

UNARMED

Written by

Chris Shalom

Integral Artists
ATTN: Doreen Holmes
#102, 196 West 3rd Avenue
Vancouver, BC
604-620-6001 ext. 230

FADE IN:

EXT. WALKER HOUSE - REAR BALCONY - DAY

A SPARKLER LIGHTS UP, burning bright. Dying quick.

REVEALED behind the spitting sparks, SYDNEY WALKER (50), her delicate brown fingers cradling the sparkler.

SYDNEY

These things are made cheaper than
they used to be.

Across from her in a matching chair, JEREMIAH WALKER (53), tall, broad, old-fashioned dignity, sees nothing but her.

JEREMIAH

I just like looking at you.

His speech is unhurried, sincere. Like it always is.

SYDNEY

Got something on your mind,
Jeremiah?

JEREMIAH

Sure, but nothing civilized.

SYDNEY

You better watch it, you're at a
family barbecue.

Jeremiah looks out at the scene below.

A PICTURESQUE 4TH OF JULY BBQ IN THE BACK YARD -- cozy and friendly. Jeremiah and Sydney's son Joseph, his Caucasian wife Abigail, and her grandfather, parents, sister, brother-in-law, nephew, and niece -- all Caucasian.

Jeremiah stands to kiss Syd as a KITCHEN TIMER sounds inside.

JEREMIAH

You get the vegetables and I'll get
the movies going.

SYDNEY

You're not even gonna give the poor
in-laws a break, huh?

JEREMIAH

Family tradition, Syd. Nothing
more civilized than that.

EXT. WALKER HOUSE - BACK YARD - DAY

A PROJECTOR SCREEN rests in the shade of a tree.

MUSIC AND LAUGHTER in the background as the projector plays HOME VIDEOS OF A MIDDLE-CLASS AFRICAN-AMERICAN UPBRINGING. Young Joseph ages from a toddler in a small apartment, to a child in a first family home, to a surly pre-teen.

ABIGAIL WALKER (20), a quiet presence but always quick-witted and observant, clutches her laid-back husband JOSEPH WALKER (20) tight as he half-hides his face in embarrassment.

Around them, the two families drink, talk, and laugh as the videos follow Joseph through his awkward teen years.

They feel like one big group: picture-perfect racial harmony.

ON THE SCREEN, a teenage Joseph strikes a 'gangsta' pose with a toy gun. An annoyed Sydney tries to grab it from his hand.

Jeremiah looks over just as ROBERT RILEY (59), Abigail's straight-laced father, shifts uncomfortably. Robert's eyes go from the on-screen Joseph with the gun, to his real son-in-law, and then to Jeremiah.

The two men share a look before Robert tips his beer to Jeremiah. Jeremiah inclines his head in return.

EXT. WALKER HOUSE - BACK YARD - DUSK

The sun is setting.

The end of the barbecue. No music and only IDLE CHATTER, now, as the families clear food and plates.

EXT. WALKER HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Abigail lingers on the porch as her family waves goodbye from near their cars.

Joseph, leaning in the doorway, smiles at her.

ABIGAIL

You sure you don't want to come?

JOSEPH

My dad goes nuts for the stars and stripes shit. Always a family thing.

Abigail flashes her wedding band at him.

ABIGAIL
I'm your family.

JOSEPH
Abby, that was not even the end of
the family videos he's going to
make us watch tonight.

ABIGAIL
Aw, I liked the videos.

JOSEPH
I like you.
(then)
But your dad's waiting. In the
passenger seat.

Abigail glances at the car. Robert stares back. She rolls
her eyes.

ABIGAIL
I can't wait to listen to them
argue about mom's driving the whole
way. Okay. I love you, Joseph.

She kisses him.

JOSEPH
(playful)
Mmm... I'll stick with "like."

Abigail hits his shoulder with mock indignation.

JOSEPH
I love you.

She flashes one last winning smile over her shoulder as she
heads for the cars.

INT. WALKER HOUSE - FRONT ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Joseph shuts the door and turns towards the living room,
where Jeremiah and Sydney already have the projector set up.

Jeremiah claps Joseph on the back as he settles down on the
couch between his parents.

JEREMIAH
You're not done with family videos
yet, boy.

Joseph smiles graciously.

EXT. WALKER HOUSE DRIVEWAY - DAY

Jeremiah heads for his car, returning a wave to his neighbour, NICK WILLIAMS (38). Suburban pleasantries.

NICK

Back to the rat race, huh?

Jeremiah offers a wave and a polite grin.

NICK

Hey, and don't forget the donations drive for Neighbourhood Watch this weekend! I've got my eye on you...

He does the "watching you" gesture, then points at a sign on the nearest streetlight: THIS IS A NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH AREA

Jeremiah gives another polite smile as he enters his car.

EXT. SPINELL UNIVERSITY - STAFF PARKING LOT - DAY

A CAMPUS SECURITY OFFICER rushes through a cigarette at the edge of the lot, smiling and waving as a Caucasian PROFESSOR in his mid-60s pulls his current-year SUV into a spot.

Moments later, a decade-old sedan pulls in. The Security Officer watches with mild suspicion as Jeremiah exits.

Jeremiah smiles at him. The Officer returns a curt nod.

INT. SPINELL UNIVERSITY - HEARING ROOM - DAY

TYLER CAMPBELL (20), his pudgy baby-face contorted in stress, is frozen in fear at the centre of the room.

JUROR 1 (O.S.)

Mr. Campbell.

It takes Tyler a second to get his mouth moving.

TYLER

Y- Yes.

Facing him in an imposing semicircle, a full ACADEMIC JURY, presided over by Jeremiah. Jeremiah's desk plaque designates him the university's ACADEMIC INTEGRITY OFFICER.

JUROR 1

Tell us about the paper. In your own words.

Tyler hesitates, then:

TYLER

Uh... yeah. Okay. Um, I guess I just wanted to say that, like, the way that, uh, Horatio Alger writes about poor people and all these rags-to-riches stories... like, it's true what the other paper says, like how it wasn't true that people like he writes about were the usual business owners. People with college degrees or inheritances or whatever are the ones that will run businesses.

(gaining confidence)

So, but, I was just trying to say that the way he talks about the Chinese character in the story shows that he wasn't thinking about all poor people either. Because he didn't believe in all that stuff for Chinese people or anything. Just like, people he thought were, uh, "real" Americans. So like these stories, uh... these stories pretend to be for all of us, but they aren't.

Jeremiah leans forward. Juror 1 takes the hint and leans back.

JEREMIAH

It's a perfectly fine analysis, Mr. Campbell. So why not just write it down?

TYLER

Sir?

JEREMIAH

I'll rephrase. If you wanted to show that Alger was wrong, why did you plagiarize part of your paper?

JUROR 2

Mr. Walker --

JEREMIAH

-- You did the reading. You did the thinking. And then you... what, you decided the work of writing was beneath you?

TYLER

It was just... I work two jobs to pay for school here, and I didn't have time --

JEREMIAH

-- working two jobs is admirable, but not an excuse for cutting corners. If you believe there are myths about America that need to be disproved, start by being a living proof against them. If you cheat the system, you'll never change it.

Tyler forces himself to stand tall.

TYLER

Am I going to be expelled, sir?

Jeremiah meets Tyler's eyes, his face giving nothing away.

INT. SPINELL UNIVERSITY - ACADEMIC INTEGRITY OFFICE - DAY

Jeremiah enters the office and winds through cubicles towards his office. GARY EATON (47), Caucasian, pudgy and kind-faced, catches up and matches his stride.

GARY

How was the BBQ with the in-laws?

JEREMIAH

Relaxing.

GARY

Count yourself lucky you took the extra days off. This whole place went to hell after the Patrick James shooting. The students have been going wild. Proud of 'em.

JEREMIAH

Patrick James?

GARY

You know... young black guy, shot by the cop at his own barbecue?

JEREMIAH

Oh, yeah. I thought he had a gun.

GARY

Yeah, and a permit. But of course all the racist pig saw was an armed "thug".

Jeremiah grunts. Noncommittal.

GARY

You don't think *that* makes a difference, do you? I know you're the red meat conservative around here, but surely you don't support the executions of law-abiding Americans.

JEREMIAH

I think, you have a gun, you're more likely to get killed by a gun.

GARY

If the cops show up and you're *black*, you're more likely to get killed with a gun.

Jeremiah claps Gary on the shoulder as he enters his office.

JEREMIAH

Lucky for you, Gary.

EXT. HOME SUPPLY STORE - DAY

CLOSE ON -- a TELEPHONE POLE as a FLYER is slapped down.

Three NEO-NAZIS -- their jackets say "THE VIRTUOUS VANGUARD" but no-one would mistake their aesthetic -- step back to admire their handiwork.

The FLYER: a picture of Barack Obama with the words "WANTED for crimes against American people -- this KENYAN MONKEY -- REPORT SIGHTINGS to your local protectors -- THE VANGUARD"

All three men turn at the sound of a CAR DOOR.

A YOUNG HISPANIC WOMAN. She exits and heads for the store.

The Neo-Nazis start after her.

INT. HOME SUPPLY STORE - DAY

The Neo-Nazis strut into the chain supply store, immediately losing their focus on the young woman as they find a cardboard cutout of the store's manager, a BLACK WOMAN.

Neo-Nazi 1 pulls the cutout forward to read it.

NEO-NAZI 1

"I'm store manager *Latisha*. Let me know if there's anything we can do to give you a better experience today!"

Neo-Nazi 3 rips open a pack of markers from a nearby shelf and starts to mark up the cutout's face.

The other two Neo-Nazis spin at the sound of the door. A WHITE MOTHER enters the store with her daughter, pulling the kid close as she sees them.

NEO-NAZI 1

Ma'am.

The Mother pulls her daughter away, fast, down another aisle.

Neo-Nazi 3 steps back to admire his handiwork.

The cutout of the store manager now has "NIG SLUT" written across its forehead, and an open cartoon mouth, inflatable-sex-doll style, drawn over the manager's smile.

The other two whoop with laughter as Neo-Nazi 3 breaks the cutout at its knees, pushes it onto his groin, and bobs the cutout to simulate fellatio.

HOME SUPPLY EMPLOYEE (O.S.)

What the hell are you doing?

Neo-Nazi 3 lets the cutout fall to the ground.

The EMPLOYEE (mid-20s), a Hispanic woman, points at the roof.

HOME SUPPLY EMPLOYEE

That's a security camera.

She holds up her phone.

HOME SUPPLY EMPLOYEE

And this is the police. You want me to get them out here, or are you gonna go?

The Neo-Nazis stare her down.

Then:

NEO-NAZI 3

I got what I came for.

He tucks the cutout under his arm and walks out of the store past the Employee. The other two follow him. As they pass her, Neo-Nazi 1 leans in to her ear:

NEO-NAZI 1
Next time maybe we'll see whose
side our boys in blue are on, *puta*.

HOME SUPPLY EMPLOYEE
Keep our language outta your mouth,
man, your pronunciation is shit.

But as they exit, jeering and laughing, she has to turn away to hide the fear in her face.

INT. TRUCK - DAY

The Neo-Nazis load themselves into their pickup. Neo-Nazi 3 tries to fit the cutout, but it's awkward, so he tosses it.

NEO-NAZI 1
We got more flyers?

NEO-NAZI 2
We got tons, man.

NEO-NAZI 3
Where'd that little thug get a car
like that?

And across the lot, THEY SEE JOSEPH, in a hoodie and jeans, supplies clutched under his arm, entering a newer SUV.

It's THE SAME VEHICLE that Abigail left the barbecue in -- the one belonging to her parents.

Joseph starts the car and pulls away.

Neo-Nazi 1 turns the key.

They follow.

INT. TRUCK - MOVING - DAY

The Neo-Nazis trail Joseph's car through an industrial district and out into the moderately wealthy suburbs.

He passes a cheery sign reading: WELCOME TO THE HEIGHTS

Behind it, another prominent sign, bigger and fancier than the previous version we've seen: THIS IS A NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH AREA

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

Joseph's car pulls off a main street in the suburb and past a sign indicating a CUL-DE-SAC.

Behind him, the Neo-Nazis' truck follows.

EXT. SUBURBAN CUL-DE-SAC - DAY

Joseph pulls the SUV to a stop outside the Riley's house.

INT. RILEY SUV - DAY

The truck pulls up behind the unaware Joseph as he gathers his purchases from the passenger seat: building materials, some glue, and a MINI MIC STAND.

EXT. SUBURBAN CUL-DE-SAC - DAY

Joseph exits, awkwardly cradling his purchases in his arms.

Suddenly, the truck LURCHES FORWARD, narrowly missing Joseph as he stumbles backwards into his car, dropping the supplies.

The Neo-Nazis exit the truck and surround him.

NEO-NAZI 1

Hey, man, you can't go running in front of trucks like that.

JOSEPH

I didn't see you coming.

NEO-NAZI 3

Bullshit. I think you were trying some kinda insurance scam.

JOSEPH

Y'all live around here?

Neo-Nazi 2 SEIZES JOSEPH HARD BY THE NECK.

NEO-NAZI 2

You live around here?

JOSEPH

Fuck, man --

NEO-NAZI 2
 -- doesn't seem like the kind of
 neighbourhood for a thug in a
 hoodie, does it?

NEO-NAZI 3
 A thug running insurance scams.

NEO-NAZI 1
 Maybe dangerous. What the fuck are
 you buying here anyway, nigger?

Joseph's eyes flash. Neo-Nazi 2 closes a hand around his
 neck and pushes him back into the car, cutting off his air.

NEO-NAZI 3
 What, that made you wanna talk
 back, uh?

BARRY (O.S.)
 HEY!

Everyone freezes.

A Caucasian man exits his front gate, gun raised in a
 practiced position, burly beneath his slacks and dress shirt.
 This is BARRY EVANS (55).

BARRY
 Let him go, right now.

NEO-NAZI 2
 Hey, brother --

BARRY
 -- RIGHT FUCKING NOW!

Neo-Nazi 3 releases Joseph. The three men step back.

Nobody moves.

NEO-NAZI 1
 This thug ran in front --

BARRY
 -- shut up.

He takes the scene in.

Then he turns to Joseph:

BARRY
 You. You got a reason to be here?

JOSEPH
I'm dropping off Robert Riley's
car. I'm his son-in-law.

BARRY
You're Abigail's husband?

Joseph nods, still frozen against the car, hands up.

JOSEPH
Their house is right there.

NEO-NAZI 1
Don't listen to this --

BARRY
-- HEY!

All three Neo-Nazis step back. Looking scared, now.

BARRY
Now all three of you get outta here
right now. You ever come back
here, I got 17 bullets in this
clip. You do the math, shitheels.

The Neo-Nazis slowly back up to the truck, pack in, reverse
to the main street, and pull out.

Joseph starts to get some colour back in his face as he
finally brings his hands down. He kneels to scoop up the
dropped supplies as Barry watches the truck disappear.

The mini tripod is cracked.

JOSEPH
Shit.

He collects the rest and stands, his back to Barry.

JOSEPH
Man, thank you --

BARRY
What's in your hands?!

JOSEPH
What?

BARRY
Show me your hands, boy!

Joseph turns to show him the tripod.

JOSEPH
It's just a --

BARRY FIRES.

The bullet catches Joseph in the hip. He stumbles, then looks up at Barry in shock. He proffers the tripod again --

JOSEPH
It's a --

BARRY OPENS FIRE AGAIN.

Bullets catch Joseph in the gut, jaw, and leg, slamming his body into the car. His face registers shock as he slides down to the concrete and slumps into a pool of his own blood.

His mouth works, unable to make sound, as he stares up at his wife's house. So close. Never again.

Blood on the pavement.

Barry looks up as a SCREAM breaks the moment's stillness --

ABIGAIL LOOKS DOWN from her bedroom window on her dead husband and his killer, her face twisted in agony, an unending shriek rising out of her mouth.

INT. SPINELL UNIVERSITY - JEREMIAH'S OFFICE - DAY

Jeremiah studies Tyler Campbell's file on the computer. The young man's photo stares back from his student profile.

In front of Jeremiah is a form: RECOMMENDATIONS -- ACADEMIC INTEGRITY CASE #10573-D

Jeremiah taps a pen against the desk. Unsure.

THE PHONE RINGS.

JEREMIAH
This is Jeremiah.
(pause)
Okay, slow -- Abigail, I can't understand you, you gotta slow down.
(pause)
Did you say "shot"?
(pause)
Abigail, are you saying "shot"?
(pause)
Which hospital?
(pause)
(MORE)

JEREMIAH (CONT'D)
 Okay, now listen to me. You get
 someone to drive you there. Do not
 drive. I'll see you there.

For a second, Jeremiah doesn't move.

Then he snatches the receiver again and dials.

JEREMIAH
 Come on, Syd, pick up.
 (leaving voicemail)
 Syd. Call me the second you get
 this. On my cell. Right away.

He hangs up.

INT. SPINELL UNIVERSITY - ACADEMIC INTEGRITY OFFICE - DAY

Jeremiah throws his jacket on as he rushes out of the office
 and past the secretary, DESIREE (23).

DESIREE
 Jeremiah! I got a call from a guy
 who says he's your cousin. Eddie
 Price, the writer. Is he really
 your cousin?

JEREMIAH
 Des, I need you to do me a favour,
 okay? I need you to get a hold of
 my wife. Tell her to call me. No
 matter what, you just keep calling,
 every five minutes, until you get
 her. Okay?

INT. EMERGENCY WARD - INTAKE - DAY

A packed waiting room. Babies WAIL and injured people MOAN.
 Loud enough that it's hard to talk.

A rambling ADDICT paces back and forth, shoving between
 Jeremiah, Robert, and Abigail as they wait at the desk.

Jeremiah has his cellphone to his ear.

JEREMIAH
 Did she say she was coming here?
 Abigail?

Abigail's face is red and puffy, her eyes unfocused.

ABIGAIL
 What? She -- yeah. She said,
 "Okay."

A POLICE OFFICER approaches.

POLICE OFFICER
 Abigail Walker?

ABIGAIL
 Yes.

POLICE OFFICER
 The station confirms that we do
 have the shooter in custody. So as
 soon as you can, we're going to
 need you down there too.

ROBERT
 Her husband's in surgery.

POLICE OFFICER
 Yes, sir. But if you want the best
 chance of justice, here, there are
 some interviews we need to take
 care of right away. Okay, Abigail?

He's gone before she finishes nodding. Jeremiah's eyes move
 from the officer to Abigail.

JEREMIAH
 (to Robert)
 Did she --
 (to Abigail)
 Did you see it happen?

For the first time, Abigail fully turns to face him, her eyes
 wide open with shock, wet with tears, full of horror.

INT. EMERGENCY WARD - INTAKE - NIGHT

The room is a little quieter at night, but not much. The
 same Addict is asleep across a few chairs. Jeremiah,
 Abigail, and Robert sit in a corner near the door.

The doors to the operating area open. All three look up.

An ORDERLY rushes out, ignoring them.

Then Jeremiah's PHONE RINGS.

JEREMIAH
 Hello?

INT. WALKER HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sydney slumps on the bed, curled up, her back pressed against the headboard, her body small on the king-sized mattress. Her voice is dreamy, a thousand miles away.

SYDNEY

It just happened, Jeremiah. Did you feel it?

JEREMIAH

Where are you, Sydney?

SYDNEY

I'm home, but I'm leaving...

JEREMIAH

Just stay where you are, Syd --

SYDNEY

-- did you feel it happen? They did it again, Jeremiah. They did it again.

INT. EMERGENCY WARD - INTAKE - NIGHT

Jeremiah stares, his face frozen.

A YOUNG DOCTOR stands at the doors, staring back.

YOUNG DOCTOR

Walker family?

JEREMIAH

Is he dead?

Abigail turns to Jeremiah, her face white.

ABIGAIL

What?

YOUNG DOCTOR

It was a hard fight --

Jeremiah turns and SPRINTS OUT OF THE ROOM as Abigail collapses, sobbing, into Robert's arms.

INT. JEREMIAH'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

Jeremiah clutches his cellphone to his ear as he manoeuvres through traffic, face tight.

Another call goes to voicemail.

EXT. WALKER HOUSE - NIGHT

Jeremiah bounces over the curb as he speeds up to the house.

ACROSS THE STREET -- a WORRIED NEIGHBOUR peers out the window as Jeremiah dashes up the stairs and through the front door.

Jeremiah fumbles for his keys, drops them. They fly under the stairs.

With a snarl, Jeremiah grabs a planter, pulls the hide-a-key out from under it, and unlocks the door.

INT. WALKER HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

FOOTSTEPS downstairs.

JEREMIAH (O.S.)
Sydney? Sydney!

Getting closer.

JEREMIAH (O.S.)
Answer me, Syd --

The door to the bedroom slams open.

Jeremiah stumbles in, then goes still as a statue.

Syd's hand rests on the blanket, palm up, lifelessly still.

Jeremiah rushes to the side table, fumbling for the open bottle of pills, phone to his ear. He puts the phone on SPEAKER as the operator answers.

JEREMIAH
I need an ambulance at 51 Birch
Terrace. She's OD'd on Zolpidem.

OPERATOR
We've already dispatched cars to
that location. Are you in danger?

JEREMIAH
What? What cars? My wife is...
it's Zolpidem.

OPERATOR
Are you and your wife the only ones
in the house?

JEREMIAH

Yes. Why?

OPERATOR

We have a report of a black male breaking and entering. Are you sure you're safe?

Jeremiah realizes. He's the suspected B&E.

When he speaks again, his voice is weary.

JEREMIAH

Just make sure they send an ambulance.

EXT. WALKER HOUSE - NIGHT

The Worried Neighbour peers out the window as blue and red lights flash across the block.

Three police cars pull up. Then, finally, the ambulance.

Jeremiah stands on the porch, awaiting the emergency responders WITH HIS HANDS UP.

EXT. GRANDE POINT CEMETERY - DAY

A beautiful day.

Jeremiah, Abigail, and the Riley family stand at the centre of the group of mourners as two coffins are lowered.

One for Joseph, and one for Sydney.

Side by side, the coffins of mother and son disappear into the ground.

Robert puts an arm around Abigail as she sobs.

Jeremiah stands alone.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Barry sits in the witness stand.

Jeremiah watches quietly from the stands, where he sits with Abigail's parents.

DEFENSE LAWYER

And why did you fire at that time?

BARRY

I was scared for my life.

DEFENSE LAWYER

Even though you believed this man to be your neighbour's son in law?

BARRY

I believed what he said. But I was on edge. The kind of violence that he brought into the neighbourhood -- those skinhead types -- I didn't know who was doing what. So when he spun around with something in his hand, I reacted.

DEFENSE LAWYER

You fired a warning shot?

BARRY

I wanted him to back off, because I didn't know what was happening. But he kept moving forward.

DEFENSE LAWYER

He was moving towards you still?

BARRY

He was a big guy, moving fast, with a mean, real mean look in his eye. He had a big hoodie, I couldn't see what he was holding. I didn't think I hit him the first time. And he brought all that violence, these guys were dangerous, he brought them to my house...

He looks out at the courtroom. A perfectly pitched performance.

BARRY

I was scared for my life.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

A TV REPORTER stands on the courthouse steps, mid-story.

Jeremiah walks down the steps, skirting the crowd that's gathered outside. A small group of PROTESTORS is at the bottom of the stairs, chanting about Joseph's unjust death.

TV REPORTER

-- where just moments ago, the jury cleared 55-year-old Barry Evans of any wrongdoing in the shooting of 20-year-old Joseph Walker. Evans, a father of three, was attempting to peacefully break up a violent altercation involving Walker and three other young men. Walker and his unknown associates descended on the sleepy suburb at around 3 pm...

Jeremiah pulls his jacket up to slightly obscure his face as he continues down the steps.

Across from him, past the protestors and the reporters, Barry Evans is escorted down the stairs.

He glances at Jeremiah.

Jeremiah meets his eyes, over the chaos of the courthouse steps. They hold each other's gaze.

INT. LEGAL OFFICE - ED'S OFFICE - DAY

ED VARNEY (42), scruffy in an expensive suit, reads over a file as Jeremiah waits. Next to Jeremiah is Robert Riley.

Finally, Ed's eyes leave the page.

ED

You're looking to appeal?

JEREMIAH

Is there a chance there?

Ed's eyes go back to the file.

JEREMIAH

I'm not looking to waste anyone's time or money. If you say there's no chance, I understand. What I want is a ruling, in criminal court, in a civil court, anything -- my son did nothing wrong. He did nothing wrong.

ED

Well that's pretty clear from the court proceedings here, Mr. Walker. No one's suggesting that your son deserved what happened.

ROBERT

No one? Have you read how they're talking about him in the news? How they're talking about my daughter?

Jeremiah's phone BUZZES. He checks it -- CALL FROM EDDIE PRICE. He puts it on silent, slips it into his pocket.

Ed places the file down on his desk and leans forward to look Jeremiah in the face.

ED

You two are ready to hear the truth?

JEREMIAH

I've been ready.

ED

There's no chance. And if you think you know why, you're right.

INT. LEGAL OFFICE - HALLWAY - DAY

Jeremiah is still as Robert paces outside Ed's doorway.

ROBERT

It's not gonna fly, Walker. What they're saying about our kids... We're gonna stop it. We're gonna find a way to appeal, goddamnit. I'm not gonna let this happen to us. You hear me? Not to us.

INT. DINER - DAY

Jeremiah sits across the table from DYLAN SELZNICK (32), a mile-a-minute speaker with a carefully cultivated 'All the King's Men' 70s journalist style.

DYLAN

It's not an issue that -- so as I understand everything that you're saying is perfectly true. And I grieve for you. What you've been through, my God. But I'm dealing with a reality -- my reality is a world of press, news media that is *endless*.

(MORE)

DYLAN (CONT'D)

It's like every morning when people wake up, they just forget everything that happened the day before and they're ready for another tragedy, you know what I'm saying? The cops, the same cops, our cops, just since what happened with your son, they pulled a gun on a ten-year-old black kid. Yesterday, a gay black women accused the department of sexually assaulting her while in custody. Just since what happened to your son. You know what I'm saying? I want to -- I grieve for you. But this story, told this way -- it's not something my paper will run with, Mr. Walker.

JEREMIAH

You can call me Jeremiah.

DYLAN

This is the deal, Jeremiah. There are too many versions of too many stories with too many perspectives to worry about the truth. The question isn't what happened, it's what you think should have happened. You think I can just run a story about a murder? People don't care about murders, they care about arguments. Your son, it's clear cut. He was a good person, wrong place, wrong time. Readers don't want to think about that. Tragedy's only news if you can pretend you're too smart for it to happen to you.

JEREMIAH

The problem is my son was too good a person?

DYLAN

That's the world's problem, not yours. You seem like a decent person and I'm deeply sorry, Mr. Walker. But the paper can't do much for you.

INT. JEREMIAH'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

The radio plays as Jeremiah drives.

DISC JOCKEY (O.S.)
And you're on the air, caller,
what's your pitch?

CALLER 1 (O.S.)
My pitch is forget this guy! He's
out here waving a gun around,
yelling at people for being white,
and he gets himself shot. So what?
Stupid games, stupid prizes.

DISC JOCKEY (O.S.)
I don't think this guy had a gun,
caller. You been watching too much
right-wing TV?

CALLER 1 (O.S.)
He had a gun, Travis. They all got
guns.

DISC JOCKEY (O.S.)
Well, agree to disagree. Next
caller!

CALLER 2 (O.S.)
Travis, you wanna see what a good
guy with a gun looks like? Turn on
your TV and look at Barry Evans.
This is a great man, finally doing
what's right for our country.
These are the guys we oughta get
protecting schools, guys with some
balls and some *marksmanship*...

EXT. WALKER HOUSE - NIGHT

Jeremiah's car pulls into the drive.

INT. WALKER HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

FOOTSTEPS up the stairs as Jeremiah approaches.

He pauses in the doorway.

The bed where Sydney died. He stares for a long time.

Then he turns back out of the room.

INT. WALKER HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jeremiah settles in to sleep on the living room couch.

EXT. WALKER HOUSE - DAY

The sun shines bright as Abigail loads a batch of her and Joseph's things into her car and heads back into the house.

EXT. WALKER HOUSE - REAR BALCONY - DAY

Jeremiah rests in his chair, looking out over the back yard that was so recently full of family and life.

He turns as Abigail pushes the screen door open.

JEREMIAH

You find everything you wanted?

Abigail crosses and takes the chair that was once Sydney's.

ABIGAIL

Pretty much. Doesn't matter -- I can always get things on a different visit.

JEREMIAH

You don't have to visit, Abigail. It must hurt to come here.

ABIGAIL

It hurts anywhere.

Jeremiah looks out into the beautiful clear day.

ABIGAIL

You're still my family, Jeremiah. She... your wife is still my...

(then)

I came here to ask you something.

JEREMIAH

She had another kid. Sydney, she -- before we met. She had a kid named Frederick when she was sixteen years old. There was a shooting near their house, near her mother's house, and a stray bullet hit him. He died in front of their house when he was thirteen. That's why. She had two families, two sons, and God took both of them. That's why.

Tears stream down Abigail's face.

ABIGAIL

I wasn't going to ask that. I
would have never asked you that.
But thank you for telling me.

She reaches for Jeremiah's hand.

They sit in silence until Jeremiah is ready to speak.

JEREMIAH

What did you come here to tell me?

And Abigail still has to say it:

ABIGAIL

I'm pregnant.

EXT. SPINELL UNIVERSITY - STAFF PARKING LOT - DAY

Jeremiah crosses from the university doors to his car.

Around him, the campus is alive with students, joking and laughing as they head between classes.

INT. JEREMIAH'S CAR - DAY

Jeremiah settles in, watching students criss-cross campus.

He focuses in on one young man: African-American, clean-cut, khakis and a dress shirt, walking confidently to class.

Jeremiah puts the car in reverse and pulls away.

INT. JEREMIAH'S CAR - MOVING - DAY

Jeremiah's phone RINGS on the car speakers. He glances at his cell before answering.

JEREMIAH

Eddie. I've been missing your
calls. Apologies, cousin.

EDDIE PRICE (43) booms confidently out of the speakers.

EDDIE (O.S.)

It's been a long time but we've got
a long distance between us. That's
okay. I'm calling about you coming
out here.

JEREMIAH
Might not be the best time.

EDDIE (O.S.)
No time is. It's a gig, if that matters. A book, a monograph. I need an editor, I thought you might have the right eyes.

Jeremiah checks his rearview and pulls the car over.

INT. JEREMIAH'S CAR - AT STREET CORNER - DAY

No mistaking the light in Jeremiah's eyes: he's interested.

JEREMIAH
I haven't worked like that in a lot of years. You're too big a name for someone with my level of experience, Eddie.

EDDIE
You were good then, you'll be good now. The money's good. It's all good.

Across the street, something catches Jeremiah's eye.

Three Caucasian STUDENTS approach a young SIKH MAN on the street. Menace in their walk.

JEREMIAH
Can I get you back, Eddie?

One of the Students YELLS SOMETHING -- inaudible in the car, but the Sikh man reacts visibly.

EDDIE
I hope you do, but make it before the 9th, okay? I'm telling you, bro, the air out here will make all the difference.

JEREMIAH
Okay.
(then)
Eddie -- why me?

But Eddie's already off the phone.

The Students fan out on the sidewalk, taking up the whole space so that the Sikh Man will be forced to stop.

Jeremiah reaches for the door handle.

The Sikh Man ducks his head and walks out onto the road.

The Students stop.

Jeremiah cracks the door, hearing the voices clearly now:

STUDENT 1

Yeah, walk, you fucking Muslim
pussy! Not so big when there
aren't little girls to rape, huh?

STUDENT 2

We're gonna keep you out. Every
one of you out of this country.

The Sikh Man walks on as the Students start on their way,
continuing to yell abuse over their shoulders.

Jeremiah pushes the door open and steps out into the street.

EXT. STREET CORNER - DAY

As Jeremiah exits, the young man and the students are already
disappearing in different directions.

Jeremiah's eyes fall on the store he's parked in front of:

An URBAN CLOTHING STORE, two HOODIES prominent in the window.

INT. URBAN CLOTHING STORE - DAY

Modern and sparse, with a few expensive brands on the walls.

Jeremiah selects a plain black hoodie.

INT. SPINELL UNIVERSITY - JEREMIAH'S OFFICE - DAY

Jeremiah enters his office with a box of takeout.

He hasn't even taken a bite when Gary KNOCKS and enters.

GARY

Late lunch?

Jeremiah doesn't bother to answer as Gary sits.

GARY

I'm not going to say anything,
because I know it isn't my place.

(MORE)

GARY (CONT'D)

But anything, *anything* that you need from me... I'm ready to tear this whole fucked-up racist country down and start from scratch. That racist son of a bitch deserves to die. That's all I'll say. He's going to burn in Hell for what he did. The judge and the jury too.

JEREMIAH

Let's hope no one burns in Hell.

Gary nods, face serious.

GARY

Hey, Peg sent me down here. Got some good news for ya, but she couldn't make it.

JEREMIAH

What's that?

GARY

You're getting a mandatory leave for grief. Two weeks, full pay, your time. At least *some* people care about supporting the marginalized and folks in grief.

JEREMIAH

I'd rather keep my routine.

GARY

Don't think they were kidding about the "mandatory" part. Listen, you deserve it and a lot more. You just take off, do something *important* with the time. I'll tell Peg you said thanks.

INT. WALKER HOUSE - STUDY - DAY

Walker pulls the freshly-purchased hoodie from its bag, inspects it, then tosses it on a chair.

He crosses to the bookshelf to trace his finger along SEVERAL EDDIE PRICE BOOKS. He pulls one out: "Black Man, Stand Not Still." A NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER sticker attached.

His head turns at KNOCKING on the front door.

EXT. WALKER HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - DAY

Abigail waits until the door swings open to reveal Jeremiah.

ABIGAIL

You didn't come.

Jeremiah inclines his head, inviting her in.

INT. WALKER HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jeremiah sets a cup of tea in front of Abigail and settles into the chair across from her.

ABIGAIL

He wanted you there for the will.

JEREMIAH

I'm the reason he had a will. He left everything to you. As it should be.

ABIGAIL

You didn't know everything about him. He wanted you there.

JEREMIAH

I do something wrong?

Abigail's anger rises to the surface.

ABIGAIL

You thought he was a loser. I know. He knew it.

JEREMIAH

I loved my son.

ABIGAIL

You were never the same to him after he dropped out of college. But he wasn't lazy. You just didn't want to see --

JEREMIAH

-- Abigail. I *loved* my son.

ABIGAIL

Then show up for the reading of his fucking *will*, Jeremiah!

They sit quietly for a long moment.

Then Abigail reaches into her purse and sets a CD on the table in front of Jeremiah.

ABIGAIL

He was a musician. He wasn't just in some dead-end job. It's not huge, but people know his music. He never told you because you came down on him so hard about college, so hard about everything after he moved out, that --

She cuts herself off. Jeremiah's face is impassive.

ABIGAIL

This is his music. He wanted you to hear it, with all of us. Now it's here. You can listen alone.

JEREMIAH

Abigail --

ABIGAIL

-- listen to it. Then we can talk if you want to talk.

Jeremiah takes the CD into his hands.

EXT. WALKER HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - DAY

Abigail walks down the front steps.

Jeremiah holds open the front door, watching her, until she gets to her car.

INT. WALKER HOUSE - STUDY - DAY

Jeremiah puts the CD in his desktop disk drive and slides an old pair of headphones over his ears.

He starts the music. Silence in the room as it plays in his headphones. Only for him.

Suddenly, he rips the headphones from his ears. His face says that he can't stand to hear any more.

His eyes fall on the hoodie draped over a chair.

Then his gaze moves to the window, where a PICTURESQUE SUBURBAN SCENE plays out -- a LITTLE GIRL helps her LITTLE BROTHER with his bike on the sidewalk, while people do household chores and others walk, jog, and bicycle.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - NIGHT

The same street, much quieter now that night has fallen.

A FIGURE IN A HOODIE AND JEANS makes his way down the street.

The figure pauses, like some sort of sixth sense -- far off, someone in the Williams house peeks out from a window.

The figure continues down the street.

EXT. BUS STOP - NIGHT

The ROUTE 57 BUS stops to pick up the hooded figure.

INT. ROUTE 57 BUS - MOVING - NIGHT

Several TRANSIT RIDERS glance up at the hooded figure making his way to the back of the bus. Few react, but a couple of faces betray some discomfort at the figure's presence.

The figure finds the back of the bus and sits. It's JEREMIAH. He briefly locks eyes with his only fellow passenger in the back section, a CAUCASIAN WOMAN.

She clutches her purse tight. Jeremiah, confused, watches as she takes the next stop as an opportunity to move to the middle of the bus, near a CAUCASIAN MAN. Settling in, she sneaks a final look back at Jeremiah.

EXT. CITY STREET CORNER - NIGHT

Jeremiah exits the 57 and starts down the street as the bus pulls away.

Walking towards him -- a WELL-DRESSED ASIAN COUPLE.

After a barely disguised glance at Jeremiah, the woman pulls the man off the sidewalk, leading him away from Jeremiah to the other side of the quiet street.

Jeremiah tugs the hood further over his face.

EXT. BUSY CITY STREET - NIGHT

Jeremiah walks the streets, feeling the strange weight that the hoodie puts on his shoulders.

Some on the streets ignore him, but many avoid him, watch him carefully, clutch their belongings closer.

Even Jeremiah's face looks different, framed by a hood, as he begins to realize how easy it is for people to take him for something he's not.

EXT. SPINELL UNIVERSITY - QUAD - NIGHT

The quad is quiet except for the FAR-OFF SOUNDS of a few drunk students heading to and from dorms.

Jeremiah walks through the quad, footsteps echoing.

SECURITY GUARD (O.S.)
You a student here?

Jeremiah turns. A portly SECURITY GUARD, one hand resting near the butt of his gun, stares him down.

JEREMIAH
I'm staff.

The Guard waits. Jeremiah proffers his Staff ID.

JEREMIAH
You never stopped me before.

SECURITY GUARD
Can't be too careful.

Jeremiah eyes the Guard's hand, close to his gun.

JEREMIAH
Can't be too careful.

EXT. WALKER HOUSE - NIGHT

Jeremiah returns home, hood still obscuring his face.

He stops at the entrance to his property for a long moment, considering his house. Nothing to distinguish it from the others on the street. A comfy middle-class home.

EXT. WILLIAMS HOUSE - NIGHT

Jeremiah's neighbour Nick Williams holds a reassuring hand up to his anxious WIFE as he closes the front door behind him.

She watches from the window as he crosses the street towards the hooded figure who's now standing on Jeremiah's lawn.

EXT. WALKER HOUSE - NIGHT

The figure hasn't moved as Nick approaches.

NICK
Hey, excuse me!

No response. Nick quickens his pace to close distance.

NICK
I'm Neighbourhood Watch...

Still no answer. Nick steels himself, then steps onto Jeremiah's lawn, a few short feet from the hooded figure that he does not know is Jeremiah.

Then Nick reaches out and touches the figure's shoulder as he puts on his best authoritative voice:

NICK
Hey, man, you need to get away from
my neighbour's --

Jeremiah swings around and CLOCKS NICK IN THE FACE.

He knows how to hit. Nick goes down, nose bloody, throwing his hands up plaintively as Jeremiah realizes who he is.

NICK
WAIT PLEASE DON'T --

Nick trails off as he registers the face in front of him.

Jeremiah stares down as he pulls the EARBUDS OUT OF HIS EARS and begins to coil them up. He's quiet, until:

JEREMIAH
What are you doing on my lawn?

NICK
I thought...

He trails off.

JEREMIAH
Get off my lawn, Nick.

Nick opens his mouth to speak, then shuts it. He gets to his feet and turns back toward his house, trying not to run.

INT. WALKER HOUSE - STUDY - NIGHT

Jeremiah paces into the study, shivering with adrenaline.

He takes a moment to get himself under control.

Then, he takes a look at himself in the mirror, his reflection peering out from underneath the hood.

He puts a fist up, as if to throw a punch.

He considers, then pulls the hood off. Same old kind-faced Jeremiah. He balls up his fist again, raises it.

After a moment, he laughs.

INT. WALKER HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jeremiah stands in the doorway. The bed stares back at him. Finally, he turns away, back down the stairs.

INT. WALKER HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jeremiah sets the blankets out on the couch.

EXT. WALKER HOUSE - NIGHT

The living room light in the Walker house blinks out. The street is quiet and empty now.

EXT. TUCSON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - TARMAC - DAY

A passenger plane touches down.

INT. TUCSON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

A fresh-faced, snappily-dressed Jeremiah makes his way off the plane and towards the exit doors.

EXT. TUCSON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - ARRIVALS - DAY

Jeremiah looks left. He spots a limo... not his name on the driver's sign. He looks right... nothing.

EDDIE (O.S.)

Walker!

Across the street, next to a new Toyota Camry, is Eddie Price.

Contrasting the relaxed, mature voice we heard on the phone, Eddie is decked out in eye-sore colours and sports a ridiculous haircut that belongs on a red carpet.

EDDIE

God ain't name you Walker for nothing, brother, get over here!

INT. EDDIE'S TOYOTA - MOVING - DAY

Jeremiah watches the edges of Tucson roll by as Eddie drives east towards Rita Ranch.

JEREMIAH

You used to drive sports cars.

EDDIE

Now I'm making real money. No flashy vehicles no more.

Jeremiah smiles.

JEREMIAH

You got that *Toyota* money.

EDDIE

Man, I'm talkin' about ride the bus to *work* money.

They laugh together, the way old friends do.

EXT. EDDIE'S RANCH - GATES - DAY

The Toyota pulls off the highway and down a dirt road towards the elegant but unassuming gates of Eddie's ranch.

Eddie stops the car, exits, and crosses to the gates to open them by hand. After a moment, Jeremiah exits the car too.

JEREMIAH

Automatic gates would ruin the rustic desert experience, or what?

EDDIE

Homecoming, brother. Leaving the world, returning to your home, to your land, that's a momentous event. It should take some work.

JEREMIAH

But I bet you never leave though.

Eddie smiles. He's right.

EDDIE
Pull the car ahead.

Jeremiah takes the wheel. Eddie talks as Jeremiah slowly pulls the car forward.

EDDIE
Home's a good place to be. That's the ideal state of affairs, being, *staying* home.

JEREMIAH
Try the city, you'll flip on that.

Eddie laughs.

Jeremiah exits the car as Eddie begins the reverse process of shutting the gates behind the car.

EDDIE
All this land, it belongs to us equally. It's up to us to demand what we need to make a home somewhere. We've forgotten that. We've been giving it away so long, smaller lots, smaller parks, smaller forests, smaller deserts, just for bigger *houses*, brother. House ain't a home, land is home.

JEREMIAH
That's the book.

EDDIE
That's the book.

Jeremiah considers his words as Eddie returns to the driver's side. They stare at each other over the car, until:

JEREMIAH
This gig is a big deal for me.

EDDIE
Hey, I remember, Walker. You understand home like nobody.

A memory from long ago flickers over Jeremiah's face as Eddie slaps the top of the car and gets in.

EXT. EDDIE'S RANCH - DAY

The Toyota moves along the dirt road of a MASSIVE ARIZONA RANCH PROPERTY.

Towards the classy, but surprisingly small, HOUSE at the crest of a hill.

INT. EDDIE'S RANCH HOUSE - GUEST ROOM - DAY

A MANUSCRIPT is set down on the desk.

Jeremiah and Eddie stare down at it.

EDDIE

That's your copy.

JEREMIAH

Give me the day.

Eddie's already on his way out.

EDDIE

Don't think deadlines yet, brother,
just think book. Except one
deadline. Cowboy show tomorrow.

JEREMIAH

Cowboy show?

But Eddie's gone.

EXT. EDDIE'S RANCH HOUSE - NIGHT

A lone light in Eddie's house, under the dark night sky.

Through the window, Jeremiah is visible, still reading.

EXT. OLD TUCSON - DAY

A HANGMAN'S NOOSE on a raised platform stares down at Jeremiah, who stands on the dusty ground of Old Tucson, theme park and frequent Hollywood film location.

Two CAUCASIAN KIDS stand on the platform, laughing as they take turns jumping, trying to grab hold of the loop.

Eddie claps Jeremiah on the back, turning his attention to the main street, where a group of tourists is gathered around the beginnings of a THEATRICAL COWBOY SHOW.

As Jeremiah and Eddie move in, OUTLAWS ambush the MARSHAL, beginning an acrobatic, Western movie-style fistfight.

A Caucasian MOTHER openly stares at Jeremiah and Eddie as they ease into the crowd next to her SIX-YEAR-OLD BOY.

Jeremiah sees fascination and excitement on the Boy's face as the Marshal valiantly fights the Outlaws.

As one of the Outlaws finally lands a knockout hit on the Marshal, the Boy flinches.

The performers lip-sync DIALOGUE PLAYING ON THE LOUDSPEAKERS:

OUTLAW 1

Let's put him inside and get to the bank and make that withdrawal!

The Outlaws rush into the bank, pulling the limp Marshal.

EDDIE

They done the same show for decades. Exact show Charlie Bronson watches in Death Wish. You remember Death Wish?

The Boy WHOOPS in excitement as a second MARSHAL appears in a doorway, opening fire on the Outlaws as they leave the bank, "killing" one and forcing the rest back inside.

MARSHAL

All right boys, the fun's over. Throw out your guns and put your hands up!

OUTLAW 2

Listen up Marshal -- I've got dynamite!

MARSHAL

Don't be a fool!

Jeremiah leans over to Eddie as the gunfire continues.

JEREMIAH

Not worth an update?

EDDIE

Update what? It's a story about America, Walker.

The voice of the ANNOUNCER booms over the same loudspeakers providing the performer's "voices."

ANNOUNCER

The outlaw life seemed a shortcut
to easy money, which could buy
liquor and women.

The Marshal cuts down another two Outlaws, springing forward
to shoot a third off the roof.

ANNOUNCER

But there were honest men who would
fight...

The Marshal stands triumphant as the last of the Outlaws
theatrically slumps to the ground.

Jeremiah watches the Boy join the applause, swept up in the
heroic moment.

ANNOUNCER

...who planted the roots that would
grow into a nation.

The audience continues to applaud. Eddie watches Jeremiah
for a reaction, but Jeremiah just watches, impassive.

EDDIE

Roots, Walker.
(then)
Hey let's check out the bar.

EXT. OLD TUCSON - OUTSIDE THE CRANE BAR - DAY

Eddie follows Jeremiah out of the bar. Both men are visibly
tipsy, cheeks flush with good beer and good conversation.

They meander drunkenly down the Old Tucson street, arguing.

JEREMIAH

You're dead wrong. You can update
a Western fine. You're talking
about Death Wish, that's a Western
update.

EDDIE

Death Wish. That movie's about the
death *drive*. The integrity of a
man's home is violated, and instead
of securing his home and making
himself whole, he heads out in the
street and starts shooting random
motherfuckers.

(MORE)

EDDIE (CONT'D)

He's so broken, all he can do is head towards death, pray towards death, create more death.

JEREMIAH

Cowboy show had a lot of death.

EDDIE

You weren't listening, Walker. It wasn't the killing. The *fight* grew into a nation.

JEREMIAH

All that crowd cared about was seeing outlaws get their asses shot off. Ain't -- that's no fight.

Eddie looks up as they approach the platform and the hangman's noose once more.

EDDIE

Forget the crowd. A man says: Death will not enter my home, by your hand or mine.

He stops to look back at Jeremiah.

EDDIE

You gonna be my editor?

Jeremiah takes a second, but his answer is firm.

JEREMIAH

Yeah, Eddie.

EXT. EDDIE'S RANCH HOUSE - DAY

The sun rises over the house.

Through the window, Jeremiah is visible, already working, the manuscript spread out in front of him, pen in hand.

EXT. EDDIE'S RANCH HOUSE - DUSK

As the sun sets, Jeremiah is still there, working.

He picks up one section of the manuscript and places it on the edge of the table. One chapter down.

EXT. EDDIE'S RANCH HOUSE - DAY

The sun rises once more.

Stepping into view, Eddie takes a moment from his path up the trail to look back through the window.

Jeremiah's still at the table...

But he's asleep, face down on the manuscript.

Eddie smirks and continues on his way.

EXT. EDDIE'S RANCH - GUN RANGE - DAY

A BULLET IMPACTS A TARGET with a THUD.

Eddie peers out from behind the sight of an OLD REVOLVER.

He takes aim again, and FIRES.

INT. EDDIE'S RANCH HOUSE - GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Jeremiah pulls another section of the manuscript off and piles it with the other completed sections. The "completed" pile is nearly the entire manuscript.

He sits back, taking stock. Just a couple chapters left...

EXT. EDDIE'S RANCH - GUN RANGE - DAY

Eddie aims down the barrel of the revolver and FIRES.

His lip twists with dissatisfaction.

FOOTSTEPS. He turns.

JEREMIAH

What do rich, famous people do with
their time? Same thing as the
brothers down the block.

(an old joke)

"Shoot guns..."

EDDIE

"Shoot guns..."

But the grin drops off Eddie's face.

EDDIE

See, we're so obsessed with shooting first, we never talk about shooting back. Take some Neighborhood Watch dude, he'll tell you he's "shooting back" ten times out of ten. Why? Because he knows this country is his turf, his home.

Jeremiah finally says it:

JEREMIAH

I was feeling... wrong, because I never even thought about going out there and killing him back. I just wanted Syd and Joseph alive again.

EDDIE

That's survival.

JEREMIAH

Not a lot of comfort.

EDDIE

That's our hand. Fortify your home, make yourself hard to kill. And when they shoot, you make sure you live through it to shoot back.
(then, quiet)
And if you got black skin, black clothes, black hair, black name... you got a target on you, Walker.

JEREMIAH

But you don't know who sees it.

EDDIE

Nah...

He swivels, lifts the revolver, and aims down the barrel.

EDDIE

Gotta find a way to see them first.

He fires, the blast echoing around the ranch.

Walker watches wisps of smoke rise from the gun barrel.

EXT. EDDIE'S RANCH - DAY

The sun rises over the ranch.

INT. EDDIE'S RANCH - KITCHEN - DAY

The FIRST EDIT OF THE MANUSCRIPT sits on the kitchen counter.
Eddie enters and smiles as his eyes fall on the pages.

EXT. EDDIE'S RANCH - HILLS - DAY

Jeremiah crests the hill, breathing heavy.
He stops and looks out from the highest point on Eddie's property, taking it all in as the sun sets behind him.

INT. EDDIE'S RANCH - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Eddie sets down the last page of the manuscript and sits motionless for a long moment. Then he leans his head back:

EDDIE
(projecting)
Walker!!

INT. EDDIE'S RANCH - LIVING ROOM - LATER

MUSIC fills the room as Jeremiah and Eddie drink down a bottle of expensive cognac.

EDDIE
That's what I'm feelin', Walker.
You gonna make this the best work I ever did.

JEREMIAH
Your reviews aren't gonna think so.

EDDIE
I've recently been described as "increasingly pugilistic" and "a race-baiting nigger agitator."

JEREMIAH
(wry)
Same reviewer?

Eddie laughs heartily. Jeremiah's face turns serious as Eddie pours another round.

JEREMIAH
I think you knew... it mattered to me, a lot, to be part of creating something again.

EDDIE

You matter, Walker. You really gonna go back there? We're family, man, you know you can stay here.

JEREMIAH

I'm going home, Eddie.

EXT. TUCSON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

Eddie's Toyota pulls into Departures.

INT. EDDIE'S TOYOTA - AT THE AIRPORT - DAY

Eddie jumps out to grab Jeremiah's suitcase from the back seat as Jeremiah organizes a sheaf of papers.

EDDIE

That should be everything, but anything else we'll just do the digital thing.

JEREMIAH

It's my first priority until we're done, Eddie. Anytime.

EDDIE

You doin' carry-on with this thing, right? I put you something in there to help out.

Jeremiah's barely listening as he organizes.

JEREMIAH

Yeah.

Satisfied, Eddie wheels the suitcase around the car and parks it on the curb as Jeremiah finishes up.

EDDIE

(mock "cop" voice)
Step out of the car, please, sir.

Jeremiah looks up at Eddie's mock-serious face.

JEREMIAH

Get the fuck outta here.

EXT. TUCSON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

Jeremiah's plane soars into the sky.

EXT. AIRPORT EXTENDED STAY PARKING - DAY

Jeremiah spots his car in the long rows of vehicles.

INT. JEREMIAH'S CAR - AT AIRPORT PARKING - DAY

Jeremiah settles in, dropping the papers from Eddie and his phone on the passenger seat.

He remembers. Phone's off from the flight. He turns it on.

A missed call: "ABIGAIL WALKER". And a VOICEMAIL.

Jeremiah's face remains impassive as he listens.

EXT. RILEY HOUSE - DAY

Jeremiah's car pulls up outside. The Riley's home is the same style and era as Jeremiah's, but bigger, more expensive.

Jeremiah nods to an UNFRIENDLY NEIGHBOUR as he walks to the Riley's front door and knocks.

The door swings open to reveal a disheveled LINDA RILEY (52).

LINDA
Jeremiah. Hi.

JEREMIAH
I had a call from Abigail.
(then)
You okay, Linda?

LINDA
She's having a lot of trouble.

She glances at the Unfriendly Neighbour, who's still watching.

LINDA
Come inside?

INT. RILEY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jeremiah shifts awkwardly on the couch as Linda sets a cup of tea in front of him.

JEREMIAH
Thank you.

LINDA
You're welcome.

Linda settles in across from Jeremiah, still looking uneasy.

JEREMIAH
I was anxious after Abigail's call.
I'm sure you've had a lot to deal
with in supporting her. I know
you're taking on a lot here, and
Robert's put a lot of energy into
the appeal, too.

LINDA
He... We've decided not to keep
going with the appeal.

Jeremiah swallows his surprise.

JEREMIAH
Why?

LINDA
It's too much, Jeremiah. We need
her to be able to move on.

JEREMIAH
The appeal isn't about her, it's
about what's right.

LINDA
I... What happened, happened. We
can't stay with that pain.

JEREMIAH
That man killed a boy and wasn't
punished for it. It will happen
again, Linda. If we don't do
everything we can, we're part of
that. We can't move on from that.

LINDA
We can. Abigail needs to.

Jeremiah searches her face. A wall between them.

JEREMIAH
Okay. Not your fight.

LINDA
Jeremiah...

JEREMIAH

Is it okay with you if I talk with
Abigail?

INT. RILEY HOUSE - ABIGAIL'S ROOM - DAY

A KNOCK on the door. Then another. Silence.

Jeremiah pushes the door open to find Abigail huddled on the bed, staring, eyes unfocused.

JEREMIAH

I'm gonna sit at your desk there.
That okay?

Abigail sits up on the bed, drawing her knees up to her chest. Jeremiah crosses and sits.

JEREMIAH

His music...
(then)
I listened. Wish I listened
before. He was good at what he
did.

Abigail's eyes finally come up to meet Jeremiah's.

ABIGAIL

I don't know how I can be a mother
when I just want to go out there
and kill, fucking *kill* the fucking
scum who took him away.

She's shaking with rage, now that she's giving voice to the thoughts. Jeremiah sits in silence for a long time. Then:

JEREMIAH

I don't know. But I know that when
you're sitting in the hospital,
holding that child in your arms,
you're not gonna worry about
anything. On that day, you're
going to be the best mother that
ever held a child. I know that.

Abigail's voice drops to an emotion-choked whisper:

ABIGAIL

But what if they take his kid, too?

INT. JEREMIAH'S CAR - MOVING - DUSK

The sun sets overhead. A POLITICAL TALK SHOW on the radio as Jeremiah drives home.

PUNDIT 1 (O.S.)

...again and again, they just, you're doing it too, dragging up these old stories. Anecdotal. This Walker guy, that's over and done with, okay? There was a ruling. It's not all racism.

PUNDIT 2 (O.S.)

You think it's acceptable that we're sending this message to black families all over our country, that people can kill them without facing repercussions?

PUNDIT 1 (O.S.)

This Walker guy, he arrives in the neighbourhood, he starts an altercation with these other guys, bringing violence into the neighbourhood.

HOST (O.S.)

Now hold on. Did he *start* the altercation?

PUNDIT 1 (O.S.)

Of course he did, and more power to him! You know, young black guy, proud, aggressive, he's angry at this other gang --

PUNDIT 2 (O.S.)

-- what do you mean, "other gang"?

PUNDIT 1 (O.S.)

-- so he stands up to them. That's the American way, and, again, more power to him. But he brought the violence in and he suffered the consequences, and thank God that homeowner was armed and responsible and nobody innocent got hurt.

Jeremiah pulls into his driveway.

INT. WALKER HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jeremiah sets his suitcase next to the bed. Then he stands, quiet and still, and looks at the bed where his wife died.

After a long time, he turns and drags the suitcase back out.

INT. WALKER HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jeremiah pulls the suitcase up to the couch and settles onto it. He flicks the TV on and unzips the suitcase.

He retrieves a copy of Eddie's manuscript and sets it on the table. BRIGHT LIGHT from the TV. He looks up.

The TV hasn't been used since the barbecue. ON THE SCREEN -- the simple DVD menu for the family's home videos.

He flicks the TV off. For a moment he just sits in the dark room. But then he grabs his phone and pulls up a VIDEO:

FOOTAGE FROM THIS YEAR'S BARBECUE. Robert and Sydney talk in serious tones. Next to them, Joseph laughs as he dumps copious hot sauce all over Abigail's food. They mock fight, laughing, as she tries to trade their plates.

Jeremiah pulls another stack of papers from his suitcase, setting it next to the manuscript.

Then his hand finds something unexpected.

He opens the suitcase fully to look as Joseph and Abigail's LAUGHTER continues on the TV.

He looks for a long time.

EXT. WALKER HOUSE - NIGHT

The front door opens to reveal Jeremiah, once again in a hoodie and jeans.

Jeremiah walks down to the street and steps off his property and into the night.

EXT. STREET CORNER - NIGHT

The same corner with the URBAN CLOTHING STORE that Jeremiah earlier bought the hoodie from.

Jeremiah steps off a city bus, BACKPACK on his back. He looks around, and heads towards a quiet, dark street.

EXT. BACK ALLEY - NIGHT

Jeremiah stops partway down the alley, removes his backpack, and stores it behind a dumpster.

He heads out the other end and turns onto the street.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

It's a quiet night, but there are a few pedestrians. Jeremiah passes them one by one -- an OLD LADY, a YOUNG STUDENT, a HOMELESS WOMAN. All three ignore him.

Jeremiah's face is tight, serious. He's on a mission.

He turns down another street. As he passes the alley:

PUSHER (O.S.)
Hey. You need it?

Jeremiah turns, eyes flashing.

A skinny, disheveled drug dealer watches him from the alley.

PUSHER
You need it, need anything?

Jeremiah shakes his head "no" and continues on.

EXT. STREET CORNER - NIGHT

Jeremiah sits alone at the bus stop. No-one around.

A CAR ROARS BY, with FRAT BOYS inside yelling loudly. One leans out the window as they pass Jeremiah:

FRAT BOY
We hittin' nines, broseph!!
Represent!!

Jeremiah watches the car's taillights disappear.

Then he stands and walks after them.

EXT. SOUTHDALE SUBURBS - NIGHT

Jeremiah checks behind him as he enters the wealthy suburb.

He glances up. A FIGURE watches him from a window, but the light is quickly turned off.

Jeremiah turns off the street, deeper into the suburb.

A car approaches from behind, then slows. As Jeremiah turns to look, the car speeds up, passing him.

Jeremiah walks on.

THE SAME CAR approaches again, this time from the front. The well-dressed Hispanic DRIVER (30s) rolls the window down.

DRIVER
Hey, I'm looking for Elmwood
Crescent. You know where that is?

Jeremiah pauses, uncertain, before shaking his head "no."

The answer the Driver was waiting for. He pushes the door open and stands half-behind it.

DRIVER
That's what I thought. What are
you doing in our neighbourhood?

Jeremiah stares back at him, silent.

DRIVER
I asked you a question, man.

FOOTSTEPS. Both Jeremiah and the Driver look over --

A YOUNG WOMAN, Caucasian, already in her PJs, is bringing the garbage out. She's frozen, recognizing a bad situation.

DRIVER
Go back inside, honey. You go back
inside right now.

The Young Woman retreats to the safety of her house.

The Driver refocuses on Jeremiah and slams the door shut, revealing the GUN on his right hip.

DRIVER
You wanna fuck with me, man?

Jeremiah shakes his head no.

DRIVER
Just move on. What the fuck is
wrong with you? We don't want you
here.

JEREMIAH
I don't see any "we."

The Driver PULLS HIS GUN, but keeps it down.

DRIVER
Is that a threat?

But Jeremiah is silent again.

DRIVER
This is my neighbourhood,
motherfucker. You come here and
start shit, you better be ready.

Jeremiah takes his time. Then:

JEREMIAH
I'm ready.

He takes a step forward.

The DRIVER brings the gun up and fires TWO SHOTS. One misses Jeremiah. The other hits him in the stomach.

Jeremiah staggers backwards and collapses on the lawn of the house behind him.

The Driver lets out a shocked gasp as he realizes that Jeremiah isn't moving.

He slowly edges forward. Jeremiah is prone.

DOGS BARK in the distance as the Driver moves to stand over Jeremiah. No signs of life.

The Driver looks behind him as another dog BARKS, closer...

Jeremiah SURGES UPWARDS and GRABS ONTO THE GUN.

They struggle...

The gun goes off, hitting the Driver in the thigh. He SCREAMS. Jeremiah wrests the gun from his hand with an audible CRACK and FIRES AGAIN.

Right into the Driver's chest. He collapses, eyes wide.

Then, as the neighbourhood starts to LIGHT UP, Jeremiah turns, shoves the gun into his hoodie, and jogs away.

EXT. BACK ALLEY - NIGHT

SIRENS in the distance as Jeremiah turns into the alley.

Wincing, he pulls his hoodie off to REVEAL -- HIGH-END, LIGHTWEIGHT TEFLON BODY ARMOUR. The BULLET that would have killed him, nose crushed flat, falls onto the concrete.

Jeremiah pulls the armour off. Underneath, he's wearing a responsible-looking collared shirt.

He yanks the baggy jeans off. Underneath -- pleated khakis.

Jeremiah scoops the bullet up, studies it, and pockets it.

He throws the hoodie and jeans in the dumpster, packs the armour and gun into the backpack, and exits onto the street.

EXT. STREET CORNER - NIGHT

Jeremiah waits at the bus stop as POLICE SIRENS get closer.

A Caucasian WOMAN approaches him.

WOMAN

Excuse me, do you know if the bus
from here goes to Southdale?

As the POLICE CARS WHIP BY -- none of the Officers bothers with more than a passing glance at the conservatively-dressed, older black man giving a young woman directions.

The bus pulls up. Jeremiah steps back, gesturing for the Woman to go ahead. She smiles and steps on.

Only as she passes him does his face drop, finally showing the fear and tension that he's desperately holding in.

INT. WALKER HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jeremiah enters and locks the door behind him.

He throws the backpack onto the couch, yanks it open, and looks inside.

The HANDGUN rests there, on top of the body armour.

Jeremiah steps back, shaking, breathing fast.

He runs for the bathroom on unsteady legs.

THE SOUNDS OF RETCHING.

INT. WALKER HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Exhausted and stumbly, Jeremiah enters and collapses face down on the bed. He's asleep almost instantly.

The first time since Sydney's death that he's slept here.

EXT. SOUTHDALE SUBURBS - DAY

INSPECTOR TONY DARROW (40s), clean-cut, all business but a humble demeanor, carefully steps under POLICE TAPE and approaches the Southdale crime scene.

The Young Woman who saw the start of the incident is being interrogated by an OFFICER nearby. Tony pauses for a moment to listen in.

OFFICER

Scars, any tattoos, unusual clothing, unusual way of moving... anything like that?

YOUNG WOMAN

I'm sorry, I just... he was a... I'm not trying to be racist, I'm not racist or anything, but he was a big black -- a big African American gentleman in a hoodie.

Tony moves on, coming to a stop at the Driver's body. Several OFFICERS are gathered, along with a photographer.

TONY

Catch me up.

The nearest Officer, a peppy, African American youngster named FRYE, snaps to attention.

OFFICER FRYE

Agent Darrow! Uh, one victim, lives just a couple blocks over from here. No wife or anything, but his boss confirmed he would have been coming home from work around the time of the shooting. Had a gun and a permit, no history with the gun. He had a couple of domestic violence calls a few years back, but no obvious motives here. He runs into our perp, gets out of his car, the gun comes out of the holster at some point and ends up in the perp's hands.

(MORE)

OFFICER FRYE (CONT'D)
Victim takes two bullets, one in
the thigh, and a fatal one to the
chest.

TONY
And our suspect is...

OFFICER FRYE
...a big black guy.

TONY
A big black guy. Right.

Tony takes his time glancing around the crime scene. He
circles to the back of the vehicle.

TONY
We find anything from the gun?

OFFICER FRYE
Yes sir. .45 calibre.

On the back of the vehicle, a bumper sticker -- an American
flag in the shape of a cowboy hat, with the words "AMERICA:
LOVE IT OR LEAVE IT."

TONY
A cowboy.

OFFICER FRYE
Yes sir.

TONY
What are you thinking? He played
Clint Eastwood and found himself
the wrong blackhat?

OFFICER FRYE
Those were .36s.

Tony shoots him a glance. What?

OFFICER FRYE
Wrong Clint Eastwood. The Man with
No Name used a Colt 1851 Cartridge
Conversion, a .36 calibre. It's
Dirty Harry used a .45.

Tony stares quizzically at Officer Frye before redirecting
his attention to the body.

TONY
So he found the wrong *punk*, then.

OFFICER FRYE

Or he was targeted, and didn't get
the gun out in time. Botched
robbery, maybe.

TONY

Would you come to Southdale to rob
people in cars?

Officer Frye doesn't answer, but a "no" is plain on his face.

INT. SPINELL UNIVERSITY - ACADEMIC INTEGRITY OFFICE - DAY

Desiree looks up from her desk as Jeremiah enters.

DESIREE

Welcome back, Jeremiah!

JEREMIAH

Hi, Des. Good to see your face.
How's it been?

DESIREE

We kept things together. How was
the experiment?

Jeremiah stares at her, uncertain.

DESIREE

How was Eddie Price's book?

JEREMIAH

Ah.

Jeremiah puts a kitschy little Arizona gift-shop statue down
on Desiree's desk: a HAPPY COWBOY.

JEREMIAH

It was a dream there. But life is
here.

Desiree studies the statue as Jeremiah heads into his office.

INT. SPINELL UNIVERSITY - JEREMIAH'S OFFICE - DAY

A WEB ARTICLE is open on Jeremiah's laptop: "SOUTHDALE MAN
FATALLY WOUNDED WITH OWN GUN -- PERPETRATOR AT LARGE"

Jeremiah opens his bag, pulls out the BODY ARMOUR and GUN,
and stores them in a locked cabinet behind his desk.

GARY (O.S.)
You saw that, huh?

Jeremiah swings around, guilty.

But Gary, leaned in the now-open doorway, is looking at the article on Jeremiah's computer.

GARY
White victim, it's gonna be all over the news for weeks. You watch.

JEREMIAH
With his own gun.

GARY
That's the part that really gets 'em scared. Someone comes along and turns the weapons of oppression on the oppressors...hoo boy.

JEREMIAH
Oppression? Seems like this guy just ran into some thug.

GARY
Well, I don't agree with your use of the term 'thug,' -- bit of a dog whistle, isn't it? I see the oppressed Other expressing through violence what he should express through solidarity and politics. These glorified redneck Neighbourhood Watch guys are just the shock troops of the fascist right. When their guns get turned on them, *now*, oh geez, it's political. But I don't have to tell ya. African Americans have been fighting to have and maintain their own spaces here since the end of slavery, and these violent whites just keep barging in and trying to shut it all down.

JEREMIAH
Mmm. Hey, Gary. Would you mind knocking next time?

The wind falls out of Gary's sails.

GARY

Uh...yeah, my man, of course. Hey,
welcome back, by the way!

JEREMIAH

It's good to be back.

INT. FLASHY CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

It's late. A quiet part of town.

Two THUGS, mid-20s, Caucasian, tatted up with short hair,
cruise down the street, eyes fixed on a figure in a black
hoodie and jeans...

It's Jeremiah.

THUG 1

You think this fucker's packing?

THUG 2

Man, they're all packing.

Thug 2 hefts his 9MM PISTOL, admiring it.

THUG 2

We should call them *all* "Pakis."

The Thugs erupt in laughter.

THUG 1

What would we call Pakis then?

THUG 2

Dune coons. Coons. I don't know,
where are they from?

THUG 1

India.

But Thug 2 isn't listening. He's leaning out the window:

THUG 2

Hey man, you packin'?

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Jeremiah turns at the words.

But Thug 2 isn't talking to him. The Thugs are watching a
different black man, TYLER (25), in hoodie and jeans -- rough-
looking, with a work collar poking out under his hoodie.

Jeremiah walks towards the car as Thug 2 continues to yell at Tyler, who's walking on, head down.

THUG 2

I mean, no offense! I don't wanna
"trigger" you. It's, like, a
scientific inquiry.

Jeremiah flexes his fingers inside the BLACK GLOVE on his right hand as he approaches.

JEREMIAH

Excuse me.

Thug 1 stops the car. Jeremiah nods to Tyler and gestures that he should move on.

Thug 2 openly brandishes his pistol as Jeremiah approaches on his side.

THUG 2

You the big boss round here?

Jeremiah comes to a stop outside the car.

Tyler watches from the street corner, ready to disappear.

INT. FLASHY CAR - NIGHT

Jeremiah leans down near the window, looking for all the world like a police officer doing a traffic stop.

JEREMIAH

You got a permit for that weapon,
sir?

Thug 2 blinks in confusion, then shakes it off.

THUG 2

You're no cop. Let me see your
badge.

JEREMIAH

That's right, I'm not a cop. But I
can make a citizen's arrest.
Unless you've got a permit.

Thug 1 looks on, incredulous.

THUG 1

This guy's gotta be fucked up.

THUG 2
You fucked up, nigger?

JEREMIAH
If you don't have a permit, then
you fucked up, nigger.

Thug 2 blinks, smiles, then RAISES HIS GUN AND PULLS THE TRIGGER.

But Jeremiah is already pushing the gun sideways.

BANG! The shot rings out in the streets as the bullet flies wide of Jeremiah's body.

Jeremiah squeezes his hand around the top of Thug 2's gun.

THUG 1
Fuck!

Thug 1 paws at the glove compartment. A second PISTOL spills out onto the floor between Thug 2's feet.

Thug 2 pulls the trigger again, but Jeremiah's holding the slide down. Nothing.

Thug 1 desperately scrambles on the floor for the gun, finds it, and brings it up to the window --

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Jeremiah sees the second pistol coming up and DROPS DOWNWARDS, HOLDING THUG 2'S PISTOL as he does.

The weight of his body SNAPS THUG 2'S ARM AT THE ELBOW as he falls to the pavement.

INT. FANCY CAR - NIGHT

Thug 2 screams as he pulls his mangled arm back into the car. His hand's empty. The gun is gone.

THUG 1
Where is he!

Thug 1 FIRES three panicked shots THROUGH THE PASSENGER DOOR, aiming blind for Jeremiah.

A moment of ear-ringing silence.

THUG 2
I'm fucking deaf!

But Thug 1 can't hear him. Neither of them can hear at all. Not even the POP POP as Jeremiah FIRES BACK through the door. Three shots hit the roof.

The fourth hits Thug 1 in the neck, splattering blood across the window.

Thug 1 falls forward, bleeding freely, and STEPS ON THE GAS.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Jeremiah ROLLS SIDEWAYS, tucking his legs as the car lurches forward, barely missing him.

The car accelerates in a lazy arc across the street and SLAMS INTO A JEWELRY STORE.

Jeremiah stumbles to his feet and starts towards the car.

Thug 2 kicks the door open and RUNS, cradling his arm.

Jeremiah tries to get his breath under control.

Forces himself to breathe slow.

Takes aim --

The first shot misses. Thug 2 stumbles...

The second shot hits Thug 2 in the back.

Jeremiah walks forward, fires one more shot into Thug 2's prone body, and looks up.

Tyler peers around the corner, staring at him. Jeremiah meets his eyes for a brief second.

Then he throws Thug 2's gun down by his body, turns, and runs in the opposite direction, disappearing into the night.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

The sun crests the horizon as a black Lincoln pulls up behind a throng of reporters at the edges of the crime scene.

The bodies are gone, but the Thugs' fancy car remains on the street, littered in broken glass from the store window.

INT. BLACK LINCOLN - DAY

INSPECTOR BRYAN FORSTER (50s), round-faced, jowly, impeccably and expensively dressed, peers out at the press.

The uniformed OFFICER driving him sighs as he stops the car.

OFFICER 2

Dang. Lot of attention out here already.

BRYAN

Victims had white supremacist ties. This one's gonna be a hell of a career booster.

OFFICER 2

For the press?

But Bryan is already pushing the door open and stepping out.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Bryan pushes his way through the press as they yell over one another to be heard for the next question.

At the front, Tony Darrow, clearly out of his element.

REPORTER

Inspector Darrow, should we be worried about the possibility of a gang war across racial lines, here?

TONY

What? No.

REPORTER 2

Weren't these guys Neo-Nazis?

TONY

I can't comment on that without a thorough investigation...

REPORTER 2

You're saying the police aren't considering a racial element here?

Bryan pushes forward and ducks the police tape.

TONY

What? I'm not saying that. I'm saying --

Bryan shakes Tony's hand as he steps up to stand beside the shorter, and now very flustered, detective.

REPORTER 3
Detective Forster!

The press, recognizing Bryan now, explode in a new round of questions aimed at him. He puts up a placating hand.

BRYAN
We're aware of the victims' possible connections to hate groups. Our priorities are safety and justice. That's going to mean figuring out who perpetrated this shocking double murder, and it's also going to mean taking a *thorough* look at the full context here. Our job is to protect the people in this community, from the obvious threats and from the hidden ones, and that's what we're gonna do. That's it. Thank you.

Bryan waves at the press and steers Tony away from the mic.

BRYAN
You can't give 'em an inch, Tony. Talk lots and say nothing, or you'll be the guy getting dragged for oppressing blacks or hating whites or whatever the angle is.

TONY
The public deserves answers.

Bryan snorts back a laugh as he kneels down to the marked-off spot where Thug 2's body used to be.

BRYAN
The public.
(then)
Let me guess. You ran over because you think it's your Southdale guy.

TONY
Crossed my mind. That's three anti-minority types in two days, shot with their own guns.

BRYAN
You don't think it was the kid?

Both men look over at Tyler, who's hunched on a nearby set of steps, exhausted, blanket around his shoulders.

TONY

Nah. Friend, maybe. He's lying about not seeing it, but the GSR guys didn't find a trace. He wasn't near any of it.

Bryan immediately strides over to Tyler, Tony trailing.

Tyler looks up wearily as Bryan leans over him.

BRYAN

You see the guy?

TYLER

I told him no.

BRYAN

He says you're lying. You lying?

TYLER

I got out of there. White guys with guns start yellin' out "nigger," I'm gone.

BRYAN

Who'd they call a nigger, you?

Tyler just stares at him for a long moment. Then:

TYLER

I'm too tired for that shit. I was tryna be helpful. Hell with that.

Tyler throws the blanket on the ground and stalks away.

TONY

The fuck was that, Bryan?

BRYAN

A bad liar stops talking to think when he gets caught. They were yelling at the other guy. We got a black perp. What's the look on your Southdale guy?

TONY

(resigned)

Witness description is a big black guy in a hoodie and jeans.

Bryan casts around and locates the BALLISTICS INVESTIGATOR, who's kneeling by the car.

BRYAN

Priestley! Your guys get a read on the suspect's height?

BALLISTICS INVESTIGATOR

Nothing firm, but this guy was 5'10" and the shot in his back was angling down.

Bryan claps Tony on the shoulder.

BRYAN

A big black guy in a hoodie and jeans. You and me are off the record partners, Darrow.

INT. RILEY HOUSE - ABIGAIL'S ROOM - DAY

A KNOCK on the door. Abigail doesn't look away from her task as she chirps:

ABIGAIL

Come in!

Jeremiah pushes the door open to find Abigail seated at an easel, a HALF-FINISHED WATERCOLOUR PAINTING in front of her.

JEREMIAH

Dig the haircut.

Abigail tosses her MUCH SHORTER HAIR.

Jeremiah sets the box on the desk beside her.

JEREMIAH

I brought... this stuff.

Abigail hasn't put the paintbrush down.

ABIGAIL

What is it?

Jeremiah hesitates, then fishes in the box and pulls out an INFANT ONESIE -- the same clothes Joseph wore as a baby in the family tapes from the barbecue.

JEREMIAH

Presents from a father, I guess. There's a bunch here. Clothes, toys, bottles...

For the first time, Abigail turns and fully looks at him. Her eyes drift to the onesie and back.

ABIGAIL

That's really lovely of you.

Jeremiah shifts, uncertain.

ABIGAIL

(re: the painting)

The therapist says destructive impulses can be replaced by creative impulses.

JEREMIAH

Any luck?

ABIGAIL

You read about these murders? One in Southdale, then a double murder last night. All these racist guys, shot with their own guns.

JEREMIAH

I read about Southdale.

ABIGAIL

While I was sitting here in front of a canvas, someone was out there shooting back.

Jeremiah takes his time before replying.

JEREMIAH

These guys... they're not who took Joseph from us.

ABIGAIL

Who then? Just the guy that pulled the trigger? Not the judge, not the courts, not the police? Not the journalists and the opinion pieces? Not the politicians? Not the good, civilized people who have nothing to say about any of it until someone takes the gun and turns it around?

JEREMIAH

I think so, Abby. Just the guy that pulled the trigger.

(then, pointed)

The rest of us belong home with our kids.

ABIGAIL

Yeah. With our creative impulses.

She dips her paintbrush red and splotches it across the watercolour. Red spreads outwards, a sharp colour against the soft painting, infecting everything.

INT. POLICE STATION - BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

Tony glances from a giant MAP OF THE CITY to the expectant crowd of POLICE OFFICERS packed into the room. At the front, Bryan lounges, hands clasped on his protruding stomach.

TONY

Inspector Forster and I are increasingly concerned that our two cases are the work of one suspect. That means premeditation, and that means we're considering this a ticking clock. Here's the deal: all three victims are connected by a clear thread of outspoken anti-minority sentiment. Our double murder victims had a documented history of race-based harassment. And our suspect, based on witness reports, is black. It's possible, and this is why we're a closed room on this, that we're looking at ideologically targeted killing.

An OFFICER raises her hand.

OFFICER 3

Does that mean a group?

TONY

We're leading with a lone wolf theory, but we won't discount that.

Another OFFICER speaks brusquely from the back.

OFFICER 4

So one guy, too much CNN, the world's against him now and he's gonna start the race war?

MURMURS through the police ranks as Bryan quickly stands.

BRYAN

The second the media gets a hold of this, we've got a black Batman killing off white supremacists.

(MORE)

BRYAN (CONT'D)

We don't bag this guy before then, we're coming down on the wrong side of it. The department's still in the public eye from the Parker incident. Racist wasn't a good look in the media. Racist and incompetent is not gonna fly.

OFFICER 4

This guy's killing whites. He's the racist one.

BRYAN

We don't know that. That's the line. We don't know that race is a factor, we don't know that the perp had any reason to target these guys. We don't want a vigilante with a righteous hatred and a backstory. We want a senseless killer. We're the ones who stop those. Senseless killer. Everybody clear on that?

Nods across the ranks. Tony steps up as the room settles.

TONY

Thanks, Inspector.
(to the room)
Here's what we're looking for, and let's end this quick.

INT. SHOPPING MALL - URBAN CLOTHING STORE - DAY

HIP HOP BLASTS as Jeremiah pays for a hoodie. As the CLERK shoves it into a bag, Jeremiah's eyes wander to the window.

ACROSS THE MALL FLOOR -- NEO-NAZI 3, one of the men who accosted Joseph, stares at Jeremiah as he whispers something to an imposing friend we've never seen, NEO-NAZI 4.

Jeremiah doesn't know the man, but he knows the look.

EXT. SHOPPING MALL - DUSK

The sun sets as the Neo-Nazis leave the mall and cross to the train station.

INT. TRAIN - NIGHT

The Neo-Nazis slide through the train doors just as they close and settle into the nearest seats.

An almost empty car. Two PUNK ROCKERS -- a Korean woman (20) and a Caucasian man (27) -- sit in the middle seats, while two older men are at the other end, both turned away.

Neo-Nazi 4 put his boots up on the glass in front of him. The male Rocker glances at them and whispers to his girlfriend. Neo-Nazi 4 leans forward.

NEO-NAZI 4

Sup, man?

The Rocker pauses guiltily, avoiding eye contact.

NEO-NAZI 3

What'd he say?

The Neo-Nazis voices are pitched loud enough for the whole train car to hear.

NEO-NAZI 4

Hell if I know. He's sick with yellow fever, talking crazy.

NEO-NAZI 3

Slant fever. Fuckin' slant slit.

The Rocker surges to his feet, face flushed with anger.

The Neo-Nazis stand and approach the Rocker, who puts a hand out to steady himself on the rail.

NEO-NAZI 4

Now he can hear me.

MALE ROCKER

Try it in German, you fucking fascist pussies.

NEO-NAZI 3

How 'bout Chinese, faggot?

The Male Rocker pulls out a SWITCHBLADE.

FEMALE ROCKER

Babe...

NEO-NAZI 4

You draw a weapon on a white man because of this trash?

Neo-Nazi 4 lifts his shirt to show THE BUTT OF A HANDGUN in his waist as THE TRAIN SLOWS TO A STOP at the next station.

One of the older men in the car quickly exits. Female Rocker looks up at her boyfriend, eyes pleading for escape.

Behind them, JEREMIAH STANDS UP.

JEREMIAH

Maybe this is someone's stop.

He puts a hand in the door, preventing it from closing, as the Neo-Nazis and the Rockers look on, confused.

JEREMIAH

Anyone wanna get off?

His voice is quiet and calm. Female Rocker tugs at her boyfriend's arm. He lowers the switchblade.

A MELODY from the train doors as they start to close. Jeremiah's hand blocks them, holds them open.

MALE ROCKER

Yeah, this is our stop.

He tucks the switchblade away and turns to exit through Jeremiah's side. Female Rocker takes his hand as they walk for the doors...

A GUN GOES OFF.

Male Rocker spits blood as he topples forward, landing flat and dead at Jeremiah's feet.

NEO-NAZI 3

Holy shit!

Female Rocker SCREAMS and dashes past Jeremiah.

Neo-Nazi 4 tucks his gun away.

TRANSIT OFFICER (O.S.)

Hold it!

Jeremiah looks past the Neo-Nazis as they turn...

But the Transit Officer's gun isn't aimed at them.

It's aimed at Jeremiah, who has a man's body at his feet.

The Transit Officer pushes forward as the Neo-Nazis raise their hands.

TRANSIT OFFICER
Everybody get down on the ground!

JEREMIAH
Sir, those men are armed --

TRANSIT OFFICER
I'm not gonna ask you again, get on
the ground! All of you!

The Neo-Nazis glance at each other, then begin to kneel. The Transit Officer is still focused on Jeremiah.

Jeremiah holds his hands out to his sides.

JEREMIAH
I'm calm. These men are armed
killers --

TRANSIT OFFICER
-- sir if you don't get on the
fucking ground right --

Neo-Nazi 4 surges up and PISTOL WHIPS THE OFFICER IN THE SIDE OF THE HEAD.

The Officer goes down, unconscious.

NEO-NAZI 3
Jesus Christ!

But Neo-Nazi 4 is advancing on Jeremiah as the TRAIN DOORS SHUT, sneering over his shoulder to the frantic Neo-Nazi 3.

NEO-NAZI 4
Looks to me like a classic story
here. Darky attacks the kid,
probably trying to rape his girl,
then he KOs the officer trying to
stop him. What do you think?

NEO-NAZI 3
Whatever, man, let's book.

Neo-Nazi 4 grins at Jeremiah.

JEREMIAH
Old story.

NEO-NAZI 4
Old story.

But then his eyes go wide as he realizes...

Jeremiah is holding a gun.

INT. TRAIN STATION - PLATFORM - NIGHT

GUNFIRE LIGHTS UP THE TRAIN CAR.

ALARMS and SCREAMS as passengers empty out of the train cars, flooding the platform.

INT. TRAIN - NIGHT

Neo-Nazi 3 slumps over, blood gurgling through a bullet wound in his neck.

Jeremiah, the last man standing, looks down to the unconscious officer at his feet.

A BODYCAM on the man's chest.

Jeremiah reaches for it.

INT. TRAIN STATION - PLATFORM - NIGHT

Confusion grows as passengers run in all directions. Jeremiah stumbles out, weaving through the crowd.

As TRANSIT OFFICERS cut through the chaos, rushing to the train, he's already disappeared.

INT. SPINELL UNIVERSITY - FOOD COURT - DAY

ON THE TV -- a REPORTER stands outside the train station.

REPORTER 4

Security cameras seem to confirm initial eyewitness reports that two of the men were shot by another passenger in self-defense after they took the life of 27-year-old Ashton Valey. Trevor?

REPORTER 5

Thank you, Nicole. Controversy is growing as evidence mounts that the city may have a vigilante killer on its hands. In each of these cases, the victims had ties to white nationalist organizations, and a history of posting on far-right websites.

(MORE)

REPORTER 5 (CONT'D)

Some say this may be the lashing
out of a minority vigilante,
someone driven to violence by the
perception that our police system
is unable or unwilling to
adequately deal with racialized
violence...

AT A TABLE -- a group of Caucasian TEENS watches the story.

BEHIND THEM -- a smaller group of African-American TEENS
watches the story, speaking low amongst themselves.

AT A FAR-OFF TABLE -- Jeremiah and Gary sit with two
HUMANITIES TEACHERS.

HUMANITIES TEACHER

This is just what the city needs.
More reason for right-wing media to
yell about a coming race war.

GARY

As if they need a reason.

HUMANITIES TEACHER 2

So this is the response?
Glorifying vigilantism?

GARY

Who's glorifying? They're
reporting the story. Some skinhead
losers picked the wrong fight.

ON THE TV -- a new headline: THE VIGILANTE STRIKES AGAIN

HUMANITIES TEACHER 2

Giving him a title like a
superhero. Glorification.

GARY

What do you think, Jeremiah?

Jeremiah is staring at the Teens as they stare at the TV.
They're rapt. He's fascinated.

GARY

Jeremiah.

Jeremiah snaps out of it.

JEREMIAH

The way to change things is from
inside the system.

GARY

Maybe if you're a certain kind of American, murder feels like it's part of the system.

HUMANITIES TEACHER

Well, you get working on a 28th Amendment, Gary.

GARY

That's my point. Top-down change has stagnated. We need change from the bottom up.

JEREMIAH

Thing about that kind of change... before it gets to power, it gets to you.

Gary stares, uncertain how to respond.

ON THE TV -- Reporter 5 reads out social media post under a headline: "SOCIAL MEDIA RESPONDS TO THE VIGILANTE"

REPORTER 5

... and he says, "Fash watch out, this time we've got the good guy with the gun." Noah from Bellevue says, "Bet white supremacists are losing recruits already -- these groups driven by fear and just found out someone is a whole lot scarier than them." And from Viola in Long Island: "To The Vigilante: some of us out here trying to make a real difference while you're playing black Batman. Drop the gun and pick up a soup ladle."

Reporter 5 glances at his co-host and chuckles.

REPORTER 5

"Black Batman." Well, Viola knows how to turn a phrase, doesn't she?

INT. POLICE STATION - CUBICLES - DAY

A PHONE RINGS. Calls waiting on four lines.

A disgruntled POLICE SECRETARY answers.

POLICE SECRETARY

62nd Precinct. Yes... Right. You want to turn yourself in as The Vigilante, right? A false report like that is -- okay. Excuse -- sir, excuse -- hey. The false report is an offense. You call again, it's jail time. Goodbye.

The Secretary throws her pen at her desk in annoyance as she answers the next call.

Tony breezes by her and into the office marked: INSP. FORSTER

INT. POLICE STATION - BRYAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Bryan and a GOVERNOR'S AIDE look up as Tony pushes the door open, documents in hand. The Aide stands immediately.

BRYAN

Ah... Mike, this is Inspector Tony Darrow. Tony, Mike is here from Governor Staley's office.

TONY

Hi.
(to Bryan)
You free soon?

Bryan glances at the Aide, who gathers his things and heads out with a last nod to Tony.

BRYAN

What do you got?

TONY

The gun on the train was the gun from Southdale.

BRYAN

So it's official.

TONY

That's not even the big one. He dumped a hoodie in a dumpster after the first night. Clean bullet hole. He's been shot. And here's the kicker: there's a pollen on it from...

He squints at his notes.

TONY

Brachystelma brac... Ah, the name doesn't matter. There's pollen from a plant unique to Nigeria and a couple other countries. Know how it got there?

Bryan's quick response shows how fast he thinks:

BRYAN

Botanical garden.

TONY

Right. The University. Only place in the state has one of these plants.

Bryan leans back in his chair.

BRYAN

We leak it.

Tony buries his surprise quickly.

TONY

Why?

BRYAN

Black guy, hard life, racism all around, he's driven to violence. Or. Black guy, works at a university, radicalized by neo-Marxist rhetoric, trying to start a race war. Which one does the public wanna see us stop?

TONY

With all due respect, is that our primary concern here?

BRYAN

Our primary concern is catching a criminal. Who's gonna be easier to catch, The Vigilante, or a disgruntled academic?

Tony searches for an answer, but doesn't find it.

INT. WALKER HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

ON THE TV -- a REPORTER speaks in grave tones.

REPORTER 6

The Vigilante. Who is he, and what has our society done, or failed to do, to create such a dangerous and polarizing figure?

Jeremiah looks up from the TV as Abigail enters.

ABIGAIL

I'm sorry I'm late.

Jeremiah stands to greet her.

JEREMIAH

No harm done. What do you think?

He gestures around the room. After a moment, Abigail realizes that the house is different. New furniture. Less decorations. Fewer pictures of family on the walls.

ABIGAIL

Wow! It's... minimalist.

Jeremiah gestures for her to take a seat.

She waits as Jeremiah sits across from her. He winces slightly as he eases into the chair. She notices it.

ABIGAIL

You're following the Vigilante story, huh?

JEREMIAH

Can't avoid it.

ABIGAIL

I've been painting more. A lot.

She pulls something out of her bags: a SMALL CANVAS. She flips it around to show Jeremiah: AN OIL PAINTING OF JOSEPH.

ABIGAIL

You like it? I painted it for you.

It takes Jeremiah a moment to speak.

JEREMIAH

It's beautiful. Thank you, Abby.

ABIGAIL

You know, it sounded like bullshit, but it's kinda true. Whatever "destructive impulses" are, I've got less of them.

JEREMIAH

That's good.

Abigail glances at the TV -- SECURITY CAM FOOTAGE OF THE INCIDENT ON THE TRAIN. The Vigilante's face is obscured.

ABIGAIL

Makes me worried for someone like that, killing every night.

Jeremiah grunts, noncommittal.

ABIGAIL

Makes me worry for... If anything happened to you, Jeremiah... my son would have nobody in his family who looks like him.

JEREMIAH

It's a boy?

Abigail nods. She holds out the painting to Jeremiah. He takes it in his hands, cradling it carefully.

ABIGAIL

Are you happy?

When Jeremiah looks up at her, there are tears in his eyes.

JEREMIAH

Of course.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Jeremiah, dressed in his work clothes, leaves his car on the street and heads into a decades-old DIVE BAR.

INT. DIVE BAR - NIGHT

Jeremiah slaps a twenty on the counter as the Bartender approaches with a bottle of whiskey.

JEREMIAH

A double, I'm celebrating.

ON THE TV -- a TV REPORTER talks about The Vigilante over shots of Spinell University.

TV REPORTER 2

The Vigilante: a disgruntled academic?

(MORE)

TV REPORTER 2 (CONT'D)

A leaked police report suggests that these attacks on the street may be the work of someone who spends most of their time in the 'ivory tower' of academia...

Jeremiah stares up at the TV. The first he's hearing of this. Down the bar, A SLOPPY DRUNK (50s) is also watching.

SLOPPY DRUNK

He's one of these college pussies? Shit. Thought he was just another violent thug. That's a whole new mindfuck.

He moves to rest on the counter, but misses and slumps forward. His eyes refocus on Jeremiah at the end of the bar.

SLOPPY DRUNK

It's fucked. Look at you. You're just a normal black guy, right? One of the good ones. How come they don't do a show about you instead of all this divisive crap?

Jeremiah grabs his drink and moves across the bar to a booth.

He sips the whiskey, watching as the BARTENDER has a tight-lipped argument with the Sloppy Drunk.

JOHN 1 (O.S.)

That's what he said. Fresh off the boat, fourteen, smooth as a peach.

Jeremiah focuses in. He glances at the mirror behind the bar, sneaking a peek at the two JOHNS in the booth behind him, one Caucasian, one African-American.

JOHN 2

Same price?

JOHN 1

There's a little premium. Shit, she's worth more than that. How many times in your life you gonna get a crack at an honest-to-God little Nubian princess like that?

John 2 hesitates, then:

JOHN 2

Beer's on you?

Jeremiah glances at the mirror as John 1 flashes a grin.

JOHN 1

My man.

EXT. DIVE BAR - NIGHT

Jeremiah stumbles slightly as he walks out to his car, eyes on the Johns ahead of him, headed for their own vehicle.

They pull away. Jeremiah follows.

INT. JEREMIAH'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

Jeremiah weaves through sparse traffic on the quiet night streets, keeping close to the Johns' vehicle.

He follows out of the neighbourhood, towards the outskirts of the city, into the dark night.

EXT. 24HR SELF STORAGE FACILITY - NIGHT

Jeremiah's car pulls off the highway along the abandoned road as the Johns exit their vehicle ahead.

INT. JEREMIAH'S CAR - AT STORAGE FACILITY - NIGHT

Jeremiah watches as a THIRD FIGURE, too far away to distinguish, walks out to greet the Johns.

As all three head towards the storage containers, Jeremiah pulls his shirt at the neck to look down at his bare chest.

JEREMIAH

Should have kept the vest in your car, Walker.

He pushes the door open and slips out.

EXT. 24HR SELF STORAGE FACILITY ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Jeremiah stays low as he moves towards the Johns' vehicle. He stops behind it, peering out.

Nothing.

Suddenly, LIGHTS FLASH as another vehicle approaches. Jeremiah moves to the front of the car, keeping low.

Jeremiah waits for the lights on the highway to pass...

...but the car turns in.

And now he can see that IT'S A POLICE CRUISER, pulling in slowly and parking parallel to Jeremiah's car.

Jeremiah ducks down as the CAR DOOR SLAMS and FOOTSTEPS START down the road towards him. Jeremiah pushes close against the Johns' vehicle as the feet of the officer draw alongside...

...THEN STOP.

A moment's silence, then:

OFFICER WILSON (O.S.)
Officer Wilson, State Police. You
got five seconds to get out here.
Hands first.

Jeremiah squeezes his eyes shut -- a one-second prayer.

JEREMIAH
I'm not armed.

He raises his hands, then slowly rises.

Coming into view, OFFICER WILSON (37), gaunt, wearing glasses, trains his gun on Jeremiah.

OFFICER WILSON
Keep your hands raised and move to
the trunk of the vehicle until
you're in full sight.

JEREMIAH
Yes sir.

He glances towards the storage containers as he rounds the back of the vehicle. Still no sign of anyone.

JEREMIAH
Sir, there's a dangerous situation
here. May I speak?

Officer Wilson draws handcuffs from his belt.

OFFICER WILSON
Lean forward onto the car and place
your hands behind your back.

Jeremiah follows his instructions. Officer Wilson moves forward and places the cuffs on Jeremiah's wrists.

OFFICER WILSON
Are you armed?

JEREMIAH

No sir.

Officer Wilson frisks Jeremiah, then spins him around.

OFFICER WILSON

What's the situation?

JEREMIAH

I overheard two men in a bar talking about a deal for underage prostitution. I followed them here, where they met a third man. I think the girl's here, too.

Officer Wilson looks from Jeremiah to the storage containers. Then he pulls Jeremiah back towards the police cruiser.

OFFICER WILSON

You're just a good citizen? Tailed them here to save the girl?

JEREMIAH

Yes sir.

OFFICER WILSON

You call 911?

JEREMIAH

No sir.

Officer Wilson smirks as he pulls the back door of the cruiser open.

OFFICER WILSON

Jesus. You were gonna stop human trafficking all by yourself, huh?

Jeremiah's eyes narrow. Gears turning in his head.

OFFICER WILSON

I'm gonna keep you here for your own safety while I take care of these sickos. You just sit tight.

JEREMIAH

Yes sir, Officer Wilson.

Officer Wilson holsters his sidearm and puts a hand on Jeremiah's head to push him down into the car.

Suddenly, Jeremiah plants his foot on the side of the seat and PUSHES BACK with all his force.

His momentum slams him into Officer Wilson. Both men stumble backwards until the full weight of Jeremiah's body smashes Officer Wilson into the side of Jeremiah's car.

Officer Wilson slumps against the car, pulling his handgun as Jeremiah spins 90 degrees, plants a foot, and pushes his large frame towards the officer again.

Officer Wilson's gun comes up just as Jeremiah SLAMS INTO THE SHOULDER of his gun arm. The GUN FIRES into the pavement.

Jeremiah keeps his weight pressed against Officer Wilson as the smaller man tries to push him off. He draws his head back and HEADBUTTS OFFICER WILSON IN THE NOSE, drawing blood.

Jeremiah pulls back and hits him again. Wilson's head lolls sideways, blood streaming from his mouth and nose.

Jeremiah hits him a third time. He goes limp.

Only Jeremiah's weight is keeping him up. Jeremiah cautiously lets up, and Officer Wilson falls to the ground, slumped against the car.

Jeremiah kicks the gun away from the officer's hand.

A LIGHT BEHIND HIM.

He glances up. Two figures are approaching from inside the storage facility.

Jeremiah tries to pull himself free of the handcuffs. Nope.

He tries to fit them under his feet. He might be able to make it, but...

He glances up. The figures are getting close. ONE CLUTCHES A GUN. Too late.

EXT. 24HR SELF STORAGE FACILITY - NIGHT

John 1 and John 2 peer out from the fence, taking stock.

Officer Wilson is visible slumped against the car.

Further away, Jeremiah lays prone, face up.

JOHN 1
The fuck is this?

JOHN 2
Fuck. Fuck! That's Brett.

John 1 signals for silence, hefts the gun, and moves forward.

EXT. 24HR SELF STORAGE FACILITY - NIGHT

The Johns approach the scene: Officer Wilson slumped against the car, and a large man lying on his back a few feet off.

JOHN 1
Who the fuck are you?

JEREMIAH
He attacked me...

John 2 is kneeling over Officer Wilson, cradling his head.

JOHN 2
Bullshit. What the fuck did you do to my brother?

JOHN 1
(to John 2)
Hey!
(to Jeremiah)
I've got a gun. Let me see your hands.

JEREMIAH
I'm handcuffed.

John 1 stalks forward, close enough to take note of the way Jeremiah's arms are awkwardly stretched under his back.

JOHN 1
Roll over then.

JEREMIAH
I'm injured.

JOHN 1
Do it, motherfucker!

JEREMIAH
Okay! Okay, I'm moving.

Jeremiah rolls onto his back.

As he does, HE OPENS FIRE WITH OFFICER WILSON'S GUN, which is clutched in his cuffed hands, facing down past his legs.

He FIRES FIFTEEN SHOTS WILDLY until the gun clicks empty.

Then he rolls onto his front --

Both John 1 and John 2 are on the ground. John 2 is stone dead, a bullet hole in his face.

JOHN 1 IS WOUNDED, REACHING PAINFULLY TOWARDS HIS GUN, which is several feet away.

Jeremiah struggles up and hobbles fast towards John 1, who reaches into his jacket...

As Jeremiah raises a foot and stomps downwards towards John 1's head, JOHN 1 PULLS A KNIFE AND STABS IT INTO THE BOTTOM OF JEREMIAH'S FOOT.

Jeremiah falls backwards in agony.

His feet are at John 1's gun. He kicks it hard. It skitters away, coming to a stop under Officer Wilson's cruiser.

Jeremiah and John 1 are collapsed on the pavement, several feet away from each other. John 1 clutches the knife.

JOHN 1
Come and get me, fucker.

Jeremiah ignores him, bends his leg up, and sets to work trying to pull the handcuffs around under his feet.

John 1 watches for a moment, then rolls over and pulls himself across the pavement towards the cruiser and the gun.

Jeremiah grunts in pain as he strains to pull his legs up far enough to free himself.

John 1 is close.

Jeremiah's almost free when he hooks the cuffs on the soles of his feet, contorting his body. He grunts in pain, twisted into a ball, unable to move.

John 1 stretches a hand under the car, reaching towards the butt of the gun.

Jeremiah slows his breathing, pulls his hip back, and slips the cuffs around to the front of his body.

Free, he pushes himself up, runs for the car, grabs John 1 by the legs, and yanks him backwards.

THE GUN slips from John 1's desperate fingers as he's pulled away. Jeremiah roughly grabs the knife out of his hand, flips him over, and kneels on his chest.

JEREMIAH
Where's the girl?

JOHN 1

What are you, a cop? Brett said
nobody knew shit. I'm sorry...

JEREMIAH

The girl!

JOHN 1

Davis has her. Inside. I'm just
a... he's the pimp, okay. He's the
pimp! I'm just a guy.

JEREMIAH

Me too.

He STABS THE KNIFE into the John's eye, killing him.

Then he kneels by the car, reaching under for the gun.

AN ENGINE ROARS behind him.

Jeremiah pulls himself out from under the cruiser and brings
the gun up, just as a car CAREENS TOWARDS HIM.

Jeremiah throws himself sideways as the car slides against
the cruiser, barely missing him.

He hits the ground hard, rising up just in time to SEE -- IN
THE BACK OF THE CAR, SCREAMING IN FEAR, A 16-YEAR-OLD GIRL.

Then the car disappears into the night.

JEREMIAH

Fuck.

He uses his sleeve to wipe the knife in John 1's chest,
stands, hobbles to his car, gets in, and pulls away.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

SEVERAL POLICE CRUISERS roar down the highway, passing
Jeremiah's car moving the other direction, back into town.

EXT. CITY STREET - STOPLIGHT - NIGHT

Jeremiah's car pulls up to a stoplight.

Then another car pulls up next to him: a POLICE CRUISER.

INT. POLICE CRUISER - AT STOPLIGHT - NIGHT

The Officer looks over at Jeremiah, seeing nothing but a middle-class man in his middle-class clothes and car.

INT. JEREMIAH'S CAR - AT STOPLIGHT - NIGHT

Jeremiah looks back at the Officer and nods.

Just below window level, his hands sit at the bottom of the steering wheel, cuffed together, covered in blood.

A piece of Jeremiah's shirt is ripped off his torso. One end is clutched in his hand, taut. Below, the other end wraps around his injured foot, keeping pressure on the stab wound. But there's blood on the car floor.

The light stays red. Silence stretches...

Then, GREEN, and the Officer pulls the cruiser forward.

Jeremiah lets out a long breath as he accelerates.

INT. WALKER HOUSE - BATHROOM OFF MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jeremiah stumbles into the bathroom, clutching his PHONE, SALINE SOLUTION, CLOTH, and a ROLL OF DUCT TAPE, turns the water on, and half-falls into the tub.

He runs the water, elevates his leg, and slowly pulls the shoe off his injured foot, grunting in pain.

He checks the phone, then pours saline solution over the DEEP CUT where the knife impaled his foot.

He checks the phone again and grits his teeth. Then he rips strips off the duct tape, tapes the two sides of the wound together, and wraps cloth around the foot.

He tries to get out of the tub, but his body is failing him.

After a few moments, he PASSES OUT.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - DAY

Tony sits in a chair, comfortable and still, lazily studying the title on the door -- ROY MCGUINN, DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Across from him, Bryan leans on the wall in a self-consciously casual pose.

BRYAN

You get my back in there, but I'm
the talker.

Both of their heads turn as ROY MCGUINN (40s), strikingly
handsome in a haughty, angular way, opens the door.

ROY

Inspectors.

INT. DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - DAY

Bryan and Tony settle into chairs at Roy's desk, which is
arranged neatly, not a thing out of place.

ROY

This must be the visit I've been
waiting for.

BRYAN

Yes sir.

He glances at Tony, who passes a folder to Roy. Roy opens
it, glances idly at the first page, and looks back to Bryan.

ROY

Sketch it for me.

BRYAN

Jeremiah Walker. Black guy, 50s,
Academic Integrity Officer at
Spinell, lost his son in a shooting
incident. White shooter gets off,
Walker's wife kills herself. About
as clearcut as motive gets.
Anyway, we can put him on transit
near two Vigilante incidents, and
we got his blood from the
clusterfuck last night. He's done,
we just need the warrant.

Roy purses his lips, thinking. Bryan and Tony wait.

ROY

It's no good.

TONY

We've got him dead to rights here.

Roy puts a hand up -- "enough."

ROY

This guy, Walker, he's not my concern. The Vigilante is my concern. You've done a good job with public opinion on this, Bryan, and you're not gonna throw that away by giving them this guy.

BRYAN

Sir --

ROY

-- two dead kids, Inspector, and a poor wife that couldn't handle it. A racist justice system that wouldn't listen. You've finally got everyone talking murderer and you wanna give them back a cowboy.

BRYAN

I know what you're saying, Roy, but let me put it to you this way: cowboys ain't black.

Surprise in Tony's eyes, but he stays quiet.

ROY

I don't know when you last went to the movies, Inspector, but they got a black guy in every story now. The answer's no.

BRYAN

He killed a cop last night!

Roy smiles, finally understanding.

ROY

Ah. Wilson. Forget him. They start looking into Wilson, it's gonna be more of a headache than any of this. Understand? Stay away from Wilson.

Bryan leans back in his chair, uncertain.

Roy runs his tongue along his teeth, considering.

ROY

You leak the university stuff?

Bryan nods.

ROY

Walk that back. This Vigilante guy -- probably just a common thug. The next black guy you pick up kills a kid, rapes a girl, whatever, someone who's gonna get life -- maybe that guy turns out to be the Vigilante.

TONY

Frame him?

Roy and Bryan's heads both swivel to Tony.

ROY

I'm speculating about how things might turn out. Is that a problem, Inspector?

Tony opens his mouth, then closes it and stays silent.

Roy stands. Bryan and Tony follow suit.

ROY

As for your Mr. Walker. Get him the hell out of my city. Forever.

He gestures them towards the door, clapping a hand on Bryan's back as he walks them out.

ROY

And Bryan -- I've got a meeting with Governor Staley next Monday. A good update would be beneficial for everyone.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - DAY

Bryan and Tony exit Roy's office and walk down the hall, side by side, in a long silence. Until:

TONY

Woody Strode.

BRYAN

What?

TONY

Man Who Shot Liberty Valance, Sergeant Rutledge. Once Upon a Time in the West.

Bryan is blank-faced as they walk on.

TONY
My favourite black cowboy.

INT. WALKER HOUSE - BATHROOM OFF MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Jeremiah wakes with a start.

Sunlight. And the RADIO is playing from his morning alarm.

He looks down, gingerly moves his foot. The tap is still on, a small stream of water disappearing down the drain.

RADIO REPORTER (O.S.)
The whole city is wondering why three men, including a police officer, are dead. Unlike previous Vigilante murders, these victims did not have ties to far-right groups and had no criminal history. Public opinion, until now sharply divided on the Vigilante, is moving towards agreement on one thing: this person is bad for our city. Inspector Bryan Forster, the lead detective on the Vigilante case, made this statement earlier today:

BRYAN (O.S.)
Yeah, I've got a message. To the Vigilante, the people of this city have seen your true colours today. However you justified these acts to yourself, be clear about this: you're a killer. Not a hero, not a saviour. You're a murderer, nothing more.

Jeremiah squeezes his eyes shut and opens them --

EXT. 24HR SELF STORAGE FACILITY - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

The 16-year-old girl SCREAMS TO JEREMIAH from the back seat of the car as it carries her away into the night.

INT. WALKER HOUSE - BATHROOM OFF MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Jeremiah GASPS, then slowly gets a hold of his breathing.

He manages to pull himself up to a sitting position, cups his hands under the tap, and drinks greedily.

Then he forces himself to stand.

RADIO INTERVIEWEE

... it's like, should I just stay home now? Is someone gonna take a shot at my son, kill my son, just because he's *white*? I don't care about the politics of it, I just want my son and his son to be safe.

Jeremiah shuffles out. A moment later, the RADIO SHUTS OFF.

INT. WALKER HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Jeremiah sprawls out on the bed, eyes slowly closing again.

Suddenly, his eyes SNAP OPEN --

EXT. 24HR SELF STORAGE FACILITY - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

The same memory as the 16-year-old girl SCREAMS TO JEREMIAH from the back seat of the car.

INT. SPINELL UNIVERSITY - CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Jeremiah clutches a glass of champagne under low lights, SMOOTH JAZZ and PLEASANT CONVERSATION filling the room around him. It's a staff event at the University, everyone in "academic formal" attire, laughing, hobnobbing, drinking.

Jeremiah stands in a group with Gary and several other ACADEMICS. As they talk, the drama of their unwittingly personal remarks plays out on Jeremiah's face.

ACADEMIC

This isn't identity politics, it's the standard right-wing distortion of identity politics. This guy's going to turn out to be just another internet-rage-fed psycho.

ACADEMIC 2

He kills white racists and you don't want it to be about identity politics?

ACADEMIC

I don't *want* any of this. The guy's a murderer, plain and simple.

ACADEMIC 3

You can't find a framework in which, I mean, at least in which self-defense enters the equation? These weren't just white racists, they were white racists with guns.

GARY

Hey look, maybe one incident is self-defense. Multiple cases of multiple murders?

ACADEMIC 2

What? Gary, you were this guy's biggest cheerleader.

GARY

Absolutely not. I defended bottom-up change, not murder. This guy doesn't want to change things. He's not helping young black men avoid danger on the street. I can extend sympathy to him insofar as he might be a product of past violence, intergenerational trauma, but this isn't healing. This is just a cycle of destruction.

ACADEMIC 4

Exactly right. He's not saving lives, he's taking them.

As they continue to talk, Jeremiah slips away.

INT. SPINELL UNIVERSITY - JEREMIAH'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Jeremiah enters, locking the door behind him.

He pulls a BLACK LEATHER BAG from the locked cabinets and removes its contents one at a time: the VEST, the HANDGUN, and the BODYCAM.

He stares at them for a long time.

Then, with a sudden, decisive movement, he grabs the gun and starts to disassemble it.

Once it's in pieces, he scribbles on a large envelope in black marker with his non-dominant hand, wraps the gun parts in paper, and shoves them into the envelope.

As he seals it, the shaky writing on it is visible: "POLICE EYES ONLY -- THIS IS THE VIGILANTE'S GUN -- I'M DONE"

He tosses the envelope back into the bag, considers, then puts the vest in too. He's reaching for the bodycam when:

KNOCK KNOCK.

BRYAN (O.S.)
Mr. Walker?

Jeremiah's head whips towards the door.

INT. SPINELL UNIVERSITY - ACADEMIC INTEGRITY OFFICE - NIGHT

Bryan pauses outside the office, then knocks again.

BRYAN
Mr. Walk --

The door swings open. Jeremiah eyes Bryan in confusion.

BRYAN
Inspector Forster. Police. You can call me Bryan.

Jeremiah studies Bryan's badge, then meets his eyes.

JEREMIAH
Seen you on TV.

INT. SPINELL UNIVERSITY - JEREMIAH'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The black bag is absent from the desk as Jeremiah leads Bryan in and directs him to the seat facing his desk.

BRYAN
Here's the deal, Walker: I'm not going to arrest you, but I need you to walk away from this city, tonight. You never come back here, you never tell anyone what you did here... Oh, and you stop shooting people.

Silence stretches in the air between them.

JEREMIAH
I don't know who you think I am, but I've got a home here.

BRYAN
I'm a polite guy, but you should take me seriously. End of the line, *tonight*.

JEREMIAH

Or you shoot me?

BRYAN

You might end up dead. But I'd be more concerned about your people, Walker. Maybe Joseph was a terrorist who started what you finished. Hell, maybe pregnant little Abigail was in on it. The city would have to take that new grandkid away if that was the case. And I know there are some real nasty situations at some of those foster facilities.

He leans forward for emphasis.

BRYAN

I know *exactly* which facilities. You understand me?

Jeremiah waits a long time to give his reply:

JEREMIAH

I understand.

Bryan abruptly stands, offering a handshake.

BRYAN

Then it's been a pleasure.

Jeremiah stands, ignoring Bryan's outstretched hand. Bryan reaches out across the desk and gives him a friendly clap on the shoulder instead.

BRYAN

And keep some perspective, okay? It was the Evans guy, *one* guy that shot your son. If you really gave a damn about justice, that's who you'd be thinking about. File a goddamn appeal. Not every white man's out to get you.

JEREMIAH

Just you.

BRYAN

You leave tonight. This isn't your home anymore, Walker.

JEREMIAH

That's the same thing Evans was trying to tell my son. At least he had the balls to do it with a gun.

BRYAN

We can do it that way too. But people like me don't need the gun. That's for people like you and Evans. Just keep shooting and shooting and wondering why the people you love are getting shot.

JEREMIAH

Some people shoot. Some people shoot back. Whose side are you on?

BRYAN

Tonight, Walker.

Bryan smirks, turns, and heads out the door.

Jeremiah crosses, locks it again, returns to the cabinet, and pulls out the bag.

He puts the desk phone to his ear as he unzips the bag.

JEREMIAH

Abigail. Hi.

INT. WALKER HOUSE - STUDY - NIGHT

Jeremiah studies himself in the mirror.

He turns and puts the CD OF JOSEPH'S MUSIC into the computer.

He slips headphones over his ears and hits PLAY...

His eyes close as the music carries him away.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - NIGHT

Two signs that Joseph saw shortly before his death:

One reads WELCOME TO THE HEIGHTS.

And behind it, that other sign: THIS IS A NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH AREA. Below the text, a phone number.

Jeremiah, in jeans and hoodie, stares up at the sign, phone in hand. Dials the number.

In the "whitest" possible version of his voice:

JEREMIAH

Hello? Yes, I'm -- yes. I'm over at the Riley house, and we've got a pretty suspicious guy walking around out here.

(conspiratorial)

An African American. Big. In a black hoodie.

(then)

Could you -- really? Thank you. That's great.

Jeremiah ends the call, pops the SIM card out of his phone, snaps it, puts the phone on the ground, crushes it, and stands. He takes one last look at the signs, flips his hood up, and starts down the road, into the neighbourhood.

EXT. SUBURBAN CUL-DE-SAC - NIGHT

The streetlights cast long shadows as Jeremiah walks slowly but purposefully down the centre of the street.

It's not the hunched walk of the man in the hoodie who drew so much fear and violence from the city around him.

It's the walk of a cowboy.

At a window, a SUBURBANITE peeks out at the man in the street, then quickly lets the curtains fall back into place.

TRUCK LIGHTS flash across Jeremiah's back. He ignores them, continuing forward.

Behind him, the truck pulls to a stop. Two men exit: ANTHONY (23), a straight-laced kid who's a bundle of nerves, and Barry, stern and commanding as the night he killed Joseph.

BARRY

Excuse me.

Jeremiah stops walking, but doesn't turn.

BARRY

Hey. Neighbourhood Watch.

Jeremiah turns to look at them. The first time he's seen Barry face-to-face since the courtroom. Barry blinks.

BARRY

Do I know you?

Jeremiah slides the hoodie off his head.

But Barry just stares back, still uncertain.

BARRY

What's your business here?

Jeremiah's eyes burn into Barry.

He steps forward, directly under a streetlight, face illuminated, features twisted by shadow.

Barry draws his weapon.

BARRY

Do not move towards me again. Just want to know what you're up to. We've had some complaints.

ANTHONY

Barry, c'mon...

JEREMIAH

This city is my home. I'll walk where I want.

BARRY

I'm warning you. Tell us what you're doing here and *do not* step forward. I've fired this gun before.

JEREMIAH

I know.

He steps forward.

Something about the light, just as he moves, lets Barry see the resemblance. For a moment, HE SEES JOSEPH AGAIN. His eyes go wide as he GASPS IN RECOGNITION.

Then his finger squeezes the trigger.

A GUNSHOT.

AND THEN ANOTHER.

THE GUNSHOTS ECHO through the neighbourhood as Jeremiah crumples to the ground.

ANTHONY

Jesus, Barry, you shot him! You killed him!

Mouth gaping open, Anthony walks towards the prone figure of Jeremiah. Blood on the pavement.

Anthony's eyes move from the blood, to Jeremiah's body, to something in his outstretched hand...

A HANDGUN. Not the driver's.

Anthony spins to look at Barry.

Barry's holding the side of his neck. BLOOD IS LEAKING ONTO HIS COLLAR IN SPURTS.

ANTHONY

Barry?

Barry drops to his knees, then falls to the ground, facedown.

Blood spreads across the concrete as Anthony stands, helpless on the street, halfway between the collapsed bodies of two men who have just shot each other.

INT. RILEY HOUSE - ABIGAIL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Abigail looks out from the window, onto the same pavement where her husband once lay, dying.

ON THE STREET -- Anthony turns and flees the scene.

Abigail calmly puts a phone to her ear.

ABIGAIL

There's been a shooting.

Below, her feet are resting -- ON THE BLACK BAG CONTAINING THE GUN AND VEST.

She scoops it up and exits the room.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY

Bryan swings around to face a Police Officer, fuming.

BRYAN

What the hell are you talking about, his gun?

OFFICER 5

It wasn't the gun from Southdale. He bought it legally. Never been fired before.

Bryan spins to face Anthony, who's seated against the wall.

BRYAN
Who shot first?

Anthony's eyes are a thousand miles away.

ANTHONY
Barry shot him. He was just
standing there and Barry yelled at
him and shot him.

A BUZZ. Bryan looks at his phone. DA'S OFFICE on the line.

BRYAN
Christ.

He hits IGNORE on the call and strides quickly down the hallway towards a room guarded by a police officer.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

The SOFT BEEPS of hospital monitors as Jeremiah, bleary-eyed, looks around the room. He's in a gown, his wound dressed, the violence of the night long since washed away.

IN THE ROOM'S SECOND BED -- a Caucasian GANG MEMBER with a SWASTIKA TATTOOED ON HIS FACE rests, eyes closed. His arm is elevated in a sling and his face is bruised and cut.

A small smirk on Jeremiah's face as Bryan enters, stopping in the doorway to look at the Officer outside.

BRYAN
What is this? Why isn't he in his
own room?

OFFICER 6
They're both under surveillance.
Hospital said they don't have the
beds, Cap said we don't have the
officers.

Bryan huffs and turns his attention to Jeremiah. He pulls up the visitor's chair and seats himself, glancing at the Gang Member to check that he's unconscious.

BRYAN
A shooting in self-defense. Cute.

JEREMIAH
They were all in self-defense.

BRYAN

You're confessing? This is what, a martyr thing?

Jeremiah stares back with a quiet comfort that draws a flash of anger from Bryan's eyes.

Bryan leans in close, voice quiet.

BRYAN

America didn't even blink when your black son was gunned down in the street, Walker. You think they'll care why you shot a middle-class white man?

JEREMIAH

You got my phone?

Bryan reaches into his jacket and hefts the cellphone.

BRYAN

Of course I do.

JEREMIAH

There's a video on there. Have a look.

Bryan unlocks the phone and pulls up the video.

JEREMIAH

I think you all got stories that help you sort things. White man shoots a black man, there's a story to go with that.

Bryan starts the video. It's a BODYCAM POV.

BARRY (VIDEO)

Excuse me.

JEREMIAH

Black man shoots a white man -- different story.

ON THE PHONE -- the video swings around as Jeremiah turns to face Barry.

BARRY (VIDEO)

We're Neighbourhood Watch. What's your business here?

Bryan's eyes go to Jeremiah.

JEREMIAH (VIDEO)
This city is my home.

JEREMIAH
But a man standing tall and
protecting his rights with a gun is
about one of the oldest stories
this country's got.

BARRY (VIDEO)
I've fired this gun before.

And then the GUNSHOT echoes through the hospital.

JEREMIAH (VIDEO)
He shot me...

Another GUNSHOT.

JEREMIAH
What do you think?

BRYAN
Recorded with a bodycam stolen from
an officer who was assaulted? You
think this is gonna help your case?

JEREMIAH
When did that bodycam disappear?
Remind me, I've had a hell of a
day. Was that before or after you
came by my office?

Bryan face drops. He swipes over to the next video and confirms his fears:

FROM JEREMIAH'S DESK -- THE BODYCAM RECORDS AS BRYAN ENTERS.

BRYAN (VIDEO)
Here's the deal, Walker: I'm not
going to arrest you...

Bryan's eyes go to Jeremiah. Struggling to maintain calm.

JEREMIAH
I see two endings here. One
without you: I get back to my work,
buy a new place near my daughter-in-
law, finish editing the book I'm
working on, and start thinking
about what my life looks like after
everything you let them take from
it. The Vigilante disappears, an
unsolved case.

Bryan waves his hand, impatient for the second option.

JEREMIAH

The other ending is with you. A lot of you, on a whole lot of front pages. And that one's you thinking about everything that's been taken from your life. Which one of us you figure has more to lose?

Bryan's eyes drift around the room as he considers his options. His face says he doesn't like them.

BRYAN

You call this justice?

Jeremiah almost smiles.

JEREMIAH

What do you call it?

INT. POLICE STATION - CUBICLES - DAY

A small group of officers huddles around Tony's desk as Bryan enters the office at the far end.

Bryan glances at the group, then at the POLICE SECRETARY near the front, who obviously appreciates his attention.

BRYAN

Hey Sue. What's the deal over there?

SECRETARY

You didn't know? They recovered the bodycam from the Vigilante train incident.

Bryan's face goes white.

SECRETARY

Sir?

But Bryan is already shoving past coworkers and stumbling around corners as he sprints across the room to Tony's desk.

He grabs at shoulders, muscling his way to the front as Tony turns to face him, THE TRANSIT OFFICER'S BODYCAM in his hand.

TONY

Forster! What's wrong?

BRYAN
Don't play that tape.

TONY
What?

BRYAN
The bodycam footage. That's
privileged. You show it to
anybody?

The Officers look on, confused, as Tony squints at Bryan.

TONY
What's wrong?

BRYAN
The tape, it's privileged. The
fucking tape!

He's red in the face as he looks around.

Tony and the other Officers stare back at him, uncertain,
questions running through their eyes.

The first time they've ever seen him like this.

But Bryan's only focused on Tony.

TONY
It's blank, Forster. There's
nothing on it.

Bryan stares at Tony, slack-jawed, processing.

Tony stares back, a strange glint in his eye.

EXT. RILEY HOUSE - ABIGAIL'S ROOM - DAY

SUPER: TWO YEARS LATER

Noonday sun streams in through the windows as Abigail sits at
her easel, painting.

A hardcover copy of Eddie's book sits on the shelf, a NEW
YORK TIMES BESTSELLER sticker prominently displayed.

Next to it, the radio, the only sound in the room:

REPORTER 7

Lawyers for Barry Evans, who was killed nearly two years ago in a shooting incident with 53-year-old African-American Jeremiah Walker, have lost their appeal, the court upholding the awarding of nearly one million dollars in damages to Mr. Walker. Mr. Evans was again found fully culpable in the unprovoked shooting of Mr. Walker, whose son Joseph he previously shot and killed in an unrelated incident. Mr. Evans was cleared of all wrongdoing in the previous shooting, but video evidence made for a very different story in the case of Jeremiah Walker. Walker has been a polarizing figure since the case began, not least because of his involvement with Eddie Price's new book, which some critics have decried as "divisive" and "racially irresponsible"...

JAMES (O.S.)

Gramps!!

Abigail smiles and stands, moving to join her YOUNG SON JAMES WALKER (20 months) at the window.

OUTSIDE -- Jeremiah waves at them from the front gate.

ABIGAIL

You know what that means, James?

JAMES

Barcue!

ABIGAIL

Heck yes, barbecue.

EXT. RILEY HOUSE - FRONT YARD - DAY

James runs out to meet Jeremiah at the gate, Abigail trailing.

JAMES

Barcue!

JEREMIAH

I like a man who appreciates
tradition. We gonna barbecue at my
place or what?

ABIGAIL

We can go to your place.

Jeremiah opens the gate, hoists James onto his neck, carries
him out onto the sidewalk and one door down...

...then turns onto the next-door property and smiles at
Abigail across the waist-high fence.

JEREMIAH

My place it is.

He sets James down on the grass. The kid dashes for his
favourite corner of the yard.

Both Jeremiah and Abigail keep an eye on Joseph as they talk.

ABIGAIL

So they lost the appeal.

JEREMIAH

They lost.

ABIGAIL

When I helped you...

She shakes off an intrusive thought, looks into his eyes.

ABIGAIL

I didn't know if you would stop
killing.

Jeremiah looks back at her, face impossible to read.

JEREMIAH

There's someone I've been trying to
find, instead.

EXT. NEW WALKER HOUSE - DAY

A PICTURESQUE 4TH OF JULY BBQ IN THE BACK YARD -- cozy and
friendly. Jeremiah, James, Abigail, and her grandfather,
parents, sister, brother-in-law, nephew, and niece. The same
barbecue as two years ago, with two less and one more.

Jeremiah smiles as he watches James run around the yard.

Then, James stops, turns, and runs back to Jeremiah.

Jeremiah looks past the boy to RICKY THURMAN (45), a pretty-faced but arrogant upper-middle-class type, holding his hands up in mock concern as his MOVERS carry boxes into the house behind him. His meathead son CHUCK (25) looms behind.

RICKY

I'm your new neighbour, don't shoot!

Jeremiah doesn't bother to stand.

JEREMIAH

That's funny. You know me?

RICKY

Oh, I know you, Walker. I know what you did, too. Just wanted to say... hi.

Abigail and the rest of the family look on uncertainly as Ricky points his hand IN A FINGER GUN AND 'SHOOTS' Jeremiah.

Jeremiah doesn't move or blink, until:

In his lap -- James awkwardly forms his stubby fingers into a finger gun AND SHOOTS BACK.

JAMES

Bang!

Jeremiah grins.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END.