The Near Death Experience

by

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FADE IN:

INT./EXT. BLACK SEDAN - PARKED - NIGHT

An urban neighborhood lined with apartment buildings.

ED WAYNE (35), clean cut and handsome, sits in the driver’s seat and peers out the window. Half of his face hidden beneath shadows.

He sits very still. Very quiet. His eyes focused on one apartment building in particular.

FOOTSTEPS echo from nearby. Ed turns slightly. Sees SOMEONE walking towards the apartment building.

Ed leans in close to the window, out of the shadows, revealing large scar lining his jaw. His eyes widen a bit. He recognizes who it is...

SAM CHANDLER, late thirties, slightly overweight, approaches the front door of the apartment building.

Ed slips into Latex gloves. Looks around. The coast clear. He fixates his eyes on Sam again while slipping into a ski mask. Never taking his eyes off of Sam. Like a predator stalking his prey.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Ed quietly approaches Sam from behind. Never breaking stride. No hesitation. He holds a hammer by his side, keeping it low. His grip around the handle tightens as he gets closer.

Just as Sam opens the front door...

ED (O.S.)

Sam?

Sam turns and WHAM! Ed bashes him across the jaw with the hammer and puts his lights out. Sam drops like a ton of bricks. He lies face first on the cement. Not moving.

Ed calmly checks his surroundings. No witnesses. He stands over Sam. Stares down at him.

A blood puddle expands from beneath Sam’s face and travels close to Ed’s foot. Ed sidesteps it. He lets the crimson puddle cascade over the stoop.

Ed searches Sam’s pockets. Finds a cell phone.
INT. BLACK SEDAN - MOVING - LATER

Ed coasts through the city streets, on Sam’s cell phone.

OPERATOR (V.O.)
(filtered)
What’s the nature of your emergency?

ED
I just witnessed an attack. He’s hurt really bad.

OPERATOR (V.O.)
(filtered)
What’s the location?

ED
The address is 323 Wellington. Right outside.

OPERATOR (V.O.)
(filtered)
Do you know the victim?

ED
No.

OPERATOR (V.O.)
(filtered)
Is he breathing? Conscious?

ED
He’s alive but... he needs help.

OPERATOR (V.O.)
(filtered)
And what’s your name, sir?

Ed hangs up. He rolls down his window, chucks the cell phone onto the street. The cell phone shatters into pieces.

INT. ED’S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - LATER

Spotless. A floor clean enough to eat off of. The counter and stove top sparkling. Everything very neat and organized.

Ed, still wearing Latex gloves, sets his hammer into the sink. Runs water over it, rinsing off blood.

He drops the gloves into a nearby trash bin.
Ed eyes a blood drop on his sleeve. Annoyed, he slips out of his shirt and drops it into the trash bin.

Ed dips into a cabinet beneath the sink. Grabs a bottle of bleach and washes the peen of his hammer.

INT. ED’S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Ed smokes a cigarette while sitting on the couch. He stares off into space, deep in thought. His mind wandering.

He exhales a thick cloud of smoke which slowly rises into the air.

INT. TRAIN STATION - NIGHT - LATER

A dimly lit subway platform. The sounds of TRAINS RUMBLING from the distance echo throughout.

PAUL THOMPSON (30), every-man good looks, neatly groomed in a business suit, waits for the train with a briefcase by his side. Nobody else in sight.

Paul looks at his cell phone. He rolls his eyes and places it to his ear.

CELL PHONE (V.O.)
One new message. First unheard message...

The sounds of a RUMBLING TRAIN become louder.

STACY (V.O.)
Hey, honey, it’s me. I was just checking in. Wanted to know what time you were coming home. Any way, give me a call when you get the message.

BEEP. Paul lets out a defeated sigh, shuts his phone.

He peers down the tracks. Headlights glow from within the tunnel.

FOOTSTEPS from behind Paul. He turns, sees a STRANGER approach the platform. In his early forties. Also in a suit.

They acknowledge each other with a nod. Paul looks down the tracks again, sees the train approaching.

STRANGER
Excuse me?
Paul turns to Stranger.

STRANGER (CONT’D)
Do you have the time?

Paul checks his watch. The RUMBLING of the train grows louder as it accelerates down the tracks.

PAUL
It’s about seven.

Stranger nods.

STRANGER
Thanks. Have a good night.

Paul forces a smile and nods. He leans forward to see the train just enter the station. He takes a few steps back.

But from the corner of his eye, he sees Stranger move to the edge of the platform with no signs of stopping.

Paul watches in horror as Stranger walks over the edge of the platform just as the train barrels through...

A LOUD THUD as the train smacks into Stranger, sweeps him away. Blood dots spatter onto Paul’s cheek.

The train slows to a stop. Paul stands frozen in shock.

INT. PRECINCT - HALLWAY - LATER

DETECTIVE KERR (45), in a dull suit, walks through the narrow corridor. A significant limp in his step. Rough and rugged features. Five o’clock shadow stubble covers his face. He speaks with wry delivery.

He walks alongside DETECTIVE MERCER (40) who wears a sharp suit and clean shaven. Very slick. Cool and calm. A smooth talker.

MERCER
They had to perform emergency reconstructive surgery just to reattach his fucking jaw.

KERR
Sounds painful.

MERCER
Well, one good thing about pain...
KERR
(grins)
Means you’re alive.

His grin fades.

KERR (CONT’D)
So they say.

MERCER
In the meantime, until he comes to, I got nothing.

KERR
No witnesses?

Mercer shrugs. Lacking confidence.

MERCER
A voice.

KERR
What do you mean, a voice?

MERCER
An anonymous 911 call from the victim’s cell phone. Which of course is nowhere to be found.

KERR
Foul play I gather?

MERCER
If that ain’t foul play, I don’t know what the fuck is.

KERR
Lucky bastard. You get all the fun cases.

MERCER
Why, what do you got?

KERR
Some asshole jumped in front of a train... some other asshole had a front row seat.

MERCER
Straight up suicide?

Kerr shakes his head in disappointment.
KERR
Open and fucking shut.

INT. PRECINCT - KERR’S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Paul sits in a chair at Kerr’s desk. He wears a lost look of wonder. His eyes wandering the room. Still in a state of shock.

Paul sees Detective Kerr’s nameplate upon the desk. He looks at photos and plaques on the wall.

One photo shows Kerr and Mercer on a fishing boat. Mercer holding up a big fish. All smiles. Another photo features Mercer and Kerr in cop uniforms posing for the camera.

Kerr enters and plops down behind his desk across from Paul.

KERR
All right, then, Mr. Thompson.
Sorry for the delay. Your story checks out fine. You’re free to go.

Paul remains in a world of his own. Out of it.

KERR (CONT’D)
Mr. Thompson?

Paul snaps out of it, stares at Kerr in bewilderment. Kerr seems slightly concerned.

KERR (CONT’D)
We’ve reviewed the surveillance tape. You’re free to go.

Paul nods with a sense of uneasiness. He slowly rises from his seat and leaves.

EXT. PAUL’S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

A tall, fancy looking apartment building that overlooks a beautiful public park.

INT. PAUL’S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - SHOWER - CONTINUOUS

An immaculate bathroom. Clean and organized. Steam rises from the shower, enclosed in a glass sliding door.

Paul wears a faraway look while rinsing shampoo out of his hair. In deep thought.
Suddenly, thick steam emits from the shower head, the hot water scalding him.

Paul, startled, jumps to the side. Avoids the hot water. Annoyed, he slides the shower door open.

STACY THOMPSON (30), a natural beauty with fair skin, stands at the sink in her pajamas and washes up.

  STACY
  Hey, honey.

  PAUL
  Hey.

  STACY
  How was work?

  PAUL
  It was fine.

Stacy quickly kisses Paul on the cheek, returns to the sink.

  PAUL (CONT’D)
  Stacy, honey? Do you think you can shut off the sink? I’m getting burned alive here.

  STACY
  I’m almost done.

Stacy gets her toothbrush ready, grabs a tube of toothpaste.

  STACY (CONT’D)
  How was AA?

  PAUL
  Good. Getting close to four years.

  STACY
  I’m proud of you.

  PAUL
  (lacking enthusiasm)
  Thanks.

  STACY
  Anything interesting happen?

  PAUL
  Interesting is one way to put it --

  STACY
  Paul?
PAUL
Yeah?

STACY
Tell me something.

Stacy shows Paul the tube of toothpaste, skinny at the top, fat at the bottom. Paul looks at the tube, puzzled.

STACY (CONT’D)
Notice anything?

Paul shrugs, clueless.

STACY (CONT’D)
The toothpaste. You’re squeezing from the top again.

Paul just stares at Stacy wearing a blank look.

STACY
You’re supposed to squeeze from the bottom. Remember? Like we’ve discussed only a about a hundred thousand times?

She turns back to the mirror and finishes brushing her teeth. Paul looks on. Speechless.

Stacy gurgles and spits, puts her toothbrush away and leaves the bathroom. Paul only stands there. Defeated.

PAUL
Sure thing, honey.

He slides the shower door closed.

INT. PAUL’S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - LATER

An awkward silence, the lights dimmed.

Paul lies in bed and stares at the ceiling fan as it whirs rapidly.

Stacy, in reading glasses, lies next to Paul and takes in a book. A lamp at her bedside keeps the room lit.

Paul rolls to his side. Stares at Stacy for a prolonged period. He reaches out and rubs Stacy’s arm.

STACY
What are you doing?
PAUL
I don’t know. It’s been a while.

Stacy keeps focus on her book.

STACY
I’m tired, Paul.

Paul sighs. Rolls to his back again. He stares up at the ceiling fan spin.

Stacy shuts her book. Removes her glasses and sets them upon her night stand. She kisses Paul on the forehead and shuts off her lamp. She rolls to her side, faces away from Paul.

STACY
Good night.

She shuts her eyes. Paul continues to stare at the whirring ceiling fan hypnotically.

PAUL
Good night, honey.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Ambulances and police cruisers sit parked outside the emergency room.

INT. HOSPITAL - ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Medical equipment BEEPS rhythmically. A night light barely illuminates the room.

Sam lies unconscious in bed. Face heavily bandaged. Tubes sticking out from his body, attached to medical equipment.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Ed quietly stands outside of Sam’s room and peers in at him through the window.

ED
One day... you’ll thank me.

Ed turns and leaves.
INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Paul continues to lie awake in bed and stare at the ceiling. He glances over at his night stand, sees the time on his clock - 2:30.

Paul quietly pulls off his covers. Rolls out of bed.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Paul sits on the sofa and flips through a phone book. He scrolls through listings with his index finger. Stops.

He ponders for a moment. Picks up the house phone and dials the number from the phone book.

OPERATOR (V.O.)
Thank you for calling the suicide prevention center hot line. Please hold as we transfer you to one of our counselors.

An upbeat song plays as Paul waits on hold - RAINDROPS KEEP FALLING ON MY HEAD by BJ Thomas.

Finally, the music stops.

ED (V.O.)
(filtered)
Thanks for calling the suicide prevention center hot line. How can I help you?

Paul remains silent. Reluctant to speak. He hangs up, sets the phone on the coffee table.

Paul escapes into deep thought again. Stressed.

The PHONE RINGS and alarms Paul. He stares at the phone as it continues to RING. He picks up apprehensively.

PAUL

Hello?

ED (V.O.)
(filtered)
Why did you hang up?

Dead air. Silence.

ED (V.O.)
(filtered)
You there?
Paul hesitates to speak.

    PAUL
    I’m here.

    ED (V.O.)
    (filtered)
    Why did you call?

    PAUL
    I don’t know.

    ED (V.O.)
    (filtered)
    Are you calling in regards to yourself or a friend?

Paul doesn’t respond.

    ED (V.O.)
    (filtered)
    Do you feel that you’re a danger to yourself right now?

    PAUL
    How did you get my number?

    ED (V.O.)
    (filtered)
    Someone calls here, it’s either because they need somebody to talk to... or it’s a prank call from some punk teenager. You’re not some punk teenager, are you?

    PAUL
    No.

    ED (V.O.)
    (filtered)
    Well, then. You called us. We’re only here to help. Now... why did you call here?

Paul thinks to himself. Apprehensive.

    PAUL
    I hate my life.

Dead pause.

    ED (V.O.)
    (filtered)
    What’s your name?
INT. SUICIDE HOT LINE CALL CENTER - CONTINUOUS

Ed sits behind a desk in a small cubicle. A computer in front of him. He speaks to Paul through a headset.

Ed jots notes into a tablet. Underlining Paul’s name several times with pencil.

ED
Okay, Paul. Tell me about yourself.
(beat)
Tell me everything.

INT. PAUL’S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

An alarms BUZZES. Stacy yawns, rolls over and feels around for Paul. She opens her eyes. He isn’t there.

INT. PAUL’S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Stacy, still in her pajamas, peeks into the room from the kitchen. She sees Paul sound asleep on the couch.

INT. PAUL’S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - LATER

Steam rises from the shower, Stacy inside. She hears something, slides the shower door open and pokes her head out.

She watches Paul urinate into the toilet. His back to her.

STACY
Hey, honey.

Paul doesn’t respond.

STACY (CONT’D)
Why did you sleep on the couch last night?

Paul shrugs. Stacy stares at him concerned and confused.

STACY (CONT’D)
Are you okay?

PAUL
Why wouldn’t I be?
Paul finishes. Sets down the toilet seat.

    PAUL (CONT’D)
    I’ll flush when you’re done.
    Wouldn’t want to burn you.

Paul leaves without even looking at her, slamming the door shut behind him. She’s left confounded. Wondering.

INT./EXT. BLACK SEDAN - CITY STREET - PARKED - DAY

Ed sits parked across the street from Paul’s apartment building.

Paul, wearing a suit, leaves the building. Ed watches him like a hawk.

Stacy, in a nice dress, comes out of the building shortly after.

Ed’s expression changes. His icy, business like disposition softens. He seems intrigued by her. Captivated.

Stacy chases after Paul but struggles in her high heels. She yells something out.


Stacy watches Paul walk away. Disappointed and upset.

Ed analyzes her. The glum expression on her face. Her slumped posture. He shakes his head -- She deserves better.

He returns his focus to Paul. He starts his car and follows after him.

EXT. TALL OFFICE BUILDING - LATER

The sidewalks flooded with PEDESTRIANS, Paul enters the building, ready for work. Heavy traffic on the streets.

Ed drives past in his black sedan. Watching Paul. A sense of hostility in his stare as he drives by.

INT. TALL OFFICE BUILDING - BOARD ROOM - LATER

At an oblong table, Paul sits among several of his well-dressed COLLEAGUES.
A PRESENTER stands at the front of the room and points out numbers on a pie chart projected onto a screen.

Paul slumps his shoulders and yawns.

EXT. SIDEWALK – DAY

An upscale part of town. Expensive name brand stores and coffee shops on every corner.

Stacy peruses the sidewalk. She window shops while walking past several jewelry and clothing stores.

Stacy speaks on her cell phone.

STACY
Yes, I’d like to make a dinner reservation for two. Eight o’clock if possible.

Stacy listens. Appears frustrated as she stops in front of a LINGERIE STORE.

STACY (CONT’D)
(disappointed)
All booked, huh? Okay, then. Thanks anyway.

She hangs up. Eyes a display of sexy lingerie in the window.

INT. LINGERIE SHOP – CONTINUOUS

Expensive and sexy lingerie lines the walls and aisles, much of it displayed on mannequins with flawless bodies.

Stacy seems at odds as she looks over several items. An attractive SALES WOMAN approaches Stacy with a smile.

SALES WOMAN
Hello.

Stacy forces a smile, remains focused on the lingerie.

STACY
Hi.

SALES WOMAN
Do you need help finding anything?

STACY
Yes, actually. I’m looking for something sexy. For my husband.
SALES WOMAN
You came to the right place. What’s the occasion? Anniversary?

STACY
No occasion.

SALES WOMAN
Just trying to spice things up, huh? Well, we have a few things that might interest your husband.

Stacy follows Sales Woman down an aisle.

SALES WOMAN (CONT’D)
He must be a lucky guy.

Stacy forces a guilt-stricken smile.

INT. PAUL’S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - LATER
Stacy, in an apron, hair done up nicely, slips into oven mitts. Pulls a roast from the oven. Sets it on top. She shuts the oven. Moves to a cutting board and slices tomatoes for a salad.

INT. PAUL’S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER
Stacy slides into a sexy dress. Applies makeup in front of the mirror on the wall.

She puts on red lipstick. Smacks her lips. She smiles at her reflection. Satisfied.

INT. TRAIN STATION - NIGHT
Empty and quiet. Paul stands alone. In a trance as he waits for the train.

Steady FOOTSTEPS approach from behind. Picking up in pace. Paul turns around.

Ed, in a ski mask, charges at Paul with the hammer and WHAM! Clocks him hard across the jaw.

Paul drops to his back. Dazed. But conscious. He wiggles gingerly while looking up at the ceiling. Barely able to move. His vision blurred.

Ed enters Paul’s view, looking down at him.
Ed raises the hammer into the air and WHAM! He nails Paul again. Knocks him out cold.

Ed raises the hammer into the air again, in a frenzy. His eyes wild with rage. About to smash into Paul again but...

He stops himself. Lowers the hammer. Catches his breath. He stares down at Paul in disbelief - What have I done?

Paul lies motionless, blood leaking from his jaw, forming a puddle beneath his face.

The SOUND of a TRAIN RUMBLING grows louder. Getting close. Ed quickly surveys the area. The coast clear.

He frantically searches Paul’s pockets. Finally, he finds a cell phone.

INT. ED’S CAR - MOVING - MOMENTS LATER

The hammer sits on the passenger’s seat, a plastic bag wrapped around the top of it.

Ed, behind the wheel, speaks on Paul’s cell phone. A nervous quiver in his voice.

OPERATOR (V.O.)
What’s the nature of your emergency?

ED
I witnessed an attack.

INT. PAUL’S APARTMENT - DINING ROOM - LATER

The table neatly set. Roast at the center. Everything perfect.

Stacy sits at the table. A feeling of unease. She checks her watch and sighs. Growing worried. She looks across the table to an empty spot where Paul would be sitting.

The PHONE RINGS. Stacy quickly answers.

STACY
Paul?

POLICEMAN (V.O.)
Am I speaking with Stacy Thompson?
STACY
(delayed)
Yes.

POLICEMAN (V.O.)
This is Officer Gates from the Allentown Police Department. I’m calling in regards to your husband.

Stacy freezes.

STACY
Yes?

POLICEMAN (V.O.)
There’s been an incident.

INT. HOSPITAL - ROOM - LATER
Paul lies unconscious in a hospital bed. Face heavily bandaged. Tubes from medical equipment attached to his body.

Stacy stands with a DOCTOR at the corner of the room. She eyes Paul nervously. Tears moistening her cheeks. A complete wreck.

She turns to Doctor. Desperation in her eyes.

STACY
Is he... is he going to be okay?

Doctor, holding a clipboard, appears unsure.

DOCTOR
Your husband is currently in a state of coma due to severe head trauma. Swelling of the brain. He also suffered linear fractures in his skull as well as depressed fractures in his jaw and orbital bones. Now the chances of him --

STACY
Is he going to wake up?

Doctor struggles to look directly at Stacy. Her desperation heartbreaking.

DOCTOR
Right now, it’s day to day, Mrs. Thompson.

(MORE)
These types of head injuries take time to assess accurately. All we can do is be patient.

Stacy finds the answer hard to accept. But she wipes her eyes and nods.

INT. HOSPITAL - LOBBY - LATER

Mercer interviews Stacy, taking down information on his notepad. Stacy struggles to maintain her composure.

MERCER
Does Paul have any enemies that you know of?

Stacy shakes her head.

MERCER (CONT'D)
Notice anything different about his behavior? Has he been acting strangely?

Stacy thinks about it. Shakes her head.

MERCER (CONT'D)
Are you sure? Nothing even slightly off?

Stacy shakes her head.

Mercer nods, jotting down a few notes. He looks to Stacy, sees tears in her eyes.

Mercer sets his hand on her shoulder.

MERCER
We WILL find whoever did this to your husband.

Stacy nods while wiping tears.

MERCER (CONT'D)
Go home. Get some rest. If anything develops, you'll be the first to know. Okay?

Stacy nods. Mercer gives her shoulder a gentle squeeze.
INT. ED’S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Ed, still wearing Latex gloves, dumps his bloody hammer into the sink. Leaves it there.

INT. ED’S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ed puffs on a cigarette while sitting on his couch. Thick smoke rises to the ceiling as he stares off into space. Deep in thought. In a state of meditation. There, but not there.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

SUPER: Three Weeks Later...

Ed pays a CASHIER, walks away from the counter with a coffee cup in his hand.

He looks across the room.

Sam Chandler sits at a table with TWO CHILDREN, both under the age of 10. Bandage over his chin. Jaw wired shut.

Ed goes to Sam’s table. Stands over them. Sam looks up. Ed flashes a glowing smile.

ED
How are you?

Sam wears a confused expression.

SAM
I’m doing well. How are you?

ED
Same old, same old.

Ed looks at Sam’s children.

ED (CONT’D)
So these are the little ones?

Sam stares up at Ed in confusion.

ED (CONT’D)
You don’t remember me, do you?

Sam thinks hard. Trying his best.
ED (CONT’D)
I’m Scott’s friend. You know, from Hobbs and Goldman? We met at a function.

Sam pretends to remember.

SAM
What was your name again?

ED
Ed.

Sam nods, tries to be polite.

SAM
Of course, Ed.

ED
I heard what happened. You look good... considering.

SAM
Thanks.

ED
All small talk aside, how are you?

SAM
I’m hanging in there.

ED
Yeah? You must feel lucky to be alive. I mean, after what happened to you?

Sam nods. Looks at his kids. As if realizing how lucky he really is at that moment. He looks up at Ed.

SAM
I’m very fortunate.

Ed nods. Looks over Sam’s children.

ED
It’s good to see that you’re doing well.

Ed turns back to Sam.

ED (CONT’D)
Maybe I’ll see you around.

Sam nods with a forced smile as Ed leaves his table.
INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Stacy stands outside of Paul’s room. Speaks with ANNE, slightly older than Stacy. Also with fair skin.

Paul lies unconscious in bed in the background.

    STACY
    I know that Mom and Dad had their... issues with Paul. And
    Anne, I know you weren’t exactly thrilled about us either --

Anne rests a hand on Stacy’s shoulder.

    ANNE
    That was a long time ago.

Stacy wipes a tear from her eye, smiles at Anne.

    STACY
    Thanks for being there for me.

Stacy glimpses sadly at Paul through the window. She turns back to Anne.

    STACY (CONT’D)
    What if he never wakes up?

    ANNE
    You can’t think that way.

    STACY
    His condition hasn’t improved. At all. And these doctors, these so
called doctors don’t seem to know anything. They keep telling me to
be patient but...


Anne sees an elevator open across the hall.

    ANNE (CONT’D)
    Come on.

They board the elevator.

At the end of the hall, Ed peeks from around the corner. Waits for the elevator doors to close. He makes his way to Paul’s room.
INT. HOSPITAL – ROOM – CONTINUOUS

Ed sits at Paul’s bedside and stares down at him with a hint of regret.

He eyes the floral arrangements surrounding the bed. Get well cards all around.

Ed sees a photo of Paul and Stacy together. Happier times. He snatches the photo and stares at it with a bizarre fascination.

INT. HOSPITAL – ELEVATOR – CONTINUOUS

The elevator moves to the ground floor. Stacy continues to vent.

STACY
I should’ve done more...

ANNE
Stop talking like that.

STACY
We’ve been growing apart. And it’s all my fault. I took it all for granted. I took HIM for granted.

ANNE
(firmly)
Stacy. Listen.

Anne makes Stacy look her in the eye.

ANNE
It’s not your fault. NONE of this is your fault.

Stacy nods, but can’t shake the heartache. Tears leaking.

STACY
I’m just so lonely without him. I love him so much.

Anne hugs an arm around her. Stacy wipes her eyes and sniffs.

STACY (CONT’D)
Do you want to do lunch?

ANNE
I’ll have to take a rain check. Kids. Maybe tomorrow?
Stacy nods as the elevator reaches the ground floor. The doors open but Stacy realizes something.

    STACY
    I left my purse.

    ANNE
    Call me, okay?

Stacy nods as Anne leaves the elevator.

INT. HOSPITAL - ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ed stashes the photo of Paul and Stacy into his pocket. Just as Stacy walks in.

Ed flinches, startled. He stares at Stacy, not prepared. Nervous.

    STACY
    Hi.

Ed nods while gathering himself.

    STACY (CONT’D)
    Are you a friend of Paul’s?

Ed, at a loss for words, nods. Stacy approaches him.

    STACY (CONT’D)
    I’m Stacy. Paul’s wife.

Ed rises.

    ED
    Ed.

They stare at each other briefly. An awkward silence. Ed notices her reddened eyes.

    ED
    Are you okay?

Stacy shrugs. Glances down at Paul.

    STACY
    As okay as I can be right now, I guess.

Ed spots a box of tissues nearby. He picks up the box and offers it to Stacy.
Stacy, grateful, takes a few tissues from the box. Dabs at her eyes.

    STACY
    Thanks.

Ed nods.

    STACY (CONT’D)
    I’m sorry, how do you know Paul?

Ed is slow with an answer, thinking of a good lie.

    ED
    A mutual friend. Through work.

Stacy sees her purse at Ed’s feet.

    STACY
    Sorry, I left my purse.

Ed just notices the purse by his feet. He lifts it from the floor and hands it to her. Their hands touch ever so slightly.

Stacy takes her purse, smiles at Ed while leaving the room. Ed watches her leave. Captivated. Bewitched.

INT. PAUL’S APARTMENT – DINING ROOM – NIGHT

Stacy sits at the dinner table. Gazing at Paul’s empty spot. Poking at her food. Sad and restless.

She dials a number on her phone. The PHONE RINGS until reaching a voice mail.

    SUSAN (V.O.)
    This is Susan. I’m not available right now, but leave a message and I’ll return your call.

BEEP.

    STACY
    Hey, Susan, it’s Stacy. We haven’t spoken in a while and I figured I’d give you a call. I thought it would be nice to catch up sometime. Maybe do lunch or something. Anyway, just give me a call when you get the chance. Bye.
Stacy hangs up. Morose. Lonely. She looks at Paul’s empty spot at the table again. Sighs.

She leaves the table.

INT. COCKTAIL LOUNGE – CONTINUOUS

A quaint little bar. Slow night. Dim lighting. MUSIC plays softly in the background.

Stacy sits at the end of the bar. Stirring her drink. Bored.

She takes a look around the room at COUPLES sitting together at tables enjoying each other’s company.

Stacy hangs her head. But something catches her eye.

She spots Ed sitting at the opposite end of the bar. Alone. A drink in front of him.

She cocks her eye at him. Suspicious. She rises, walks over and sits next to him. He pretends not to notice.

    STACY
    Hey.

Ed turns.

    STACY (CONT’D)
    Are you following me?

Ed immediately grows uncomfortable. Thrown for a loop.

    ED
    Beg your pardon?

Stacy smiles, looks down at the floor embarrassed.

    STACY
    I’m sorry. You don’t remember me.

Ed feels bad.

    ED
    Stacy, right?

She looks up at him pleasantly surprised.

    STACY
    I’m sorry, I don’t recall your name.
ED

Ed.

STACY

Small world, huh?

They share a brief, uncomfortable silence. Stacy awkwardly thinks of something to further the conversation.

STACY (CONT’D)

So... what’s your story?

ED

My story?

STACY

What are you doing here?

Ed sips his drink. Stares at it. Delays his response.

ED

(hesitant)

I met my wife here. Today would have been our anniversary.

It takes Stacy a bit to catch on, but she eventually grasps the undertones of his response.

STACY

I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to pry.

Ed shakes his head indignantly.

ED

It’s fine. You didn’t know.

A brief, awkward silence. Stacy tries to think of something to say. She turns to Ed. Hesitates.

STACY

So... is she...?

Ed nods sadly. Stacy feels for him.

STACY

What was her name?

ED

Amy.

Stacy seems uncomfortable. A touchy subject.

STACY

Sorry.
ED
There’s no need to apologize. It was four years ago. I’ve had plenty of time to... deal. I mean, I’m fine now.

Stacy stares into Ed’s eyes. Sympathetic. She nods in understanding.

STACY
How long have you known Paul?

The change of subject throws Ed off. He’s slow to answer.

ED
For a while.

Another brief pause.

STACY
I can relate. I mean, Paul’s not, you know...

Ed nods sadly.

STACY (CONT’D)
I’m trying to be optimistic. But it... it’s been hard.

Stacy’s voice quivers. Becoming emotional.

STACY (CONT’D)
I can’t help but think, what if he doesn’t wake up? It’s already been three weeks.

She wipes tears. Avoiding eye contact. Ashamed to cry in front of Ed. She strains to hide her melancholia.

STACY (CONT’D)
How do you handle something like that? What do you do?

Ed shrugs.

ED
I don’t know what to tell you.

STACY
Have you found someone else? Like another woman?

Ed shakes his head.
STACY
Have you tried?

He shakes his head again.

STACY
Why not?

Ed digs deep for answer, but comes up blank.

ED
I don’t know.

STACY
Don’t you get lonely?

ED
Well, yeah. But, you know, Amy, she meant the world to me. It was hard. It’s still hard sometimes. There was even a time when I... I wanted to kill myself.

STACY
What stopped you?

ED
Someone else almost made the decision for me.

FLASHBACK - EXT. SHADY NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT


Ed reaches the street corner.

WALTER, late twenties, in rags, approaches Ed with his hands out. Begging for change.

ED (V.O.)
I was walking home one night and there was this homeless guy I used to see all the time. I never had any problems with him before. Once in a while, I’d give him some spare change. Probably did him more harm than good. For all I knew, I was probably supporting his habits.

Ed looks into Walter’s eyes. Walter strung out. Eyes dilated. Shivering from side effects.
Ed shows Walter empty hands.

    ED
    Sorry, Walter, nothing tonight.

    WALTER
    Just a nickel? A dime?

Ed walks away from him.

    ED
    I got nothing.

Walter glares at Ed.

    WALTER
    No... you got everything. I got nothing.

    ED
    I’d trade places with you any day of the week, my friend.

As Ed walks away, he hears RUNNING FOOTSTEPS behind him. He turns around. Walter comes at him with a hammer, nails him across the jaw.

Ed drops to his back. Dazed. He looks up to see Walter standing over him. Walter raises his hammer into the air and smashes Ed in the face.

Everything turns black.

BACK TO PRESENT - INT. COCKTAIL LOUNGE - NIGHT

Stacy looks at Ed, stunned.

    ED
    I was clinically dead for three minutes. That’s what they tell me anyway.

    STACY
    Did the police find him?

    ED
    I didn’t tell them who it was.

    STACY
    Why not?

    ED
    I felt sorry for him.
STACY
But what if he tries attacking somebody else?

Ed shakes his head confidently. Not the least bit worried.

ED
He won’t.

FLASHBACK - EXT. DARK ALLEY - NIGHT

Walter digs around through garbage cans for scraps. Moonlight peeks in through shadows. A blue hue.

A tall dark shadow approaches Walter from behind. Looms over him.


ED
Remember me?

Walter looks down, sees a hammer in Ed’s grip. Before Walter can react...

Ed cocks back with the hammer and WHAM! Lights out.

SMASH CUT TO:

BACK TO PRESENT - INT. COCKTAIL LOUNGE - NIGHT

A DRUNKEN PATRON from across the bar knocks over his glass and it SHATTERS on the floor.

Ed and Stacy look over, briefly distracted from their conversation. They watch DRUNKEN PATRON try to gather the glass, slicing his hands up. Blood trickling.

BARTENDER comes around with a broom. DRUNKEN PATRON insists on cleaning it up, but BARTENDER waves him off.

Ed and Stacy return to their conversation.

STACY
So, it took a near death experience, huh?

Ed shrugs, raises his glass.
STACY (CONT’D)
Not sure if that’s the route I want to go.

Ed smiles. Laughs lightly.

ED
Probably not. But it happened. And I like to think, by doing what he did... he helped me. And now, I’m trying to make the most out of my second chance.

STACY
And what exactly are you doing to make the most of it?

ED
I help people.

STACY
In what way?

Ed gives Stacy a business card. She reads it.

STACY (CONT’D)
The Suicide Prevention Center Hot line?

Ed nods.

STACY (CONT’D)
You talk people out of suicide?

Ed reflects for a moment.

ED
Something like that.

STACY
Doesn’t that get depressing?

ED
Actually, it’s therapeutic. It helps ME to know that I’m doing something to affect another person’s life. In some way.

INT. SAM CHANDLER’S APARTMENT - KID’S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sam tucks his TWO CHILDREN into bed. He stands back. Warmth in his heart as he watches them doze off.
He gives them another solemn glance as he leaves the bedroom.

INT. SAM CHANDLER’S APARTMENT - SAM’S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sam cuddles with his wife BARBARA under the covers. She lies sound asleep.

Sam remains awake. He stares at her. Cherishing every moment. Finally, he shuts his eyes. At peace with himself.

INT. HOSPITAL - ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Paul lies motionless in bed. Unconscious. Medical equipment BEEPS rhythmically, periodically breaking the silence of the still night.

INT. COCKTAIL LOUNGE - LATER

Several empty glasses sit bunched together upon the bar.

Ed and Stacy share a good laugh. Both nicely buzzed. Ed glances over to the open area of the bar and sees an ELDERLY COUPLE slow dance.

Ed’s smile fades while watching them. He turns to Stacy. She also watches the ELDERLY COUPLE. An inconceivable anguish as tears fill her eyes.

Ed stands up. Reaches his hand out to her.

STACY
What?

ED
Come on. Let’s dance.

Stacy doesn’t seem so sure. She glances at the ELDERLY COUPLE, turns back to Ed. Shakes her head.

STACY
I don’t know.

ED
Yeah, you do. Come on.

Stacy remains in her seat. Mulling it over. Ambivalent. She looks up at Ed. He raises his eyebrows suggestively at her. Motions his head to the dance area.

ED
One dance won’t kill you.
Stacy takes a moment. Makes her decision. She rises and takes Ed’s hand.

INT. COCKTAIL LOUNGE – DANCE FLOOR – LATER

Ed and Stacy slow dance into view. Hands rested upon each other’s shoulders. At a distance. Feeling each other out.

Stacy moves in close. Rests her head upon his shoulder.

Ed embraces her. Holds her tightly. Their faces touch. Cheek to cheek.

Stacy shuts her eyes. A moment of solace. Comfort. Warmth. She cherishes his care and sensitivity. Something she hasn’t felt in a very long time.

But she opens her eyes. Her thoughts taking her out of the moment. Back to reality. A sudden guilt.

STACY
I have to go.

She gently breaks away from him. Ed nods in acceptance. Stacy turns and leaves.

Ed watches her walk out the door.

INT. PAUL’S APARTMENT – BATHROOM – LATER

Stacy cries while showering. Cleansing herself.

INT. PAUL’S APARTMENT – BEDROOM – LATER

Stacy lies in bed. She stares despondently at a photo of her and Paul that sits on her night stand.

INT. ED’S APARTMENT – BEDROOM – CONTINUOUS

Ed lies in bed. He holds the photo of Paul and Stacy that he took from the hospital. Stares at it in envy.

He covers Paul’s face with his thumb.

EXT. CAFE – DAY

Stacy and Anne take in a cup of coffee at an outdoor cafe. Sitting across from each other. Stacy hangs her head. Staring blankly at her cup of coffee. Feeling down. Hopeless.
STACY
He was the only one who ever
treated me like a person.

ANNE
You keep referring to him in the
past tense.

Stacy looks to another table. Sees a HAPPY COUPLE conversing
over lunch. She sighs. Hangs her head again.

STACY
It’s been over a month and
nothing’s changed. I’m tired of
hoping.

ANNE
I understand how you feel, Stacy,
but you gotta keep a level head --

STACY
You have no idea how I feel.

Anne turns silent.

STACY (CONT’D)
Every time I visit him, it feels
like a funeral service.

A long, saturnine pause. Anne tries to come up with something
to say.

ANNE
You can’t just... give up?

Stacy ponders to herself. Conflicted.

ANNE (CONT’D)
Can you?

INT. PRECINCT - MERCER’S OFFICE - NIGHT

Detective Mercer downs a cup of coffee while shuffling
through paperwork.

He reads over PAUL THOMPSON’S PHONE RECORDS. He runs through
a list of numbers. But zeroes in on one in particular. THE
SUICIDE PREVENTION CENTER HOT LINE.

Something dawns on him. He sets the phone records to the
side, runs through a list of numbers on SAM CHANDLER’S PHONE
RECORDS.
He sees THE SUICIDE PREVENTION CENTER HOT LINE.

Mercer stuffs the records into a file folder and leaves his desk.

INT. MERCER’S HOME - KITCHEN - LATER

Half of a roast sits at the center of the table. Kerr takes a forkful of meat, dips it into mashed potatoes and engulfs it. While chewing, he looks across to...

DEBORAH, an attractive woman in her late thirties. A significant bump in her belly. At least eight months pregnant.

KERR
It’s delicious, Deborah.

She smiles, motions her head to Mercer, who pokes around at his food. Something else on his mind.

DEBORAH
Glad SOMEONE appreciates my cooking.

Mercer doesn’t catch on. In his own world. Deborah and Kerr eyeball him concerned.

DEBORAH
Honey?

Mercer snaps out of it. Looks up at Deborah.

MERCER
Huh?

DEBORAH
How’s dinner?

Mercer nods.

MERCER
It’s good.

She analyzes him. Worried. But goes back to her food.

Kerr looks across the table to Mercer. Something on Kerr’s mind. Curious.

KERR
So... how’s this case of yours going?
MERCER
I’m getting close.

Kerr waits for Mercer to explain further. But Mercer only continues to poke around at his food.

KERR
Are you gonna give me some details or am I gonna have to interrogate you?

MERCER
Still no witnesses. One victim’s in a coma, the other doesn’t remember anything.

KERR
Sure ass hell doesn’t sound like your getting close. You got no weapon, no witnesses. All you got is --

MERCER
A voice.

KERR
Without any suspects, what good is a voice gonna do you?

MERCER
Well, being a detective and all, I decided to do some detecting.

Mercer ducks under the table. Brings up a file folder. As he digs through files:

MERCER
Both victims suffered similar injuries, right? Blunt object to the jaw. Then you got the 911 calls. Both made from the victim’s phones...

KERR
Sounds like a serial killer who sucks at killing.

Deborah seems turned off by the conversation.

DEBORAH
You know I don’t like it when you boys talk shop at the table.
KERR
I’ve been stuck behind a desk for six months, Deborah...

DEBORAH
You can live vicariously through my husband after dinner. Not at the table.

Silence. Kerr goes back to eating dinner. But Mercer continues to sift through paperwork obsessively.

Kerr glances up at Mercer. Still curious as he watches him.

KERR
You know, I’d hate to burst your bubble, but what if it’s just a big coincidence?

Deborah rolls her eyes. Kerr shrugs at her, feigning innocence.

MERCER
I don’t believe in coincidences.

Mercer finally finds the file he was looking for.

MERCER (CONT’D)
Check this out.

He hands Kerr a few papers. Kerr eagerly gives them a look. After reading, he looks up at Mercer.

KERR
Phone records?

MERCER
Tell me if anything jumps out at you.

Kerr reads further.

KERR
Suicide Prevention Center Hot Line?

MERCER
Both calls to that number were made a day before their attacks.

Kerr appears impressed.

MERCER (CONT’D)
How’s that for coincidence?
INT. SUICIDE HOT LINE CALL CENTER - NIGHT

Ed sits in his cubicle, microphone headset on. He conducts research on his computer. We see a photo of Paul appear on the screen. His company web site.

He scrolls to a personal web page. A photo of Stacy appears. Suddenly...

The PHONE RINGS and interrupts Ed. He hits a button and answers.

   ED
   Thank you for calling The Suicide Prevention Center Hot Line. How can I help you?

Silence on the other line. Then BREATHING. Someone CRIES softly. A WOMAN.

   STACY (V.O.)
   (filtered)
   Ed?

Ed sits up straight. He knows who it is.

INT. ED’S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Stacy and Ed sit on the couch in silence. A distance between them.

Ed looks over to Stacy. Her cheeks moist and eyes red after hours of crying. Ed awkwardly reaches over and sets a hand on her shoulder.

   ED
   You okay?

She nods, trying to hide her emotions. Embarrassed.

   STACY
   I was just having a Stacy moment.
   Didn’t have anyone else to talk to.

Ed scrunches his brow perplexed.

   ED
   What exactly is a Stacy moment?

Stacy shrugs. Smiles sadly.
STACY
When me and Paul first started dating, every time I would behave irrationally, he would say I was having a Stacy moment.

Ed scratches his head. He doesn’t quite understand.

ED
You’re going through a rough time right now. I wouldn’t necessarily categorize your behavior as irrational.

Stacy sees a pack of cigarettes on the floor, sticking out from beneath the couch, by her feet.

She grabs the pack of cigarettes. Pulls a cigarette out.

STACY
You mind?

Ed just notices the cigarettes in her hand. Jumps out of his seat.

ED
No!

Stacy seems thrown off by his reaction. Ed catches himself acting strangely and quickly tries to cover it up.

ED (CONT’D)
I mean... not inside.

Stacy raises her eyebrow at Ed.

EXT. ED’S APARTMENT BUILDING - ROOFTOP - NIGHT


Stacy stands at the middle of the roof area. Far from the edge. She puffs on a cigarette while admiring the view.

STACY
I’m sort of afraid of heights.

Ed stands near the edge of the roof. He looks down and watches PEOPLE who appear like ants far below him.

Stacy looks at her cigarette while exhaling smoke.
STACY
You know, I haven’t smoked a cigarette in four years?

Ed glances back at Stacy, acknowledges her.

ED
Yeah?

STACY
I promised Paul that if he’d quit drinking, I’d quit smoking.

Ed nods. Faces the view in front of him again. He approaches the very edge of the roof and tight-ropes it. Tiptoeing along the ledge.

ED
(while tiptoeing)
How long were you married?

Stacy stares off into space, zoned out.

STACY
About five years.

ED
Were you happy?

Stacy hangs her head while thinking about it. She shrugs, tosses her cigarette butt.

STACY
There’s been some rough patches.

She looks up and just notices Ed pulling a high wire act along the ledge.

STACY
Can you please not do that?

ED
What?

STACY
You could fall.

ED
I’m aware of that.

STACY
I wouldn’t consider myself an expert in physics, but you could probably die.
Ed looks over to Stacy.

ED
How can you appreciate life without knowing how close you are to dying?

STACY
I appreciate my life just fine.

ED
Do you?

Stacy considers it briefly. Momentarily confounded. Ed extends his hand to Stacy and waves her over.

ED
Come on.

STACY
You’re insane.

Ed turns and faces Stacy. His heels hanging off. He wobbles, loses his balance. About to fall backwards, off the roof.

ED
Whoa!

STACY
Ed!

Stacy hurries over and grabs Ed’s hand. Helps him regain his balance. But he smiles, not letting go of her.

STACY
You asshole!

Ed laughs it up. Pulls Stacy close to him. Their lips embrace. A long passionate kiss at the edge of the roof.

Stacy looks down.

STACY
Oh, my God.

Ed holds her in front of him. Looks her dead in the eye.

ED
Just look at me. Don’t worry about what’s down there.

She takes a breath. Swallows. Keeps her eyes on Ed.
ED (CONT’D)
Are you still afraid?

Stacy laughs nervously.

STACY
Yeah.

Ed kisses her. Long and passionate. Ed guides her down into sitting position. Their lips locked.

They look deep into each other’s eyes. Lust taking over. Ed’s hands feeling every part of her body. His hand on her thigh. Creeping up her leg.

Stacy clenches her eyes shut. Unfastens Ed’s belt. Slides his pants down just enough. He slides her pants down.

Ed lies on top of her. Thrusts his midsection into her’s. She moans insatiably. He thrusts into her again. Their lips break apart. Stacy moans in sheer ecstasy.

He thrusts into her sharply. Things getting intense. Harder and faster while gazing into each other’s eyes.

The stars and moon shine bright in the background, glistening off the surrounding buildings.

EXT. HOBBS & GOLDMAN BUILDING - DAY

A tall office building. Hustle and bustle along the sidewalk out front, flooded with PEDESTRIANS. Heavy traffic in the street.

INT. HOBBS & GOLDMAN BUILDING - CAFETERIA - CONTINUOUS

Detective Mercer sits across from Sam Chandler. The scar on his chin healing nicely. Jaw no longer wired.

Sam enjoys a sandwich while Mercer jots down notes.

MERCER
So, this suicide hot line... did it help at all?

Sam shrugs, wipes his mouth with a napkin.

SAM
Not really. I don’t remember much about it. You know, with the head injury and all. I’m still having trouble remembering things.
MERCER
How’s everything going now, since the incident?

SAM
Great. I can’t really complain.

MERCER
And I take it you don’t recall who you spoke with when you called this hot line.

Sam shakes his head. Mercer nods. But seems disappointed.

MERCER (CONT’D)
Anything peculiar happen recently? Since leaving the hospital?

Sam shakes his head.

MERCER (CONT’D)
Nothing just a teensy bit off?

Sam thinks back for a moment.

SAM
Nothing really.

Mercer shuts his notebook.

MERCER
Thank you for your time, Mr. Chandler.

Mercer stands up and leaves.

INT. ED’S APARTMENT – BEDROOM – CONTINUOUS

Stacy lies in Ed’s bed. Naked. Eyes open. Staring at the ceiling in deep thought.

Ed lies naked next to her. Sheets covering them from the waist down.

STACY
He hit me once. When he was drunk.

Ed kisses her neck. Tries to comfort her.

STACY (CONT’D)
It was Christmas. Four years ago. My whole family was there.
ED
You don’t have to talk about it.

Stacy remains in her own world.

STACY
That was the only time he ever hit me. And it was the last time he ever had a drink. I know it was a long time ago. But from time to time... I think about it.

A somber silence. Stacy rolls over. Faces Ed.

STACY
What about you?

ED
What about me?

STACY
Have you ever hit a woman before?

He shakes his head indignantly.

ED
Only men.

INT. HOBBS & GOLDMAN BUILDING - ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Sam waits as the elevator makes a stop. The doors slide open. SCOTT, early forties, boards the elevator. A fellow coworker.

SAM
How’s it going, Scott?

SCOTT
It’s going.

Scott checks Sam’s face. Suddenly concerned.

SCOTT (CONT’D)
How are YOU doing?

SAM
Feeling much better.

Scott nods in approval.

SCOTT
Well, you look good.
SAM
Thanks.
The elevator doors slide shut. Moving again.

SAM (CONT’D)
Oh, yeah, I forgot to tell you. I ran into a friend of yours the other day.

SCOTT
Didn’t know I had friends. Who was it?

SAM
Said his name was Ed?

Scott wears a blank expression.

SCOTT
Ed?

Scott thinks back but draws a blank.

SCOTT (CONT’D)
I don’t even know anyone named Ed.

SAM
Really? He said he knew me through you.

SCOTT
Well, he must be mistaken.

Sam ponders to himself. Perplexed.

IMAGINARY SEQUENCE – EXT. ANYWHERE – NIGHT
Ed, wearing his ski mask, charges at us with his hammer ready to strike...

INT. HOSPITAL – ROOM – DAY
Sunlight shines onto Paul’s face. Lying motionless in bed. Eyes shut. The sun peeking in through the blinds.
The BEEPING from his medical equipment echoes.

Suddenly, Paul’s eyes slam open. He lets out a frightened gasp.
INT. ED’S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Stacy lies down and stares up at the ceiling in meditation. Ed showers in the bathroom with the door slightly ajar.

A CELL PHONE RINGS and startles her. She sits up. It’s her cell phone.

She checks the caller ID with a quizzical expression. Not sure who it is, she answers.

STACY
Hello?

DR. RYAN (V.O.)
(filtered)
May I please speak with a Mrs. Thompson?

STACY
This is her.

DR. RYAN (V.O.)
(filtered)
This is Dr. Ryan from Saint Luke’s Hospital. I’m calling in regards to your husband, Paul.

She expects the worst. Bracing herself for bad news.

STACY
Yes?

DR. RYAN (V.O.)
He’s awake.

INT. HOSPITAL - ELEVATOR - LATER

Stacy can’t contain herself. Nervous, yet eager. The elevator can’t move fast enough.

She taps her foot nervously. Growing impatient. Finally, the elevator stops. The doors slide open.

INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Stacy bolts out of the elevator like an Olympic sprinter. She dashes through the hallway, zigzagging her way around DOCTORS and NURSES.
INT. HOSPITAL - ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Stacy rushes into the room. But stops suddenly. Staring at Paul awake in bed.

She stands frozen stiff. A million thoughts running through her mind.

Paul wears a warm smile. His jaw wired shut. Slightly disfigured.

    PAUL
    (weak)  
    Hey, honey.

Stacy falls apart. Tears flood down her cheeks. She tiptoes towards him. Her conscience eating at her. But she soon becomes overcome with joy.

She hugs him tighter than she’s ever hugged anyone. He embraces her as she sobs hysterically, her face buried into his chest.

Paul nearly falls into tears. Deeply touched.

EXT. PAUL’S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

SUPER: One Week Later...

A VAN pulls to the front of the building. The side door slides open. DRIVER gets out, pulls out a handicap ramp. He guides Paul, in a wheelchair, down onto the sidewalk.

Stacy follows him out. Pushes Paul the rest of the way into the building.

INT./EXT. ED’S CAR - PARKED - ACROSS STREET - CONTINUOUS

Ed spies from the driver’s seat. Face hidden beneath shadows.

As cars zoom by, shadows dance across his face. Only his eyes remain in constant view. A cold, unsettling gaze.

INT. PAUL’S APARTMENT BUILDING - ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Paul sits patiently in his wheelchair. In good spirits. Grateful to be alive. He glances up at Stacy. Sees a mischievous grin on her face.
PAUL
There’s a surprise party waiting for me, isn’t there?

Stacy tries hard to hide her grin.

STACY
I haven’t the slightest idea what you’re talking about.

Paul smiles.

PAUL
I’ll do my best to act surprised.

INT. PAUL’S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

The doorknob jiggles. Turns. Stacy opens the door and wheels Paul inside.

The lights flick on and a whole mess of PEOPLE jump out from hiding spots all over the apartment.

PARTY GUESTS
(in unison)
SURPRISE!!!

Paul does his best to appear surprised, but his act seems awfully labored.

PAUL
Wow! I had no idea!

He looks up at Stacy and shares a good laugh.

INT. PAUL’S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATER

UPBEAT MUSIC plays in the background as GUESTS socialize with each other. Groups of them spread all over the room. Everyone having a good time.

Paul and Stacy appear inseparable. Paul looks around at all the guests.

PAUL
Thanks, honey. I really appreciate this.

Stacy kisses him on the top of his head.

STACY
It’s the least I can do.
They look deep into each other’s eyes. Sharing a warm moment.

    PAUL
    I love you.

    STACY
    I love you.

They give each other a big smooch. Anne butts in.

    ANNE
    Get a room, you two.

Stacy laughs.

    PAUL
    Where are your parents tonight?

Anne shares an awkward glance with Stacy. Keeps quiet. Stacy makes something up.

    STACY
    They wanted to come but something else came up.

Paul’s expression falls a bit. He knows they didn’t want to come.

    PAUL
    Well, give them my blessings.

    ANNE
    I’ll do that.

Stacy’s CELL PHONE RINGS. She checks it. Freezes. Thrown off. Uneasy.

Paul raises an eyebrow.

    STACY
    I’ll be right back.

Stacy disappears into the kitchen. Paul watches her suspiciously. Studying her. She seems worried while talking on the phone.

    ANNE
    So, Paul, when do you go back to work?

Paul continues to eyeball Stacy from across the room.

    PAUL
    Aiming for next Monday.
ANNE
And the wheelchair?

PAUL
Just for a few days or so.

He keeps focus on Stacy.

PAUL (CONT’D)
Excuse me.

Paul wheels his way to the kitchen.

INT. PAUL’S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Stacy huddles into the corner of the room. Whispers on her cell phone. She speaks fast. On edge.

STACY
I can’t talk right now.

ED (V.O.)
(filtered)
I haven’t heard from you in a while. I’m worried.

STACY
Paul’s here. I’ll call you tomorrow, okay?

ED (V.O.)
(filtered)
That’s what you said a week ago.

STACY
(firm)
I’ll call you tomorrow.

Stacy hangs up just as Paul wheels in from behind.

PAUL
Who was that?

Stacy flinches, caught by surprise.

STACY
(tense)
Oh, hey honey.

PAUL
You okay?
STACY
Yeah, I’m fine.

PAUL
Who were you talking to?

Stacy stalls for a few moments.

STACY
It was Detective Mercer. I told him we were having a welcome home party. Told him to call back tomorrow.

Paul accepts her answer.

PAUL
Your parents didn’t want to come, did they?

Stacy looks down at the floor, back at Paul.

PAUL (CONT’D)
I understand.

STACY
They’re stubborn.

Paul smiles sadly.

PAUL
In time, I guess. At least your sister seems to have come around.

Stacy plants a big kiss on Paul’s lips.

STACY
Let’s go back to the party. (more upbeat) Your people await.

Stacy spins Paul around in his chair, wheels him back into the living room.

Meanwhile, Stacy’s cell phone sits on the counter. It lights up and VIBRATES.

INT./EXT. ED’S CAR - PARKED - ACROSS STREET - CONTINUOUS

Ed sits parked across the street from Paul’s apartment building. He listens to Stacy’s voice mail.
STACY (V.O.)
(filtered)
You’ve reached Stacy Thompson.
Sorry I’m unable to take your call.
Please leave a message and I’ll get
back to you as soon as I can. Bye.

BEEP. Ed slams his cell phone shut. Drops it onto the
passenger’s seat. He exhales through his nostrils, glares up
at Paul’s apartment building.

INT. PRECINCT - MERCER’S OFFICE - DAY

Detective Mercer sits at his desk and munches on a bagel. Sam
Chandler sits across from him.

MERCER
What’s the word, Mr. Chandler?
How’s the jaw?

Sam shrugs.

SAM
Still clicks when I eat.

MERCER
Yeah? My old man had the same
problem. Used to annoy the shit
outta my mom.

Sam forces a nervous laugh.

MERCER (CONT’D)
How can I help you today, Mr.
Chandler?

SAM
(reluctant)
Last time we spoke, you asked me if
anything strange happened recently.

MERCER
You told me no.

SAM
Well...

MERCER
Well?

SAM
I was at this coffee shop about a
month ago. Had my kids with me.
(MORE)
SAM (cont'd)
And this man came up to me. He
struck up a conversation. Talked to
me like he knew me.

MERCER
But you didn’t know him?

SAM
I thought I didn’t remember. You
know, on account of the head
injury.

Mercer wipes his mouth with a napkin, waits for Sam to
finish.

SAM (CONT’D)
He seemed to know an awful lot
about me. Told me he knew me
through a mutual friend. Only
problem is that this mutual friend
doesn’t seem to know him.

Sam now has Mercer’s full attention. Mercer scratches his
chin in deep thought.

MERCER
You remember what he looked like?

SAM
He looked normal enough. But there
was one thing. He had this... scar.

MERCER
Scar?

SAM
On his chin.

Mercer eyes the scar on Sam’s chin.

MERCER
Like you?

Sam nods.

MERCER
Catch his name?

Sam nods, leans in close to Mercer.

SAM
Ed.
INT. SUICIDE PREVENTION CENTER OFFICES - NIGHT

Ed sits in a cubicle. Down in the dumps. Dark circles under his eyes. His office space cluttered and messy.

Ed speaks with a sad, monotone voice on the phone.

ED
Thanks for calling The Suicide Prevention Center Hot Line. How can I assist you?

The SUPERVISOR, late twenties, wearing thick-framed lenses, pokes his head into Ed’s cubicle.

SUPERVISOR
Ed?

Ed looks up at Supervisor while on the phone.

ED
(on phone)
Please, hold.

Ed puts the caller on hold, gives Supervisor his full attention.

SUPERVISOR
There’s someone here to see you.

ED
Yeah?

SUPERVISOR
A Detective Mercer?

Ed’s expression falls. Sheer panic. A million thoughts flashing through his mind. Ed takes a deep breath. Tries to maintain his composure.

INT. SUICIDE PREVENTION CENTER - BREAK ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A small room with a coffee machine and a mini-fridge in the corner. Posters line the walls with positive messages.

Ed and Detective Mercer sit across from each other at an oblong table. A tense silence as Mercer observes Ed carefully. Focuses on the scar that covers Ed’s chin.

MERCER
What’s with the beauty mark?
It was years ago.

MERCER
What was years ago?

Ed grows uncomfortable very quickly. Constantly touching his face. Shifting around restlessly in his seat.

ED
I was mugged. Almost died.

Mercer nods, continues to eyeball Ed.

ED (CONT’D)
Did I do something wrong, Detective?

MERCER
I don’t know. Did you?

Ed freezes up. Mercer laughs jokingly.

MERCER (CONT’D)
Just messing with you. Only here to ask you a few questions, Ed. You don’t mind if I call you Ed, do you?

Ed shakes his head.

ED
You mind if I call you Detective?

Mercer chuckles, but maintains a serious expression.

MERCER
Feel free, Ed. Whatever makes you comfortable.

Mercer shuffles through papers.

MERCER (CONT’D)
The night of March 27th, say around 11 p.m. You wouldn’t happen to remember your whereabouts, would you?

Ed pretends to think hard. Shrugs.

ED
I don’t know.
Mercer reads over his paperwork.

MERCER
What about the night of March 29th?
Around seven o’clock?

Ed feigns concentration. Pretending to think back.

ED
That was so long ago. I was probably here, working. Like I should be doing now.

MERCER
So... you say that you were working?

ED
Probably, yeah.

Mercer scratches his chin. Acting ironically puzzled.

MERCER
Because your supervisor tells me you’ve been working graveyard shift for three years. Midnight to eight.

ED
I pick up a lot of over time.

Mercer nods, jots something down. He studies Ed’s body language. A prolonged stare.

MERCER
What’s your relationship with Sam Chandler?

Ed’s eye twitches a bit. He clears his throat, fakes a cough.

ED
Never heard of him.

MERCER
What about Paul Thompson?

Ed shakes his head before Mercer finishes the question.

ED
I really need to get back to work...
MERCER
Just one more question. I understand a few years back you were a suspect in the murder of an Amy Conway?

Ed snaps, pounds his fist on the table.

ED
What the fuck does that have to do with anything?

An intense stare down. Mercer nods. Gathers his paperwork and stands up.

MERCER
Thank you for your time, Ed.

Mercer smirks at Ed on his way out of the room.

INT. PAUL’S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Paul and Stacy lie asleep in bed, huddled close under the covers. Paul opens his eyes. The first thing he sees is Stacy. He smiles. Cherishing her beauty.

Paul sits up, kisses Stacy on the forehead. Her eyes remain shut, but she smiles.

STACY
Back to work today?

Paul smiles. Kisses her again.

INT. PAUL’S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - LATER

Paul and Stacy shower together. Sharing an intimate moment. Caressing each other. Steam pouring from the shower.

She kisses Paul on the mouth, grabs a towel and steps out of the shower. Paul finishes his shower alone.

Stacy dries off, stands in front of the sink. She wraps the towel around her head. Wipes fog from the mirror.

She grabs her toothbrush and a tube of toothpaste. But she stops. Stares at the tube annoyed. Fat at the bottom, thin at the top.

STACY
Hey, honey?
PAUL (O.S.)
Yeah?

Stacy catches a glimpse of herself in the mirror. Holds back.

STACY
Nothing.

EXT. TALL OFFICE BUILDING - DAY - LATER
Paul, spruced up in a suit and tie, briefcase in hand, weaves around PEDESTRIANS on the crowded sidewalks out front. A bounce in his step. Refreshed.

He enters the building.

INT. TALL OFFICE BUILDING - TOP FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER
Paul steps out of the elevator, turns into a hallway.
As Paul walks through, COWORKERS greet him with welcoming smiles.

COWORKER #1
Hey, Paul, good to see you.

Paul nods and smiles.

COWORKER #2
Welcome back, Paul.

PAUL
Glad to be back.

Paul reaches his office at the end of the hallway.

INT. TALL OFFICE BUILDING - PAUL’S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS
Paul enters his office, flicks the light switch on. He comes to a sudden halt. Looks around. He smiles and shakes his head at a display of flowers and balloons surrounding his desk.

INT. PAUL’S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS
Stacy stands at the counter and flips through mail. She stops at one envelope in particular. Thrown off. Befuddled.

She opens the envelope. Reads the contents -- FIREARMS PERMIT.
INT. PAUL’S APARTMENT - DINING ROOM - NIGHT - LATER

A steaming pot roast sits at the center of the perfectly set dinner table. Paul enjoys his meal. Looks across the table to Stacy.

   PAUL
   Real good, honey.

Stacy forces a smile. Not very happy with Paul. She slides the FIREARMS PERMIT across to Paul.

He looks down at it. Up at Stacy. She crosses her arms. Waits for him to explain himself.

   PAUL
   What?

   STACY
   A gun license?

   PAUL
   Yeah?

   STACY
   You can’t buy a gun, Paul.

   PAUL
   What’s the point of having a gun license if I don’t own a gun?

   STACY
   Why would you even apply for a gun license?

   PAUL
   Well, for one, I was brutally attacked and unconscious for over a month --

   STACY
   Promise me you won’t bring a gun into this house.

Paul rolls his eyes while chewing his food. He looks up at her. Wipes his mouth while nodding.

   PAUL
   Fine. I won’t bring a gun into this house.

Stacy doesn’t buy it at first. But she nods. Goes back to her food. But she freezes up for a moment. Stops eating.
She looks down into her pocket. Her CELL PHONE glows while BUZZING quietly. On vibrate.

Stacy sees Paul preoccupied. Quickly checks the call ID. Keeping her phone low, under the table. One eye on Paul, the other on the phone.

She shuts her phone, slips it into her pocket. Tries to act natural.

    STACY
    So, how was work?

    PAUL
    Great. It feels good to be out and about again.

The HOUSE PHONE RINGS and alarms Stacy. Paul raises his eyebrow. Perplexed by Stacy’s strange reaction.

    PAUL
    Want me to get that?

Stacy immediately stands up, wipes her mouth and tosses the napkin onto the table.

    STACY
    No honey, you eat. I’ll get it.

Stacy hurries out of the dining room. Paul watches her curiously.

    PAUL
    You know, you can just let the machine get it?

INT. PAUL’S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Stacy plucks the phone off the wall, answers it.

    STACY
    Hello?

INT./EXT. ED’S CAR - PARKED - CONTINUOUS

Ed sits in the driver’s seat of his car, stares up at Paul’s apartment building across the street.

    ED
    Hey there, stranger.
STACY (V.O.)
(whispers)
Not now, Ed.

ED
Then when?

INT. PAUL’S APARTMENT – KITCHEN – CONTINUOUS
Stacy looks into the living room. Paul watching her closely.

STACY
I’m sorry, you have the wrong number.

Stacy hangs up.

INT. PAUL’S APARTMENT – DINING ROOM – CONTINUOUS
Stacy sits back down. Avoiding eye contact with Paul. She pretends to be preoccupied with her food. Paul analyzing her.

PAUL
Who was that?

STACY
Wrong number.

Paul glows with cynicism. Eyeing her suspiciously.

PAUL
A lot of wrong numbers lately.

Stacy stops eating for a moment. Her guilty eyes focused down on her plate. But she continues to eat.

INT. PAUL’S APARTMENT – BEDROOM – LATER
Paul lies on top of Stacy. Makes intimate love to her. Face to face. Very sensual. Bedsheets cover them waist down.

Paul breathes heavy into her ear. Suddenly, Stacy wraps her thigh tightly around Paul’s waist. Whispers into his ear:

STACY
Fuck me.

Paul’s eyes widen. Surprised. But he’s turned on. He goes harder into her. Grunts. Thrusting into her harder and harder. Growing more and more intense.
Stacy moans in ecstasy. Digs her fingernails into his back. Scratches him.

PAUL
(whispers)
Ouch...

Paul seems disturbed. This isn’t the same woman.

Stacy rolls him to his back. Hops on top of him. Dominates him. She pins his shoulders to the bed. Rides him hard and fast.

STACY
Fuck me! Fuck me!

Paul enjoys every second of it. An unexpected pleasure. He shuts his eyes tightly. Climaxing.

Stacy screams with pleasure. Her eyes also shut tightly. Their bodies glistening with sweat.

Stacy exhales. Catches her breath. She plops down on top of Paul.

Paul appears puzzled. Staring up at the whirring ceiling fan.

INT. PAUL’S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - LATER

A tranquil silence broken by Paul occasionally snoring. The room dark.

Stacy’s CELL PHONE VIBRATES and glows. Stacy opens her eyes. Half asleep. She reaches for her phone. Tilts it to see the caller ID.

She sighs. Frustrated. She shuts her cell phone off. Stares up at the ceiling. Worried and annoyed.

The HOUSE PHONE RINGS from the next room. Stacy sits up. Alarmed. In disbelief. Panic hits her like a bucket of water.

She turns to Paul. Sees him sound asleep. The HOUSE PHONE continues to RING.

Stacy creeps out of bed. Tiptoes to the bedroom door while keeping a close eye on Paul.

She leaves the bedroom. The door slightly ajar. Light from the kitchen slivers into the bedroom. Shining onto Paul’s face.

He opens his eyes.
INT. PAUL’S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Stacy grabs the house phone from the wall. She stands in the corner of the room, as far away from the bedroom as possible.

STACY
(whispers)
Do you have any idea what time it is?

ED (V.O.)
(filtered)
When exactly did you plan on returning my call?

STACY
Ed, I can’t --

ED (V.O.)
(filtered)
You can’t what?

STACY
Please, Ed, I’ll call you tomorrow.

ED (V.O.)
(filtered)
What time?

STACY
I don’t know... three o’clock?

ED (V.O.)
(filtered)
If you don’t call --

STACY
Ed, I’ll call you, okay? Bye.

She hangs up. Sighs in frustration.

PAUL (O.S.)
Who’s Ed?


Stacy takes a deep breath. Regains composure. Thinks fast.

STACY (CONT’D)
That was Dad.

PAUL
Sounded to me like you said Ed.
Paul inspects Stacy suspiciously. But acts normal again.

    PAUL (CONT’D)
    Then again, I was in the bedroom
    with the door closed. Everything
    okay?

    STACY
    Yeah, he was just... he’s not
    feeling well.

Paul nods.

    PAUL
    All right.

Paul disappears into the bedroom.

INT. PAUL’S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

The sun peeks through the blinds in the window. The glare
awakens Stacy. She opens her eyes.

She shuts her eyes and rolls over. Feels around Paul’s spot
in bed. She turns to see that Paul isn’t there.

INT. PAUL’S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Paul paces while on the phone. Dressed in a suit, ready for
work.

    PAUL
    (on phone)
    That’s right, just for a few hours.
    Say, till around five o’clock?

Paul sees Stacy in the kitchen. Turns his back to her. A
private phone call.

    PAUL (CONT’D)
    (on phone)
    I’d rent a car myself, but this was
    last second.

INT. PAUL’S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - LATER

Stacy stands in the shower. Vulnerable. A lot on her mind.
She hears the door open. Slides open the shower.

Paul stands at the toilet, urinates. His back to her. He
whistles a tune, seems upbeat.
STACY
Hey, honey.

PAUL
(cheerful)
Hey.

STACY
You were up early.

PAUL
Big day at work. Guess I was just excited. How’s your father?

STACY
(delayed)
He’s doing better.

PAUL
Good.

Stacy seems confused by Paul’s upbeat behavior. Something’s not right.

Paul zips up and flushes the toilet. Washes his hands at the sink. Still whistling.

A thick steam generates from the shower head. The hot water singes Stacy.

STACY
Ouch!

Stacy moves to the back of the shower, away from the hot water. Paul dries his hands. Leaves the bathroom in a hurry.

EXT. PUBLIC PARK – DAY – LATER

A bright sunny day. Perfect blue sky. A constantly moving wave of PEDESTRIANS crowd the park and flood the sidewalks.

SKATEBOARDERS and TEENS loiter corners and park benches. DOG WALKERS peruse the sidewalks.

Ed sits alone at a park bench. Checking his cell phone frequently. Losing his patience.

Finally, he sees Stacy emerge from the CROWD. Ed’s eyes light up.

She spots Ed. Seems less than enthused. Slowing down as she nears him.
Ed rises from the bench with open arms. He hugs her tightly, but she doesn’t return the warmth.

Ed moves in for a kiss, but she offers him only her cheek. He pulls back. Senses something off.

ED
I’ve missed you.

Stacy avoids his comment, struggles to look him in the eye.

STACY
We can’t see each other anymore.

Ed slouches in defeat. Crestfallen. He waits for her to say more, but she doesn’t.

ED
Why?

Stacy finds this increasingly difficult.

STACY
I love my husband.

ED
Do you?

Stacy, fighting tears of guilt, nods.

STACY
Yes.

Ed doesn’t know what to say or how to act. The wind taken out of his sails.

STACY (CONT’D)
I didn’t think he was going to make it, Ed --

ED
So, what was I then? A back up plan? Something to fall back on, just in case?

Stacy stares gloomy-eyed down at the ground. Anything she says will be the wrong thing.

ED
(firm)
Look at me.
She hesitates. Afraid to look at him. But she does. Ed wears his heart on his sleeve. Desperation palpable.

    ED (CONT’D)
    Did any of it mean anything to you?

Stacy contemplates her response. On the fence. She holds back tears. Shakes her head.

    STACY
    No.

Ed takes a step back. Devastated. He runs his hands through his hair and smooths his brow in frustration. Either about to cry or explode. Staring off into space. His mind scattered.

He turns back to her. Gazes at her coldly.

    ED
    Did you love him when he hit you?

    STACY
    (delayed)
    Yes.

Ed leans his face in close to Stacy’s. Intimidating her.

    ED
    Did you love him when I was fucking your brains out on my roof?

Stacy stares at Ed. Appalled. Furious but afraid at the same time. A tense silence.

    STACY
    If I ever see you or hear from you again, I will have you arrested.

Stacy turns her back to Ed and walks away.

A BLACK CAR sits parked nearby. At the curb. SOMEONE watching Ed.

EXT. ED’S APARTMENT BUILDING – DAY – LATER

Ed walks into his building. Suddenly, the BLACK CAR pulls up to the curb. Across the street.

Paul exits the car. He looks up at Ed’s building. Approaches the front door.

He reads off a list of TENANT NAMES listed beside APARTMENT NUMBERS and buzzers.
Paul scrolls down the list with his index finger.

PAUL
Where are you, Ed?

Paul’s finger stops at E. WAYNE. The only first initial with the letter E.

PAUL
There you are.

INT. PAUL’S APARTMENT BUILDING – LOBBY – CONTINUOUS

Stacy enters the building while rummaging through her purse. She digs out her cell phone and checks for messages.

As she nears the elevator, she runs into Detective Mercer.

MERCER
Miss Thompson?

STACY
Oh... Detective Mercer. How are you?

MERCER
Not bad, yourself?

STACY
I’m doing okay.

MERCER (CONT’D)
Sorry to pop in like this. I just tried contacting your husband, but he doesn’t seem to be home.

STACY
He’s at work.

MERCER
Wasn’t there when I stopped by.

STACY
He must be busy.

MERCER
Well, while I’m here, I was wondering if YOU had a few minutes to talk.
INT. PAUL’S APARTMENT - DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Detective Mercer makes himself comfortable. Sits down at the table. Hangs his jacket on the back of his chair.

Stacy brings him a cup of coffee. He takes a sip. Impressed. He smiles and raises his cup to her in thanks.

Stacy grins. Sits down across from Mercer.

MERCER
How’s Paul doing, anyway? Getting around okay?

STACY
Like nothing ever happened.

MERCER
That’s great news, Miss Thompson. Good to hear.

STACY
So, how can I help you, Detective?

MERCER
Call me Bob. People call me Detective so much, I’m beginning to think it’s my Christian name.

Stacy humors him with a smile.

MERCER (CONT’D)
Anyway, down to brass tacks, here.

Mercer sets a file folder on the table, flips through paperwork.

MERCER (CONT’D)
What do you know about a suicide hot line?

Stacy immediately freezes. A delayed reaction.

MERCER (CONT’D)
Because I went through your phone records and found the number for a Suicide Prevention Center Hot Line. It was dialed from your land line the night before your husband was attacked.

STACY
The night before?
MERCER
Yeah. Paul ever mention anything?

Stacy shakes her head, puzzled.

MERCER (CONT’D)
Does the name Ed Wayne ring a bell?

Stacy grows speechless.

MERCER (CONT’D)
Miss Thompson?

STACY
That’s MRS Thompson.

Mercer eyes her suspiciously.

MERCER
Sorry if I offended you. I tend to refer to all women as Miss. It’s something I do.

A DOOR OPENS OS. Paul walks into the room. Stops when he sees Mercer and Stacy.

Mercer stands up, shakes Paul’s hand.

MERCER
Mr. Thompson.

PAUL
Detective Mercer.

Mercer sits down again. Paul sets his briefcase to the side. Shares a tense glance with Stacy. Looks back to Mercer.

MERCER
Tried getting in touch with you. A few developments concerning your investigation.

Paul leans against the wall. Acts nonchalantly.

PAUL
Any suspects?

MERCER
We’ll get there. I was just talking to your wife about a suicide hot line I found on your phone records.

PAUL
Yeah. That was me.
Stacy narrows her eyes up at Paul. Confused.

MERCER
You remember who you talked to?

Paul shakes his head. Unsure.

PAUL
It’s fuzzy.

MERCER
Because there was an attack very similar to yours a few nights before. Same injury. Phone stolen. An anonymous 911 call.

Paul gives Mercer a blank look. Doesn’t see a connection.

MERCER (CONT’D)
Found it curious because the other victim in question ALSO made a call to the same suicide hot line. A night before his attack.

PAUL
Awfully coincidental.

MERCER
I don’t believe in coincidences. Ed Wayne. You recognize that name?

Paul glances at Stacy suspiciously. Stacy wears her guilt on her sleeve. Mercer senses an awkwardness between the couple.

MERCER (CONT’D)
Well?

Paul shakes his head.

PAUL
Never heard of him.

Mercer shuffles through papers, scans each page.

MERCER
He works the phones there. His supervisor says he tends to get a little personal with his callers.

Paul shrugs, gives Mercer his best poker face. Mercer looks to Stacy, analyzes her closely.

MERCER (CONT’D)
What about you... MRS Thompson?
Stacy’s nerves begin to unravel. She tries her hardest to keep her cool.

STACY
I already told you, no.

Mercer exhales through his nose. Frustrated.

MERCER
I’m asking you in particular because the phone number shows up twice. Once on the night before your husband was attacked. Once again about a month ago.

Stacy’s heart races. A lump in her throat. Unable to respond.

MERCER (CONT’D)
If I’m not mistaken, your husband here was still in a hospital bed, catching up on his beauty sleep.

Stacy looks around the room. All eyes on her. Paul looks down and sees her knee shake nervously.

Stacy avoids eye contact with Paul. Looks to Mercer with a blank expression. She shrugs and shakes her head.

Mercer nods in disappointment.

MERCER (CONT’D)
Okay.

Mercer collects his files. Stands up and throws on his jacket. He slides his business card across the table to Stacy.

MERCER (CONT’D)
Thanks for the coffee.

Paul shows Mercer to the door. Stacy lets out a sigh. Starting to crack.

Paul returns. A stern look pasted to his face. He stands above Stacy with his hands on his hips.

PAUL
Anything you’d like to tell me?

Stacy tears up a bit. As if she wanted to come clean. But she doesn’t. Only responds with a puppy dog look. Paul shakes his head at her. Storms off and leaves the apartment.

Stacy bursts into tears. Sobbing hysterically.
EXT. PAUL’S APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Detective Mercer leaves the building. He crosses the street, walks to his car parked at the curb. A silver sedan with OFFICIAL POLICE FORCE stickers on the windows. Another one on the license plate.

INT./EXT. ED’S CAR - PARKED - CONTINUOUS

Ed sits parked only a few car lengths behind Mercer. He watches Mercer closely. Bad intentions behind his cold gaze.

INT. BAR - LATER

A true dive bar. Street signs and license plates hang on the walls. Graffiti everywhere as if encouraged. A trashy dump.

The place nearly empty. Paul sits at the bar alone with his shirt halfway tucked in. Tie loose around his neck. A drunken mess.

He downs a shot and chases it with a pint of beer. He zones out. Bad thoughts running through his mind. Anger slowly rising to the surface. Reaching his boiling point.

INT. CORNER BODEGA - CONTINUOUS

A small mom-and-pop type shop. Only a few aisles. Minimal goods. Just the basics.

Detective Mercer leans over the counter. He slides a few bucks across the counter to HERMAN, the elderly cashier.

MERCER
Hey, Herman. I’ll take the usual.

Herman pours Mercer a cup.

HERMAN
Black, right?

MERCER
Yes, sir.

Herman hands Mercer his coffee.

MERCER
How’s the wife?

HERMAN
Getting older every day.
Mercer laughs.

MERCER
Aren’t we all?

EXT. CORNER BODEGA - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Mercer leaves, approaching his car parked out front. He sips his coffee, but quickly moves his lips away from the cup. Too hot.

As he reaches his car, his CELL PHONE RINGS. Mercer checks the display while opening the door.

INT. MERCER’S CAR - PARKED - CONTINUOUS

Mercer answers his phone while sitting down. Shutting the door behind him.

MERCER
Hey, baby.

He listens while setting his coffee in a cup holder.

MERCER (CONT’D)
Yeah, fix him a plate. I just talked to him, he’s on his way.

Mercer listens. Checks his watch.

MERCER (CONT’D)
I don’t know. Maybe about a half hour?

He chuckles.

MERCER (CONT’D)
Okay, I’ll see you soon, baby. (beat)
Love you, too.

Mercer hangs up. About to start the car. But he sees something in his rearview. Freezes. He adjusts the mirror. Sees Ed sitting in the backseat. Mercer keeps still.

MERCER (careful)
What’s up, Ed?

ED
From here on out, it’s Mister Wayne. Got that... Detective?
Mercer grins.

MERCER
Okay, then. Mister Wayne. Mind telling me what you’re doing in my car?

Ed just glares at Mercer through the mirror. His silence menacing.

MERCER (CONT’D)
Breaking into somebody’s car is one thing, but breaking into a cop’s car?

(shakes his head)
Not wise, Mister Wayne. In fact, it’s pretty stupid of you --

Ed shows Mercer his hammer. Gripping it tightly.

ED
Don’t talk to me like you’re better than me. Because I WILL hurt you.

Mercer eyes the hammer through the mirror.

MERCER
(careful)
I believe it. And I apologize if I sounded condescending. But I’m just a little confused as to what you’re doing here.

ED (CONT’D)
What did you tell her about me?

Mercer wrinkles his brow in confusion.

MERCER
Who?

ED
You KNOW who.

Mercer, confused at first, smiles ironically and shakes his head in realization.

MERCER
I fucking knew it.

Ed holds up a file folder with his free hand. Tosses it onto the front passenger’s seat for Mercer to see.
ED
Sam Chandler, huh? After everything I’ve done for him?

MERCER
You re-configured his face. You tried to kill him.

ED
I didn’t try to kill anybody.

MERCER
Oh, yeah? What would you call it?

ED
Ask him how his life was before I opened his eyes.

Mercer eyes Ed with a confound expression. He tries to understand.

MERCER
Is that what you were trying to accomplish when you beat Paul Thompson into a coma?

Ed delays in riposte. Rather thrown off by the question.

ED
That was different.

MERCER
What about Amy Conway?

Ed glares at Mercer, appalled and shocked.

ED
I was cleared.

MERCER
Sad to say, but every once in a while the system lets one slip through the cracks.

Ed, ready to explode, tries to keep it together. He takes a deep breath and exhales through his nostrils.

ED
I loved her.

MERCER
Is that why you killed her?
ED
I didn’t fucking kill her!

MERCER
She’s buried six feet underground in some cemetery right now, Ed. What do YOU think you were doing? Opening her eyes?

ED
Shut the fuck up!

MERCER
I’m trying to understand, Ed. Because the way I see it, whatever you’ve been doing, you seem to think that there’s nothing wrong with it.

Ed breathes heavily. Face red as he glares up at Mercer.

MERCER (CONT’D)
You’re sick, Ed. You need help.

Ed fights tears. Frustrated. Falling apart.

MERCER (CONT’D)
(gentle)
How about this? You let me take you to the station. We talk this over --

ED
(explodes)
No more talking!

Mercer nods. Shrugs.

MERCER
Fine. Have it your way.

In a flash, Mercer grabs his steaming cup of coffee and splashes it back onto Ed’s face. Ed screams in agony, covering his eyes.

Mercer pulls his gun. Points it into the backseat and POP! POP! The gun flash illuminates the car.

Ed opens the door and falls out.
EXT. MERCER’S CAR – PARKED – CONTINUOUS

Ed hits the cement. Wincing in pain. He looks at his arm. Blood soaking through his sleeve from a bullet wound. The blood drips down his forearm to his wrist.

Mercer opens his door and steps out with his gun drawn. But in the blink of an eye, Ed snatches his hammer from the street, gets to his knee and swings it at Mercer.

He hits Mercer in the hand. Mercer drops his gun. As it clanks against the street POP! The gun goes off on its own. But doesn’t hit anybody.

Mercer runs after his gun, but Ed bashes him in the back of the kneecap with his hammer. Causes Mercer to drop.

But Mercer keeps the gun in his sights. He reaches for it. His fingers within inches of the handle...

Ed gets to his feet. Stands above Mercer. Flips his hammer around in his palm. Switches positions. He raises it into the air and WHAM! Sticks Mercer in the back of the head with the claw of hammer.

Mercer gags. His eyes wide. Paralyzed. His hand goes limp. No longer reaching for the gun. He falls to the street with the hammer sticking out from the back of his head.

Mercer lies motionless. Dead.

Ed tries to pull the hammer out, but it’s stuck. He steps on Mercer’s back for leverage. Yanks the hammer out. Blood spurts into the air like a geyser.

Ed looks around. He sees HERMAN standing outside the bodega watching in shock. Ed makes a run for it. Flees the scene.

A huge puddle expands around Mercer.

EXT. SAM CHANDLER’S APARTMENT BUILDING – NIGHT – LATER

Sam hugs one arm around a bag of groceries as he unlocks the front door. He swings it open with his free arm and holds it open with his foot.

BARBARA, Sam’s wife, middle-aged and attractive, trudges through the doorway, her hands full with several bags of groceries.

Sam grins and gives her a peck on the cheek as she passes through.
SAM
Got all that?

BARBARA
My personal trainer would be impressed right now.

Sam laughs.

SAM
Hell, I’m impressed.

Their TWO CHILDREN mosey on in after Barbara.

SAM
All right, chilins. Your beds await.

The Two Children share a collective groan in disapproval.

SAM
Don’t “oh” me. It’s already an hour past your bedtimes.

INT. SAM CHANDLER’S APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

The Two Children follow Barbara up the stairway. Sam releases the door, lags behind. But the door doesn’t close.

A hand reaches in, keeps the door from closing. Ed swings the door open wide, flashes in quietly.

Sam glances back, does a double take. Panic hits Sam when he sees the hammer in Ed’s grip. Sam drops his groceries and tries to run.

SAM
Barbara!

Ed raises his hammer while chasing after Sam. Barbara looks down the stairs. Her eyes widen in horror.

BARBARA
Sam!

She grabs the Two Children, hurries them up the stairs.

WHAM! Ed bashes Sam in the back of the head. Sam collapses at the bottom of the stairs. Slams his chin against the edge of one of the steps. Dazed.

Barbara belts out an horrific shriek. She cries desperately for help throughout the scene. Unhinged chaos.
Sam rolls to his back and clutches the back of his head. Gushing blood.

Sam frantically tries to escape. He slowly slides up a few stairs, leaving a trail of blood.

Ed easily keeps pace, stands above Sam with his hammer ready.

ED
After all I did for you, you ungrateful piece of shit!

SAM
(gasping)
Please... don’t...

ED
I gave you a second chance! I gave you back your fucking life!

SAM
I’m sorry... I’m so sorry...

ED
Look what you’re making me do!

SAM
No... please... no...

Ed nails Sam in the face with full force. Silences him. In a frenzy, Ed hits him again. And again. And again. The hard punishing cracks sound MUSHIER with each blow.

Barbara’s horrific shrieks sound like they can break glass as she watches in horror.

Blood splatters everywhere as Ed continues to hammer away. Finally, Ed stops. The whites of his eyes bright in contrast to the crimson blood covering his face.

A long silence as Ed backs away in disbelief -- What have I done?

He looks up the stairs and sees Barbara on her knees, weeping hysterically.

He looks away, ashamed. Leaves the building drenched in blood.
INT. ED’S CAR - MOVING - LATER

Ed weeps hysterically while behind the wheel. He tries to make himself stop. Straining to hold it in. But it only makes it worse.

His knuckles white around the steering wheel, Ed glances into the mirror above the dash. His reflection alarms him. But he forces himself to look. His reflection soon calms him.

Ed wipes his eyes and turns his focus back to the road.

INT. PAUL’S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Stacy paces back and forth, tears in her eyes. A worried mess. She checks the clock on the wall. Repeatedly checks her cell phone -- NO MISSED CALLS.

STACY
Where the hell are you, Paul?

Suddenly, her BUZZER sounds loudly, gives her a bit of a jolt. She hits a button on the wall.

STACY
Yes?

INT. PAUL’S APARTMENT BUILDING - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Ed stands with his face close to a speaker on the wall. He holds down a button next to the name THOMPSON.

ED
Stacy?

INT. PAUL’S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Stacy freezes. Speechless at first.

ED (V.O.)
(filtered)
Can you let me in?

The hairs on Stacy’s arms stand up. Frightened.

STACY
What are you doing here?
INT. PAUL’S APARTMENT BUILDING - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Ed struggles for words.

    ED
    I need to see you.

    STACY (V.O.)
    (filtered)
    Ed? I need you to leave. Please?

Ed almost falls into tears.

    ED
    Whatever Detective Mercer told you... they’re all lies. I would never hurt you.

INT. PAUL’S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Stacy doesn’t know what to say. But she’s scared.

    STACY
    If you don’t leave... I’m gonna call the police.

INT. PAUL’S APARTMENT BUILDING - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Ed hangs his head in sadness. Heartbroken. He leans in close to the speaker, about to say something. But no words escape.

Ed stands there for a moment. But turns and leaves.

INT. PAUL’S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Stacy sits down at a table. Panic on her face. Hands on her knees as she wheezes for air.

Stacy picks up the house phone, about to dial when...

The HOUSE PHONE RINGS and startles her. She drops the phone to the table. Unsure of whether or not to pick up. The loud RINGING wracks her nerves.

Finally, the answering machine picks it up.

    ED (V.O.)
    (on answering machine)
    Stacy? Please pick up?
INT./EXT. ED’S CAR – PARKED – ACROSS STREET – CONTINUOUS

Ed sits in his car and leaves a message for Stacy.

ED
I left, just like you asked. Please pick up?

No response. Ed fights tears.

ED (CONT’D)
I might have to go away for a while. I just wanted to see you one last time.
(beat)
You might hear some bad things about me. I just wanted you to know...

Ed clears his throat, tries not to cry.

ED (CONT’D)
Just know that I love you.

INT. PRECINCT – KERR’S OFFICE – LATER


Suddenly, a PHONE VIBRATES. Mercer’s phone. Stuttering upon the table.

Kerr flinches from the sudden movement. He eyeballs the phone for a moment. Finally, he answers.

KERR
Hello?

INT. PAUL’S APARTMENT – BEDROOM – CONTINUOUS

Stacy, shaken, speaks on the phone while holding Mercer’s business card in the air.

STACY
Detective Mercer?
INT. PRECINCT - KERR’S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Kerr doesn’t respond right away.

KERR
This is Detective Kerr.

STACY (V.O.)
(filtered)
May I please speak with Detective Mercer?

Kerr clears his throat. Wipes his eye. This is difficult for him.

KERR
He can’t come to the phone right now. Can I take a message?

STACY (V.O.)
(filtered)
This is Stacy Thompson.

Kerr glances down at Mercer’s case file and catches something. Reads her name on one of the files.

KERR
Is this about your husband’s case?

Stacy stalls. Hesitant.

STACY (V.O.)
(filtered)
I really need to speak with Detective Mercer.

Kerr tries to pull himself together. Trying to sound more business like. Professional.

KERR
I’ll be filling in for Detective Mercer from here on out. Any questions you have about the case, any information you have, I’m the one you talk to.

Dead air. Kerr waits for a response.

KERR (CONT’D)
Hello?

STACY (V.O.)
(filtered)
I’m here.
KERR
Are you gonna tell me why you’re calling?

Stacy sighs on the other end. Apprehensive.

STACY (V.O.)
(filtered)
Ed Wayne just stopped by my home.

Kerr flips frantically through the case files. Stops at a page. He rises to his feet, immediately intrigued.

KERR
Ed Wayne, did you say?

INT. ED’S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Paul tears the room apart. He rummages through dresser drawers, pulling them open. Neatly folded clothes in most of them.

He stops at the middle drawer. Tosses out several wrinkled plastic bags. Finds a box of Latex gloves and chucks it to the side.

He pulls out a ski mask, looks at it while holding it into the air. He sets it atop the dresser.

But he grinds to a halt. Pulls out a photo of him and Stacy. He eyes it curiously. Baffled.

INT. ED’S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS


His hammer drips blood from the peen and claw. Everything crimson colored.

Ed shuts the door. Turns. He freezes when he sees Paul sitting on his couch, smoking a cigarette.

A tense silence as they behold each other. Sizing each other up. Paul can’t help but be obfuscated by Ed’s appearance.

But Paul catches sight of the bloody hammer in Ed’s hand. Paul’s eyes widen in realization. It all comes together. He rises. Draws a gun from his waist and points it at Ed.
Ed sighs in defeat. He looks at Paul with regret. Nods. Accepts his fate. He knows he deserves it.


Ed’s motionless body holds the front door open. A pool of blood expands from under his face. Cheek first on the floor.

Paul walks over to him. Looks down. He spits on Ed and steps over his body, walking out the door.

INT. PAUL’S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - LATER

Stacy stands over the sink, splashes water onto her face. She looks at her reflection in the mirror. Repulsed by what she sees.

INT. PAUL’S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS


She lets out a sigh of relief, presses her hand to her heart.

STACY
Oh, my God, Paul! You scared me!

Paul doesn’t answer. He only wears a lost, faraway look.

STACY (CONT’D)
Where were you?

Paul shrugs sluggishly. Stacy takes a few steps further into the room. She sniffs the air.

STACY
You’ve been drinking.

Paul remains in his own world.

She continues to approach him. But stops cold upon sight of the gun sitting on Paul’s lap.

Paul slowly lifts his head. Looks up at Stacy. Fingers the handle of his gun.

Stacy slowly inches back. No sudden movements.
STACY
(careful)
What are you doing with a gun, honey?

PAUL
Did you love him?

Stacy doesn’t say anything. Staring down at Paul’s gun.

PAUL (CONT’D)
Huh?

STACY
Paul? Please put the gun down?

PAUL
How long has this been going on?

STACY
Paul... please...

Paul rises with the gun in his hand. He takes a few steps towards her.

PAUL
Months? Years?


STACY
(desperate)
Paul... honey... please put the gun down?

PAUL
Did you put him up to it?

Stacy backs into the wall by the mirror.

STACY
(crying uncontrollably)
Honey... you’re scaring me...

PAUL
I broke into Ed Wayne’s home tonight.

He glances down at his gun. Looks up at Stacy again.

PAUL (CONT’D)
And I killed him.
Stacy can’t move back any further. Cornered.

PAUL (CONT’D)
He used a hammer to do what he did
to me. But see, I was smarter than him. I used a gun.

Paul stands almost nose to nose with her. He gestures with
the gun. Points it at her face.

PAUL (CONT’D)
And I pointed it at his face. Just
like this. And then... I pulled the
trigger.

Paul grabs Stacy by the throat with one hand. Pins her to the
wall while waving the gun into her face.

PAUL
Did you love him?

Stacy gags while fighting for air. Slapping at his wrist. But
unable to break free. Overpowered.

He sticks the gun into her cheek with even more force.

PAUL (CONT’D)
(explodes)
Did you fucking love him?!

Stacy shakes her head adamantly. Fighting for air. Unable to
speak. Gasping. Face red. Paul’s thumb pressed hard against
her windpipe.

PAUL
I changed for YOU! I wanted to be a
better man! For YOU! I did
everything for YOU!

Stacy’s eyes grow heavy. Losing consciousness.

Paul looks up. Catches a glimpse of his reflection in the
mirror.

His rage dissipates. Softening. Falling into despair. Guilt.

He releases Stacy. She slides down to the floor onto her
rear. She wheezes desperately for air while sobbing loudly.

Paul backs away. In shock. Disturbed by his own behavior. He
sits at the edge of the bed.

Stacy stares at him sadly while getting her breath back. A
long and somber silence.
STACY
(crying)
Paul... I love you so much...

Paul fights tears. He gazes down at his gun.

PAUL
I love you too, honey.

Paul places the gun under his chin.

STACY
Paul... NO!!!

The whirring ceiling fan spins. POP! Blood projects up onto the center of the fan. A mist of blood spatter spits from the fan blade like a sprinkler as it spins around.

Stacy cries hysterically. Screaming as blood slowly drips from the center of the ceiling fan.

INT. PAUL’S APARTMENT - DINING ROOM - LATER

Stacy sits at the dinner table. Staring at a cup of coffee as POLICE swarm through her home.

Detective Kerr sits across from her. Takes notes. Dejected. Low-spirited. His head not all there.

STACY
He told me his wife died four years ago. Said her name was Amy.

Kerr flips through files sitting on the table.

KERR
Sorry, I’m still trying to catch up here...

He stops at a page. Narrows his eyes.

KERR (CONT’D)
Amy, you say?

She nods. Dabbing at her moist eyes with a tissue.

KERR (CONT’D)
Amy Conway?

Stacy shrugs. Not sure.

KERR (CONT’D)
Did Ed ever tell you HOW she died?
Stacy shakes her head.

    KERR (CONT’D)
    She was murdered.

Stacy can’t believe it. Blown away.

    KERR (CONT’D)
    Amy Conway was having an affair
    with Ed.

    STACY
    He killed her?

    KERR
    He was charged. Tried in court. But
    he was cleared. Turns out it was
    her husband who killed her.

Stacy sips her coffee. She struggles to hold the mug. Her
hand trembling. She sets the coffee down. She looks down to
hide her tears.

Kerr observes her. Touches her hand. She looks up at him.

    KERR (CONT’D)
    Do you have some place else to stay
    tonight?

    STACY
    My sister’s.

    KERR
    Is it safe?

    STACY
    Why?

    KERR
    We believe Ed Wayne may have killed
    two men tonight.

    STACY
    But he’s dead, right?

    KERR
    Stacy... we’ve searched Ed’s home.
    He’s not there.

The hairs on the back of Stacy’s neck stand up.
EXT. WALTER’S HOUSE – NIGHT – LATER

A quiet suburban neighborhood lined with humble townhouses. Walter exits his home hauling a garbage bag out to the curb.

Walter seems cleaned up in contrast to the homeless junkie he once was. A street light shines onto his face and accentuates a brutal scar along the lining of his jaw. The bottom of his face disfigured.

Walter dumps the garbage at the side of the curb and dusts his hands off. He turns around and walks back to his porch. But he stops. Eyes suddenly wide.

Ed sits on the stoop. Elbows on his knees. Hunched over.

Walter carefully moves towards him. Squinting his eyes while slowly getting closer. Trying to make out who it is.

WALTER
Ed?

Ed keeps his head down.

ED
(speech impaired)
Walter.

Ed lifts his head. Looks up at Walter. Revealing a blood covered face. Grotesque bullet wound to the jaw.

WALTER
What the hell happened to you?

ED
I did some pretty despicable things tonight, Walter.

WALTER
(urgent)
We need to get you to a hospital.

ED
Just stay here and talk to me?

Walter grimaces at the sight of Ed’s grotesque condition.

WALTER
Geezus Christ...

Ed remains in deep thought as Walter continues to inspect him.
ED
It all started with you, Walter. Everything I’ve done... it all started with you.

WALTER
Who did this to you?

ED
I wanted to kill you for what you did to me. I TRIED to kill you.

Walter leans in closer to Ed for a better look.

WALTER
Did someone shoot you?

ED
But the weird thing is... I felt guilt. I called every hospital in the city trying to find out if you were alive or not.

WALTER
Look at you, you’re drenched...

ED
Then I saw how good things were for you after. And I thought to myself that maybe I found my calling. I thought that maybe I found a way to make my mark in this world.

WALTER
You’re losing a lot of blood...

ED
And up until tonight I never cared to wonder why you attacked me.

WALTER
I’m calling an ambulance --

ED
(explodes)
Just listen to me!

Walter nods. Gives him his undivided attention.

WALTER
I was a crackhead. I didn’t have my head straight. I was desperate. I was angry.

(MORE)
But I’m a different person now. And I have YOU to thank for that.

ED
But why did you do it?

Walter thinks back but can’t come up with a logical explanation.

WALTER
I don’t know, Ed. I don’t know.

Ed studies Walter. Slightly perturbed.

ED
Did you feel guilty?

Walter thinks. Comes up empty.

WALTER
I can’t even remember.

Ed hangs his head. Tears in his eyes.

ED
I thought I was doing something good.

WALTER
I know you did, Ed.

They share a deep silence. Ed looks up at Walter.

ED
Your family, they’re inside?

WALTER
Sleeping.

Ed nods. Thinking to himself.

ED
You have everything a man could ever want, Walter. But you don’t deserve it. None of them do. Not even me.

Walter eyes Ed peculiarly. Confused and concerned all at once. He grimaces at the sight of Ed’s jaw wound.

WALTER
You need to keep pressure on that or else you’re going to bleed to death. I’ll get you some rags.
Walter moves past Ed. Back into his house. Ed remains on the stoop.

ED
I’m a monster. I know that now.

He gazes down at a hammer lying on his lap. He tightens his grip on the handle.

INT. WALTER’S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Walter stands at the sink and dampens a few rags under the faucet.

EXT. WALTER’S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Walter comes outside with a handful of wet rags. He stops. Looks around confused. Ed no longer there.

Walter continues to survey the area in search of Ed. Moving further out onto the porch. But no sign of him anywhere.

He stands with his hands on his hips at the edge of the stoop. Stumped. But he glances down. Sees a blood-covered hammer sitting at his feet.

INT. FUNERAL HOME - DAY

The tune from the organ only adds to the somber tone. A small showing of MOURNERS talk amongst each other softly. Everyone in black.

The closed casket sits at the front of the room amid a display of flowers, photos and other memorabilia.

Stacy slowly walks down the aisle. Approaches the casket.

She kneels down in front of it. Her head down. In tears.

She breaks down while staring at the casket. Knowing that her husband is inside of it. Still finding it hard to accept. Mixed emotions. Sadness. Guilt. Regret.

Stacy rises to her feet and just stares at the coffin. She shakes her head in despair. Wiping tears from her eyes.

A hand gently sets upon her shoulder. Startles her. She turns.

Detective Kerr stands there. Looking at the coffin.
KERR
I was in the neighborhood.

Stacy peers down at the casket again.

KERR (CONT’D)
How are you?

Stacy doesn’t respond. Her face says it all. Kerr nods in comprehension.

They share a moment of silence while looking down at Paul.

Stacy grows increasingly distraught. Her thoughts tormenting her. Tears trickle down her face. Unable to hold it in anymore. She breaks down.

STACY
It’s all my fault. Everything that happened. If it wasn’t for me, he’d still be alive.

Stacy lets it all out. Hysterical. Kerr puts an arm around her. She weeps into his shoulder.

She eventually stops. Lets out a deep sigh. Trying to regain her composure. She wipes her tears. Forces a smile.

STACY (CONT’D)
Sorry about that.

KERR
It’s okay.

She looks down at the casket. Kerr understands how she feels.

KERR
I lost my wife six months ago. Car accident. I was behind the wheel. Now, the accident itself wasn’t my fault. Some drunk driver ran a light. (beat) We were on our way home. But I took a detour. I wanted to stop for cigarettes.

Kerr pauses for a few moments. Reliving the tragedy. Playing it through his mind.

KERR (CONT’D)
I took responsibility for it. Blamed myself. (MORE)
If I had just gone straight home, my wife would still be alive.


Kerr (CONT’D)
A good friend of mine told me that some things are just meant to happen. For us to learn from.

Kerr wipes his eyes. Tries to toughen up.

Kerr (CONT’D)
I’m not sure if I’ve really learned much from it though. I stopped smoking. But I find it hard to believe that my wife died for that reason.

Silence.

Kerr (CONT’D)
That car accident put me out of work for a while. And I can’t help but think that if it wasn’t for that accident, I would have been assigned to your husband’s case. And Mercer would still be alive.

Kerr sighs. Takes a deep breath.

Kerr (CONT’D)
But he’s not. And that’s the reality. Things happen. No matter how unfair it may seem, there’s nothing we can really do about it. We all get there. One day. Some of us just go sooner.

Stacy nods. Kerr’s words sinking in.

Stacy (CONT’D)
Someone once told that being close to death makes us appreciate life more.

Kerr
Yeah? Find any truth in that?

Stacy thinks about it.

Stacy
I don’t know.
Kerr nods. Looks down at the casket again.

Kerr’s CELL PHONE VIBRATES. He checks his phone display. Turns to Stacy.

    KERR
    Duty calls.

Stacy nods.

Kerr extends his hand to her. She shakes his hand. Looks him in the eye. Shares his grief. On common ground.

Kerr digs into his pocket. Hands her his card.

    KERR
    If you ever feel like talking.

She looks at the card and nods.

    STACY
    Thank you.

He smiles warmly at her. Pays his respects to Paul one last time and leaves.

Stacy turns back to the casket. Looks down. Calms a bit. Tears dissipating. Starting to find acceptance.

Something catches her eye. Lying at the edge of the casket. A piece of folded paper.

Stacy slowly reaches for it. Unfolds it. It’s a photo of her and Paul. The one Ed took from the hospital. A bloody thumbprint on it.

Stacy holds the photo tightly in her hand.

    FADE OUT:

    THE END