

TEXAS **NOIRE**

Written by

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Pilot

Address
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ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. PRISON - CORRIDOR - DAY

A ROBUST GUARD walks down a row of cells.

The guard stops at a cell door. He lifts the peephole cover and checks inside. Then opens the door. Revealing TOM COOK, early-forties, sullen eyes, laconic, gruff visage. He wears a white jumpsuit and reads a book.

GUARD

Let's go, Cook.

Tom steps out. The guard locks the cell door behind him. The two men walk off down the corridor.

INT. PRISON - BLOCK A - DAY

Tiers upon tiers of cells. The NOISE of the INMATES resounds off the tile walls.

Tom and the guard pass through.

INT. PRISON - CORRIDOR - DAY

Tom and the guard pass through several security gates that open and close NOISILY as they go by.

INT. PRISON - CHANGING CUBICLE - DAY

Tom pulls on civilian clothes, jeans and a tee-shirt. The old skin feels good. Then slips into a pair of well-worn cowboy boots.

INT. PRISON - RECEIVING AND RELEASE STATION - DAY

A RELEASE SERGEANT brings up a small envelope to the counter, opens it and takes a out a check. He reviews the amount on his calculator.

RELEASE SERGEANT

Thirty-five cents an hour, six hours a day, five years, minus expenses... nine hundred and thirty-three dollars.

TOM

(casual, heavy drawl)

Those damn expenses.

The release sergeant hands the check to Tom.

EXT. PRISON - DAY

It's massive, red-bricked. Almost too imposing to look at. It fronts abandoned factories.

A sign reads: "TEXAS STATE MINIMUM-SECURITY CORRECTIONAL FACILITY." Someone has spray-painted below it: "If you were in prison, you'd be home now."

The front door pushes open. Tom hovers there for a moment, on the precipice of freedom.

But Tom musters his courage, then takes his first step into free America...

INT. SCAGNETTI'S CAR - DAY

Tom is seen through the windshield of the car, parked about 30 yards away. The occupant gets out.

EXT. SCAGNETTI'S CAR - DAY

BOB SCAGNETTI, late-forties, pot-bellied, bad clothes, bad comb-over hair, bad attitude. There was a time he enjoyed his job, but now, it's just a job.

Tom Cook's file is in his hand, it's bulging with everything about Tom Cook.

Bob looks at the photo of Tom paper-clipped to the folder.

BOB
(raspy)
Tom Cook?

TOM
Yes, sir.

BOB
I'm Bob Scagnetti. You're parole
officer.

TOM
Well I guess that makes me your
parolee.

BOB
I don't do humor. Get in.

INT. SUV - DAY

TWO UNSAVORY MEN, FINCH and BEAUMONT, watch as Tom and Bob
climb into the car and drive off. Finch starts the engine
and follows.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Bob's car cruises along a semi-quiet highway through the
sweltering plains of the Great State of Texas. The SUV is
not far behind.

INT. SCAGNETTI'S CAR - DAY (MOVING)

Tom sits quietly as Bob gives him the low-down.

BOB
No drugs, no booze. And no contact
with any gang affiliations or bad
elements.

TOM
Does that mean you?

BOB

Let's get something straight, I'm not your friend and I sure as shit don't wanna be. So don't be gettin cute with me. If you follow the rules and do what I say, you'll stay on my good side.

TOM

Is this your good side?

Bob rolls his eyes.

TOM

So where's the halfway house, Austin, Houston?

BOB

You're not going to one. Since most of the halfway houses are full up the state's doin something irregular. You're being housed at a hotel in Bellflower until an available spot is open.

TOM

Bellflower? Never heard of it.

BOB

It's an hour west of Le Grange. A nice quiet little town that keeps you outta my hair.

TOM

So does that mean I don't have to report to you?

BOB

You'll be reportin to the sheriff. He'll administer the monthly piss tests. So don't fuck it up.

TOM

I don't plan to.

BOB

From what I read in your file, this is your last chance. You fuck up again, you'll be doin the full Monty: 20 years.

TOM

Like I said I don't plan to.

Tom glances at his side mirror, sees the SUV is still behind him. He's not dumb, he knows who they are and why they're following him.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Bob drives further into the Heartland. Mesquite and cottonwood trees. Checkerboard farmlands and trailer parks. Cow pastures and slaughterhouses. Roadside bars and churches. Beautiful and rustic. Everything that makes Texas Texas.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY (LATER)

Bob flies by a large weatherbeaten wooden sign: "Welcome to Bellflower - The Most Pleasant Town in Texas".

Moments later, the SUV speeds by as well.

EXT. BELLFLOWER - MAIN STREET - DAY

Main Street is old, but still booming and teeming with shops. Young mothers push strollers, skateboard punks jump sidewalk benches. Three fresh-faced young Special Forces soldiers in tan camo uniforms walk down the street, eating ice cream cones.

INT. SCAGNETTI'S CAR - DAY (MOVING)

Tom scans the town. It seems like it is the most pleasant town in Texas.

EXT. THE MUSTANG INN - DAY

A two-story, paint-peeled rJimc on the edge of main street. Bob's car pulls up to the curb. The two get out.

INT. THE MUSTANG INN - LOBBY - DAY

Tom and Bob enter the lobby. A standard issue Texas inn: sixties furniture, an old carpet laid out on the hardwood floor, a rotating fan on the counter, etc.

They walk up to the counter. Tom hits the counter bill. DING!

Moments later, a WOMAN walks through the curtain behind the counter: CATALINA ZAVALA, late-fifties, brown hair, naturally attractive. She wears a Crucifix around her neck.

BOB

Afternoon, ma'am.

CATALINA

Afternoon.

BOB

My name's Bob Scagnetti, we spoke on the phone.

CATALINA

Right, the convict I'm housing.

TOM

That'd be me, ma'am. Tom Cook.

Catalina extends her hand. Tom shakes it.

CATALINA

Catalina Zavala.

BOB

She's also to report to me if you break your 9 o'clock curfew. You also have to help around the hotel.

Tomorrow mornin you report to your
job. I think it's called...

Bob digs into his pocket and pulls out a slip of paper and
reads it.

BOB

The Greasy Spoon. Talk to Earnest
Walker, he's the manager.

TOM

Let me guess, he's to report to you
if I don't show up for work?

BOB

You catch on quick.

Bob exits the inn.

CATALINA

It must take hard work to warm up
to him.

TOM

Nah, very little actually.

CATALINA

Let me show you to your room.

She comes out from the counter and shows Tom to his room.

INT. THE MUSTANG INN - SECOND FLOOR - DAY

Catalina and Tom are mounting the stairs from the lobby. The
carpeted hallway is lined by transom-topped doors. They go
to a door halfway down to the right.

INT. THE MUSTANG INN - TOM'S ROOM - DAY

Catalina and Tom enter.

Print curtains, a chair, a bedside table on one side of a cast iron Bethany bed, a TV on the credenza, and a bathroom. Will walks further into the room.

CATALINA

Turndown service is at six in the evening if you want it.

TOM

Thanks, but I'll be fine.

Tom walks to the window, looking down on the street, sees the SUV parked at the corner across the street.

CATALINA

What's it feel like to be out of prison?

TOM

Doesn't feel any different actually.

(he turns to her)

It's still a jungle.

Catalina places the key on the credenza.

CATALINA

You need anything just call the front desk.

TOM

Thank you.

Catalina closes the door on her way out.

Tom sits on the bed for a spell.

INT. SHOWER - DAY

Tom turns his face into the jet of water, the best thing he's felt in a while.

INT. THE MUSTANG INN - TOM'S ROOM - DAY

Tom comes out of the bathroom, wearing boxers and his tee-shirt.

He climbs into bed and goes to sleep.

EXT. BELLFLOWER - EVENING/NIGHT

Long reefs of dull red clouds rack over the darkening western horizon.

INT. THE MUSTANG INN - TOM'S ROOM - NIGHT

Tom gradually rises from the bed. He rubs his eyes.

He goes to the window and pushes back the old curtain. Lights in the street. The SUV is still at the corner but doesn't see anyone inside.

INT. THE MUSTANG INN - TOM'S ROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

Tom puts on his jeans, then his boots.

INT. THE MUSTANG INN - LOBBY - NIGHT

Tom comes down the stairs and walks up to the counter. Catalina's behind it.

TOM

Hope you don't mind, but I'm goin
for a walk.

CATALINA

Just be back before 9.

TOM

Yes, ma'am.

Catalina watches Tom leave.

EXT. BELLFLOWER - MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Tom walks up the empty street.

EXT. THE SHAMROCK - NIGHT

A large red brick building that serves as a honky-tonk attached to the Standard Hotel. It is the most popular place in town.

INT. THE SHAMROCK - NIGHT

The Texas flag hangs proudly above the bar. Dimly lit, hardwood floors and a long, aged wooden bar to the side. Steer horns, spurs, and saddles adorn the red brick walls.

The place is jammed packed with LOCALS. Some are on the dance floor.

Stunning SERVERS carry trays of hard liquor to the large crowd of patrons. A BAND in the back play a hearty country twang.

Tom approaches the bar. Behind it is a DARK HAired BARTENDER in her -mid-thirties.

BARTENDER

What can I get you?

TOM

Is water free?

BARTENDER

Yeah. But we do have stuff stronger than that.

TOM

I don't doubt it, but water'll be fine.

The bartender fills up a glass with water.

TOM

This is a nice place.

BARTENDER

I guess. Sure as shit ain't the
Hardrock.

TOM

My name's Tom, what's yours?

BARTENDER

Addie.

She smiles and goes back to work. Tom can't help but smile
too.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Hey!

Tom turns around to a ROTUND DRUNK who's on the verge of
keJimng over.

TOM

Yes?

ROTUND DRUNK

You're in my seat.

TOM

It was empty when I got here.

ROTUND DRUNK

That's because I was takin a piss.

TOM

Alright.

(to the bartender, grabs
his water)

I'm gonna find a seat down there.

ROTUND DRUNK

Thanks for keepin it warm for me,
asshole.

TOM

No problem. If you need me to keep
your wife warm tonight, just give
me a holler.

Tom passes him. The rotund drunk grabs Tom by the shoulder.
Tom springs into action! He throws a right hook, knocking
him to the floor. Patrons look on with awe.

Tom kicks and stomps the shit out of the rotund drunk. His
face starts to become a bloody, pulpy mess.

A hand is placed on Tom's shoulder. He turns to throw a
punch but stops at the site of the gold steel badge pinned to
the chest of SHERIFF LELAND JOHNSTON, mid-sixties, clean
shaven, a tall southern good old boy. An old Colt .45 hangs
on his hip. He is old school all the way.

SHERIFF JOHNSTON

I think he's had enough, son.
(to the local drunk)
How bout it, Earl?

Earl doesn't have the strength to answer back. Tom relaxes.

A BELLFLOWER CITIZEN speaks up.

BELLFLOWER CITIZEN

Another performance by Earl, huh,
Sheriff?

SHERIFF JOHNSTON

Man loves the sauce.

The Sheriff helps Earl to his feet. Emerging from the crowd
is JIM YOUNGER, early-forties, stout, tall, wavy hair.

JIM

What the hell's goin on, Sheriff?

SHERIFF JOHNSTON

It's fine, Jim.

(to Tom)

What's your name, son?

TOM

Tom Cook.

SHERIFF JOHNSTON

The parolee? You know you're not supposed to be in here.

TOM

Just havin a glass of water. The bartender can vouch for me.

Sheriff Johnston looks past Tom and receives a nod from Addie.

SHERIFF JOHNSTON

What'd you do this time, Earl?

EARL

He- he's started it.

JIM

(to the Addie)

Is that true, sugar?

ADDIE

No, sir, Mr. Younger. This guy was just mindin his own business when Earl came up and started botherin him about a seat.

EARL

That's bull... it's not true. He stole it from me.

JIM

I'm sick and tired of your shit, Earl. This is the last time you're allowed in here.

EARL

I- I wanna talk to Hathcock...

JIM

I speak for Hathcock when he's not here.

SHERIFF JOHNSTON

I'll take care of him.

JIM

Be sure that you do, Sheriff, I mean you are the sheriff, right?

The Sheriff stares down Jim.

SHERIFF JOHNSTON

Let's go, Earl.

(to Tom)

I'll see you soon, Cook.

TOM

Yes, sir.

The Sheriff holds Earl by the arm and leads him out.

Tom sits back in Earl's seat.

EXT. THE MUSTANG INN - NIGHT (LATER)

Tom enters.

INT. THE MUSTANG INN - NIGHT

Catalina is still behind the counter.

TOM

Don't you ever move?

CATALINA

Occasionally I shift my body a few inches to the left.

Tom cracks a smile.

TOM

Do you need anything before I go?

CATALINA

Not now. I might need your help with cleaning some rooms once in a while.

TOM

Alright. Good night, Ms. Zavala.

CATALINA

Good night, Mr. Cook.

Tom heads up to his room.

INT. THE MUSTANG INN - TOM'S ROOM - NIGHT

Tom walks into his room and closes the door, but doesn't lock it.

He grabs the chair and sits it against the wall and sits down. He slowly drifts off to sleep.

EXT. BELLFLOWER - MORNING

The townspeople start their day.

INT. THE MUSTANG INN - SECOND FLOOR - MORNING

Tom exits his room and locks the door. As he makes his way to the stairs, Finch comes up and passes Tom. The two barely connect eyes with each other.

Tom heads down.

INT. THE GREASY SPOON - MORNING

Pure kitsch. A linoleum-covered counter trimmed with aluminum. Behind it, in the kitchen, TWO short-order COOKS sizzle grub on an open grill or flip pancakes.

Tom walks in, still wearing the same clothes he walked out of prison with. He approaches the counter and speaks to a WAITRESS: ELEANOR ROWE, early-thirties, round, blonde, and bosomy.

ELEANOR

Hello, sir, how can I help you?

TOM

My name's Tom Cook, I'm-

ELEANOR

You're the new guy. The new dishwasher guy.

TOM

Yes, ma'am.

ELEANOR

Well, I'm Eleanor.

Tom shakes her hand.

ELEANOR

(calls out)

Hey, Ernie!

Moments later, ERNEST WALKER, fifties, robust, steps out from the back. He hikes up his pants, wiping his hands on his slacks.

TOM

Mr. Walker, Tom Cook.

ERNEST

Oh yeah, hey. Welcome.

Ernest shakes Tom's hand.

ERNEST

Hope you're ready to work.

TOM

Ready to earn a paycheck.

ERNEST

Well, let me introduce you to some of the staff. That's Eleanor. We have another waitress, Judy Turner, but she's doing you're job right now. Let's go in the back.

Tom follows Ernest to the kitchen.

INT. THE GREASY SPOON - KITCHEN - MORNING

The cooks are DONNIE SUTTON, late-thirties, tall, string-bean-like and RHETT TAYLOR, early-forties, tatted.

ERNEST

This is Donnie Sutton and John Taylor. Guys, is the new guy, Tom Cook.

DONNIE

Hey.

RHETT

Hey, man.

TOM

Nice to meet, ya'll.

ERNEST

Let me show you where you'll be workin.

Ernest leads Tom to the dish pit where JUDY TURNER, late-twenties, is elbow-deep in pots and pans and plates.

ERNEST

Judy, this is Tom Cook.

JUDY

Awesome. Nice to meet you. Enjoy the shit pile.

Judy walks away. Ernest hands Tom an apron.

INT. THE GREASY SPOON - MORNING

VARIOUS SHOTS

Tom washes and racks plates then runs them through the dish machine.

Tom brings a fresh stack of plates to the cooks' line.

Tom separates the silverware before washing.

Tom busts one table after another, placing dirty plates and cups in a plastic bin.

Tom puts a trash bag in the trash can.

Tom carries two full bags of trash to the dumpster.

INT. SUV - DAY

Finch and Beaumont sit inside. Finch has his phone to his ear.

FINCH

Nah, he's just working.

(a beat)

No, I doubt he's going to. Like you said, he's on parole. If I was him I'd lay low too.

INT. IMPETUS - DAY

A high-class restaurant on the 48th floor of a skyscraper, showing an impressive view of Las Vegas. The place is filled with Las Vegas' upwardly-mobile types: bankers, models, entrepreneurs. All dressed in expensive clothes and dining on even more expensive food, the nouvelle cuisine.

Standing in the corner on his cell is CUBBY BARNES, late-thirties, suite and tie with a sharp looking haircut and a Viking-style reddish beard.

CUBBY

Did you search his room?

FINCH (V.O.)

Yeah, but there was nothing there.
The guy had nothing when he went
in, so, I don't know. You want us
to grab him tonight?

CUBBY

I'll talk to Hahl. Just keep me
posted.

Cubby hangs up. He looks over to a private booth where his boss MARION HAHL (pronounced Hall), early-fifties, salt hair, clean shaven, flirts with a TWENTY-SOMETHING MODEL-TYPE.

INT. THE GREASY SPOON - DAY

Tom clears off a table. He hears SNICKERING from the table next to him. He turns to find THREE PEOPLE giggling to themselves. The DOUGHERTY SIBLINGS: LEIGH-GRACE, late-twenties, chestnut hair, fine features. She wears Daisy Duke shorts, a crop top, and a trucker's hat. SHANE, the middle child, lean with some muscle and tats. CASSIE, the baby of the three, a little stocky with strong arms.

TOM

Something funny?

SHANE

Aren't you a lil old to be bustin
tables?

LEIGH-GRACE

Must suck havin to start over, huh?

CASSIE

Sucks, even more, to start over
here.

SHANE

Hey, man, while you're at it.

Shane holds out a plate for Tom. He's reluctant to take it. But reaches out to grab it when Shane lets go. The plate shatters, pieces going scattering.

SHANE

Oops.

Cassie and Leigh-Grace CHUCKLE.

JOHN (O.S.)

Clean it up, Shane.

Everyone turns to face JOHN HATHCOCK, mid-sixties, salt hair cut short, stern, forceful. He wears jeans and a polo shirt and eyeglasses. He pulls his paper away and faces the Dougherty's and Tom.

JOHN

You got wax in your ears, boy?

Shane just glares at him.

CASSIE

I'll get it.

Cassie scoots out of the booth and picks up the pieces, placing them in Cook's bin.

JOHN

Ya'll got a problem with a guy workin a steady job?

LEIGH-GRACE

No, Mr. Hathcock.

CASSIE

No, sir.

SHANE

We were just fuckin with him. Not our fault he can't take a fuckin joke.

JOHN

You droppin out of high school is a
joke that never gets old, Shane.
Have your parents stopped bein
ashamed of you?

Shane stares daggers at John.

Leigh-Grace puts money on the table.

LEIGH-GRACE

Let's go. Come on.

The Dougherty's walk out.

JOHN

The Dougherty kids are real
characters. Leigh-Grace does
webcam shows and strips over in
Brazzer County. Shane and Cassie,
collect disability. That gives
them time to do their own thing.

TOM

Which is?

JOHN

Stealin copper, makin and sellin
ammunition. Peddlin pot. Good
examples of bad youths. You must
be Tom Cook. I'm John Hathcock.

Tom and John shake hands.

JOHN

Have a seat, son.

TOM

I don't think the boss'll let me.

JOHN

I am the boss. This is my joint.

Tom slides into the booth.

TOM

I guess I should be thankin you for the job then.

JOHN

It's no big deal. I've known guys that needed a second chance. Just happy to help.

TOM

I do appreciate it, sir.

JOHN

Five years, right?

TOM

Out of ten.

JOHN

Hells Bells. I wasn't privy to your rap sheet. What'd you do?

TOM

Just stole some money.

JOHN

Must have been a lot.

TOM

Just enough to get ten years. So you own a bar and a diner. Not bad.

JOHN

I own a lot of businesses around here. I was twenty-something when I left town. When I came back it was... dying. Like it had cancer. So, I revitalized it. Brought in investors, money started flowin.

Now we're a prosperous town in the
greatest state in the greatest
country.

TOM

Amen, sir. Well, I wish I could
sit down on some more, but dishes
need to be cleaned.

JOHN

Don't work too hard, Tom. It's
only washin dishes.

TOM

Yes, sir.

Tom grabs his bin and heads to the back.

INT. THE GREASY SPOON - KITCHEN - DAY

Tom heads to the dish pit. He puts the broken dishes into
the trash. Then starts washing dishes. He quickly spots a
steak knife covered in steak sauce. He washes it, looks
around, then slides it in his pocket.

EXT. BELLFLOWER - MAIN STREET - EVENING

Tom strolls on back to the hotel. Some shops begin to close
up.

INT. THE MUSTANG INN - LOBBY - EVENING

Tom enters. He sees Catalina struggling to carry three heavy
boxes to the back room behind the counter. He quickly
sprints over and grabs the first two boxes.

CATALINA

Thank you.

TOM

You're welcome. How was your day?

CATALINA

Quiet like the grave. You?

TOM

Felt like I was a janitor for the entire city of San Francisco.

CATALINA

That bad, huh?

TOM

Not really. It's better than cleanin up after inmates.

INT. THE MUSTANG INN - BACK ROOM - EVENING

Catalina's bedroom/kitchen/storage room.

CATALINA

Just set them down right here.

They set the boxes in a small corner.

CATALINA

Speaking of cleaning up: you ever gonna get some new clothes?

TOM

I have a check from prison I'm gonna cash tomorrow. Maybe even open up an account.

CATALINA

That'll be a good idea.

They exit the room.

INT. THE MUSTANG INN - LOBBY - EVENING

Tom quickly spots a photo of an early-forties LATINO MAN framed on the counter.

TOM

(re: the photo)

Husband?

CATALINA

He was. Emilio. He died a long
time ago.

TOM

I'm sorry to hear that.

(a beat)

Well, good night, Ms. Zavala.

CATALINA

Good night, Mr. Cook.

Tom heads upstairs.

ACT TWO

INT. THE MUSTANG INN - TOM'S ROOM - EVENING

Tom enters. Then goes to the bathroom.

INT. THE MUSTANG INN - BATHROOM - EVENING

Tom splashes his face with cold water. Then rubs his eyes. He glides his fingers through his hair. Stares at himself. He remembers something. He reaches into his pocket and takes out the steak knife.

INT. THE MUSTANG INN - TOM'S ROOM - EVENING

Tom turns off the light as he exits the bathroom. He heads over to the chair by the door and sits down. He sighs. Then closes his eyes, with the steak knife still in his hand.

INT. THE MUSTANG INN - TOM'S ROOM - NIGHT

Tom is fast asleep. Pitch black save from the light coming from underneath the door.

From somewhere, a dull chug. The sound has brought Tom's look up. He sits listening. No further sound. He listens ever so carefully. He listens at the crack under the door.

An open airy sound like a seashell put to your ear.

A long beat on a motionless Tom. He looks at the line of light under the door. At length, a soft shadow appears in the line of light below the door. It lingers there.

A beat. Now the soft shadow becomes more focused. It resolves into four columns of dark: feet planted before the door.

Tom grips the knife even harder. This is it. He hears several CLICKS on the door's lock. A beat. The slowly opens. The first shadow moves in. Tom sees a gloved hand, gripping a suppressed Kimber .45.

Tom moves fast. He grabs the arm and swiftly jabs the steak knife in Finch's throat, then pulls it out, spilling a fountain of blood.

TOM
Goodbye, Finch.

Pushing Finch to side as he slowly bleeds to death is Beaumont, also armed.

TOM
Hello, Beaumont.

Tom and Beaumont tussle. Tom wrestles the gun away from Beaumont, chopping at the wrist until he finally lets go. The gun goes sliding across the floor.

Beaumont gathers his stance. Tom tries to strike but Beaumont's reactions are phenomenal. Then he lashes out with a well-practiced move at lightning speed, knocking Tom's knife from his hand.

As Beaumont whips out his Microtech knife, Tom knocks his feet from under him and leaps on him.

They fight - crashing off the bed, walls and Finch's dead body. It's brutal and gritty.

One minute Beaumont has the upper hand, then Tom, then Beaumont again. In the end, Tom loses his steak knife. Beaumont swipes and slashes the air. He goes in for the kill but Tom manages to smack the knife from Beaumont's hand. Beaumont suddenly explodes with an upswing hook to Tom's jaw. His lightning jab stings Tom's face repeatedly.

Beaumont melts out a left hook that raises a goose egg over Tom's eye.

Beaumont swings at Tom who blocks the attack and throws a straight shot to Beaumont's face. He's stunned. The moment's hesitation allows him to employ a terrifying kick to the head. Beaumont drops to the floor, conscious, but in serious pain.

Tom grabs the Kimber, smacks the magazine and pulls the slide back, ejecting a round, but chambering another one. He looks at Riley, dead. Then back at Beaumont.

BEAUMONT

Long time no see, Cook.

TOM

Not long enough.

BEAUMONT

Hahl knows where you're at, Cook.

TOM

I hope he brings a lot of body bags.

BEAUMONT

You're fucking crazy.

TOM

Give my regards to Frank and Jerry.

Tom puts two rounds in Beaumont's chest. Dead on the spot.

Tom goes to work: He frisks their bodies, takes the cash out of the wallets. He takes one of the Kimbers and stuffs it under the mattress.

Tom walks over to the door and opens it.

TOM

(calls out)

Ms. Zavala! Call the police!

INT. THE MUSTANG INN - SECOND FLOOR - NIGHT (LATER)

Sheriff Johnston, Catalina, and Tom are in the hallway while a small FORENSICS TEAM is inside the room, canvassing the scene.

TOM

I don't know how many more times
you want me to tell you, Sheriff?

SHERIFF JOHNSTON

Until I feel like you're story is
bullshit.

TOM

Look they came in, just I was comin
out of the bathroom. I attacked
the first one with the knife.

SHERIFF JOHNSTON

That you stole from the restaurant.

TOM

Borrowed. I'm takin it back
tomorrow.

CATALINA

I don't think they're gonna want it
back.

SHERIFF JOHNSTON

Why'd you take the knife anyway?

TOM

I saw them earlier in the week. I
didn't like how they were lookin at
me. When you've been in prison as
long as I have and guys look at you
like that, you know they're up to
no good.

SHERIFF JOHNSTON

So you felt like you need to
protect yourself?

TOM

I knew I needed to protect myself.

Moments later, Tom sees a familiar face coming at him, this time in a deputy's uniform.

ADDIE

Sheriff.

Tom is slightly at awe.

SHERIFF JOHNSTON

Find anything, deputy?

ADDIE

Some more handguns, cash, clothes,
and an eight-ball of coke.

SHERIFF JOHNSTON

Thanks, Addie.

Everyone steps out of the way as the bodies are wheeled out of the room in black body bags.

SHERIFF JOHNSTON

So you think they were tryin to
steal from you?

TOM

Well, I doubt they were tryin to
save my soul.

SHERIFF JOHNSTON

I'm questionin if you even have
one.

(a beat)

You might wanna stay in another
room tonight.

TOM

I'll be fine, Sheriff.

Johnston turns and walks away, accompanied by Catalina.

TOM

(to Addie)

So a cop and a bartender. How do you pull that off?

ADDIE

Bartendin is part-time.

TOM

Any chance I can see you part-time?

ADDIE

Good night, sir.

Addie walks away. Tom goes into his room.

EXT. TRUCK STOP DINER - MORNING

On the highway, between the Border and Bellflower.

A '98 Honda Civic pulls into the parking lot and parks next to a '79 four-door Impala. Jim Younger climbs out of the Civic. Looks around, nothing but TRUCKERS and TOURISTS. He enters the diner.

INT. TRUCK STOP DINER - MORNING

Jim looks around, spots a MEXICAN MAN wearing shades and a cowboy hat. He walks up to his table and sits down, placing the cars on the edge of the table.

The Mexican stands up, puts his keys on the table, grabs Jim's keys, and leaves. This is routine.

JIM

Can I get a cup of coffee?!

INT. THE GREASY SPOON - MORNING

Tom busts one table after another. He comes toward the sheriff's table. The sheriff is reading a newspaper.

TOM

Can I get that for you, sir?

SHERIFF JOHNSTON

(without looking up)

I'm not stoppin you. Don't forget you need to come by the station for your piss test.

TOM

I'll be there. Any word on the guys that attacked me?

SHERIFF JOHNSTON

(looks up at Tom)

Their names came back with a long rap sheet. Connected to organized crime in Vegas.

TOM

Well, no longer connected to organized crime.

SHERIFF JOHNSTON

One of them had a wife and two kids.

TOM

Dog eat dog, sheriff. If he really loved his family, he shouldn't put himself in danger.

JOHN (O.S.)

Couldn't agree more.

Tom and Johnston look to see John standing behind Tom.

TOM

Mr. Hathcock.

JOHN

How's it goin, Tom?

TOM

Just workin. Speakin of which.

JOHN

Well, hop to it then.

Tom gets back to work. John slides into Johnston's booth.

SHERIFF JOHNSTON

What do you want, John?

JOHN

Just to chat. How's the coffee?

SHERIFF JOHNSTON

There's coffee in half the places you own in town, why don't you go there and have it.

JOHN

Because I like to branch out, and I wanted to see a dear friend.

SHERIFF JOHNSTON

We're not friends, John.

JOHN

Lee-Lee.

SHERIFF JOHNSTON

Don't call me that.

JOHN

You didn't mind bein called that when were kids.

SHERIFF JOHNSTON

We're not kids anymore, John.

Eleanor comes to the table.

ELEANOR

Hey, Mr. Hathcock. What can I get you?

JOHN

Coffee, black. And a slice of apple pie.

SHERIFF JOHNSTON

Can I get the check, Eleanor?

ELEANOR

Sure.

Eleanor leaves. The sheriff gets ready to depart.

JOHN

Leavin so soon?

SHERIFF JOHNSTON

I have work to do.

JOHN

Work? This is the safest town in Texas. It's almost like we don't need a sheriff's office.

The sheriff's now annoyed.

SHERIFF JOHNSTON

You enjoy doin this?

John doesn't answer.

SHERIFF JOHNSTON

How do you sleep at night, knowin the things you've done to get where you are now?

JOHN

Quite well, actually. Because you see, nobody in town cares about what I've done, only what I can do.

And I do a lot of good things for
this town. You need to forget
about what happened back then.

A long beat. Leland tries to keep his eyes from watering.

SHERIFF JOHNSTON

I'll never forgive you for the
things you've done.

Eleanor comes back with the check and John's coffee and apple
pie.

JOHN

Thank you, Eleanor.

Eleanor leaves, the sheriff slides out of the booth, leaving
some money on the table.

JOHN

How's your daughter by the way? Is
she still makin As at Arizona Tech?

The sheriff stops dead in his tracks. He stares daggers at
John.

JOHN

I just wanna know how she was doin
is all. I did award her that
scholarship so she could go to
school.

SHERIFF JOHNSTON

(leans in close)

Mary's not your kid. Don't ever
ask about her again.

The sheriff exits the diner. John sips from his cup and
begins to eat his pie.

ACT THREE

INT. IMPETUS - MORNING

The STAFF sets the tables, preparing for the lunch crowd. Cubby snakes past the staff and heads to Marion's private booth. Marion fiddles with his cell phone.

MARION

What's the word, Cubby?

CUBBY

Finch and Beaumont haven't checked in.

A beat. Marion sighs.

MARION

It's my fault. I got impatient.
Used guys that Tom knew. They
stood out like roosters.

He sighs again.

CUBBY

What do you wanna do next?

MARION

Call Norman. Tell him I need to
see him.

Cubby breaks out his phone and starts dialing as he walks away.

Marion begins to fume. He bangs his fist on the table.

MARION

Fuck.

EXT. BELLFLOWER - MAIN STREET - DAY

Tom strolls on down. Suddenly, a deputy's cruiser speeds on by like a bat out of hell. Tom looks on for a moment before brushing it off and continues on to his destination: a bank.

INT. TEXAS MIDLAND BANK - DAY

It's quiet. Only a HANDFUL OF CUSTOMERS at the windows or filling out slips. Tom enters and approaches the new accounts desk. Very relaxed, he smiles at the WOMAN behind the desk.

TOM

I'd like to open an account.

WOMAN

Have a seat.

The woman begins to gather forms and Tom produces his prison paycheck from his pocket.

Tom awkwardly waits. Just sitting there as the woman fills out his application.

WOMAN

Name?

TOM

Tom Cook.

WOMAN

Current employer?

TOM

The Greasy Spoon. I'm a dishwasher.

Suddenly the front door flies open and TWO MEN wearing street clothes and ski-masks bursts in. One carries a sawed-off Remington 870 and the other a Smith & Wesson 9mm.

Everyone stares at them. Frozen like deer in headlights.

No one moves. No one knows what to do. Then it all happens in a blur.

FIRST ROBBER
GET ON THE FUCKIN GROUND!!!
EVERYBODY.

The first robber raises his gun, pointing it frantically at everyone. All the people hit the deck, including Tom. The second robber sweeps the room, making sure everyone does what they're told.

SECOND ROBBER
ON THE FUCKIN GROUND, YOU DUMB
FUCKS!

The first robber jumps the counter, pressing his gun hard to the face of the teller.

FIRST ROBBER
All of ya'll on your fucking knees.
NOW.

All the tellers drop to their knees. The first robber frantically scraping money from the drawers, one after the other.

The second robber spots Tom on the floor and stampedes over to him. He stands over Tom who looks at the second robber's boots.

Suddenly, the second robber kicks Tom in the guts. The air is sucked out of him. He tries to breathe.

SECOND ROBBER
That old cocksucker isn't here to
stick up for you now.

The second robber kicks Tom in the face.

SECOND ROBBER
Now that's a fuckin joke.

The first robber leaps over the counter and the two robbers sprint out the door. Tom spits out a mouthful of blood.

INT. TEXAS MIDLAND BANK - DAY (LATER)

Tom leans against a wall with an ice-pack on his mouth. Addie stands next to him. MULTIPLE DEPUTIES question the employees and customers.

ADDIE

Trouble just seems to follow you around.

TOM

Just my luck. So what took ya'll so long to get here?

ADDIE

Bomb threat at the middle school. Had to dispatch all available LEOs.

TOM

Just so ya'll be further away from here. Smart move.

ADDIE

Uh-huh.

TOM

Listen, I know it's not you're job, but since I'm headin that way, could you give me a lift to the sheriff's office?

ADDIE

I'm not a taxi service.

TOM

Please? I don't even know where it is.

Addie considers him for a moment. Looks him over.

ADDIE

Alright.

TOM

Well, look at that, the kindness of
cops. Shame I don't see that in
the sheriff.

ADDIE

He's a hard man.

TOM

Seems to have a hard-on for that
guy Hathcock.

ADDIE

You don't know the half of it.
I'll be right back.

Addie walks over to the deputies.

INT. THE MUSTANG INN - LOBBY - DAY

Catalina is behind the counter reading a cheesy love novel.
John walks in.

JOHN

Afternoon, Cat.

CATALINA

John. What can I do for you?

JOHN

Nothin. I just wanted to come by
and see you.

CATALINA

Bullshit. At least once a week you
stroll on in here, try to smooth
talk me, and then try to slip in an
offer to buy me out.

JOHN

Now you know that's not true. I don't try to smooth talk you. I do a good job at succeedin.

Catalina cracks a smile.

JOHN

But why won't you consider my offer?

Catalina scoffs.

JOHN

I'm offerin you three times what this place is worth.

CATALINA

That's very Christian of you.

JOHN

Come on, Cat, look around, there's hardly anyone here.

CATALINA

Not true. That new deputy's got a room here.

JOHN

Really?

CATALINA

Mmm-huh. And I get a few stragglers that can't afford your fancy hotel. So, thanks for keeping me in business.

JOHN

What can I do to sweeten the deal?

CATALINA

Where would I go, John?

JOHN

Well, I'm hopin you'd stay in
Bellflower. I'd hate for you to
leave. You could always move in
with me at the ranch.

CATALINA

Oh, God.

Cat smiles, smooth-talking candy-man he is. He approaches
the counter.

JOHN

So what do you say?

CATALINA

I say what I always say to you: no.

JOHN

There's no gettin through to you,
is there?

CATALINA

It's taking you that long to figure
it out.

JOHN

You know I'm just tryin to look out
for you. I care about you.

CATALINA

You care too much about me.

John slowly comes around the counter and approaches Catalina.

CATALINA

You know you're not supposed to be
back here.

JOHN

There's a lot of things I'm not
supposed to do.

John places his hand on top of hers, gets in close. He places his other hand on her shoulder. He gets in even closer, she meets him halfway.

They can't fight it. Their lips are drawn into a kiss that they drink like water in a desert. John starts pawing at her body. Their breathing becomes hot and heavy.

Catalina opens her eyes, looking down at the picture of her late husband on the counter. She quickly pulls away from John. A beat.

JOHN

It's him, isn't it?

Catalina's eyes say yes.

JOHN

Damnit, Cat! He's dead. He's been dead for a long time. When are you gonna move on?

CATALINA

I think it's time for you to leave, John.

John wants to say something, but he holds back. He leaves.

INT. ADDIE'S CRUISER - DAY (MOVING)

Tom rides shotgun, taking in more of the town.

TOM

So how long have you been a cop?

ADDIE

Five years. How long have you been a criminal?

TOM

Since I was fifteen.

ADDIE

What'd you do mostly?

TOM

Stole stuff. Money, cars, the Mona Lisa.

Addie sends Tom a look: "yeah, sure".

TOM

So what's your story?

ADDIE

My story?

TOM

Why do you bartend?

ADDIE

Just pullin in some extra money.

TOM

I guess it doesn't pay to be a peace officer around here.

ADDIE

I guess it doesn't pay to be a thief.

TOM

You'd be surprised.

ADDIE

Really? You're on parole and you're bein driven by a deputy to the station for a piss test instead of livin the high life.

TOM

I never lived the high life.

ADDIE

Bullshit.

TOM

No, it's true. A friend of mine told me the higher you fly the harder the fall will be. So I stayed under the radar.

ADDIE

Until you got caught.

Tom thinks for a moment. Not wanting to tell her everything.

TOM

Yep.

EXT. BELLFLOWER SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY (LATER)

The Bellflower Sheriff's Department is in an old brick building. Floor to ceiling windows. Addie's cruiser pulls up. The two get out.

INT. BELLFLOWER SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

It's a strange, shiny amalgam of sheriff's department and a museum. There's a seven-foot long wooden case displaying the town's lawmen from the eighteen-hundreds. In back, there are three free-standing holding cells. The HANDFUL OF DEPUTIES do their daily tasks.

Addie and Tom walk in.

ADDIE

Wait here.

Addie leaves Tom in the foyer. He walks over to the seven-foot long case. He scans the photographs (black & white to color), the 1870 revolvers, the tin badges over the years, etc.

Moments later...

SHERIFF JOHNSTON (O.S.)

My dad was the longest standin sheriff in this town's history.

Tom sees Leland at the corner of his eye.

SHERIFF JOHNSTON

The second was Sheriff Digger Jennings. He was sheriff for a whole year.

TOM

You hopin to beat your dad's record?

SHERIFF JOHNSTON

If my luck keeps on goin.

TOM

Did he die in the line of duty?

A beat. The sheriff is quiet.

SHERIFF JOHNSTON

In a way. Come on, let's get this over with.

INT. IMPETUS - ELEVATOR - DAY

A .45 caliber bullet is between two fingers: NORMAN DIX, forties, tall, Cesar hair, an average Joe with underworld wisdom. He stares at the bullet, something ominous about it.

DING. The elevator doors open. Norman pockets the bullet and exits the elevator.

INT. IMPETUS - DAY

Norman meets Cubby halfway. They shake hands.

CUBBY

Norman. It's been awhile.

Cubby leads Norman to Hahl.

NORMAN

I'd say. Last time I saw you that beard was close-cropped. Hahl doesn't have a problem with it?

CUBBY

As long as it doesn't get in the way of my labors. How you been keeping?

NORMAN

Bouncing from one state to another, doing unwanted jobs for outfits from here to Maine.

CUBBY

Unwanted?

NORMAN

Morally indefensible and absolutely necessary.

Norman and Cubby make it to Hahl's table. Cubby breaks away as Norman slides in.

MARION

Thanks for coming all the way out here.

NORMAN

Thanks for paying my ticket.

MARION

I'll get right to it. I need you to go to Bellflower, Texas.

(produces a mugshot of Tom)

His name's Tom Cook. He's worked for me for fifteen years. Went to prison for robbery. Did five out of ten. Now he's bunking in a hotel some podunk town.

NORMAN
What's the task?

MARION
Follow him. Learn his habits; any leverage you can find to use against him.

NORMAN
Aren't you aware of any leverage?

MARION
None.

NORMAN
No family, no friends?

MARION
Cook wasn't exactly sociable. He never talked about... anything personal.

NORMAN
How did he come into your service?

MARION
Max Gates in Pittsburg. He told me Tom was brought on through an associate of Max's.

NORMAN
You might wanna dig further. Everyone has leverage.

MARION
If you find the opportunity, snatch him and bring him to me. Alive. If become cozy with someone there, then snatch them up too. I can use them as leverage.

NORMAN

You're trying to squeeze something out of him. What is it?

MARION

Where he stashed my thirty-million.

INT. BELLFLOWER SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Tom and Leland exit the men's room. Leland has a ziploc bag with Tom's bottled urine inside.

SHERIFF JOHNSTON

I'll see you next month. Stay out of trouble.

Tom nods. As he's making his way toward the door, he stops by Addie's desk.

TOM

So, how do I get to see you?

ADDIE

Either in the back of my cruiser as I haul you to jail or at the Shamrock.

TOM

Shamrock it is. Hope ya'll are stocked up on soda and water.

ADDIE

Why are you tryin to pursue me? Is it because you haven't been with a woman for a while? You could always try Tinder.

TOM

For that, I'd have to get a cell phone, and I'm not really a big fan of those sites. I think you're interestin, and I'd like to get to know you more.

ADDIE

Well, there's nothin interestin
about me. Plus I don't date ex-
cons on parole.

TOM

Ahhhh. Parole. Well, I won't be
on parole for long. So be prepared
to be wooed.

Addie scoffs with a grin.

Suddenly, the doors bursts open: DEPUTIES ED GOSSER, mid-
thirties, a picture of health, and CLAY BRESSANT, forties,
half-Cajun with a goatee haul in RICKEY, thirties, gangly.

Addie spots Rickey.

ADDIE

Rickey you little shit.

TOM

You know him?

ADDIE

Sadly.

(to Clay and Ed)

What's he booked on this time,
guys?

ED

Slingin dope to some high school
kids.

CLAY

One em ODed. The others ratted
this one out.

Leland approaches Ed and Clay.

SHERIFF JOHNSTON

Rickey Ward. Nice to see you
again, kiddo. Your cell awaits
you.

RICKEY

I want a lawyer.

SHERIFF JOHNSTON

Well, I hope Hathcock can afford
the best one for you. Lock him up.

Ed and Clay haul him to the cells. Tom walks away.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

John's green '72 Ford Torino turns off the main road and onto
an unpaved road dissected by an endless shortgrass prairie.

The road leads all the way up to the Ballard cattle ranch.

EXT. BALLARD HOUSE - DAY

The Torino drives up to the house.

The clapboards on the house are in good shape. The paint is
still white. The windows are without screens. There's a
large barn and several aged pickup trucks.

John parks his car and climbs out. He goes over to the barn,
inside is the '79 four-door Impala from the truck stop, in
pieces, gutted from the inside.

INT. BALLARD HOUSE - DAY

John walks in like owns the place. He heads to the kitchen.

INT. BALLARD HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Washing dishes are DALE and AMY BALLARD, a thirty-something
married couple. John walks into the kitchen.

JOHN
Afternoon, folks.

DALE
Mr. Hathcock.

JOHN
How you both doin'?

AMY
We're good. Can I get you somethin'
to drink?

JOHN
Ice tea.

AMY
Comin' up.

Amy gets a glass and goes to the fridge.

JOHN
What time did they show up?

DALE
Sometime around lunch. Jim's down
there too.

Amy hands John the glass of ice tea.

JOHN
Thank you.

He takes a sip.

JOHN
Damn, that's good. Ya'll take
care.

AMY
You too, sir.

John goes to a door that leads down into the basement.

INT. BALLARD HOUSE - BASEMENT - DAY

FIVE TABLE WORKERS wearing surgical masks are in the middle of cutting up fifteen kilos of cocaine and breaking them down into gram bags. Tens of thousands of blue-cellophane packets of blow neatly cover two folding tables.

John moves up to Jim.

JOHN

Okay, so why am I out here?

JIM

We have a problem. Rickey Ward was arrested for dealin coke to some high school kids. One of 'em ODed but he's alright.

John takes a moment, drinks his tea.

JOHN

Bail him out, bring him to the Bucket O Chickens later tonight. Make sure this shit gets to El Paso on time.

John heads back upstairs.

INT. THE GREASY SPOON - EVENING

The evening brings on a slow flow of patrons. Most of the staff begin cleaning up.

INT. THE GREASY SPOON - KITCHEN - EVENING

Tom is in the dish pit, elbows deep in the sink. Judy and Eleanore walk in, placing dishes on the table for Tom.

JUDY

So what're you're plans for tonight, Tom?

TOM

After today's events, I think I'm
just gonna relax.

ELEANOR

Really? Some of us are going to
the old drive-in theater for a
party. You sure don't wanna come?

TOM

Sounds enticin, but, I have a nine
o'clock curfew. Plus, no booze.

JUDY

That fuckin sucks.

TOM

Yes, it does. But thanks for
invitin me.

EXT. BUCKET O CHICKENS - NIGHT

A KFC rip-off.

INT. BUCKET O CHICKENS - KITCHEN - NIGHT

John sits on a stool eating a plate of fried chicken legs.
Jim and THREE of John's goons escort Rickey into the back.

JOHN

(wipes his hand and mouth)
Hey, Rickey. How you been?

John shakes Rickey's hand.

RICKEY

Good, good. Hey, thanks for bailin
me out.

JOHN

Not a problem. But, we do have a
problem. You know that, right?

RICKEY

Yeah, I know. If you just-

JOHN

You wanna explain, don't you?

RICKEY

Yes, sir.

JOHN

Well first, let me explain what I told you two years ago, you know when I hired you. I told you to never sell around town, didn't I?

RICKEY

Yes, sir, you did-

JOHN

It's bad business, and it ruins the town's image if we got high school kids droppin dead from coke.

RICKEY

I know, I'm sorry.

JOHN

Don't I pay you enough? I gave you a job at this place. Huh? What's goin' on?

Rickey fumbles his words.

JOHN

Did you steal from the farm?

RICKEY

No, sir, I did not.

JOHN

How'd you get the shit then?

RICKEY

Matt Lewis.

JOHN

One of my dealers in El Paso?

RICKEY

Yes, sir.

John takes a moment. In the background, Jim puts on oven mitts.

JOHN

Alright. Thank you.

RICKEY

Is that it, are we done?

JOHN

Almost.

John signals Jim. Jim and the goons grab a hold of Rickey. They drag him to one of the workstations. Jim dips Rickey's right hand into a bucket of batter.

RICKEY

Mr. Hathcock...

John finishes his chicken as he watches. They drag the squirming Rickey to a boiling deep fryer. He already knows what's going to happen.

RICKEY

No, no, no, no. Mr. Hathcock,
please!

Jim and the goons struggle with Rickey. They approach the deep fryer. Jim grabs a hold of Rickey's arm and thrusts Rickey's hand into the scolding deep fryer.

Rickey SCREAMS like a banshee and bucks like a wild mustang. His eyes well up with tears of pain. His legs give way and fall to the floor.

Jim pulls Rickey's arm out. His hand is dark red and crispy with bloody blusters, making SIZZLING sounds. They bring Rickey to a cutting board, extending his arm out.

John holds a large meat cleaver. Without saying a word, he chops off Rickey's hand. Blood flows from his stump like a creek. He lets out another high pitch SCREAM.

JOHN

(to the goons)

Take him to the Doc.

(to Rickey)

You got drunk on the tracks, passed out, and got your hand cut off by a passin train. If you say anythin else or even think about dealin in town, I'll deep fry your fuckin head.

John signals the goons who drag Rickey away.

JIM

What should I do with the hand?

JOHN

Wrap it up and feed it to the pigs.

JIM

And Matt Lewis?

JOHN

Call Ross. And get someone to clean this shit up.

EXT. BELLFLOWER - MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Tom is halfway down the street when a deputy cruiser pulls up to him. She speaks to him through her car window while driving at a slow pace.

ADDIE

I hope you plan on goin home.

TOM

I don't know, I was plannin on robbin a bank until you pulled up.

ADDIE

Well, you heard what the sheriff said, stay out of trouble.

TOM

Trouble seems to follow me around, much like what you're doin now.

ADDIE

Maybe I am trouble.

Tom flashes a smile. Addie drives off.

INT. THE MUSTANG INN - LOBBY - NIGHT

Tom enters, sees Catalina behind the counter.

CATALINA

Mr. Cook.

TOM

Ms. Zavala. Don't you ever go anywhere?

CATALINA

My mind goes somewhere, does that count? How was your day?

TOM

Quite.

CATALINA

I tried cleanin the blood stains in your room. If you want you can switch rooms.

TOM

Thanks, but I'll be fine with the one I have.

I mean it's just a little blood.
Good night, Ms. Zavala.

CATALINA

Good night.

Levi goes upstairs.

EXT. HATHCOCK'S RANCH - NIGHT

A beautiful ranch dwelling, two stories. A long veranda extends across the front of the building. Blue Oaks dot the ten acres of land.

INT. HATHCOCK'S RANCH - DEN - NIGHT

John sits in a royal wing chair, surrounded by objects of his success. He is drunk. His little black eyes are hooded and unfocused. He sips brandy from a cut crystal tumbler. He talks to himself.

JOHN

This world of ours is filled to the
brim with opposites. So filled,
it's practically over flowin.

INT. THE MUSTANG INN - LEVI'S ROOM - NIGHT

Levi takes a shower.

JOHN (V.O.)

There are so many opposites, that
you could argue that we live in a
dualistic universe, one in which
everything has an opposite.

INT. HATHCOCK'S RANCH - DEN - NIGHT

JOHN

Perhaps opposites are necessary for
the existence of some.

INT. LELAND JOHNSON'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Leland relaxes in his recliner, a cold beer in his hand and album of family photos in his lap. He smiles at photos of him and his nineteen-year-old daughter MARY.

JOHN (V.O.)

For example, if you wanna build a house you must first cut down a tree. In order for hot water to exist, cold water must also exist. Hot water cannot be defined without the existence of cold water.

Leland turns the page and finds a half-folded photo. One side has his daughter. He's tempted to unfold it. But turns the page.

EXT. EL PASO - NIGHT

A glowing jewel in the desert.

INT. MATT LEWIS' HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

MATT LEWIS, twenties, does lines of coke on the table. In the background, an INTRUDER creeps through the living room, wearing black from head to toe and gloves. The intruder carries a plastic bag.

JOHN (V.O.)

Up and down, light and dark,
positive and negative, the examples
are infinite.

INT. HATHCOCK'S RANCH - DEN - NIGHT

JOHN

But what about good and evil? Is
evil necessary for good to exist?
Of course it is.

INT. MATT LEWIS' HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

The intruder throws the plastic bag over Matt's head and begins to choke him to death. The intruder yanks him out of the chair and throws him to the floor.

JOHN (V.O.)

Evil is needed for good to blossom.

Matt bucks like a wild mustang, legs kicking over a chair. The intruder sticks a knee into Matt's back and punches him three times in the face. The intruder pulls harder on the bag.

Matt begins to lose strength and momentum. He goes limp, dead, blood spilling from his nose.

INT. HATHCOCK'S RANCH - DEN - NIGHT

JOHN

When I came back to this town, this place was bereft of life. But I breathed life back into it, all with evil. And do any of them protest my actions when I do it, no, because evil is needed.

INT. THE INTRUDER'S CAR - NIGHT

The intruder sprints to the car and gets in. The intruder pants, looks around, removes the hood and mask - it's Addie.

JOHN (V.O.)

Evil is needed.

CUT TO BLACK: