathroom.

INT. BOARD GAME CAFE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

A mirrored sink, a stall. Very clean. Vintage wall posters evoke a nostalgic ambiance.

Harper stands in the quiet, empty space.

ON PHONE SCREEN

HARPER (ON TEXT)

When?

ALEXIA (ON TEXT)

Now? He's outside. We're going 2 watch a movie.

HARPER (ON TEXT)

Be good. I'll be home at 10.

ALEXIA (ON TEXT)

:)

BACK TO SCENE

He smiles, loves her so much.

The door BURSTS open. Kerensky SLAMS him against the wall.

KERENSKY

Humiliate me on the job one more time, ya dead.

Harper gasps, wide eyed.

KERENSKY

When I ask you a question, you answer immediately. Don't turn ya back on me and squat like some fuckin' hippie guru. Do you understand?

Harper nods 'yes'.

KERENSKY

Do you understand?!

HARPER

Yes.

He lets go. Stumbles to the urinal, balance unsteady. Harper straightens his clothing, regains composure.

EXT. BALTIMORE HARBOR - BOARD GAME CAFE - NIGHT

The three colleagues say their goodbyes, bathed in neon. Kerensky staggers off to another venue.

LAYNA

Don't dwell on it. Tomorrow when he sobers up, you can savor the apology.

HARPER

I have to go and be a parent now.

EXT. BALTIMORE HARBOR - STREET - NIGHT

They walk.

Moonlight dances on the surface of the Patapsco River, the distant HONK of passing ships.

LAYNA

Working your way through the manual, huh?

Layna drops a few coins into a busking SAXOPHONIST'S open instrument case.

HARPER

She misses her Mom.

LAYNA

Tell Lex the truth. She'll understand.

HARPER

When she's older.

LAYNA

Listen, if there are any woman issues Alexia wants to chat about, something she can't bring up with dad, I'm here for her, any time.

HARPER

No, no, it's not necessary.

They arrive at Harper's car, parked curbside.

LAYNA

Anything at all, ok? Just give her my cell.

Layna hugs him, he tenses up. She reassures him with a gentle pat.

LAYNA
Goodnight.

Quad headlights blind them. Startled, they separate, shielding their eyes.

A car throttle REVS intimidatingly. It's Layna's psycho possessive boyfriend DAN, 30's, insecure, manipulative.

DAN (O.S.)
Laynie!

She touches the bruise on her forehead, fingers trembling.

HARPER
You have options, Layna. You don't have to stay with him.

LAYNA
What options? You?!

HARPER
Legal options.

A muscle car pulls up, engine GURGLING.

HARPER
Put yourself first.

LAYNA
Talk tomorrow.

She hops in.

DAN
(mouths, no sound)
You're dead.

Dan makes a throat-slitting gesture across his military-sculpted neck, Harper steps back.

Tires SCREECH. In a cloud of exhaust smoke, they're gone.

Keys shaking, unlocks his vehicle with a CHIRP.

There's a wad of paper on the windscreen, wedged under a wiper. He pries it out.

Unfolds it.

INSERT - PHOTOGRAPH

An A4-sized printed family portrait. A MAN, 20's, his WIFE, 20's, their SON, 2, and DAUGHTER, 4.

All smiles, taken decades ago judging by the hair and clothing. Beneath them, a cut-and-paste message composed from snipped magazine fragments reads: 'U R DEAD'

BACK TO SCENE

Unnerved, Harper struggles to recognize anyone. Scrunches it up, looking intensely in all directions for the culprit.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - HARPER'S TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

A charming brick facade tucked between neighboring houses. Manicured lawns, soft porch lights, idyllic.

Car headlights illuminate a RISING roller-door. Harper pulls in.

INT. HARPER'S TOWNHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Modern and sleek. Sparse minimalist furniture, impeccably arranged.

Alexia is with JACE, 17, geekish yet cool, who's attempting a discreet front door exit.

Harper emerges from the garage, weary and downtrodden. They whirl.

ALEXIA

Hi Dad.

Jace nods respectfully.

JACE

Sir.

Alexia ushers him outside. Flustered, they've probably been making out.

JACE

Shoot me a text.

ALEXIA

Sure thing.

HARPER (O.S.)

How was it?

Jace pauses inside the door-frame.

A moment.

HARPER
The movie.

JACE
Ending kinda sucked, although --

ALEXIA
Jace doesn't have time for a three
act plot breakdown, so...

Harper approaches, sizing him up, projecting sternness.

HARPER
Where do you live, Jace?

Alexia rolls her eyes. Jace pulls a bicycle-chain out of his
backpack.

JACE
Not far, I'm biking it.

He departs. Harper slowly eases the door shut.

HARPER
Be safe.

The teens exchange awkward farewells through the ever
shrinking gap. Harper LATCHES it.

HARPER
Please keep the front and back doors
locked at all times! Even when you're
home.

She storms off in a huff.

ALEXIA
Every time I meet someone cool, you
fuck it up.

HARPER
Don't swear, Lexie.

ALEXIA
He thinks you're weird.

HARPER
I didn't do anything.

ALEXIA
Exactly. Can you pretend to be
normal? For me?

HARPER
Be yourself, don't be stifled by
others opinions.

She retreats to her bedroom, shuts the door.

Harper stands in silence, dejected.

INT. HARPER'S TOWNHOUSE - ALEXIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tidy and organized. Hanging fairy lights cast a warm glow. Above an art desk, a collage of surreal dreamlike sketches.

She's in bed, chatting on her cellphone.

ALEXIA
It's my life, my decision.

KNOCK-KNOCK-KNOCK

ALEXIA
Have to go.

Thumbs it off, secretes it under a pillow.

ALEXIA
Yes?

HARPER (O.S.)
I want to ask you something.

Snuggles under the blanket.

ALEXIA
I'm sleeping!

Her door creeps ajar.

HARPER
Lex, if there's anything you need to talk about, and uh...you can't tell me, or ask me, because I'm a guy --

ALEXIA
Any time this year.

HARPER
If you want to discuss, you know, girls stuff, Layna has offered to give you her number.

ALEXIA
Oh my god.

Turns away, seeking comfort in the cocoon of her quilt.

ALEXIA
Goodnight!

Beat.

HARPER
I love you.

Harper closes the door softly, leaves.

INT. HARPER'S TOWNHOUSE - ENSUITE BATHROOM - NIGHT

Elegant marble, chic lighting. Harper is at a vanity, shirt unbuttoned, moisturizing a faded burn scar across his chest.

RING-RING

Incoming call from: Unknown

Hesitant, he accepts but doesn't say anything. It's Jemma's sister NIKKI, 18, wiry, agitated.

NIKKI (ON PHONE)
Yo, this Harper?

HARPER
Speaking.

NIKKI (ON PHONE)
You ruined her life, dude.

HARPER
Who is this?

NIKKI (ON PHONE)
I'm Nikki, Jemma's sister. And you're dead.

HARPER
I'm sorry, I have to end this call --

NIKKI (ON PHONE)
You're dead motherfu! --

Hangs up, powers it off.

Fingers quivering, he takes a vape from a drawer. Moves to the window for ventilation.

Has a puff.

Through a haze of marijuana smoke, he spots someone standing in the street.

A black silhouette, watching him.

Harper SQUEAKS the venetian blinds shut. Sits on the closed toilet seat, takes another hit.

Breathes meditatively, closes his eyes.

INT. UNKNOWN ROOM - NIGHT

Darkness.

Silence.

HARPER'S POV

Eyelids opening.

HARPER (O.S.)

What...?

BACK TO SCENE

His voice ECHOES inside a large, cavernous void.

Tries to move, realizes he's restrained.

Struggling, hyperventilating, looking frantically in all directions.

HARPER

Help!

Overhead fluorescent lights FLICKER on, bzzt.

INT. FIRING RANGE - TARGET ZONE - NIGHT

Harper is shackled to a moving target inside an abandoned shooting range.

Body bound to a steel rectangular frame attached to a girder in the ceiling. His spine presses against a paper bullseye.

There are 9 firing lanes, he's slap-bang in the middle at number 5.

Duct tape is wound around his neck, waist and feet. Both hands zip-tied behind his back.

A thick steel chain constricts his waistline, padlock sealed.

HARPER

Help! Somebody!!

On either side, concrete walls encase, segmented by rows of windows, some obscured by corrugated iron and wood panels.

A ventilation unit on one wall THROBS. In the gloom outside, dense forest.

Above him, a row of 9 girders traverse the expanse that shuttle shooting targets back and forth.

Wires and debris dangle through shattered or missing ceiling tiles. Intertwined, a network of rusted sprinkler pipes.

Below his tightly bound ankles, he's suspended 1 meter above the ground. Trash, paper and shell casings litter the floor.

Behind, the bullet trap. A mound of dirt bearing the scars of countless impacts, spent projectiles embedded within.

HARPER
Anybody?! Please!

A loudspeaker CRACKLES.

A cassette-tape message starts to play.

INSTRUCTOR (V.O.)
(carnival-esque)
Welcome! To ensure the safety, well-being and most importantly, fun, of all attendees, please listen to the following important instructions before diving into the excitement.

Harper is frantic, extremely confused.

INSTRUCTOR (V.O.)
Please ensure that all mobile phones are switched off or set to silent mode.

Straining, he slips one hand into a rear pants pocket.

RIGHT POCKET

Harper's fingers probe for his cellphone.

All he finds is:

Penlight.

Bubblegum.

Both useless.

He SCREAMS, thrashing wildly, CLANG-CLANG-CLANG.

Ceiling debris dislodges, toppling over him.

INSTRUCTOR (V.O.)
Store all personal items, including bags, purses, and jackets, in the lockers provided. Do not bring any personal items into the shooting area.

HARPER'S HANDS

Grappling desperately at the waistline chain - impossible to break free.

Feeling around the steel frame now as best he can with limited movement.

An exposed wire on the worn, ruptured steel gives him a jolt, bzzt, he flinches.

INSTRUCTOR (V.O.)

Proper eye protection, goggles or glasses, and ear protection, ear muffs or ear plugs, are mandatory. These items are available for your use at the range counter.

Another set of lights blink on.

INT. FIRING RANGE - SHOOTING BAYS - NIGHT

150 meters ahead of him, a row of 9 booths in disrepair, some saturated in dried blood.

Positioned at stall 5, a bizarre shotgun contraption. Disassembled and bolted-together pieces, interconnected gears and springs. Aimed directly at Harper.

Steel wire woven through the trigger extends through a mechanism, ultimately morphing into a taut tripwire 10 meters ahead of the gun.

Centered behind the weapon, the control room. A large pane of unbreakable polycarbonate glass overlooking the range. Frosted, so it's interior is obscured.

Adjacent, an armory. Steel roller-door closed half way. To the right, a fire door with an 'Exit' sign taunts.

INSTRUCTOR (V.O.)

Treat all firearms as if they are loaded. Keep the firearm pointed downrange at all times. Keep your finger off the trigger until you are ready to shoot.

INT. FIRING RANGE - TARGET ZONE - NIGHT

Harper, terrified, struggles upward in a pathetic attempt to escape.

INSTRUCTOR (V.O.)

No Horseplay. Climbing, running, or any unsafe behavior is strictly prohibited.

CLANG-CLANG-CLANG

INSTRUCTOR (V.O.)

Listen to commands. Pay attention to announcements and commands from the range officer over the loudspeaker.

Roof fragments and dust rain down. Retching, he spits asbestos laced saliva onto the garbage strewn floor.

INSTRUCTOR (V.O.)

Respect the range. Keep the range clean and tidy. Dispose of your trash properly.

HARPER

(coughing)

Somebody...help me.

INSTRUCTOR (V.O.)

Enjoy your shooting experience responsibly and safely. Thank you for your cooperation and have a great time!

A RICOCHET rings out, he recoils.

It's just a sound effect.

Silence, save for Harper's panicked breathing.

A silhouette materializes inside the control room.

HARPER

Hey...hey! Over here!!

INT. FIRING RANGE - SHOOTING BAYS - NIGHT

Behind the glass, the blurred figure occupies a chair with a chilling calmness, gaze fixed on Harper.

INT. FIRING RANGE - TARGET ZONE - NIGHT

HARPER

What is this?!

Feedback SQUEALS. A deep voice, disguised by a vocal changer, emits on loudspeaker.

The enigmatic presence in the control room is RANGE MASTER.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)

The M ten fourteen twelve gauge.
Shotgun of choice for U S Special
Forces.

THE SHOTGUN

Poised menacingly in its vise. The waiting tripwire catches a reflection of moonlight.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)

In 2018, an elite Seal unit performed an assassination raid in ISIS held Idlib province, northwest of Syria. The strike team, equipped with ten fourteen's, dispatched over a dozen insurgents at point blank range.

(pause)

Boom!

Harper flinches.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

One shot, and their skulls were obliterated. The rapid succession of decapitated corpses dropping to the ground petrified the enemy. So much so, they surrendered, bowing on their knees before the American's. Regarding them as gods.

(pause)

Today, I'm god. And I intend to prolong your fear.

HARPER

W-what do you want?

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)

Same as you, Mister Harper.

A beat.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)

We seek it in all things. Regardless of how many lives we destroy, nor the method we use to attain it. The end result is always the same.

(pause)

Truth.

HARPER

What truth?

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)

Think of this place as one colossal lie detector. You're the needle, and I'm the chart.

(pause)

Let's calibrate, shall we?

Harper writhes, CLANG-CLANG.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
I would advise you to stay perfectly still. Any unnecessary movement may distort your physiological response.

HARPER'S FACE

Distressed, disoriented.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
Is your surname Harper?

HARPER
I don't...yes.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
Age?

HARPER
F-forty one.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
Do you live at 3 7 5 Oakwood Road,
Federal Hill, 2 1 2 3 0.

HARPER
Lex...no, don't hurt her, please!

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
Focus, Mister Harper.

HARPER
I'm begging you. Whatever this is,
leave her out of it --

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
I require an answer.

HARPER
Yes, the address is correct!

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
Are you feeling well physically
today?

Harper scoffs.

HARPER
(delirious)
Fine and dandy, in perfect health --

A deafening BUZZ blares out - a klaxon light centered in the ceiling pulsates.

Harper inches forward along the target carrier, bathed in flickering red.

HARPER
Wait, wait!

Advancing.

HARPER
Stop!

Still advancing.

The movement is agonizingly slow.

He squirms helplessly.

CLANGS to a stop.

140 METERS FROM TRIPWIRE

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
Must I wave my hands around and
explain the rules?

HARPER
No, I feel like shit!

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
Have you ever cheated on a test?

HARPER
No.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
Are you here to answer all questions
truthfully?

HARPER
Yes, yes I am.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
Did you consume any alcohol or drugs
within the last 24 hours?

HARPER
(quietly)
Yes.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
Speak up.

HARPER
Yes, I did!

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
What's wrong, Mister Harper. Need a
fix?

Harper slumps.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
That's your solution, you're cure, is
it not?

HARPER
Yes.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
How do you think you wound up here?
Your own pitiful dependency.
(pause)
One cannot mask trauma forever. What
are you hiding from, Mister Harper?

HARPER
Nothing.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
We shall see.

A moment.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
I believe I have a sufficient
baseline. Let's begin.

HARPER
Why are you doing this to me?

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
What's the most dear thing you've
lost that you can never get back.

Harper weakens, eyes downcast.

HARPER
My wife.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
She abandoned you.

HARPER
Yes.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
That's why your daughter resents you.

He begins to cry.

HARPER
Yes.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
Did you fuck Layna?

Harper snaps out of his misery, looks up.

HARPER

No...no!

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)

Have you pondered it?

HARPER

Dan, if this is...we're friends,
nothing more.

The BUZZ resonates, red light oscillates.

He moves forward.

HARPER

No!

Advancing.

A long beat.

CLANG

130 METERS FROM TRIPWIRE

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)

A non answer will be construed as a
strike.

HARPER

No, I haven't thought about it!

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)

How many years of your life have you
dedicated to ballistics analysis?

HARPER

F-fifteen years.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)

During that time, have you ever felt
pressured to compromise the integrity
of your work for personal reasons?

HARPER

Never.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)

What if the testimony you provided
caused the suffering of a child?

HARPER

I...I follow the evidence where it
takes me.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
 As do I. Like a bullet drawn
 irresistibly to its target.

Harper languishes.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
 Oh dear.
 (pause)
 It seems fate is granting us an
 unplanned intermission.

INT. FIRING RANGE - SHOOTING BAYS - NIGHT

The lights dim.

Silence.

Darkness.

To Harper's right, a shadow of movement outside. He snaps
 into alertness, scanning the dark.

HARPER
 Hey!

EXT. FIRING RANGE - WALL - NIGHT

A weathered concrete facade adjacent to a boarded-up window.
 Overgrown weeds sprout from the soil. Very dark.

BLAZE, late teens, jittery, cloaked in a street-wear hoodie,
 dismounts a scooter.

Unstraps a bulging backpack, drops it at his feet, CLINK.

Holds his cellphone aloft.

BLAZE
 Whaddup friends and followers.
 Tonight, I'm at Big Joe's for a fat
 cap throw up piece. Props to my boy
 Nova for the spot. Love you, bro.

Secures it snugly in a chest pocket.

ON PHONE SCREEN

Fingerless woolen-gloved hands UNZIP the pack, retrieve an
 aerosol can.

BLAZE (O.S.)
 Check me on Insta, Blaze at gospel
 graffiti.

Shakes it vigorously, rattle-rattle-rattle.

BLAZE (O.S.)
Let's go.

INT. FIRING RANGE - TARGET ZONE - NIGHT

A faint HISS.

HARPER
In here!!

CLANG-CLANG-CLANG

Then another.

HISSSSS

EXT. FIRING RANGE - WALL - NIGHT

Blaze can't hear him, SPRAYING away. Curves, lines, shapes.

His tag now outlined in a chunky font, incorporating a stylized crucifix within the letter 'A'.

INT. FIRING RANGE - TARGET ZONE - NIGHT

Range Master quietens his voice.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
This is not a recommended course of
action, Mister Harper.

HARPER
Help!!

Harper reaches into his back pocket.

HARPER'S HANDS

Delicately extract the penlight, careful not to drop it.

Aims it in Blaze's direction.

Awkwardly toggles the beam - click, click, click.

EXT. FIRING RANGE - WALL - NIGHT

Blaze enhances his creation, infusing colors and details.

HISSSSS

He halts. Attention drawn to a feeble glimmer from within.

Apprehensive, he peers into the target zone.

HARPER (O.S.)
 (muted)
 Can you hear me?!

Flashes of light disrupt the pitch-black void.

BLAZE
 Yeah man, I hear you!

INT. FIRING RANGE - TARGET ZONE - NIGHT

Blaze peers through a cracked window.

HARPER
 Call 9 1 1!!

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
 He dies in 10 seconds.

HARPER
 No.

EXT. FIRING RANGE - WALL - NIGHT

Blaze packs up, hoists the tote around his shoulder.

BLAZE
 Sup?! You security?!

INT. FIRING RANGE - TARGET ZONE - NIGHT

Range Master exits the control room, plods through the dark.

HARPER'S POV

Heart racing, catching only fleeting glimpses - legs, torso, gloved hands, all black. He's brandishing a specialized tool resembling a hammer.

It's a forensic bullet extractor.

BACK TO SCENE

HARPER
 Get out of here!!

BLAZE (O.S.)
 What's that?!

HARPER
 Go! Get help!!

EXT. FIRING RANGE - WALL - NIGHT

The fire exit door BURSTS open.

Range Master's imposing silhouette looms across the ground, head oddly over-sized in relation to his body.

BLAZE'S FACE

Wide eyed in terror.

He backpedals, arms raised in a defensive stance.

INT. FIRING RANGE - TARGET ZONE - NIGHT

HARPER

Run!!

Range Master sprints up to Blaze at blinding speed, like an Olympic athlete.

Harper turns away.

THUMP

The window SPATTERS red.

EXT. FIRING RANGE - WALL - NIGHT

The phone hits the dirt.

ON PHONE SCREEN

Range Master's shadow animates on the wall, bludgeoning Blaze to a pulp.

THUMP, THUMP, THUMP.

The facade now a ghastly masterpiece of blood and paint.

Turns his attention to the camera filming him, shadowed blobs drip from the hammer.

The screen SHATTERS.

INT. FIRING RANGE - TARGET ZONE - NIGHT

HARPER

Fuck!

The assailant trudges past the windows, dragging Blaze's mangled cadaver by one ankle.

INT. FIRING RANGE - SHOOTING BAYS - NIGHT

Steps inside, SLAMS the door shut.

Shifting about, concealing the body within the shadows.

INT. FIRING RANGE - TARGET ZONE - NIGHT

Re-enters the control room. Activates the lights.

Harper slips the penlight back into his pocket.

HARPER

Why...?

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)

His death is on you, Mister Harper. I gave you fair warning.

(pause)

How many more destroyed lives do you wish to add your tally?

HARPER

He was innocent.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)

Now you advocate the innocence of others?

(pause)

The very God he worships proclaims that none of us are truly innocent.

FLASH CUT TO: The spray-painted, bloodstained crucifix on the exterior wall.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)

(quoting)

No one is good. No, not one.

HARPER

I haven't seen you, I don't know you, please...let me go.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)

Your only chance at freedom, Mister Harper, is confession.

Harper's eyes plead.

HARPER

Confess? To what?!

The BUZZ, red light.

He moves along the target carrier.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)

A denial will be construed as a strike.

HARPER

Stop!

Advancing.

HARPER
You've got the wrong guy!

A beat.

OVER BLACK

The reverberating CLANG of the moving target ECHOES.

120 METERS FROM TRIPWIRE

EXT. BALTIMORE CITY - DAY

High-rise buildings bask in the first light of dawn, bustling streets, shimmering harbor waters.

Seagulls SQUAWK, soaring in the crisp morning air.

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - FORENSIC LAB - DAY

Sleek metal countertops hold trays of fingerprint cards, slides, magnifying glasses.

Layna's workspace has a few cute trinkets, an NFL plushie stationed by her mouse-pad.

She's flipping through legal paperwork, contemplating a violence protective order against Dan.

FOOTSTEPS approach, pristine shoes on polished tile. Layna stuffs it in a drawer. Closes it.

Kerensky appears, a bit hung-over, carrying an evidence satchel. Layna swivels in her chair to greet him.

LAYNA
Got your message.

KERENSKY
Came across Harper's car up on
Mapleton.
(pause)
I think there was a changeover to a
secondary vehicle.

He places down a gelatin sheet tire tread impression.

LAYNA
You skipped breakfast for this? It's
barely a partial.

KERENSKY
That's why I have you, Layna.

She dons a pair of latex gloves. Slips it out, places the sheet on a lit examination table, fine-tunes the lighting.

LAYNA
Anybody see anything?

KERENSKY
Not so far. Canvassing nearby homes,
pulling C C T V where we can.

Layna runs her fingers over the gelatin, feeling the grooves and contours of the impression.

Places it on a scanner bed.

LAYNA
Phones?

KERENSKY
His was in the glove-box. Alexia's
gone ghost, gettin' hold of her
carrier.

She initiates a scan, a high-resolution image of the tire tread pattern appears on her monitor.

A progress bar starts to fill, taking forever.

LAYNA
Come on.

Kerensky pulls up a chair, takes a seat. Grabs the plushie off Layna's desk, examines it.

KERENSKY
Any enemies, grievances?

LAYNA
Apart from you?

KERENSKY
Give me a break. What about Dan the
man?

LAYNA
This isn't him.

KERENSKY
Ex wife?

Layna shakes her head 'no'.

LAYNA
By Harper's account, she moved on
after custody was granted.

She ponders.

LAYNA
Nikki lost it in the waiting room.

KERENSKY
Seems a bit out of her league.
(pause)
I D the vehicle. I'll have a little
chat with our cast of characters.

He places the toy back, stands up.

KERENSKY
I need precision on the field, Layna.

She positions it where it's meant to rest.

LAYNA
Precision is my game, old-timer.

KERENSKY
That a challenge?

The computer BEEPS. With a few mouse-clicks, Layna loads the scanned image into the tire tread database.

LAYNA
A coffee says I find them first.

KERENSKY
You're on.

INT. FIRING RANGE - TARGET ZONE

Harper dangles on the target frame, slumped, chin on chest, weary from the barrage of questions.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
...do you have moments of regret for
past actions?

Nods lethargically.

HARPER
Some.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
Any in your capacity as a ballistics
analyst?

HARPER
Yes.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
Go on.

HARPER

I...we indicted a young girl for murder.

(contemplative pause)

Her life's over, she'll never see the outside of a detention facility.

A moment.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)

Truth. No matter how many lives we destroy, nor the method we use to attain it.

Harper concedes.

HARPER

Yes.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)

Have you ever been coerced into changing your testimony?

HARPER

No.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)

Have you ever falsified evidence to secure a conviction?

HARPER

Never, I made a vow --

BUZZ, red light.

Harper inches forward, trembling feebly.

Notices a long wire hanging from the ceiling, directly in his path, sparks SPUTTERING.

Advancing. He awkwardly positions his head to align his mouth with the wire.

Catches it with some difficulty between his teeth, grunting, breathing rapidly through his nostrils.

Clenches down despite the searing pain, yanking it free from the ceiling as the carrier stops.

CLANG

110 METERS FROM TRIPWIRE

Takes a few shallow breaths through the nose, spits it out.

The wire drapes over his body, falling behind his back about 1 meter away.

Harper writhes, causing it to sway like a pendulum, CLANG-CLANG, gracefully swinging back and forth.

HARPER'S HANDS

Fingertips frantically reaching, yearning for its touch, fumbling and missing.

After a few more violent shakes, CLANG-CLANG-CLANG, manages to grab hold of it, holding tight with his right.

He exhales deeply.

His left hand explores the target frame, searching for the exposed copper wire he discovered earlier.

His thumb presses firmly on it.

Psyching himself up, ready to 'short circuit' the carrier mechanism and render it inoperable.

Thrusts the live wire into his torso, body serving as a makeshift conduit between the two connections.

Electricity ARCS, he spasms, sparks rain down from above.

With a resounding THROOM, the ventilation unit abruptly shuts down.

Then, with a POP and FIZZ, everything falls silent.

Harper's body tenses up, muscles contracting involuntarily.

He moans, in shock and pain.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
You disabled the filtration system.

A haze of dense gas swirls.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
Lead dust and nitrogen dioxide.
You're on the brink of a rather
unhealthy intake of P B and N O 2,
Mister Harper.
(pause)
Quite hazardous.

Gasping for air, breathing erratic, panic in his eyes from being unable to clutch his chest.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
 But of course, you already know that,
 because you're a savant.
 (pause)
 A published savant, no less.

INT. FIRING RANGE - CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Only a glimpse - tabletop microphones, desk mounted control panels, an old rotary-dial telephone.

A LAPTOP

Black-gloved hands navigate the Internet; Giallo style.

On the screen, Harper's personal life - social media, drivers license, passport, bank accounts.

With a double-click, one web-page opens to full screen. Range Master scrolls through an online article.

INT. FIRING RANGE - TARGET ZONE - DAY

Harper coughs spittle from his lips, his skin takes on a pallid, sickly hue.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
 (reading)
 Research gate dot net. The importance of forensic ballistics in criminal investigations part 1 by M Harper, October 24, 2015.

Weak and trembling, his vision blurs.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
 (quoting)
 A bullet's trajectory doesn't lie.
 (pause)
 If only human beings were so infallible.

Harper convulses, body fighting against the gas.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
 I note here you refer to the IBIS legacy system.
 (pause)
 Rather outdated, wouldn't you say?

Contorting in painful spasms now, teeth clenched tightly.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
 I require an answer.

Harper can barely muster a response through labored breathing.

HARPER
It's the...b-best we had at the time.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
Times change though, don't they
Mister Harper?

His body heaves. VOMITS onto the floor with a repulsive SPLAT.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
Oh dear.
(pause)
Clean up in lane five.

HARPER'S FACE

A twisted mask of suffering and humiliation.

Unresponsive, barely conscious.

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

No more teddy's or crayons. Nikki rocks back and forth, clearly suffering drug withdrawal.

Kerensky sits across from her, wearing a pair of Google glasses for real-time transcription.

An A4 page displaying cellphone logs is on the table between them, highlighting the call Nikki made to Harper last night.

KERENSKY
What was the purpose of that phone
call, Nikki?

NIKKI
Wasn't me.

Kerensky reclines.

KERENSKY
Where are they?

She thinks, biting her nails.

NIKKI
Gimme your pen.

KERENSKY
Why?

Nikki flips the paper, revealing its blank side.

Kerensky, skeptical, hands her the Montblanc from his suit pocket.

She begins to sketch covertly, paper resting on her lap.

KERENSKY
Whatchya' drawing?

Scribbling away.

NIKKI
Secret map.

The Detective plays it cool, masking his dread.

KERENSKY
What are we gonna find there, Nikki?

Nearly done, just a few more refinements.

KERENSKY
Are they alive?

She presents him with the completed drawing.

INSERT - PAPER

An obese swine, dressed in a suit and tie, wearing chunky spectacles.

Kerensky massages his temple, migraine swelling. Folds it up, discreetly acquiring it as evidence of her hand strokes.

She inexplicably launches into 'Here with me' by Dido.

NIKKI
(singing)
*Oh, I am what I am.
I'll do what I want.*

KERENSKY
(overlapping)
Do you know of any other persons who
might know their whereabouts?

NIKKI
(louder)
*But I can't hide.
And I won't go, I won't sleep...*

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY (LATER)

Dan leans in eagerly, sipping from a styrofoam cup.

KERENSKY

...and you also understand you're not under arrest, you're not accused of anything.

DAN

Yep, nah, happy to help in any way I can.

(takes a sip)

Shoot.

KERENSKY

It's my understanding you threatened Harper last night.

Dan sits back, not jovial anymore.

DAN

Where'd you hear that?

KERENSKY

It's something I've uncovered on surveillance footage.

DAN

The canoodle in the car park? Dirty dog was copping a feel.

Kerensky nods, doesn't believe him.

KERENSKY

Thirty minutes prior to that death threat...

Dan shifts uncomfortably.

KERENSKY (CONT'D)

...were you involved in any activity near Harper's vehicle?

DAN

Ay?

KERENSKY

Did you put anything under his windscreen?

DAN

Why would I?

KERENSKY

It's obvious you two boys don't get along.

DAN
 Look, sometimes I don't think, I
 react.

(takes a sip)
 Especially after a few ales.

Dan glances around as if ensuring their privacy.

Leans in.

DAN
 (hushed)
 What if your superiors were to
 investigate you for assaulting a
 colleague in a cafe bathroom?
 (pause)
 It's the booze, mate. Sometimes we
 say and do things we regret, ay?

Their stares lock.

KERENSKY
 That what you tell Layna?

Dan slides the empty cup across the table. Stands up.

DAN
 Hope you find them.

Pats him on the shoulder. Walks out.

KERENSKY'S FACE

Suppressed rage.

INT. FIRING RANGE - TARGET ZONE - DAY

HARPER'S FACE

Eyelids fluttering, pain throbbing.

With a deep, shaky breath, regains his bearings.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
 Still no inkling of why you're here?

Harper scoffs, hasn't got a clue.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
 Does the name Belmont mean something
 to you?

Harper struggles to recall.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
Think, Mister Harper. Cast your
addled mind to the photograph.

FLASH CUT TO: The A4-sized printed family portrait on Harper's windscreen. Belmont, with his Wife, Son, and Daughter.

BACK TO SCENE

He looks up.

HARPER
The family.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
They were. Once. But you completely
destroyed that.
(pause)
Like a projectile pulverizing a
picture frame, leaving nothing but
fragments, echoes.

Harper moans weakly.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
Gunpowder Falls State Park. December
12, 2008.

His memories begin to trickle back.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
Your ballistics testimony convicted
an innocent man of murder.

FLASHBACK MONTAGE

In monochrome.

-Tall trees surround a secluded nighttime campsite where a family of four have set up.

-Belmont and his Wife silhouetted in their tent.

-He stands, aims a rifle.

-A gunshot, BANG.

-She slumps dead.

BACK TO SCENE

Harper's gaze, lost in recollection.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
Now you recall, don't you?

HARPER

Vaguely.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)

The prosecutor presented a brief of evidence that discounted any possibility that another person committed the act, did he not?

HARPER

I...I believe so.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)

There are two narratives, Mister Harper. Only one was investigated.

(pause)

Scenario A suggests a loving husband shot his wife without apparent motive. In scenario B, there exists the possibility of an external assailant.

Harper shakes his head.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)

Was any evidence to support scenario B downplayed?

HARPER

N-not that I'm aware of, no.

BUZZ, red light.

Advancing.

HARPER

Please!

Still advancing.

A long beat.

CLANG

100 METERS FROM TRIPWIRE

Harper breathes heavily.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)

Fingerprints, footprints, D N A, all belonging to an unknown perpetrator. All suppressed.

QUICK FLASHES

-Muddy footprints imprinted on dirt.

-A complex DNA diagram on a computer screen.

-Microscopic fibers, suspicious and enigmatic.

BACK TO SCENE

HARPER
To what end?

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
To secure a conviction.

Harper looks up.

HARPER
You're Belmont.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
Who and where is this unknown perpetrator?

HARPER
There wasn't...I don't know.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
Was any attempt made to apprehend this person?

HARPER
There was no person!

BUZZ, red light.

HARPER
Fuck!

Advancing.

Still advancing.

A long beat.

CLANG

90 METERS FROM TRIPWIRE

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
A Remington 700 hunting rifle was discovered.

Harper tries to calm his breathing.

HARPER
Yes, you owned the weapon. The casing recovered was a match to that gun.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
How many casings were recovered,
Mister Harper?

HARPER
One.

BUZZ, red light.

Advancing, Harper grimaces.

Still advancing.

A long beat.

CLANG

80 METERS FROM TRIPWIRE

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
There were two. Indicating after his
wife was killed, Belmont returned
fire, thus causing the assailant to
flee.

FLASHBACK MONTAGE

-The family campsite, Belmont and his Wife share a tender
moment inside their tent.

-A gunshot, BANG.

-Belmont rushes outside, panic in his eyes, aiming a rifle.

-He fires at a retreating figure, BANG.

-Pitch dark forest devours the escaping silhouette.

-Overwhelmed with distress, cradling her in his arms.

-The children wake in terror, their CRIES pierce the night.

BACK TO SCENE

HARPER
No.

BUZZ, red light.

Advancing.

Still advancing, desperation intensifying.

A beat.

CLANG

70 METERS FROM TRIPWIRE

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)

Two shell casings, Mister Harper. One belonging to the Remington. The other, to the true killers weapon.

HARPER

Your children testified to one shot being fired!

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)

Ah yes, child protective services manipulation of their innocent, impressionable minds. Molding their naivety into a scenario that supported your version of events.

HARPER

You c-confessed under interrogation.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)

No food, no water, intimidation, sleeplessness.

(pause)

Anyone would.

HARPER

There was nothing to suggest coercion.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)

Of course not. This was a deliberate collusion between corrupt parties.

Harper shakes his head 'no'.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)

Were trial jury members selected by the prosecutor?

HARPER

That couldn't happen.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)

He was rather selective, focusing on those persons who could be swayed by emotional arguments, and predisposed to believe the prosecutions version of events.

Harper pleads.

HARPER

It was a fair process.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
 The trial was a sham, Mister Harper.
 Cross examination was limited,
 evidence withheld, data suppressed.

(pause)

All topped off by the prosecutors
 Oscar winning performance as the
 concerned public servant.

HARPER
 I...I just did my job.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
 The pathologist also did her job,
 didn't she?

HARPER
 Of course.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
 Yet she chose to omit crucial
 information from the autopsy report
 that could have suggested an
 alternate scenario.

HARPER
 No.

BUZZ, red light.

Advancing.

HARPER
 Fucking hell!

Still advancing.

A long beat.

CLANG

60 METERS FROM TRIPWIRE

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
 What did her report indicate?

HARPER'S FACE

Mind racing, sifting through memories.

QUICK FLASHES

-Autopsy details on a computer screen.

-Polaroids of a cold, blue corpse.

-A recovered bullet fragment.

BACK TO SCENE

HARPER

Uh...shot at close range, inside her tent.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)

Wrong. The bullet entry wound indicated some distance between the shooter and victim, did it not?

HARPER

No.

BUZZ, red light.

Advancing.

HARPER

Please!!

Harper notices a triangular shard of steel dangling from the ceiling; it could easily cut through his zip-ties.

Still advancing, waiting for the opportune time.

He thrashes wildly to dislodge it, CLANG-CLANG-CLANG.

HARPER'S HANDS

Palms outstretched, waiting to catch it. But it just falls past him onto the floor.

CLANG

50 METERS FROM TRIPWIRE

HARPER'S FACE

Contorted with fear.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)

The autopsy was manipulated to support scenario A.

HARPER

Her opinion aligned w-with the prosecution theory.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)

Toxicology. Again, misrepresented.

Harper looks into the control room.

HARPER
 You had alcohol in your system, I
 remember that distinctly.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
 The levels detected were well within
 the realms of normalcy.

QUICK FLASHES

- Examining a blood sample slide under a microscope.
- Analyzing the presence of alcohol-related compounds.
- The pathologist's pen strokes, altering a formula.
- Writing in a higher value beyond the line.
- Doctoring the report with calculations and changes.

BACK TO SCENE

HARPER
 She wouldn't.

BUZZ, red light.

Advancing.

Still advancing. Harper thrusts backward, CLANG, to dislodge
 another shard along his path.

HARPER'S HANDS

Desperately snatching at the falling fragment, unable to
 grasp it.

A beat.

CLANG

40 METERS FROM TRIPWIRE

Harper's panic increases. Tripwire glistening, beckoning.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
 I have your doctored ballistics
 report right here, Mister Harper.
 (pause)
 Now is the time for confession.

HARPER'S FACE

Pale, overwhelmed with dread.

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - FORENSIC LAB - DAY

MONTAGE

-On Layna's computer, the database algorithm compares the scanned tread pattern with thousands of entries.

-The screen displays a series of potential matches, each with a percentage of similarity.

-She narrows down the options, examining each potential match more closely.

-Dips, grooves, sipes, depth, diameter, width, sidewall markings, tread compound, load index, speed rating.

-With a determined look, selects a specific tire tread pattern that appears to match the evidence.

LAYNA'S FACE

Intense and focused, cross-referencing the selected pattern.

INT. HARPER'S TOWNHOUSE - ENSUITE BATHROOM - DAY

Kerensky stands at the vanity. Analyst 1 exits, carrying a satchel containing Harper's vape-pen.

RING-RING

Incoming call from: Layna

KERENSKY
Whatchya' have?

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - FORENSIC LAB - DAY

Layna paces back and forth.

LAYNA
Firestone radial A T X, after market replacements, last manufactured 2012.

Flumps into her chair, eyes on the computer screen.

LAYNA
Good news for us, it wasn't a best seller. Only one dealership in the state sold A T X in the last 12 months. One set was purchased by a customer living in Towson, that's only a few miles from where Harper's car was found --

KERENSKY (ON PHONE)
Layna...

ALAYNA
It's Drayton.

INT. HARPER'S TOWNHOUSE - ENSUITE BATHROOM - DAY

Kerensky straightens up.

KERENSKY
Our Drayton?

LAYNA (ON PHONE)
I've got her case file in front of
me. Reported missing six weeks ago
after failing to attend a family
gathering. Retired in 2019.
(contemplative pause)
She was a good mentor.

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - FORENSIC LAB - DAY

KERENSKY (ON PHONE)
Why use her vehicle to transport
Harper? Someone goading us?

LAYNA
Be perplexed, don't be misled.

KERENSKY (ON PHONE)
What?

LAYNA
Her parting advice.
(pause)
The car was never found, but her
cellphone was recovered at a no-tell
motel. Cash only, no surveillance.

KERENSKY (ON PHONE)
We know all this, Layna.

LAYNA
What if someone is fixing on
departmental staff?

INT. HARPER'S TOWNHOUSE - ENSUITE BATHROOM - DAY

Kerensky contemplates.

KERENSKY
Take a look at every case they worked
together, see what jumps out.
(pause)
Any progress at the impound?

LAYNA (ON PHONE)
No third party prints or D N A. You
still in the game?

KERENSKY
Alexia's off the grid. No signs of a
struggle, but we did find traces of
an unknown powder along with...other
substances.

LAYNA (ON PHONE)
Relax, the weed's prescribed. Send me
the sample.

KERENSKY
Toxicology can run it.

LAYNA (ON PHONE)
Precision on the field, every move
counts.

He relents.

KERENSKY
Pass me the play when you have
something.

INT. FIRING RANGE - TARGET ZONE - DAY

Harper languishes on the target frame, quivering in
distress.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
You altered ballistics evidence to
match the prosecutors version of
events, conveniently pointing to
scenario A.

HARPER
No --

BUZZ, red light.

Advancing.

HARPER
Your own children's testimony pointed
in that direction!

Still advancing.

A long beat.

CLANG

30 METERS FROM TRIPWIRE

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
 What of the retrial? Your presence
 was sorely missed.
 (pause)
 Why choose not to rebuff your
 original findings?

HARPER
 It w-was deemed unnecessary.

A moment.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
 Shall I present the highlights?

HARPER
 I...I don't --

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
 (quoting)
 The fragment recovered from her body
 was consistent with a Remington 700,
 in particular the surface markings
 and rifling pattern.

Harper slumps.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
 These are your words.

HARPER
 Yes.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
 (quoting)
 Distinctive breach face marks and
 firing pin impressions led me to that
 conclusion.

HARPER
 Yes, I remember.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
 Surprising revelation one, newer
 microscopic analysis of the fragments
 striations revealed a different
 story.

HARPER
 I don't know, I --

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
 The lands and grooves on the bullets
 surface did not, in fact, align with
 the expected characteristics of a
 Remington 700 round.

Harper shakes his head in disbelief.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
What was the true caliber of the
murder weapon, Mister Harper?

HARPER
Please...

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
Surprising revelation two, advanced
electron microscopy identified unique
metallurgical elements within the
fragment.

HARPER
I wasn't there, I --

RANGE MASTER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
These elements are not consistent
with Remington's manufacturing
process, but rather, are in line with
the composition of Glock 22 bullets.

HARPER
Maybe she...I was only presented with
the fragment, I didn't extract it.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
Laying blame won't save you, Mister
Harper. Even if that were so, do you
still deny there was collusion?

HARPER
There was no collusion!

BUZZ, red light.

Advancing.

HARPER
No! Stop!!

Still advancing.

A long beat.

CLANG

20 METERS FROM TRIPWIRE

HARPER'S FACE

Fighting desperately to control his breathing, perilously
close to obliteration.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)

The pathologist also neglected to reevaluate her autopsy, not bothering to consider alternative explanations, regardless of the emerged evidence that contradicted the original narrative.

HARPER

That doesn't imply any...s-she's no longer with the department.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)

Indeed.

(pause)

Look to your left.

Harper's gaze is drawn to lane 3.

Gasps at the sight of Drayton's skeleton hanging on a target frame. From behind, only the feet visible, suspended limply.

DRAYTON'S CARCASS

Body punctured by around 30 biopsy needles, protruding like acupuncture pins, some scattered on the floor where flesh has deteriorated.

10 meters ahead, within the cubicle, the remains of the grim contraption that launched them - tripwired and activated weeks ago.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)

Her incessant denials are what led me to you.

HARPER

S-she...wouldn't lie.

BUZZ, red light.

Advancing, trembling in horror, turning his head away from the tripwire.

Still advancing.

A long beat.

CLANG

10 METERS FROM TRIPWIRE

Anxiety at boiling point, breath quickening, glancing hopelessly in all directions.

Harper's eyes stop on a pile of papers strewn on the floor, just to his right.

Looks up at the sprinkler system in the ceiling; a fire alarm will bring the cavalry.

HARPER'S HANDS

He urgently TEARS a strip from the paper bullseye against his spine.

Stuffs it into his left pocket.

Then another strip follows.

Tearing, collecting, filling.

Until he can't reach any more.

With one hand, he dips into the pocket, scrunching and molding the collected fragments into a clump.

He compresses the clump with a firm squeeze, fashioning it into a long, tubular shape.

Pulls it up about halfway, the top of the wad sticks out.

HARPER'S FACE

Taking a few deep breaths to steady himself.

HARPER'S HANDS

Now, he reaches into his right pocket and carefully retrieves the penlight.

Clutching it tightly, he uses his left hand to gently unscrew the base from the top.

Separating it into two tubular pieces.

The bottom piece goes back into his right pocket.

With his left palm outstretched and ready, he rotates the top piece horizontally.

Very slowly.

A single AAA battery pops out, and he catches it, wrapping his fingers around it firmly.

HARPER'S FACE

He exhales.

Calms his breathing.

HARPER'S HANDS

The top piece of the penlight goes back into his right pocket.

He carefully secretes the battery into his left pocket, with the paper wad still sticking out.

Next, he retrieves the packet of gum.

Slowly and meticulously extracts one silver foil-wrapped stick.

The gum packet joins the penlight's bottom piece in his right pocket.

With both hands, he unfolds the aluminum wrapper.

Removes the candy, placing it into his right pocket.

Holding the silver foil wrapper, he unfolds it into a large square.

Then moves it to his left hand.

With his right hand, he delicately takes out the battery, handling it with utmost care.

He wraps the square over it, ensuring it touches both ends, the positive (+) and negative (-).

The aluminum-coated wax paper chemically reacts with the lithium, splitting in half, and tiny corner edges ignite into flames.

He rubs the two embers together, causing them to merge and expand, enveloping his fingers.

He SCREAMS in agony, clutching the battery tightly but inadvertently drops the burning wrapper.

It floats to the floor, away from the paper pile.

Fizzles out in a pitiful gust of smoke.

HARPER

Fuck!

HARPER'S HANDS

He pats out the fire that has spread to his shirt cuffs, extinguishing it.

Smoke swirls and dissipates.

Harper maintains his grip on the battery, fist quivering.

HARPER'S FACE

Psyches himself up with a few more deep breaths.

Now prepared for pain, he repeats the same delicate steps.

HARPER'S FACE

Unwrapping the last gum stick, contorting with each step – grimacing, concentrating, wincing.

He's almost done.

HARPER'S HANDS

He wraps the gum wrapper around the battery, and it ignites, splitting once more.

Rubs the singed edges together, flames erupt.

Harper grimaces from the searing heat, but this time, he doesn't drop it.

He clutches the burning wrapper in his right hand while using his left to extract the paper clump.

He joins the two items together, and with a WHOOSH, the paper wad is set ablaze.

Harper discards the now redundant wrapper, which drops to the floor.

Tosses the burning clump to the ground as best he can with limited movement.

It lands mere millimeters from the paper pile.

It smolders on the floor, just shy of igniting the papers.

Harper frantically pats out remnants of flame from his burning shirt, battery in his fist.

The burning paper wad starts to diminish, he thrashes wildly, CLANG-CLANG-CLANG.

HARPER

Burn!

A minuscule gust is all it takes – the paper pile erupts in flames with a resounding FWOOSH.

INT. FIRING RANGE - SHOOTING BAYS - DAY

Range Master's silhouette stands up, watching the scene unfold with curiosity.

INT. FIRING RANGE - TARGET ZONE - DAY

Harper laughs deliriously as the fire intensifies, growing larger and fiercer.

HARPER'S FEET

Rising flames lick at his shoes, he flinches.

Flames engulf him with a fierce FWOOSH, the paper pile erupts in a fiery ROAR, casting orange hues into the surrounding darkness.

The duct tape around his ankles smolders.

Harper desperately kicks his legs free, flailing in a vain attempt to stave off the rising blaze.

His anguished SCREAMS fill the air as he writhes, flames slowly creeping up his legs.

HARPER

No!!

The fire climbs higher, consuming his knees, thighs, torso.

Harper is ablaze, head to toe, SCREAMING, burning to death.

He's done for, roll credits.

INT. FIRING RANGE - CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Range Master's finger hovers over a button on a desk-mounted control panel.

An LED display reads: 'Fire suppression - off'

Beat.

Harper WAILS.

Another beat.

Range Master presses it.

INT. FIRING RANGE - TARGET ZONE - DAY

With a reverberating WHOOSH, the sprinkler system kicks in.

Water SPRAYS out in graceful arcs, drenching the interior with a continuous HISS.

Harper twitches and convulses as the flames are quenched, gradually dissipating.

HISS

The paper pile extinguishes, devolving into soaked ash.

HISSS

With a SQUEAK, the water abruptly ceases, leaving only silence.

DRIP-DROP

Harper hangs limply, his clothing now tattered rags draped loosely over blackened skin, smoke rises from singed flesh.

Drenched like a drowned rat, moaning weakly.

DRIP-DROP

Somewhere within him, a glimmer of hope that help will arrive.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
Very resourceful.
(pause)
But ultimately pointless.

INT. FIRING RANGE - SHOOTING BAYS - DAY

It looks like Range Master is cupping a hand behind an ear.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
No alarms, no phone calls. No distant sirens.

INT. FIRING RANGE - TARGET ZONE - DAY

Harper blacks out.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
Oh dear.

Slumps like a rag-doll.

Electrocuted.

Burned.

Defeated.

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - FORENSIC LAB - DAY

MONTAGE

-Layna examines Harper's vape-pen under a high-powered microscope, adjusts the lenses for a closer look.

-Examines the surface, searching for any residue or chemical traces.

-With a fine-tipped swab, she delicately collects a sample from its power-button.

-Places the sample into a small labeled vial.

-Loads the vial into a mass spectrometer, an analytical instrument used to identify chemical compounds.

-It generates a readout, displaying data on the composition of the sample.

-Enters the data from the analysis into a specialized software program.

-The program cross-references the results with a database of known compounds.

-There's a match to a chemical formula identified as: 'NaN3'

BACK TO SCENE

A printer WHIRS to life, spitting out a paper report summarizing her findings.

Layna retrieves an evidence satchel containing Drayton's cellphone. Slips it out, prepares to repeat the process.

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY

Kerensky sits, encroached by piles of paperwork. A quarter of the room dedicated to their investigation.

Layna stands before a cork-board, on it 2 printouts tacked side-by-side depicting complex chemical formulae.

LAYNA
It's exposition time.

KERENSKY
Make it snappy.

LAYNA
I ran chemical analysis on Drayton's cellphone. Detected residue on the screen coating.

Kerensky listens intently.

LAYNA
I compared it with the sample taken from Harper's vape.
(pause)
Sodium azide. One press, or, in Drayton's case, one swipe, would have rendered them unconscious in minutes.

She TAPS the board with her finger.

LAYNA
Check out the purity and isotopic
structure. They're identical

KERENSKY
From the same batch?

Layna nods.

LAYNA
From a commercial quantity used
primarily in the agricultural
industry.

Kerensky massages his temple.

LAYNA
Stay with me. I contacted the
manufacturer, that led me to a
supplier out of state.
(pause)
I found one online purchase on April
17 this year by a Mister Stanley
Belmont, a local farmer.

Layna pulls up a chair, sits next to him.

LAYNA
Fourteen years ago, Belmont was tried
for the shooting murder of his wife
during a family camping trip.
(pause)
Any cogs turning?

KERENSKY
Someone else's gig, didn't pay much
attention back then.

She rifles through a dossier, slips out a page.

INSERT - MUG SHOT

Belmont, 30, sullen, bathed in unforgiving fluorescent
light.

LAYNA
He insisted it was someone else, but
his two infant children were unable
to corroborate his story.

KERENSKY
Where are they now?

LAYNA
Stint in foster care, then emigrated
overseas.

Layna shows him another document.

LAYNA
With lack of evidence supporting his
version of events, he was convicted
and sentenced to 25 years. Drayton's
pathology report secured that
conviction.

KERENSKY
Do I need to ask who worked
ballistics?

LAYNA
Your star quarterback. One of his
first cases.

She pulls another folder closer, flips it open.

LAYNA
Fast forward to January this year,
there was a retrial.
(pause)
It was found to be a wrongful
conviction based on updated forensic
tech. He was exonerated, walked
February five.

KERENSKY'S FACE

Eyes glazed, gaining clarity.

KERENSKY
Got an address?

Layna proudly hands him a printout.

LAYNA
Way ahead on the scoreboard.

He takes it, stands up.

KERENSKY
Well played, Layna.

Equips his cellphone.

KERENSKY
Get me a Swat team, now.
(pause)
On my way.

END CALL

KERENSKY
Who prosecuted?

LAYNA
Wescott.

KERENSKY
Compile a list of everyone involved.
We'll have to notify 'em, arrange
protective custody.

He leaves. Layna gets up, snatches another page, follows him to the door.

LAYNA
Ballistics pointed to a hunting rifle
found at the scene owned by Belmont.
But that too was found to be in
error.

Kerensky halts, reads it.

KERENSKY
Maybe Harper fucked up, made a
mistake.

LAYNA
That's why you hate him, isn't it?
His untarnished record.

Hands it back.

KERENSKY
I don't hate the guy --

LAYNA
You've been a prick ever since his
divorce.

KERENSKY
So she pushed him around, boo-hoo. My
missus handles the finances, makes
decisions --

LAYNA
Does she make you sleep on the floor
and wake you up with boiling water?

KERENSKY
What?

Layna's eyes well up.

LAYNA
Starve you? Stab you?!

He holds her shoulders.

KERENSKY
I didn't know.

She embraces him tightly. The Detective reassures her, a quiet moment of shared pain.

KERENSKY
I'm gonna go get him, ok?

She nods, steps back.

Kerensky draws his pistol.

LAYNA
(sniffling)
You're going into the field?

Slides the chamber, KA-CHINK.

KERENSKY
The field is my game, junior.

Layna almost smiles.

LAYNA
Stay on your toes.

He swipes the door open, BEEP.

As it's closing.

LAYNA
White, two sugars!

Returns to the computer, takes a seat.

TYPING feverishly, her concerned expression illuminated by monitor glare.

RING-RING

Incoming call from: Dan

Grabs her cell, dabs a tear.

LAYNA
Forgive me, I should have called --

DAN (ON PHONE)
Where are you? I fired off six messages.

LAYNA
I'm working late.

DAN (ON PHONE)
You coming home?

LAYNA
I can't right now, you know why.

DAN (ON PHONE)
You think he's more important than me?

LAYNA
Of course not.

DAN (ON PHONE)
Pause and reload, get some chow in you, ay?

LAYNA
Later.

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - LOBBY - DAY

Scaffolding, paint tins, faded wall patches where portraits once hung. The echoes of antiquity yielding to rebirth.

Dan chills at the reception window, carrying a paper bag, elbow on the counter like he owns the place.

DAN
I got your fave, crab cake sandwich, extra Old Bay.

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY

Exasperated, she tidies the workspace.

LAYNA
Give me a minute.

END CALL

Quickly freshens up.

INT. FIRING RANGE - TARGET ZONE - DAY

HARPER'S FACE

Contorting as consciousness slowly returns.

He moans, coughing, drooling.

Body still grappling with the aftermath of the fire, nervous system battling the ever increasing haze of lead dust.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
We've been waiting, Mister Harper.

HARPER'S POV

Inside the control room, 2 silhouettes gradually merge into 1 as his blurred vision stabilizes.

BACK TO SCENE

HARPER
We?

A moment.

ALEXIA (O.S.)
Dad?

Harper's eyes widen in shock, his heart skips a beat. Trying to play it cool for her sake, voice trembling.

HARPER
Hi princess.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
If a bullet to the brain won't
dislodge the truth, perhaps a blade
to Alexia's neck will.

HARPER
No...no!

INT. FIRING RANGE - SHOOTING BAYS - DAY

Range Master exits the control room. Moves to the armory.

A numerical keypad chimes, beep-beep-beep-beep. It's heavy steel door GROANS open.

He strolls inside. Lights flicker on, bzzt, casting a bright glow over the weapon counter.

ALEXIA (O.S.)
I'm scared, Dad.

Harper's pulse rate is through the roof.

HARPER
Daddy's here, I'm right here.

He strains to get a glimpse inside. There's activity within, a flurry of movement.

The roller-door SLAMS shut, leaving only a narrow sliver of illumination escaping from the edges.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
 These target frames are rather
 versatile. A touch of engineering
 finesse, and one is able to fashion a
 fully functioning guillotine.

Harper writhes maniacally, CLANG-CLANG-CLANG.

HARPER
 Please!!

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
 I considered decapitation most
 appropriate for your daughters
 demise.

HARPER
 No!!

ALEXIA (O.S.)
 Daddy?

Harper loses it, crying hysterically.

INT. FIRING RANGE - CONTROL ROOM - DAY

On a wall, Range Master's shadow steps back inside.

His hand hovers over an improvised lever, connected to a
 makeshift tripwire mechanism stretching into the armory.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
 Confess.

INT. FIRING RANGE - TARGET ZONE - DAY

ALEXIA (O.S.)
 Help me!

HARPER
 Please don't hurt her! Please!! --

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
 She dies in 10 seconds --

HARPER
 No!!

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
 9...

ALEXIA (O.S.)
 Daddy!!

The ethereal ECHO of Belmont's children SCREAMING, mingling
 with the resonance of Alexia's VOICE.

Long-repressed memories surge forth, breaking through the barricade of trauma that held them for so long.

Overlapping SPEECH melds into a discordant wall of WHITE NOISE, culminating in a deafening, cacophonous CRESCENDO.

Silence.

Darkness.

HARPER
(childlike)
Daddy's gone a-hunting.

A moment.

HARPER
(singing)
*To get a little rabbit skin.
To wrap his baby bunting in.*

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
Focus, Mister Harper.

Mouthing words silently, engaged in one-sided dialogue with invisible figures.

ALEXIA (O.S.)
Dad, what's wrong?

HARPER
(to the ceiling)
Why are you so good at drawing, hmm?

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
Mister Harper.

QUICK FLASHES

-The family campsite, crime scene established, red and blue lights pulsate in the dark.

-Harper (aged 25) crouched in long grass, collects a Glock 22 shell casing.

-Slips it slyly into his pocket.

-Drayton's traumatized face, operating a forensic computer device on the bonnet of a Police car.

-They exchange a knowing look.

BACK TO SCENE

HARPER
 We found a U S B drive in your
 possession. There were photos,
 videos.

HARPER'S FACE

Distant, unfocused.

HARPER
 I saw things I can't unsee.
 (catatonic)
 Sounds, I can't unhear.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
 To what are you referring?

HARPER
 We couldn't definitively identify
 you.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
 Are you alleging abuse? Why not
 present such damning material, if it
 exists...

HARPER
 (overlapping)
 We destroyed it.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 ...and formally prosecute?

HARPER
 Conviction was unlikely. A pig mask,
 a tutu, it could have been anyone.

A moment.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
 Perhaps it was.

Harper scoffs.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
 So you and Misses Drayton conspired
 in secret, embellishing an existing
 scenario to ensure incarceration.

HARPER
 It was the only way to stop you. To
 save them.

INT. FIRING RANGE - SHOOTING BAYS - DAY

Ranger Master steps away from the glass, not visible anymore.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
How liberating it is to confess our untruths. A weight discarded, the burden removed.

INT. FIRING RANGE - TARGET ZONE - DAY

Harper's mind clears.

HARPER
(grateful)
Yes, yes.

He pleads.

HARPER
Let her go.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
It's time to say goodbye.

HARPER
Please, no!

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
Is there anything further? Time is ticking.

HARPER
Alexia?

ALEXIA (O.S.)
I'm here, Dad.

HARPER
When you were little. You heard fighting and we always locked the door...

ALEXIA (O.S.)
I remember.

HARPER (CONT'D)
...Mommy was hurting Daddy. I tried to hide it, told the surgeons I was self harming.
(pause)
They said my organs were failing. That I had 10 days. That's when I knew I had to leave.

ALEXIA (O.S.)

Ok.

HARPER

To save my life. To make a life, for
you and me.

INT. FIRING RANGE - CONTROL ROOM - DAY

A LAPTOP

On the screen, grainy monochrome CCTV shows a Swat armored
vehicle and a Police car creeping up a dirt driveway.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)

Oh dear.

EXT. BALTIMORE COUNTY - FARMSTEAD - DAY

Sprawling acreage dotted with trees. An old clapboard home
nestled in the center. Adjacent, a rectangular brick barn.

Birds TWITTER, the wind WHISPERS through rustling leaves.

The tranquility disrupted by the faint HUM of a Police
surveillance drone.

ON DRONE CAM

An elevated, top-down aerial perspective reveals a dozen
dark figures converging across the landscape.

DRONE PILOT (V.O.)

Visual on target, over.

BACK TO SCENE

A heavily armed SWAT TEAM prowl through foliage, clad in
body armor, machine guns aimed.

With a hand signal, they split into two groups. 'Alpha'
surround the house, 'Bravo' take the barn.

EXT. FARMSTEAD - HOUSE - DAY

A ramshackle porch, creaky floorboards, weathered pillars.

Kerensky stands at the front door, pistol drawn, bullet-
proof vest over a suit and tie. A wind-chime TINKLES.

KERENSKY

Police search warrant!

Kerensky nods, SWAT 1 complies, SMASHES inside with a
battering ram.

Alpha team charge inside.

SWAT 2
Move, move, move!

EXT. FARMSTEAD - BARN - DAY

Aged brick, rows of cracked windows covered by corrugated iron and wood paneling.

Bravo team assemble before it's chained up double-doors.

SWAT 3 operates pneumatic bolt cutters, with a sharp CRACK, they breach.

Rickety timber GROANS open, they enter.

SWAT 4
Go, go!

SWAT 3
Watch your corners!

INT. FARMSTEAD - BARN - DAY

Empty. Crumbling framework, tired beams. Patches of light streak through gaps in the roof.

SWAT 3
Clear!

Ahead, the lower half of a vehicle peeks out beneath a tarpaulin.

They approach cautiously.

SWAT 4
Stay low.

INT. FARMSTEAD - HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Dilapidated decor. Dust particles catch sunlight streaming through tattered curtains, cobwebs cling to the ceiling.

Kerensky steps inside.

SWAT 1 (O.S.)
Clear!

Heavy footsteps ECHO.

SWAT 2 (O.S.)
All clear!

Holsters a Glock, brings his cellphone to his ear

SWAT 3 (ON PHONE)
Kia Sorento, white, license plate X J
N 8 4 7.

KERENSKY
That's her. Secure the perimeter,
Bravo.

SWAT 1 (O.S.)
Sir, in here!

Kerensky whirls.

INT. FARMSTEAD - HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Hurries toward a bedroom on the right.

Passes by Swat 2, crouched before a steel door beneath the staircase. Knob missing, peering through a keyhole.

INT. FARMSTEAD - HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Ragged furniture, neglected and time-worn.

Kerensky enters. Belmont's skeleton hangs from the ceiling via a self-made noose, rope CREAKING, insects SWARMING.

Hand on mouth to stifle a retch, he grabs a framed photo from a dressing table. Wipes off the dust.

INSERT - FAMILY PHOTO

The same picture that was on Harper's windscreen.

KERENSKY (O.S.)
Wrong Belmont.

His gaze shifts between two children. Conflicted, realizing that one of them is their suspect.

Calls Layna.

RING-RING

LAYNA (ON PHONE)
Find them?

KERENSKY
Negative. Did family attend the
retrial?

LAYNA (ON PHONE)
I can check.

Belmont's skull sways gently, empty eye sockets shift to face Kerensky.

KERENSKY
The field just got rearranged. It's
one of the kids, Layna.

LAYNA (ON PHONE)
On it.

KERENSKY
Keep me in the huddle.

END CALL

Swat 1 notices a large key on a string necklace dangling
around the corpses neck.

Rips it off.

Steps out, throws it to Swat 2 in the hallway.

INT. FARMSTEAD - HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

He catches it mid-air.

SWAT 1
Try it.

Swat 2 slots it in, CLICK.

Kerensky approaches. Sees an electrical wire duct-taped to
the wall, leading in through the door-frame.

The key turns.

KERENSKY
Wait! --

EXT. FARMSTEAD - HOUSE - DAY

A deafening KABOOM erupts - fire and smoke billow through
SHATTERED windows.

Swat members outside are hurled through the air, torn apart
by flying shrapnel.

Utter devastation, the home now a smoldering heap of twisted
steel and charred timber.

ON DRONE CAM

Flames CRACKLE, plumes rise. The entire team are wiped out.

DRONE PILOT (V.O.)
Squad is down, I need E M S on site
right now!

INT. FIRING RANGE - CONTROL ROOM - DAY

A LAPTOP

With a mouse-click, Range Master closes the video feed, now replaced by CRACKLING static.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
My father is deceased, Mister Harper.

INT. FIRING RANGE - TARGET ZONE - DAY

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
After you inflicted fourteen years of hell upon him, he was unable to reconnect with his children.
(pause)
You took his life. My life. A man shattered even further by the indignity of suicide.

HARPER
I saved you! You were both too young to remember!

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
Now I take from you, as you've taken from me.

ALEXIA (O.S.)
Dad!

HARPER
Please, please!!

A guillotine blade SLAMS down.

Silence.

HARPER
Lexie?
(pause)
Alexia!!

The armory lights flicker off. Trembling with anguish, Harper SCREAMS.

HARPER
Baby!!

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
Our interrogation is concluded.
(pause)
Rules are rules, Mister Harper. You're free.

The target zone lights dim, shrouding him in darkness.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
Free to rot.

INT. FIRING RANGE - CONTROL ROOM - DAY

A TABLE

Range Master drops an empty duffel-bag beside the laptop.
Ready to pack up and leave.

HARPER (O.S.)
I lied.

Black-gloved hands halt.

INT. FIRING RANGE - TARGET ZONE - DAY

Harper glares into the control room, seething.

HARPER
During your calibration. I left my
wife, she didn't leave me.

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
Indeed you did.

Harper looks up at another triangular shard hanging from the
ceiling, calculating it's falling speed and trajectory.

Not scared anymore, angry.

HARPER
Rules are rules.

He *wants* to be carried forward.

INT. FIRING RANGE - SHOOTING BAYS - DAY

RANGE MASTER (O.S.)
Joining your daughter swiftly in
death.
(pause)
Noble.

Range Master sits down. Preparing to watch the carnage for
his own amusement.

INT. FIRING RANGE - TARGET ZONE - DAY

The BUZZ reverberates, red light oscillates.

Harper advances, getting closer to the waiting shard of
metal above him.

HARPER'S FACE

Mind racing, running intricate calculations, computing trajectory, angle, descent velocity, air resistance, mass, shape, size.

9 METERS FROM TRIPWIRE

He poises himself, leaning forward slightly.

Ready to intercept it accurately by slamming his spine against the frame at the opportune moment.

He closes his eyes, breathes meditatively.

OVER BLACK

Silence.

Emptiness.

Harper's heart BEATS like a drum.

BADOOM-BADOOM-BADOOM

Time slows down.

BADOOM

BADOOM

BADOOM

A loud THUD echoes through the void, a triangular shard of steel tumbles in slow motion.

BADOOM

Tumbling.

BADOOM

Spiraling.

BADOOM

BACK TO SCENE

HARPER'S HANDS

Outstretched palms clasp the shard tightly.

Opens his eyes, exhales deeply.

7 METERS FROM TRIPWIRE

Harper frantically saws through the zip-ties.

Cutting, slicing.

6 METERS FROM TRIPWIRE

Severing, making progress.

5 METERS FROM TRIPWIRE

With a SNAP, his restraints fall to the floor.

4 METERS FROM TRIPWIRE

Hands free, he tugs at the duct-tape around his throat - but it's impossible to unwrap.

INT. FIRING RANGE - SHOOTING BAYS - DAY

Range Master stands up, watching closely.

INT. FIRING RANGE - TARGET ZONE - DAY

2 METERS FROM TRIPWIRE

Harper slices his neck with the shard, he SCREAMS, adhesive tears, blood trickles.

1 METER FROM TRIPWIRE

Carving into flesh, hands growing slipperier.

The duct-tape splits in half. Neck untethered, he bends his body forward.

500 CENTIMETERS FROM TRIPWIRE

The wire scrapes over his burnt hair and across his bruised spine - ever so subtly, not enough to trigger it.

250 CENTIMETERS FROM TRIPWIRE

Harper remains hunched, eyes on the floor. The metal frame and girder behind him hits the tripwire.

The shotgun BLASTS the frame, sending shrapnel flying as it separates from the girder.

Harper drops to the floor with a THUD, the frame still attached to his back via the waist chain.

INT. FIRING RANGE - SHOOTING BAYS - DAY

Range Master leans forward, scans the cubicles.

Harper is out of sight.

INT. FIRING RANGE - TARGET ZONE - DAY

Harper pops up, grabs the shotgun, still in its vise, and aims at the control room.

He reloads, KA-CHINK, the expelled shell casing pirouettes skyward.

Their stares lock.

HARPER
(sarcastic)
Oh dear.

Shoots the silhouette, BOOM.

INT. FIRING RANGE - SHOOTING BAYS - DAY

Range Master is propelled backward, blood SPATTERS on the pellet-riddled glass. It shatters, but remains intact.

INT. FIRING RANGE - TARGET ZONE - DAY

With a CLICK, Harper disengages the vises release mechanism, freeing the shotgun.

He tries to jump over the cubicle, but the steel frame chained to his back won't allow it.

Fumbling at the padlock, sealed shut.

He climbs over, wielding the shotgun, awkwardly SCRAPING through the tight space.

INT. FIRING RANGE - SHOOTING BAYS - DAY

Drops inside, turns right, rushes to the control room.

CONTROL ROOM DOOR

Seizes the handle, rattle-rattle-rattle.

Locked.

Takes a step back, reloads, KA-CHINK.

Shoots it, BOOM.

The door swings open in HAIL of splinters.

INT. FIRING RANGE - CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Dust-coated consoles, a neglected desk housing outdated equipment. A sleek laptop the sole emblem of modernity.

Harper maneuvers inside through the door-frame, twisting his body sideways due to the steel frame affixed to his back.

Ahead, a dingy restroom, tiles broken, door missing. To his right, Ranger Master is slumped, blown back against a wall.

Dressed in all black, wearing a gas mask and a bulky 1970's earphone and microphone headset, torso ruptured by a 12 gauge blast.

Twitching, trying to get up. A river of blood pools.

Harper reloads, KA-CHINK, aims for the final kill.

Watches his assailant's breathing gradually slow.

Until it finally ceases.

A moment.

Lowers the weapon solemnly.

Harper pivots, shimmying out of the room toward the armory.

INT. FIRING RANGE - SHOOTING BAYS - DAY

ARMORY DOOR

On it, a digital keypad lock.

He frantically tries the handle, rattle-rattle-rattle.

HARPER

Lexie!

Then, the roller-door, rattle-rattle. Impossible to get in.

Panicked, he searches for an alternate entrance.

There's a steel hatch. Moves toward it, yanks it open.

It SQUEAKS ajar. A gust of frozen air escapes, hits his face.

INT. FIRING RANGE - COLD STORAGE - DAY

Mostly bare shelves, a few crates of expired food cans. Harper shivers from the permeating chill.

HARPER'S POV

Through a faint haze of frozen mist, Blaze is slumped against the wall, cranium pulverized.

Returns to the armory, aims the shotgun at the keypad. Blasts it.

BOOM

Sparks SPUTTER.

KA-CHINK

BOOM

KA-CHINK

The trigger click-click-click's.

He's out.

Smashes the lock with the butt of the weapon.

BANG

BANG

BANG

Unable to gain entry, he drops to his knees in despair.

Finds Alexia's alphabet bracelet on the floor, scoops it up in his burned, blackened fingers. Clutches it tight.

Curls up into a fetal position, sobbing.

EXT. BALTIMORE COUNTY - FIRING RANGE - DAY

A weathered brick structure surrounded by dense woodland. Junk, dilapidation, overgrown foliage.

A lopsided billboard missing letters faintly reads: 'Big Joe's Gun Galleria'

Harper lets out an ear-splitting, primordial scream.

HARPER (O.S.)

Aargh!!

The forest shudders.

INT. FIRING RANGE - CONTROL ROOM - DAY (LATER)

Harper staggers inside, zombie-like, frame still strapped to his back, soaked in blood, clothing tattered.

Grabs the handset on the rotary-dial phone, brings it to his ear. No dial-tone.

Throws it against the wall, SMASH.

Moves to Range Master's cadaver. Removes the headphones, slips off the gas mask.

It's Belmont's daughter, JADE, now 19, intelligence shining through her youthful face.

Harper shakes his head, torn between sorrow and the horrific necessity of self-defense.

Rifles through her pockets. Finds a cellphone, one bar of power.

Keys in 911.

His gaze falls on Jade's computer.

A LAPTOP

On the screen, Alexia's Instagram page, a selfie video on pause.

A sound editing software program is open, audio waveform across it's interface.

He sets the phone aside, kneels on the floor, fingers hovering over the keyboard.

ON COMPUTER SCREEN

Alt-tabs it to full screen. There's a text box, typed inside is: 'I'm scared, Dad'

BACK TO SCENE

Harper, overwhelmed, clicks 'play'. Her voice ECHOES on loudspeaker.

ALEXIA (V.O.)
I'm scared, Dad.

His excitement surges, leans in.

ON COMPUTER SCREEN

With a mouse-click, he deletes the text. Types in 'Hello'. Presses play.

BACK TO SCENE

ALEXIA (V.O.)
Hello.

With newfound hope, grabs the cell, stands up and dials her number.

RING-RING

RING-RING

AUTOMATED VOICE (ON PHONE)
The number you are calling is either
switched off or unavailable, please
try again later --

Hangs up.

HARPER
Fuck!

Calls Layna.

RING-RING

DAN (ON PHONE)
Who the fucks this?

HARPER
Still screening her calls.

DAN (ON PHONE)
Everyones been looking for you.

HARPER
Put Layna on the phone.

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - LOBBY - DAY

A SWAT TEAM, armed to the teeth, vengeance in their posture,
awaiting orders. Beyond them, a few TRADESMEN continue their
renovations.

DAN
Take it easy, mate. Do your breathing
shit.

HARPER (ON PHONE)
I'm not your mate.

Dan turns to look behind him, Layna is consoling Alexia
quietly in a corner.

DAN
She's having a private convo with
Alexia at present.

INT. FIRING RANGE - CONTROL ROOM - DAY

HARPER
There are only two options, Daniel.
Death, or change. The latter, you're
incapable of.

DAN (ON PHONE)
Ay?

HARPER

Today, you say goodbye to Layna for good. If you ever interact with her again, I'll track you down and blow your fucking head off with a shotgun. Do you understand?

A beat.

HARPER

Do you understand?!!

Dan, shell-shocked, regresses into a military persona.

DAN (ON PHONE)

Yes, sir.

HARPER

Get my daughter.

Harper exhales.

A moment.

ALEXIA (ON PHONE)

Dad?

Straightens up, eyes shining with glee.

HARPER

Hi baby, I miss you so much.

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - LOBBY - DAY

Layna, a bit stunned, watches as Dan, with a soldierly-bearing, exits through double doors, ignoring everyone.

ALEXIA

Where are you?

HARPER (ON PHONE)

Coming home soon.

ALEXIA

Cops caused a massive fuss, went looking for me.

HARPER (ON PHONE)

What happened?

ALEXIA

I caught the bus to go see Mom. Turned my phone off so you wouldn't know.

INT. FIRING RANGE - CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Alexia sobs.

ALEXIA (ON PHONE)
She didn't even want to talk to me.

HARPER
Don't cry. She loves you, she just...
doesn't know how to show it.

ALEXIA (ON PHONE)
(crying)
I got a message, but it wasn't her.
It was like...some deep fake stuff.

Harper turns toward Jade's corpse.

HARPER
(to himself)
So you wouldn't raise the alarm.
(pause)
Lexie, about me and your Mom --

ALEXIA (ON PHONE)
Don't worry, Dad. Layna told me.

HARPER
She did? I'm sorry I kept that from
you. You have good memories, I didn't
want to ruin that.

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - LOBBY - DAY

Layna arrives, puts a comforting arm around Alexia.

ALEXIA
Lets make new ones.

HARPER (ON PHONE)
I'd like that. I've been devoted to
my work instead of you, trying to fix
a mistake I made. But I'm ready to be
a Dad, now.

ALEXIA
You're the best Dad in the whole
world.

INT. FIRING RANGE - CONTROL ROOM - DAY

HARPER
And you're the best Daughter. Talk
soon, you going to wait for me?

ALEXIA (ON PHONE)
 (sniffling)
 I think I can manage that.

They chuckle, reconciled.

ALEXIA (ON PHONE)
 Hang on.

The phone switches hands.

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - LOBBY - DAY

LAYNA
 Hey.

HARPER (ON PHONE)
 Sorry about Dan.

LAYNA
 I won't ask what you said. Are you
 ok? You safe?

INT. FIRING RANGE - CONTROL ROOM - DAY

HARPER
 I am now.
 (pause)
 I was taken, I --

LAYNA (ON PHONE)
 We know about the Belmont's, just
 tell us where you are.

Harper kneels on the floor, grabs a sheet of yellowed paper from a pile inside a busted drawer. Reads it.

HARPER
 According to a very dodgy looking
 flier, I'm at...2 5 4 Willowbrook
 Road, Crestwood.

LAYNA (ON PHONE)
 Got it.

In the background, the Swat team DISPERSE.

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - LOBBY - DAY

Layna stands solemn. Behind her, Tradesman 1 applies paint to high wall with a roller.

LAYNA
 Kerensky came for you.
 (pause)
 He didn't make it.

Harper sighs, a mix of grief and regret.

HARPER (ON PHONE)
Rest in peace, pal.
(pause)
You're a good friend, Layna. It's all
I ever wanted.

LAYNA
Same.

INT. FIRING RANGE - CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Harper looks somberly at Jade's sprawled remains.

HARPER
The daughter, she's dead.
(pause)
I had to.

LAYNA (ON PHONE)
What about the son?

HARPER
What?

LAYNA (ON PHONE)
The boy.

HARPER'S FACE

Struggling to comprehend.

LAYNA (ON PHONE)
Harper.
(worried)
It's both of them.

Black-gloved hands wrap a telephone cord around his throat.

Harper gasps, drops the phone, wide-eyed, struggling for
breath.

It's Jace. Having been silently recovering in the restroom,
crude tourniquet around a ricocheted shotgun wound.

Harper chokes.

JACE
I was the one who found him, blood
vessels compressed.
(pulling tighter)
Larynx deprived.

Harper, losing consciousness, desperately grapples at the
wire constricting his neck.

Jace exerts brutal force, dragging him backward.

They both collide against the wall with a THUD, shelf items CRASH to the floor.

Against the solid surface, Jace tightens his grip even further.

Harper gurgles, inching closer to death. Jace leans in, whispers in his ear.

JACE
Lexie tasted good, though.

Licks his lips.

Enraged and with a surge of strength, Harper thrusts his body backward, SMASHES the target frame into Jace's torso.

Jace GRUNTS, pinned to the wall by the impact, but his grip remains relentless.

In a primal SCREAM of defiance, Harper summons his last reserves.

He thrusts backward once more, driving the top of the frame into Jace's neck. He winces, his grip finally loosens.

With a final, desperate backward push, the frame severs Jace's neck with a sickening CRACK.

His decapitated head THUDS to the floor.

Rolls across the room like a football, coming to a rest against Jade's leg.

Harper collapses, massaging his throat.

Regains his breathing, coughing, gasping for air.

Looks at Jace.

HARPER
You're dead.

The distant WAIL of sirens. Harper, exhausted, rises to his feet.

EXT. BALTIMORE COUNTY - FIRING RANGE - DAY

The afternoon sun begins its descent, casting a gentle, overcast hue.

BLARING klaxons pierce the air, an armada of Police, Fire and Ambulance approach rapidly.

EXT. FIRING RANGE - WALL - DAY

The fire exit door CREAKS open.

ON DASHCAM

Harper emerges. A Police car HURTLES along uneven ground toward him, the view shakes and stutters, SPEEDING closer.

SKIDS to a stop.

Harper looks at the camera, steel frame still strapped to his back, caked in dried blood, skin and clothing ravaged, carrying Jace's head in one hand, dragging Jade's carcass in the other.

CUT TO BLACK