

DANCER

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V4

Written by

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OVER BLACK--

HEAVY BREATHING takes us to...

OPEN ON:

INT. CRUMMY APARTMENT - NIGHT

RICHARD (12 years old) inhales and exhales, PANICKED BREATHS, innocent eyes wide with fear--

As he stares at his MOTHER (early 30s) lying belly first on the floor. Crawling gingerly. Battered. Crimson mask of blood covering her face from a gash on her head.

She looks up at the boy, desperation and sadness in her eyes.

RICHARD'S FATHER (O.S.)

Richard.

The boy looks up at his mean-looking, blue-collar FATHER (early 30s) sitting at a nearby table, sipping a beer.

RICHARD'S FATHER (CONT'D)

Go to your room.

He looks back to his MOTHER on the floor, who stares back at him pleadingly.

RICHARD'S MOTHER

(mouthing silently)

Help...

RICHARD'S FATHER

(firmly)

Richard.

He can't take his terrified eyes off his mother.

RICHARD'S FATHER (CONT'D)

(bangs on the table hard)

Richard!

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. RICHARD'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - NIGHT (PRESENT DAY)

RICHARD opens his eyes--

In his mid 20s. Perpetually stoic and emotionally ambiguous. Deceivably docile. A handsome, kind face.

But behind those eyes lies a man who could snap at any given moment. A ticking time-bomb.

He listens to ARGUING and BANGING from next door. It sounds like a violent domestic dispute.

CASSANDRA (mid 20s, distinct, uniquely beautiful features), lies asleep next to him. Her six-months-pregnant stomach moves up and down as she snores lightly.

Staring up at the ceiling fan WHIRRING rhythmically above him, the anger grows within him. Intensifying as the violent ARGUING, SLAMMING and CRYING continues...

WOMAN NEIGHBOR (V.O.)
(screams)
GET OUTTA MY HOUSE!

Richard can't listen to it anymore -- he sits up.

Cassandra rustles awake.

CASSANDRA
Richard?

Without saying a word, he gets out of bed and marches out of the room as the ARGUING and SLAPPING next door persists--

INT. RICHARD'S APARTMENT/HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

He marches past a bedroom--

An empty baby's crib inside.

INT. RICHARD'S APARTMENT BUILDING/HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Richard storms out of his apartment...

INT. HALLWAY/NEIGHBOR'S FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

The BICKERING and CRYING can be heard inside.

Richard KNOCKS on the door. Again, HARDER.

Suddenly--

TOMMY FRITZINGER (early 30s, unsavory, sharply-dressed) opens the door. Sizes Richard up.

TOMMY
Yeah?

Richard tries looking into the apartment, the SOUND of a WOMAN CRYING inside -- but Tommy keeps the door halfway closed, blocking Richard's view.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
We'll keep it down.

He tries shutting the door, but Richard stiff-arms it, keeping it open--

Tommy glares at Richard's hand keeping the door open. Then at him. A thousand-yard stare.

Richard notices a gun tucked into Tommy's waist. He lets go of the door, the anger in his eyes dissipating a bit.

Tommy smirks at him. Then SLAMS the door in his face.

Sighing in disappointment, Richard turns away from the door, about to walk away--

But a SLAP and a WOMAN'S SCREAM from inside stops him.

INT. CRUMMY APARTMENT - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

The 12-YEAR-OLD RICHARD stares into his MOTHER'S eyes as his FATHER grabs her by the hair, exposing her throat--

Then slicing her throat with a kitchen knife--

INT. RICHARD'S APARTMENT BUILDING/HALLWAY - (BACK TO PRESENT)

Richard clenches his fist, rage filling his eyes.

INT. NEIGHBOR'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

The WOMAN NEIGHBOR (early 20s), weak and beaten, crawls away from Tommy -- mascara running down her face from tears, nostrils crusted with blood.

WOMAN NEIGHBOR
(whimpers)
Please...

Tommy yanks her up to her feet by her hair -- she SCREAMS!

BOOM! Richard kicks the door open, rushing in--

Tommy turns--

WHAM! Richard CLOCKS him in the jaw, dropping him.

In a frenzy, Richard STOMPS the living shit out of Tommy, over and over again--

Richard's foot stomps down on the back of his head--

His wife, Cassandra, hurries in, tries pulling Richard off--

CASSANDRA
Richard, stop!

But Richard continues to STOMP away with Cassandra on his back, the devil in his eyes--

CUT TO BLACK:

INT. STATE PRISON/VISITATION ROOM - DAY

ON RICHARD'S FACE--

Resting on Cassandra's pregnant stomach. She's at least nine months now.

Wearing a prison jumpsuit, he stares off sadly.

Cassandra somberly stares off while cradling Richard's head, stroking his hair as his head rests on her pregnant belly.

Her somber gaze wanders the room, staring at other INMATES interacting with VISITORS.

Richard clasps his hand onto hers... tracing his finger around a small **BUTTERFLY TATTOO** on her hand.

OFFICER HAYDEN (O.S.)
Hey! No touching!

A mean-looking, bully of a prison guard, OFFICER HAYDEN (mid 30s) glares at them from across the room.

Richard doesn't budge. Zoned out. Lost in the moment.

But Officer Hayden and another PRISON GUARD march over.

Standing over Richard, glowering down at him, their hands touching their clubs.

OFFICER HAYDEN (CONT'D)
Don't make me tell you again.

Richard doesn't budge. Lost in thought.

Both prison guards grab Richard, bringing him to his feet.

OFFICER HAYDEN (CONT'D)
All right, time's up, asshole...

And they escort him off, prodding him along.

Cassandra can only sit at the table alone, watching Richard leave with a longing gaze--

Richard glances back at her sadly, but he's shoved along.

Officer Hayden looks back at her with an unsettling glare before escorting Richard out of the room.

INT. RICHARD'S APARTMENT/KITCHEN - NIGHT

ON CASSANDRA'S EYES--

Filled with sheer terror, tears welling up as Cassandra takes rapid, panicked breaths.

PULL OUT TO REVEAL--

Her nose bloodied, face pouring sweat, Cassandra sits on the floor, back against the fridge, clutching her pregnant tummy.

She takes painful breaths, legs spread out in front of her...

A puddle of sticky, transparent fluid on the floor, expanding out from under her.

FEET step into view, by the puddle. But quickly take a step back, away from the fluid...

BUD FRITZINGER (late 20s, weasly yet passive "Fredo" type) stares down at her, filled with uncertainty. Even sympathy.

CASSANDRA
My... my water broke...

BUD
(a beat)
This isn't right, man.

Cassandra continues to breath in and out, in and out, pained moans from contractions.

Appearing next to Bud--

A man simply known as THE DOCTOR (mid 40s, auburn hair) stands over her wearing a hoodie, gloves and plastic covering his shoes. A pistol hanging from his grip. Earbuds playing music lodged into his lobes.

Cassandra looks up at them pleadingly.

CASSANDRA
Please. You don't have to do this.

The Doctor points the pistol at her.

BUD
She's fucking pregnant.

CASSANDRA
Please...

The Doctor turns up the MUSIC on his earbuds -- the song "Africa" by Toto can now be heard faintly.

The Doctor points the pistol down at her. Closing his eyes.

CASSANDRA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Please! Don't--

POP! A GUNSHOT silences her. Without even seeing it, we know she's dead.

After a long silence...

The Doctor opens his eyes. Stares down at her.

He removes his earbuds, the song "Africa" playing more prominently. He turns to Bud, who gazes down at Cassandra, horrified. Frozen.

THE DOCTOR
Well? What are you waiting for,
Annie Leibovitz? Take the picture.

Bud lifts an old-fashioned Polaroid camera. CLICK! He takes a snapshot of Cassandra's dead body OS.

The PHOTO slides out of the Polaroid.

The Doctor takes the photo, blows on it, never taking his eyes off Cassandra's lifeless body--

INT. STATE PRISON/RICHARD'S CELL - DAY

Breathing in and out, Richard intensely performs high-impact push-ups in the tiny confines.

OFFICER HAYDEN (O.S.)
Hey, scumbag.

Richard stops mid push-up. Looks up at Officer Hayden at the other side of the bars.

OFFICER HAYDEN (CONT'D)
Got something you need to see.

Richard stands up. Eyes Officer Hayden suspiciously. Approaching the bars, curious.

Officer Hayden holds up a Polaroid photo of Richard's dead wife, holding it close so Richard could see.

It takes a few moments for Richard to process. But, as he does, realization sets in.

He looks up at Officer Hayden, devastated. Confused.

OFFICER HAYDEN (CONT'D)
This is for Tommy Fritzinger.

Richard tries grabbing the photo, but Officer Hayden easily plays keep away.

OFFICER HAYDEN (CONT'D)
Don't worry... you'll see her again soon enough.

With a smirk, Officer Hayden walks away, WHISTLING casually as he moseys off.

Gripping the prison bars, the devastation still setting in, rising to the surface--

Richard lets out a TORTURED SCREAM!

EXT. PENITENTIARY/DISCHARGE GATE - DAY

The electronic prison gates slide open...

SUPER:

7 YEARS LATER

Richard emerges as the gate continues to slide open. In a wrinkled suit that looks like it's been folded inside of a box for the past eight years.

INT. FANCY RESTAURANT - DAY

A five-star Michelin establishment with fine cloth draped over each table. The candlelit ambiance classy and elegant. The SERVERS and STAFF all dressed to the nines.

PEOPLE SINGING "HAPPY BIRTHDAY" takes us to...

RESERVED SECTION

The FRITZINGER FAMILY sits around the table...

Tommy, now wheelchair bound, practically a vegetable. Almost catatonic, he doesn't seem very aware of the candle-lit birthday cake in front of him as...

GIDEON FRITZINGER (mid 50s, distinguished, dapper but dangerous) sitting at the head of the table near Tommy, leads the "HAPPY BIRTHDAY" song. Sitting across from Tommy--

NIKKI FRITZINGER (late 40s, oozing elegance but exuding an intimidating authority) halfheartedly sings along, disinterested, sunglasses covering her eyes.

She gazes at a FAMILY sitting across the room, zeroing in on their CUTE LITTLE DAUGHTER at the table-- Nikki smiles to herself while warmly gazing at her.

Bud sits further down the table, not singing at all, sour. An elbow jabs into his side--

Sitting next to him, his brother, CLAY FRITZINGER (mid 20s, pretty boy with toned physique) makes a face at him, singing louder, cueing him to stop being a sourpuss and sing.

The "HAPPY BIRTHDAY" SONG finishes, everyone CLAPPING for Tommy, who just stares off, catatonic. Not there.

GIDEON
(sadly)
Happy birthday, Tommy.

Gideon blows out the candles for him.

Bud just sneers, a hint of jealousy. Gideon notices.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
Got something on your mind?

BUD
Just saying, I didn't get no
birthday cake. I didn't even get a
birthday lunch.
(MORE)

BUD (CONT'D)

Clay got one, Tommy gets one and he doesn't even know what the fuck's going on.

He looks across to Nikki.

BUD (CONT'D)

She ain't even family, she gets a God damn week in the Bahamas.

GIDEON

(scolding, losing
patience)

Bud.

BUD

Come on, you're married to her for like five minutes and she gets to run the club?

CLAY

Step up your blowjob game, maybe Dad will give you a club to run.

This gets a smile from Bud. But Gideon and Nikki scold Clay with a look.

CLAY (CONT'D)

It was a joke, relax. You know we love you, Nikki.

Nikki fixates on Bud.

NIKKI

And what do you know about family, Bud, huh? You can't even take care of your own family.

This shuts him up.

NIKKI (CONT'D)

You don't deserve that little girl. You never did.

BUD

(under his breath)

Just jealous because you can't have your own children--

WHAM! Gideon POUNDS his hand against the table, drawing looks from other GUESTS at the restaurant.

He glares at Bud long and hard.

GIDEON

You ever disrespect her like that again... I'll fucking end you.

He continues staring daggers into Bud.

But exhales. Trying to change the mood, he cuts the cake, distributes slices onto plates.

He tosses a plate in front of Bud.

GIDEON (CONT'D)

Just eat your God damn cake and keep your fucking mouth shut like a good boy.

Gideon offers Clay a plate, but he shakes his head.

CLAY

I'm in training right now.
(pats his hard stomach)
Down to eight percent body fat.

Nikki just gazes down at her slice of cake sadly, affected by Bud's comment. Though her shades hide her sadness.

GIDEON

I should get the check, Tommy needs to be back soon...

EXT. OZ'S JUNK YARD - LATER THAT DAY

Heaps of scrap metal and old vehicles everywhere.

A massive VEHICLE COMPACTOR slowly closes, crushing an old automobile inside of it... LOUD GRINDING and BENDING...

AT A SCRAP PROCESSOR--

OSWALDO MARTINEZ aka OZ (mid 30s) oversees a compacted block of steel being sent through a shredder. Faded gang tattoos covering his strong, stocky build, this is one Mexican you don't want to fuck with.

Scraps of metal shoot out onto a moving conveyor belt that transfers the scraps into a dumpster.

Richard appears behind Oz, who turns--

OZ

(pleasantly surprised)
Oh, shit.

Oz smiles, embraces Richard with hearty, manly hug.

OZ (CONT'D)
Back from the dead. I heard a rumor
you got yourself whacked in prison.

RICHARD
(shrugs)
Not quite.
(a beat)
Still got my stuff here?

INT. OZ'S JUNK YARD/GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Oz pulls the dusty cover off a sexy, shiny MUSCLE CAR, in
pristine condition.

Richard runs his fingers along the hood. Peering in through
its windows.

He gets into the front seat.

INT. MUSCLE CAR (PARKED) - CONTINUOUS

Behind the wheel, Richard pulls down the sun visor--

A PHOTO of himself and Cassandra right there.

Richard stares at the photo somberly. Then shuts the visor.

Oz leans on the open window, peering in at Richard.

OZ
Still got a full tank of gas.

Richard turns, looks up at Oz.

RICHARD
I need a big favor.

OZ
Whatever you need, amigo, what?

RICHARD
Guns.

OZ
(wryly)
Now, what on earth would you need
guns for, Richard?

RICHARD
Just a few things I need to cross
off my to-do list.

Oz smiles knowingly, nodding.

OZ
Sure don't waste any time, do you?

EXT. OFFICER HAYDEN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A FORD MUSTANG parks in the driveway of a modest, single-story home in the suburbs.

Officer Hayden gets out of the car, still wearing his prison guard uniform after a long day at work.

WHISTLING casually, he heads to his front door. In the background--

RICHARD'S MUSCLE CAR sits parked at the curb across the street, OUT OF FOCUS.

INT. OFFICER HAYDEN'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Officer Hayden hooks his keys onto a rack after entering, hanging up his jacket next.

HAYDEN'S WIFE (early 40s) sits at the dinner table.

OFFICER HAYDEN
I'm starving, what do you got going
on for dinner?

He turns, looking to a bare stove.

Confused, he looks to his WIFE at the table. Senses something off about her as she sits there, clearly on edge.

OFFICER HAYDEN (CONT'D)
What's wrong?

Richard, wearing a frightening Halloween mask, appears behind him with a shotgun.

WHAM! KNOCKS Hayden out cold with the shotgun barrel.

EXT. GIDEON'S DEN - NIGHT

A long line of RAMBUNCTIOUS MEN wait to get in, BOUNCERS checking ID's and patting everyone down at the entrance.

A hot pink neon sign above the entrance reads "GIDEON'S DEN" along with "GIRLS, GIRLS, GIRLS".

INT. GIDEON'S DEN - CONTINUOUS

PULSATING SYNTH continues over speakers...

A high-priced gentleman's club: classy meets trashy. Neon strobe lights flashing as ROWDY MEN gathered by the stage hoot and holler at SEXY TOPLESS DANCERS, dollar bills fluttering into the air like confetti.

DEEJAY (O.S.)

Ladies and gentleman, welcome next to the stage... the sexy, the enchanting... DALLAS!

DALLAS (late 20s) enters through back curtains, immediately commanding everyone's attention: she's a force of nature, beyond gorgeous. In full control of the AUDIENCE as the pick their jaws off the floor, CHEERING emphatically.

The neon lights shimmer of her body: perfectly svelte but curvy in the right places.

She works the stage like a true performer. Moving gracefully while remaining seductive, moving in perfect sync with the mood-setting music...

AT THE BAR

Richard sits, his back turned to us. We see a MASSIVE SCAR on the back of his head.

He turns slightly to get a glimpse of the stage--

And watches Dallas-- a massive, intricately-detailed **BUTTERFLY TATTOO** across her back grabs his attention. The butterfly wings spread across her shoulder blades.

Richard is immediately absorbed.

ON STAGE

Working the crowd, Dallas...

For a moment that feels like it lasts forever, Dallas meets eyes with him from across the room.

As she continues her routine, she never takes his eyes off Richard. As if she were dancing only for him.

SUPER:

DANCER

AT THE BAR

Richard cracks somewhat of a smile. A sincereness to it. Not threatening. About as close to warm as someone like him gets.

But he turns, faces the bar again. We only see that scar on the back of his head.

RICHARD'S FACE--

Looking to the sexy bartender, SCARLET (early 20s).

SCARLET
Another whiskey?

He nods. Pushes his empty glass forward.

As she fills his glass, Richard turns and watches Dallas on the stage again.

Again, they meet eyes. There's something there.

BACK OF THE ROOM

Behind the RAUCOUS CROWD--

Nikki sits alone at her own reserved table. Wearing a ravishing, elegant dress, luxurious fur jacket like you see rappers wear in music videos, she puffs a cigar as she watches Dallas do her thing on stage.

The neon lights reflect off her designer aviators. She carries herself like she owns the place -- because she does.

As she puffs her thick cigar, smoke hypnotically escapes her lips and rises slowly into the air above her.

AT THE BAR

Richard looks to the opposite end of the bar and stares coldly at...

BUD--

A bruise around his eye, he sniffs cocaine from his pinky nail while staring at Dallas on stage with contempt. Resentment.

RICHARD--

Continues eyeing Bud like a hawk, in a dark trance...

OFFICER HAYDEN (V.O.)
Bud Fritzingler... it was revenge
for his brother.

EXT. OZ'S JUNK YARD - EARLIER THAT NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

AT THE SCRAP PROCESSOR--

On his knees, Officer Hayden, gash over his head, face glazed with sweat, stares up at Richard, who wears a terrifyingly ominous Halloween mask while pointing a shotgun.

RICHARD
(a beat)
Where is he now?

OFFICER HAYDEN
I dunno, man...
(thinks)
Used to see him at the strip club a
lot. He was dating some broad, she
was a dancer there.

A long, ominous silence as Richard stares down at him through that scary mask.

OFFICER HAYDEN (CONT'D)
That whole family, they're fucking
psychos, man. I was just a
messenger, that's it.

He looks up at Richard, studying the mask.

OFFICER HAYDEN (CONT'D)
Look, I don't know who the fuck you
are and I don't wanna know, okay?
But this isn't very smart. They'll
kill you and everyone you care
about.

Richard crouches to his level. Removes the mask, revealing his face -- Officer Hayden remembers him.

OFFICER HAYDEN (CONT'D)
Ah, fuck.

Richard kicks him backwards--

Officer Hayden tumbles down towards the entrance to the scrap processor.

Richard lifts a control panel with a button on it. As Richard hits the button--

OFFICER HAYDEN (CONT'D)

Wait, no--

Officer Hayden is sucked in! SOUNDS OF METAL GEARS and MACHINERY GRINDING his body into mush--

SPLAT! Blood, shredded flesh and crushed bones spit out of the other side of the scrap processor.

INT. GIDEON'S DEN/AT THE BAR - NIGHT (BACK TO PRESENT)

ON A BLENDER--

As Scarlet the bartender blends a blood-orange frozen drink.

RICHARD--

Continues to eye Bud from across the bar.

But Dallas blocks his line of sight, standing next to Richard, leaning over the bar-- Richard eyes her tattoo.

Scarlet pours herself and Dallas a shot. They CLANK glasses and knock the shots back.

From the corner of her eye, Dallas notices Richard looking at her and smiles at him.

DALLAS

Hey, how's your night going?

RICHARD

Good.

(beat)

I like your tattoo. It's pretty.

Dallas hears this a lot. Especially at the club.

DALLAS

It's symbolic. For life,
resurrection... hope... change.

Richard is utterly fascinated by her, his unblinking eyes staring directly into her soul.

RICHARD

We delight in the beauty of the butterfly... but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty.

Dallas softens a bit, fascinated. But she keeps her guard up, breaking eye contact and looking to the wedding ring on Richard's finger.

DALLAS

Your wife know you sit around at strip clubs, quoting Maya Angelou to the dancers?

Richard only smiles. Unable to take his eyes away from hers.

DALLAS (CONT'D)

What's your name?

RICHARD

Richard.

DALLAS

I'm Dallas.

An awkward silence as they continue to stare at each other.

DALLAS (CONT'D)

Did you want a dance?

Her hand touches his arm.

RICHARD

(a beat)

Thanks. But I'll take a rain check.

She remains lost in his eyes. Smiles, somewhat disappointed.

DALLAS

Well... enjoy your night.

SLOW MOTION:

As she leaves Richard, taking her hand away from his arm, Richard notices **SCARS ACROSS BOTH HER WRISTS.**

The moment lasts forever as he eyes the scars, concerned.

BACK TO NORMAL SPEED:

Dallas glances back at him with a flirtatious smile before turning forward, moving through the crowd.

DALLAS--

Meets eyes with Bud across the bar.

Clearly some bad blood between them, Dallas subtly flashes him her middle finger by scratching his face with it.

BUD--

Sneers, hatred in his eyes.

BUD
Fucking cunt.

Wiping coke from his nose, he knocks back a shot.

INT. PRIVATE DANCE ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Intimate, the MUSIC slower and more sensual. Plush leather seats, a velvet curtain closing the room off.

A muscle-bound BOUNCER keeps guard just outside the curtain.

Dallas gives a BUSINESSMAN a sexy lap dance, moving sensuously, grinding against his lap.

As she positions herself in reverse cowgirl and grinds back against him, the BUSINESSMAN reaches around and runs his hands along her thighs.

She seems bothered by it, but lets it happen...

Until his fingers creep up a little too far up her thigh, trying to slip his fingers down the front of her thong...

Dallas slaps his hand away, stands up, beside herself.

BUSINESSMAN
Oh, come on, get over here...

He playfully grabs her arm, tries pulling her back onto his lap -- but she slaps his hand away again.

DALLAS
You don't touch me like that.

BUSINESSMAN
I don't think you understand. I know the owner. Nikki?

DALLAS

I don't give a fuck who you know.
Lay another finger on me and see
what happens.

He grabs her by the wrist hard, pulling her in close.

BUSINESSMAN

(gritting his teeth)
I don't think you understand--

WHAM! She punches him in the face, busting his nose.

As she storms out through the curtains:

DALLAS

Fucking pussy.

BUSINESSMAN sits there, stunned. Dabbing at his bloody nose.

BUSINESSMAN

Crazy bitch!

INT. DRESSING ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

End of the shift, Dallas changes into street clothes as other DANCERS, some of them naked, stand around, applying makeup, getting ready for their routines.

INT. NIKKI'S OFFICE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Nikki sits behind her desk, watching Dallas count cash.

Meanwhile, the ACCOUNTANT (middle-aged, bookish, glasses) runs wads of bills through a cash counter.

Once the bills are counted, he wraps them in rubber bands, all facing the same way. And he draws a RED LINE down the side of each stack of cash.

Dallas finishes counting Nikki's cut. Sets it on the desk. Then looks across to Nikki.

Nikki doesn't even regard the cash. She just stares menacingly at Dallas through those dark aviator shades.

NIKKI

Do you like working here?

Dallas isn't quite sure where this is going.

DALLAS

Sure.

NIKKI

I appreciate that you bring in a crowd, Dallas, I do. But I could easily find someone who looks just as good, if not better. Only reason I keep you around is because you have a kid with my degenerate stepson. And I'll be damned if that little ray of sunshine isn't taken care of and provided for.

Dallas lowers her eyes.

NIKKI (CONT'D)

One misconception about dancers is that everyone thinks they all have a fucked up past. Daddy issues. Maybe they were touche when they were little girls. But that's not really the case, is it? Most girls do it because they enjoy it. It's empowering to them. It gives them control. Makes them proud of their bodies. Proud to be a woman.

Nikki lights up a cigar. Takes a few puffs.

NIKKI (CONT'D)

But the people who come here and spend their hard-earned cash aren't a bunch of woke feminists. They don't come here wearing pink shirts, waving signs in support of women's rights. You see where I'm going with this?

Dallas nods, in shame.

NIKKI (CONT'D)

I have serious clients who come here. Clients who spend serious money. Clients who pay extra to be treated special. So, if I have a client who pays extra to get his dick wet, I don't care if he wants you to spread your cheeks and take it up the ass... you fucking spread 'em wide.

Nikki digs through her purse, emptying contents on the desk in search of something. Eventually setting a rose gold-plated pistol on the desk, still searching through her purse.

NIKKI (CONT'D)
And next time there's an incident
like there was tonight...

Dallas eyes the gun nervously as Nikki finally finds what she was looking for: lip gloss.

NIKKI (CONT'D)
Not only will I fire you...

She applies the lip gloss, smacking her lips. Then looks across to Dallas, dead serious.

NIKKI (CONT'D)
I will do everything in my power to
make sure you never find a job in
this town again. And that precious
little child will be in my custody,
living with her grandma and
grandpa.

Nikki SNAPS her fingers.

NIKKI (CONT'D)
Just like that, I could take
everything away from you. Keep that
in mind.

Dallas nods again, clearly intimidated by Nikki.

EXT. GIDEON'S DEN - LATER THAT NIGHT

Dallas stands out by the curb, looking at her phone.

HER PHONE--

Indicates her Uber will be there in 10 minutes.

--BACK TO SCENE

Sighing, Dallas pockets her phone. Waits.

Meanwhile, some OTHER DANCERS smoke cigarettes nearby.

DANCER#1
You going home already, girl?
You should come out with us,
tonight!

DALLAS

I'll take a rain check. Don't wanna
keep the baby sitter waiting.

A CAR pulls up to the curb--

It's Bud, hanging out of his opened window. Not happy.

BUD

Get in the car.

DALLAS

Fuck off.

BUD

You changed the locks.

DALLAS

You don't live there anymore.

BUD

So, I can't stop by? See my
daughter?

DALLAS

No, Bud. I'm pretty sure that's
already been established.

BUD

You wouldn't have that girl if it
weren't for me.

Dallas gives him the cold shoulder, starts walking away.

But Bud drives alongside her.

DALLAS

Can we not do this tonight?

BUD

I said, get in the fucking car.

He reaches out, grabs her wrist--

But she slaps it away.

DALLAS

Fuck off!

Bud puts the car in park. Gets out.

Converging on her, he grabs her even harder by the wrist.

BUD
 (firmly)
 I'm not gonna ask you again.

Dallas shoves him back, slapping at his face.

Touching his lip, he sees blood. Incensed, he grabs Dallas by the back of her hair.

BUD (CONT'D)
 Get the fuck in the car!

The OTHER DANCERS just watch as she's pulled into the car.

INT. MUSCLE CAR (PARKED) - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Richard watches it all go down from a distance.

HIS EYES--

Narrow with utter rage.

HIS HANDS--

Grip the steering wheel tightly, knuckles white.

EXT. DALLAS'S APARTMENT BUILDING - LATER THAT NIGHT

BUD'S CAR pulls up out front.

INT. BUD'S CAR (PARKED) - CONTINUOUS

Awkward silence as Bud sits behind the wheel, looking over to Dallas in the passenger's seat.

Giving him the silent treatment, she goes to open her door so she can leave--

But the door locks.

DALLAS
 Bud, open the fucking door.

BUD
 Not until you talk to me.

DALLAS
 We've had more than enough time to talk.

Bud sighs. Ponders to himself, frustrated.

BUD

This wasn't how it was supposed to be. We were supposed to have a family. Together. Our OWN family.

They stare at each other, Dallas showing a hint of sympathy. As if yearning for the old days. But she hardens up.

DALLAS

You ruined everything the moment you hit her. You could've smacked me around all you wanted, but not her. Not ever.

Dallas pulls the lock up on her door, tries opening it again--
But Bud locks it again.

DALLAS (CONT'D)

Open the door.

BUD

Or what?

Dallas takes out her phone.

DALLAS

I'm calling the police. If you wanna go back to jail, that's on you...

Bud grabs her firmly by the hair again--

But Dallas jabs her thumb-knuckle hard to his throat--

He lets her go, gagging, stunned.

BUD

(coughing)

Fucking... cunt...

Dallas pulls the lock up, hurries out of the car.

As Bud continues to suck wind, he sees Dallas disappear into her apartment building entrance.

EXT. MUSCLE CAR (PARKED) - ACROSS THE STREET - CONTINUOUS

Richard watches from the driver's seat as Bud pulls off, drives away.

Richard follows.

INT. DALLAS'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Dallas tiptoes in, quietly places her keys in her purse.

The BABY-SITTER (early 20s, female hipster) naps soundly on the couch with the TV on.

But she wakes up, sees Dallas.

BABY-SITTER

Hey.

She sits up, wiping her tired eyes.

DALLAS

Sorry, late night. If you need to, you can crash here.

BABY-SITTER

It's okay, I'm not too far.

Dallas sits next to her, handing her cash.

DALLAS

A little something extra.

BABY-SITTER

(counts cash)

Thanks.

(looks to Dallas)

Your baby-daddy came by earlier, didn't let him in.

DALLAS

Yeah. I know.

The BABY-SITTER notices a bruise around Dallas's wrist.

BABY-SITTER

You really should look into a restraining order.

DALLAS

(labors a sad smile)

If only it were that simple.

BABY-SITTER

Well, if I were you, I'd move as far away from that asshole as possible. He's toxic.

DALLAS

It's not him I'm worried about.
(changes subject)
What'd she have for dinner?

BABY-SITTER

Chicken croquettes and mashed
potatoes.

DALLAS

And she ate all her potatoes?

BABY-SITTER

Every bite.

DALLAS

What about homework?

BABY-SITTER

It's Friday, she didn't have any.

Dallas smiles. Nods.

INT. SARAH'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

SARAH (7 years old) sleeps peacefully under her pretty, pink
bed covers. The face of an angel. Cute as a button.

Dallas quietly opens the door, tiptoeing into the room.

She smiles warmly, gazing at her daughter. Then gently kisses
her on the top of the head.

Dallas quietly leaves the room, closing the door behind her.

INT. DALLAS'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Dallas puts cash into a shoebox already stuffed with a lot of
cash inside of it. A secret stash.

She hides the shoebox in the back of her closet.

INT. 24-HOUR CONVENIENCE STORE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Bud takes cash out of his wallet at the front counter: a
PHOTO of he and Dallas inside of the wallet.

He pays for a pack of cigarettes.

In the background--

RICHARD'S MUSCLE CAR pulls in, parks next to Bud's car. Sitting there ominously with its lights off.

EXT. 24-HOUR CONVENIENCE STORE - MOMENTS LATER

Bud comes out, heads to his car.

But as he opens his door, he looks over his roof and sees the MUSCLE CAR in the next spot.

But doesn't make much of it, unable to see through the tints.

INT. BUD'S CAR (MOVING) - MOMENTS LATER

As Bud coasts through the gritty, city streets...

RICHARD'S MUSCLE CAR appears in his rearview. Bud glances at his mirror casually. But does a double take. Getting a feeling he's being followed.

He now peers into his mirror, noticing the car behind him.

He pulls a right turn.

Looks into his rearview again--

RICHARD'S MUSCLE CAR also turns. Tailing him.

Getting jumpy, Bud opens his glove-box, grabs his gun.

EXT. DOWNTOWN CITY STREET - CONTINUOUS

Passing a bunch of HOMELESS PEOPLE in tents, BUD'S CAR pulls a sudden left into...

EXT. DARK ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

And continues through...

Until reaching a dead end.

INT. BUD'S CAR (IDLING) - CONTINUOUS

Bud sits in idle, staring into his rearview...

RICHARD'S MUSCLE CAR sits parked, blocking the alley's entrance -- trapping Bud.

A long, tense silence as Bud stares at Richard's car through his rearview--

Richard's car stays there, not moving.

Fed up, Bud cocks his gun. Gets out of the car.

EXT. DARK ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Bud marches towards RICHARD'S MUSCLE CAR blocking the end of the alleyway. Gun ready.

He points the gun as he gets closer.

BUD
Hey, asshole!

No response.

POP! Bud FIRES a warning shot into the air. Keeps moving forward, pointing it forward again.

Finally, he reaches the...

EXT. MUSCLE CAR - CONTINUOUS

He keeps his gun trained on the window, trying to see through its dark tint. But he can't.

BUD
Get outta the car, now!

Nothing. No response.

Fed up, Bud pulls the driver's side door open--

But furrows his brow in confusion--

Nobody's inside the car.

Suddenly, Richard appears behind him, wearing that mask.

Bud sees the reflection of Richard behind him through the window--

But Richard locks his arms around his neck--

POP! POP! Bud FIRES WILD SHOTS into the air, just missing Richard's face...

Finally, Bud drops his gun, losing consciousness as Richard squeezes the oxygen out of him...

Until Bud goes limp.

CUT TO BLACK:

FADE IN:

EXT. WOODS - LATER THAT NIGHT

RICHARD'S MUSCLE CAR sits parked under a canopy of trees, his headlights cutting through the pitch dark. Engine running.

Wearing his mask, Richard opens the trunk--

Bud sits inside, wrists, ankles taped together, his mouth taped shut. Squirming frantically, unable to move.

Richard reaches in, grabs him.

BUD--

Is dragged along the mossy ground by his ankles, MUFFLED SCREAMS as Richard continues pulling him to a...

HOLE IN THE GROUND

A freshly dug, makeshift grave. More than deep enough.

Richard kicks Bud into the hole. Jumps into the hole with him, standing over him. Then rips the tape off his mouth--

BUD

HELP!!!

WHAM! Richard boots him in the side hard, Bud gasping.

RICHARD

Nobody can hear you.

BUD

Look, I got money... just please,
let's talk about this...

Richard removes his mask, showing Bud his face.

RICHARD

Do you remember me?

Bud doesn't recognize him.

BUD

Whatever I did to you, man, I'm
sorry, okay!

RICHARD
Look harder.

Bud shuts his eyes, breaking down pitifully.

BUD
Come on, man...

RICHARD
(explodes)
LOOK AT ME!

A hush as Bud opens his eyes, stares up at him long and hard.
Finally, Bud realizes who it is.

BUD
Wait a minute...

Richard calmly slips his mask back on.

BUD (CONT'D)
Look, man, it wasn't me, okay? I
don't know who told you what, but I
swear, it wasn't me!

Richard takes a deep breath. Then climbs out of the hole,
disappearing out of Bud's line of sight.

BUD (CONT'D)
Wait, where are you going? What are
you doing, man?

A few moments go by...

Until Richard returns with a gas can, staring down at Bud
from the top of the hole.

BUD (CONT'D)
Oh, God, no, please!

He douses Bud in gasoline, getting out every last drop.

BUD (CONT'D)
(sobbing)
Look, I was there, but it wasn't
me, okay? That's the God honest
truth! It wasn't me! I didn't even
wanna be there! My dad, he's the
one who ordered the hit...

RICHARD
(firmly)
If you didn't kill her, who did?

BUD
I don't know his fucking name,
man...

Richard brings out a Zippo lighter.

BUD (CONT'D)
It's some guy who works for my dad,
man, that's all I know...

Richard lights the Zippo, the flame reflecting off his mask.

BUD (CONT'D)
The Doctor! That's what they call
him, The Doctor! And I swear to
fucking Christ, that's all I know
about the guy!

Richard shuts the Zippo.

BUD (CONT'D)
My dad... he's at the Randall
apartments on Third and Brookshire.
He knows who he is.

Richard just gazes down at him menacingly from the top of the
hole while CLICKING the Zippo opened and closed repeatedly.

He stops CLICKING the Zippo. Studies Bud.

RICHARD
Tell me something.

BUD
Anything, man, what?

RICHARD
Did she beg for her life?

BUD
What?

RICHARD
My wife. Did she beg?

Bud starts crying, sensing the end is near.

BUD
Come on, man, please...

Richard lights the Zippo.

BUD (CONT'D)
NO!!!

And Richard throws the Zippo into the hole...

WHOOSH! Bud is immediately engulfed in flames, his SCREAMS piercing through the night!

Richard leaves for a moment, OS.

Then returns with a 12-gauge shotgun. He pumps it-- CHA-CHUK!

Then points it at Bud, who continues to SCREAM in pain--

BOOM! Puts him out of his misery.

INT. MUSCLE CAR (PARKED) - MOMENTS LATER

Richard gets behind the wheel. Removing his mask.

He grabs a pack of cigarettes -- Bud's cigarettes that he just bought.

And he pops one in his mouth. Lights it. Then puffs away as he watches flames dancing from out the hole, smoke rising into the air.

Richard brings down the visor-- stares longingly at the PHOTO of himself and Cassandra.

He kisses his finger. Touches the PHOTO.

CUT TO BLACK:

FADE IN:

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY (FLASHBACK)

DALLAS (15 years-old, wearing a Catholic school uniform) walks home alone, her backpack on.

A rusty, old PICK-UP TRUCK pulls up along side, slowly following along.

Dallas notices, looking to the PICK-UP TRUCK, where kind-looking MIDDLE-AGED MAN sits behind the wheel.

MIDDLE-AGED MAN

You know, it ain't safe walking all alone like that.

DALLAS

Just coming home from school.

MIDDLE-AGED MAN
I know your Daddy. Tom, right? I
live right down the street.

She forces a smile. But keeps walking.

MIDDLE-AGED MAN (CONT'D)
You don't recognize me?
(beat)
Me and Tom, we grew up together.
Heard he and your Momma split up.
Sorry to hear that. Didn't believe
it at first, they was high school
sweethearts.

Dallas stops-- the PICK-UP TRUCK also stops.

DALLAS
You knew her?

MIDDLE-AGED MAN
Sure did.

DALLAS
Do you talk to her?

MIDDLE-AGED MAN
Once in a while, yeah.

A beat.

MIDDLE-AGED MAN (CONT'D)
How about I give you a lift home,
tell you all about it.

He pops open the passenger's side door. Reaches his hand out
to Dallas.

Hesitant, Dallas eventually takes his hand. He pulls her up,
helps her get into the PICK-UP TRUCK--

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. UNDISCLOSED BEDROOM - LATER THAT DAY

Young Dallas in bed, tied to the bedpost SCREAMING, the
MIDDLE-AGED MAN on top of her, covering her mouth.

MIDDLE-AGED MAN
Scream all you want, your Daddy
ain't coming for you!

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. PICK-UP TRUCK (IDLE) - CONTINUOUS

SLOW MOTION: Young Dallas taking MIDDLE-AGED MAN'S hand before getting into the PICK-UP TRUCK.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. UNDISCLOSED BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

MIDDLE-AGED MAN on top of her in bed, covering her mouth.

SMASH CUT TO:

LATER

A quieter, serene moment as Young Dallas lies in the bed, her wrists tied to the bedpost.

Utterly helpless, she takes a moment to appreciate the beauty of a **BUTTERFLY** landing just outside the window, the bright sun accentuating its beautiful, colorful wings.

The BUTTERFLY then flies away.

SMASH CUT TO:

LATER

Young Dallas desperately pulls on the rope keeping her wrists bound to the bedpost.

Her wrists bleed as she saws away at the rope over the edge of the bedpost, the rope starting to give...

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. DALLAS'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (BACK TO PRESENT)

GASPING, Dallas wakes up suddenly from her nightmare.

She sits up, looking at her scarred wrists.

Suddenly, Dallas's door creeps open, Sarah tiptoeing in.

DALLAS

What are you doing awake, baby?

SARAH

Can I sleep with you tonight.

DALLAS

Did you have a bad dream?

SARAH
Not really.

Dallas shuffles over, making room, patting her hand on the mattress.

Sarah jumps into bed, lies next to her mother.

She picks up a tablet sitting on the bed: a PHOTO of a scenic beach on the screen.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Is that where we're moving when we get enough money?

DALLAS
Maybe.

Dallas smiles, nestling up closer to her daughter as they scroll through more photos together.

EXT. WOODS - CONTINUOUS

HOLE IN THE GROUND--

The charred corpse of Bud Fritzingler staring up at us, blue and red lights flashing.

PULL OUT TO REVEAL--

A full-on crime scene, police tape around the hole. POLICE CARS and FIRE TRUCKS parked nearby in a clearing just outside of the crime scene. UNIFORMED COPS everywhere.

CRIME SCENE PHOTOGRAPHERS taking snapshots of the charred remains in the hole.

DETECTIVE DARLA MCMURTRY (early 40s, all business) appears, standing over the hole, looking in.

Next to her, DETECTIVE KANE FOSTER (early 30s, weasly-looking, something unattractive about him).

FOSTER
Might take a while to ID.

Wearing rubber gloves, McMurtry shows him a Ziploc evidence bag filled with charred belongings.

She opens the bag, pulls out a burnt-to-shit wallet. Opens it, showing Foster a barely legible driver's license ID, the edges melted--

The only thing not completely burnt is the center of the ID: Bud Fritzingers face and name.

Foster looks at McMurtry, stupefied.

FOSTER (CONT'D)
Bud Fritzingers?

MCMURTRY
Not a thousand percent. Still need forensics to do their thing. But his vehicle was found abandoned in an alley downtown. After someone reported hearing gunshots.

Foster stares down at the charred corpse, unsettled.

FOSTER
Huh.

INT. RICHARD'S MOTEL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Richard sits by the window at a table, writing on a notebook.

NOTEBOOK--

A list: "OFFICER HAYDEN, LEWIS LYNCH, BUD FRITZINGER, TOMMY FRITZINGER, CLAY FRITZINGER and GIDEON (THE DAD)".

Officer Hayden's name already crossed out, he crosses Bud's name off the list.

--BACK TO SCENE

As he finishes writing, he stops. Looking at the wedding ring around his finger. Lingering on it. Staring sadly at it...

INT. STATE PRISON/VISITATION ROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Richard resting his head on Cassandra's pregnant belly, holding her hand, interlocking fingers.

Their wedding rings touching...

He traces the BUTTERFLY TATTOO on her hand...

INT. RICHARD'S MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT (BACK TO PRESENT)

Richard continues gazing sadly at his wedding ring...

INT. CRUMMY APARTMENT - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

A 12-YEAR-OLD RICHARD watches as his FATHER slits his MOTHER'S throat--

He CRIES out, mute of sound during the flashback. Almost dream-like. Reliving a nightmare.

A large puddle of blood beneath her, she rolls to her back...

But RICHARD'S FATHER straddles on top of her and stabs her repeatedly as she tries her best to stave off the attack.

Rolling back to her stomach, she tries crawling towards her son... but dies with her eyes open.

INT. RICHARD'S MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT (BACK TO PRESENT)

Deeply disturbed as he relives that moment, Richard stares off wearing a faraway look...

INT. CRUMMY APARTMENT - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

RICHARD'S MOTHER lies on her belly, dead on the floor.

The blood covering her back almost resembles a BUTTERFLY.

RICHARD'S FATHER sits Indian-style right by her dead body. Just staring off, crimson blotches dotting his face and staining his shirt.

He slowly looks up to see 12-YEAR-OLD RICHARD pointing a small revolver at him, hand trembling.

RICHARD'S FATHER
I thought I got rid of that thing.

In a malaise, RICHARD'S FATHER looks at the dead body. Then slowly up at 12-YEAR-OLD RICHARD.

RICHARD'S FATHER (CONT'D)
It's too late, Richard. You can't
save her. It's too--

POP! 12-YEAR-OLD RICHARD SHOOTS his FATHER--

INT. RICHARD'S MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT (BACK TO PRESENT)

As Richard continues to stare off, the look in his eyes now appears more unsettling. Menacing and dark.

He looks down at his notebook again.

NOTEBOOK--

Richard writes a new name, adding it to the list -- "**THE DOCTOR???**".

INT. HOSPITAL/DELIVERY ROOM - DAY

A PREGNANT WOMAN in labor breathes in and out, pouring sweat.

NURSE

Push!

PREGNANT WOMAN GRUNTS in agony, pushing with all her might, HOSPITAL STAFF surrounding her.

One big push and--

She SCREAMS as the OBSTETRICIAN guides the baby out of her womb, a surgical mask hiding his face.

PREGNANT WOMAN squeezes her HUSBAND'S hand...

The SOUND of the BABY CRYING as the OBSTETRICIAN delivers the baby successfully-- the pint-sized BABY CRYING, eyes shut, covered in blood and goo.

PREGNANT WOMAN and her HUSBAND let out CRIES of joy.

The OBSTETRICIAN holds up the crying newborn.

THE DOCTOR

All right, Dad, do us the honors?

The HUSBAND cuts the umbilical cord.

The OBSTETRICIAN then gives the BABY to PREGNANT WOMAN, who cries tears of joy while holding her newborn to her chest.

Her HUSBAND kisses her, unable to fight off the happy tears.

OBSTETRICIAN removes his surgical mask--

This is THE DOCTOR who killed Richard's wife.

He stares at the happy couple and their newborn with a bittersweet smile on his face.

HUSBAND

(to wife)

We did good, huh?

PREGNANT WOMAN
(crying tears of joy)
We sure did.

A single tear trickles down The Doctor's cheek. He seems unusually touched by this.

INT. THE DOCTOR'S HOUSE/DINING ROOM - LATER THAT EVENING

A nice, spacious home.

The Doctor sits at the dinner table next to his prissy wife, MARGARET (mid 40s). For some reason, she wears a cocktail dress at the table. And way too much makeup.

While poking at his food, he looks across the table to his children--

IDENTICAL TWINS. Both somewhere between 7-10 years old, wearing matching identical outfits.

They gawk at their father with dumb, slack-jawed looks on their faces.

THE DOCTOR
You know, you don't have to wear
the same exact clothes, right?

The TWINS just continue to stare at him.

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)
(whispers to Margaret)
Why do they always have to stare at
me like that? It gives me the
fucking creeps. What's wrong with
them?

She begrudgingly shovels food into her mouth.

MARGARET
Oh, I don't know. Maybe if their
father was around more...

THE DOCTOR
Well, I'm sorry but someone has to
support your weekly face-lifts and
ridiculous Fabergé egg collection.

A nearby shelf is lined with several Fabergé eggs. Too many.

The Doctor looks across-- the TWINS are still staring.

Fed up, he pushes his plate of untouched food forward and leaves the table.

INT. BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

The light turns on at the top of the stairs.

The Doctor comes down into the finished basement, reaching a heavily secured door with a safe combination knob on it.

The Doctor spins the knob, entering in the combination.

Finally, the door opens.

INT. BASEMENT/SECRET ROOM - CONTINUOUS

And he enters...

Soundproofed walls and ceiling, a CAPTIVE MAN, tape over his mouth, hangs by his wrists from the ceiling.

The Doctor cracks open a beer. Takes a big gulp. Then looks to the CAPTIVE MAN.

THE DOCTOR

Do yourself a favor: don't ever get married.

Slams back the rest of his beer. Sets the bottle down.

He turns on some MUSIC.

Then slips into boxing gloves, strapping the Velcro shut.

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)

I do have some bad news: it was a REALLY long day, today.

He pounds his gloves together, squaring up to CAPTIVE MAN.

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)

So, this is probably gonna hurt like a motherfucker.

WHAM! The Doctor throws a hard overhand right--

INT. SPECIAL NEEDS HOME/TOMMY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tommy Fritzinger sits in his wheelchair as his father, Gideon, spoon-feeds him porridge.

GIDEON

Atta boy, Tommy... that's a good boy...

Nikki watches, puffing a thick cigar, annoyed.

NIKKI

You know, one of these days, you oughtta just smother him when none of the nurses are looking. Put the poor kid out of his misery.

Gideon turns, glares back at her.

GIDEON

You're not a very sensitive woman, are you?

NIKKI

You married me.

GIDEON

For your looks. Obviously.

Nikki smiles.

NIKKI

Hey...

She comes over to him, puts an arm around him. Kisses him on the cheek warmly.

NIKKI (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, I have an acid tongue.

He gives her a look. Cracks a hint of a smile. But turns, focuses back on his son.

GIDEON

Don't say sorry to me.

Nikki sighs. But swallows her pride. She crouches down to Tommy's level.

NIKKI

Tommy? I'm sorry for what I said. I didn't mean it.

Satisfied, Gideon smiles. Kisses Nikki. Then focuses on spoon-feeding Tommy again.

Her hand on Gideon's shoulder, she stares off, something bothering her.

NIKKI (CONT'D)
We should look into adoption.

Gideon looks up at her. Sympathy behind his gaze.

He just nods.

EXT. RICHARD'S MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

INTENSE BREATHING...

Richard pumps his arms while performing intense push-ups. Shirtless, his muscles glistening with sweat.

ANGLE ON a scar on his lower back. Then on the scar on the back of his head as he breathes in and out, banging out some serious reps.

His mask sits on the table nearby next to a shotgun.

MOMENTS LATER

Sitting by the window, Richard stares down at his notebook. Gazing at his list.

NOTEBOOK--

CLOSE ON the name "GIDEON".

EXT. FLOPHOUSE - NIGHT

A two-floor apartment building in the bad part of town. An eerie silence gives the place a menacing aura.

Outside the front entrance stands a GUARD in street clothes.

The GUARD steps aside as Gideon Fritzingler enters.

INT. FLOPHOUSE/FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Gideon makes his way down the poorly lit corridor, shoddy ceiling lights flickering above.

He makes his way to an elevator at the end of the hall, its doors sliding open.

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Gideon gets in. Sticks a key under the "BASEMENT" button.

The sliding doors close. And the elevator descends.

INT. BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Gideon leaves the elevator, moving down the damp and narrow concrete hallway...

Past rooms made into prison cells with CAPTIVE WOMEN being held in each room, peering out of the small windows in their doors...

Gideon reaches a room at the end of the hallway, where GUARD#2 is posted.

Inside the room-- A CAPTIVE WOMAN sits on a cold slab for a cot, cradling a NEWBORN BABY.

GIDEON
Everything on schedule?

GUARD#2
Shipping out in three hours.

Gideon nods.

INT. ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

Gideon boards. Taps the "2ND FLOOR" button -- he ascends.

INT. 2ND FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Gideon exits the elevator, heading towards an office at the end of the hallway, SEVERAL ARMED GUARDS in street clothes standing post.

INT. GIDEON'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Sitting behind his desk, a safe behind him hanging open, Gideon runs stacks of cash through a money counter.

Once the stacks are counted, he rubber bands them. Then draws a RED MARK along the side of each of them.

THE MONEY COUNTER--

CLICKS rapidly and rhythmically as another stack of cash is run through it...

INT. MIXED MARTIAL ARTS GYM - CONTINUOUS

Several MMA FIGHTERS and COACHES spectate from outside of an caged, octagon ring as Clay, wearing headgear and MMA gloves, spars with another fighter.

IN THE OCTAGON

Biting down on his mouthpiece in determination, Clay, toned muscles glistening, looks for an opening as he and his OPPONENT circle each other strategically, testing each other out, reaching in and retracting their hands.

The OPPONENT hits Clay with a leg kick, but it doesn't bother Clay too much...

His OPPONENT throws another leg kick, which Clay eludes but leaves a small window open--

OPPONENT lunges in, shooting his shoulder into Clay's midsection and driving him back towards the cage...

But Clay hip-tosses him, quickly gets to work on his ground game...

But OPPONENT immediately gets back to his feet, back into his stance as he plays the defensive game...

EVERYONE outside of the cage yells out moves at the two fighters...

OPPONENT gets cute, going for a spinning back-fist--

But Clay ducks it, nailing OPPONENT in the gut, following up with a hard combo--

OPPONENT covers up but--

WHAM! Clay hits him clean in the jaw with a Muay Thai jumping knee strike!

OPPONENT collapses, dazed--

Clay pounces on him, landing vicious blows to his OPPONENT'S face as he lies unconscious.

In frenzy, Clay keeps wailing on the unconscious man...

MMA TRAINER (O.S.)

Clay!

A FEW MMA TRAINERS hurry into the cage, taking several of them to pull Clay off his OPPONENT.

Finally, Clay snaps out of his frenzy. Stands there, staring down at his badly hurt, unconscious OPPONENT.

He spits out his mouthpiece.

CLAY
Walk it off.

INT. MIXED MARTIAL ARTS GYM/LOCKER ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Towel around his waist, Clay returns from the showers to his locker -- he hears his CELL PHONE RINGING.

Popping open his locker, he checks his phone, the caller ID reading: "FOSTER".

He answers.

CLAY
What's up?

INT. FOSTER'S CAR (MOVING) - CONTINUOUS

Detective Kane Foster mans the wheel, coasting through the city streets while speaking to Clay on the phone.

FOSTER
(a beat)
It's Bud.

INT. MIXED MARTIAL ARTS GYM/LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Clay's expression goes from annoyed to stunned. Then to quiet devastation as he continues to listen to Foster on the phone.

He hangs up. Staring off, devastation truly setting in.

INT. CLAY'S CAR (MOVING) - LATER THAT NIGHT

Clay drives with a sense of urgency, looking at his cell phone. He dials "DAD" on his contact list.

INT. FLOPHOUSE/GIDEON'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Gideon continues to count cash as...

His CELL PHONE lights up on his desk, on silent, Clay's name on the caller ID...

But Gideon doesn't notice, missing the call as he transports the neatly stacked bills into a black duffel bag.

INT. GIDEON'S DEN/BACK OF ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Smoke pours from Nikki's mouth as she elegantly puffs a cigarette while watching Dallas dance on stage, the ROWDY CROWD around her hooting and hollering.

Her phone vibrates. She checks, seeing Clay is calling..

But an INTIMIDATING MAN in expensive Italian suit approaches Nikki, whispering something in her ear.

The INTIMIDATING MAN then points to Dallas on stage.

Distracted, Nikki pockets her phone, takes the cash from him.

DALLAS--

Notices the transaction, an uneasy feeling coming over her.

INT. PRIVATE DANCE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Nikki sits on a plush couch, puffing her cigar while watching Dallas give the INTIMIDATING MAN a sensual lap dance to the seductive MUSIC.

INTIMIDATING MAN--

Grabs Dallas's ass hard.

DALLAS--

Glances back at Nikki, appalled.

NIKKI--

Puffs her cigar. Continues to supervise Dallas, making sure she does the right things.

DALLAS--

Lowers her eyes in shame.

INT. MUSCLE CAR (MOVING) - CONTINUOUS

Cruising the gritty streets, MUSIC playing on the stereo, Richard gazes off at the road ahead, laser-focused.

His shotgun and mask sit on the passenger's seat.

INT. GIDEON'S DEN/PRIVATE DANCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Puffing her cigar, smoke rising from her lips, Nikki watches as Dallas has sex with the INTIMIDATING MAN, on his lap.

DALLAS--

Tears stream down her face as Nikki watches in the background, OUT OF FOCUS.

INT. CLAY'S CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT

Clay comes up on the FLOPHOUSE, driving with purpose...

EXT. FLOPHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

CLAY'S CAR quickly pulls up to the curb out front.

Clay hurries out, hot-footing it to the building, the GUARD letting him in.

EXT. ACROSS THE STREET - CONTINUOUS

RICHARD'S MUSCLE CAR pulls up, parking at the curb.

INT. MUSCLE CAR (PARKED) - CONTINUOUS

Richard gazes up at the FLOPHOUSE with bad intentions.

EXT. FLOPHOUSE/FRONT DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

The GUARD plays "Angry Birds" on his phone, really into it.

But he looks up, sees RICHARD'S FIGURE methodically approaching, merely an OMINOUS SHADOW lurking in the dark.

As RICHARD'S FIGURE gets closer, still hidden in shadows, the GUARD touches the gun tucked into his waist.

GUARD#1

Can I help you with something?

RICHARD--

Emerges from the darkness in his mask, gripping his shotgun.

GUARD#1's eyes widen-- he goes for his gun!

BOOM! Richard splatters his brains all over the clear glass entrance door!

INT. FLOPHOUSE/ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

The blood splatter on the glass door obscures and distorts Richard's image as he approaches...

And enters. Without breaking stride-- CHA-CHUK! He pumps the shotgun while entering the--

INT. 1ST FLOOR HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The ceiling lights flicker above as Richard marches through the narrow corridor...

A THUG casually leaves one of the room, into the hallway, eyes widening upon seeing Richard. He pulls a gun--

BOOM! Richard's faster, destroying THUG, splashing his blood onto the wall!

THUG#2 emerges from another room further down the hall, drawing his gun as he sees Richard-- POP! He misses Richard, putting a bullet hole in the wall.

BOOM! Richard BLASTS him in the arm, nearly tearing it off the man's body!

As Richard moves around THUG#2, clutching his arm on the floor-- BOOM! Richard ends him without breaking stride.

Richard marches right to the elevator at the end of the hall.

INT. 2ND FLOOR/GIDEON'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Gideon shares a somber moment with Clay, just hearing the news about Bud.

GIDEON

Whoever did this, they wanted my attention.

(a beat)

They got it.

CLAY

Who do you think it is?

GIDEON

Thing about this life, son... you make a lot of enemies.

Clay nods. Worried. On edge.

CLAY
So, what's the move?

GIDEON
We find out who did this, find his family, his friends, anything he holds sacred, everything he's ever loved... and we send him a message right back.

Clay isn't so sure about the plan.

CLAY
What if he's got nothing to lose?

INT. 2ND FLOOR HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The elevator doors open.

CHA-CHUK! Richard pumps his shotgun, marching forward, catching the TWO ARMED GUARDS by surprise.

ARMED GUARD#1 draws his firearm--

BOOM! Richard CLIPS him in the throat, ARMED GUARD#1 dropping, gurgling on his own blood as Richard passes.

BOOM! Richard beats ARMED GUARD#2 on the draw, BLASTING him in the chest, sending him backwards--

INT. GIDEON'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Hearing the GUNSHOT BLASTS, Clay and Gideon exchange a wary, doomed expression.

INT. 2ND FLOOR HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Clay comes out with his pistol, guns blazing-- POP! POP!
Missing Richard--

BOOM! Richard CLIPS him in the upper chest, dropping him.

INT. GIDEON'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

As Gideon opens a desk drawer, sees his pistol--

Richard marches in, shotgun already pointed at him.

A tense silence as they stare at each other.

Finally, Richard lifts his mask to show Gideon his face.

A hush. Gideon recognizes him.

GIDEON
(quietly enraged)
I had a feeling I'd see you again.

Tense silence as they stare each other down...

Until Gideon suddenly goes for his pistol--

BOOM! Richard BLASTS him, splattering Gideon's head into a thick mist of brains, blood and skull fragments, splattering all over the room.

Richard peeks over the desk, confirming the kill as Gideon's head lies on the floor.

The black duffel bag on the desk, Richard can't help but notice all the cash stuffed inside.

INT. 2ND FLOOR HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Richard leaves the office, black duffel bag full of cash slung over his shoulder, en route to the elevator.

CLAY--

Flutters his eyes, not dead yet. On the floor, chest and shoulder badly wounded.

CLAY'S POV--

Vision blurred at first, he sees Richard on the elevator, focusing on the mask until the doors slide shut.

--BACK TO SCENE

Clay groans, sitting up. Clutching his wound, he looks to the fire emergency stairway entrance.

INT. FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

GUARD#2 eyes the dead bodies on the floor in disbelief. Behind him--

Elevator doors open. Just as he turns--

BOOM! Blood dots splatter onto the camera lens as Richard puts the man down, stepping over his body.

FRONT ENTRANCE

Mission seemingly accomplished, Richard nears his exit...

POP! The glass entrance door shatters!

Richard turns--

POP! Exiting the emergency stairway, Clay FIRES another SHOT--

Richard buckles, catching one in the leg!

POP! POP! Clay misses as Richard dashes out with a limp!

Clay pursues him...

EXT. FLOPHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Clay continues after Richard, who is already across the street, getting into his muscle car...

POP! POP! Clay FIRES wild SHOTS, missing everything.

Picking up the pace, Clay continues his pursuit, BLASTING more wild SHOTS as RICHARD'S MUSCLE CAR pulls off...

MIDDLE OF THE STREET

POP! POP! POP! Clay busts off MORE SHOTS, Richard far out of his reach, speeding off into the distance...

INT. MUSCLE CAR (MOVING) - CONTINUOUS

CRACK! His side mirror blasts off from one of Clay's shots!

VROOM!

RICHARD'S FOOT--

Stomps hard on the gas!

EXT. MIDDLE OF STREET - CONTINUOUS

All Clay can do is watch Richard make his getaway.

EXT. OZ'S JUNK YARD - LATER THAT NIGHT

A heavy-duty padlock keeps the front gates chained up, locked up for the night.

Just inside the front gate...

EXT. OZ'S TRAILER HOME - CONTINUOUS

Instead of wind chimes, tin cans dangle from strings out front, lights on inside the mobile abode.

INT. OZ'S TRAILER HOME - CONTINUOUS

Cluttered, messy but more spacious than one would think.

KITCHEN

Oz blends a frozen cocktail in his blender.

He removes the lid, chugs straight from the pitcher--

KNOCK-KNOCK-KNOCK!

Startled, Oz nearly spills his frozen concoction. Looking to the door, on alert.

Snatching a big fucking handgun off the counter...

FRONT DOOR

And cracks the door open. Then opens it all the way, revealing--

Richard, clutching his leg, mask still on.

Oz lowers his weapon, already knowing who it is.

Richard removes the mask, face sweaty.

RICHARD

Cut myself shaving.

Richard shows him a wad of cash-- that RED MARK tinging the edges of each bill.

Oz checks to make sure the coast is clear.

OZ

Meet me in the shed.

EXT. SHED - CONTINUOUS

Behind the trailer in the "backyard".

INT. SHED - CONTINUOUS

Wearing surgical gloves, Oz cuts up Richard's pant leg with scissors-- revealing the gushing bullet wound.

OZ
The Doctor, huh?

He then hands Richard a bottle of whiskey.

Richard knocks back a good swig.

OZ (CONT'D)
What do you wanna know?

RICHARD
Everything.

Oz injects a numbing agent into Richard's leg wound.

OZ
You're asking a lot...

Then grabs a pair of tweezers.

OZ (CONT'D)
Because there ain't much to know.
Nobody knows what he looks like,
who he is... more myth than man as
far I know.

As Oz tweezes out bullet fragments...

OZ (CONT'D)
If you thought the Fritzinger boys
were wild...

INT. THE DOCTOR'S HOUSE/BASEMENT/SECRET ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The Doctor sips a beer while gazing menacingly at the CAPTIVE MAN dangling from his ceiling.

OZ (V.O.)
You ain't seen nothing yet. He's a
different kinda motherfucker,
that's for sure. Don't think
there's a word to describe that
kinda crazy...

The Doctor spits beer at the CAPTIVE MAN.

OZ (V.O.)
 But let's just say he enjoys
 killing people. A lot.

The Doctor then reveals a very sharp butcher knife.

OZ (V.O.)
 Whatever he gets paid... that's
 just a bonus.
 (beat)
 Hopefully, you find him before he
 finds you.

He marches up to the CAPTIVE MAN who lets out panicked,
 MUFFLED SCREAMS under the duct-tape over his mouth...

OZ (V.O.)
 Because that's probably who they're
 gonna sic on your ass.

The Doctor slits his throat!

INT. SHED - CONTINUOUS

Richard knocks back a few painkillers, chasing them with
 liquor straight from the bottle.

RICHARD
 Who?

Oz exhales.

OZ
 Let's say for a second you wipe out
 every last Fritzingler with a
 swinging dick...

Oz continues to clean out Richard's leg wound...

OZ (CONT'D)
 I'd say your problem's really only
 just begun, amigo. Because the REAL
 motherfucker you need to worry
 about ain't got no dick.

Oz holds up his hand to reveal a few fingers missing.

OZ (CONT'D)
 Remember Kabul?

Richard looks up at him stoically.

OZ (CONT'D)

No doubt in my mind if that suicide bomber was a man...? You would've smoked him before he even had a chance to set that shit off.

The memory eats at Richard as he falls into thought.

INT. NIKKI'S HOME/LIVING - LATER THAT NIGHT

Nikki sits on her couch, seething, tears streaming down her face from under her designer aviators as she watches TV.

TELEVISION SCREEN--

A NEWS REPORTER stands outside the FLOPHOUSE: a full-on crime scene flooded with POLICE and INVESTIGATORS.

NEWS REPORTER

(on television)

... Of the six men gunned down, reputed organized crime boss, Gideon Fritzingler.

An on-screen graphic shows a PHOTO of Gideon.

--BACK TO SCENE

NEWS REPORTER (V.O.)

(from the TV)

It's here where six young women and a newborn child were found by police in what authorities believe to be a human trafficking ring...

Nikki explodes, flipping over the coffee table and SCREAMING in a frenzied rage!

Falling to her knees, she SOBS, hands over her face.

Her aviators off, her tear-filled eyes stare up coldly at the television, a dark, vengeful expression.

INT. DALLAS'S APARTMENT/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Dallas sits at the table, tears in her eyes as she stares down at one of Sarah's drawings from school on the table.

THE DRAWING--

A colored-pencil sketch of Dallas and Sarah holding hands.

Written under the drawing in Sarah's handwriting: **"When I Grow Up, I Want To Be Just Like My Mom."**

A teardrop hits the paper.

INT. SARAH'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Dallas sneaks into Sarah's room, trying not to wake her.

She quietly slips into bed next to her. Holds her close.

Sarah wakes up.

DALLAS

(smiles)

Hey.

(a beat)

Hope you don't if I sleep in your bed tonight.

SARAH

Did you have a bad dream?

DALLAS

(a beat)

Yeah.

Sarah yawns, closes her eyes again.

SARAH

Okay. You can sleep here tonight.

DALLAS

Thank you.

Dallas stares up at the ceiling while holding her daughter, fighting tears after being sexually humiliated earlier.

EXT. NIKKI'S HOME - NIGHT

A gated-off, affluent ranch-style home in a quiet, upscale neighborhood.

INT. NIKKI'S HOME/BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nikki lies in bed, staring up at the ceiling.

But she hears something-- a LIGHT THUD. Then RUSTLING.

Nikki sits up. Listens.

Suddenly alert, she opens her night stand-- takes out her rose-gold handgun.

She quietly stands up, leaving bed.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Gun ready, she keeps as quiet as possible, listening out...

Then hears another THUD.

Her unblinking eyes fixate on the...

BACK DOOR

Nikki quietly inches towards it. Peeks out through the vertical blinds--

But she can't see anything through the sliding glass door.

She flicks on the patio lights--

Clay appears suddenly, startling her!

Taking a relieved breath, she lowers her handgun.

EXT. BACKYARD PATIO - MOMENTS LATER

Clay puts pressure on his wound with a towel, crimson soaking right through it.

CLAY

I shot him in the leg before he got into his car and sped off.

NIKKI

Did you think to check his plate?

CLAY

(shakes his head)
Didn't get a look. But it looked like a Dodge Challenger. Maybe black or dark blue, I couldn't really see.

NIKKI

Any idea who it could've been?

CLAY

I dunno. But it sounded like pop knew him.

Clay continues to GROAN as blood soaks through the towel.

CLAY (CONT'D)

If I don't get this looked at, I'm
gonna fucking bleed out, Nikki.

NIKKI

Well, you can't just go to the ER,
can you?

(beat)

I know someone.

INT. SHED - NIGHT

Richard lies sound asleep in the corner. His leg bandaged and wrapped in several layers of gauze.

INT. OZ'S TRAILER HOME - CONTINUOUS

Oz laughs, watching cartoons, eating cereal.

But he stops laughing suddenly. Listens. Sensing something.

He mutes the television. Listens some more.

Convinced something is amiss, he lifts his couch cushion,
pulls out his gun.

On high alert, he stands up...

Creeps towards his front door...

Then opens it suddenly--

Clay stands outside, clutching his upper chest and shoulder.

CLAY

Nikki sent me.

INT. OZ'S TRAILER HOME/KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Oz cleans the blood off with a wet rag to get a better look
at the wound-- several buckshot wounds spread deep into his
shoulder and upper chest.

OZ

(chuckles)

Rough night?

Clay sneers at him.

OZ (CONT'D)
Buck up, amigo, I'll fix you right
up, good as fucking new.

CLAY
You know what you're doing?

OZ
I was a medic back in the day,
marine corps.

Oz stands up.

OZ (CONT'D)
Just chill here for a minute, I'll
be right back. Keep putting
pressure on it.

Oz casually walks out the front door.

Clay keeps pressure on his wounds. Sees a light turn on in
the backyard through the back window above the sink.

He watches as Oz unlocks the padlock on the shed out back.
Disappears inside of it, shutting the door behind him.

Clay narrows his eyes suspiciously. Something isn't right.

While sitting at the counter, on a stool, Clay notices some
cash on the counter.

As he looks closer, he sees bloody fingerprints on the cash.

Looking even closer, Clay notices the signature RED MARK
tinging the edges of the bills.

The realization hitting him, Clay looks out to the shed in
the backyard again.

EXT. BACKYARD/SHED - MOMENTS LATER

As Oz moseys on out of the shed with medical supplies, he
looks ahead. Then stops--

Clay holds him at gunpoint.

CLAY
He's in the shed, isn't he?

Tense silence as they stare at each other.

OZ

I was just getting some supplies,
amigo. You DID want me to fix you
up, right--

WHAM! He gun-butts Oz over the face, dropping him.

CLAY

One move, I will fucking annihilate
you right here in your backyard.

Turning his attention to the shed, Clay inches towards it...

And yanks the door open!

But nobody's there.

Clay enters...

INT. SHED - CONTINUOUS

As moves in further, he sees bloody rags on the table. And then Richard's mask.

CLAY

Motherfucker!

Richard comes out from the corner--

And TACKLES Clay to the ground, the gun falling out of his hand, sliding across the concrete floor!

They grapple on the ground, fighting for position...

Clay gains the upper hand, on top of Richard, wailing on him, punching him the face!

But Richard reaches up, digs his fingers into Clay's shoulder wound!

CLAY (CONT'D)

Fuck!

Clay counters, punching Richard's leg wound-- Richard GRUNTS, rolls away.

Then gets to his feet.

Clay, also to his feet, squares up with him. Like two prize fighters at the center of the ring.

Clay throws a straight right--

But Richard is clearly more skilled in hand-to-hand combat, blocking the punch, getting him into a wrist-lock and then--

CRACK! Snapping his elbow backwards!

Clay HOWLS in agony, his bone sticking out of the arm!

WHAM! Richard nails him in the jaw with a right hook, following up with a straight leg-kick to the solar plexus!

Clay flies backwards into the wall, knocking a bunch of tools off the wall display.

Dropping to the floor, Clay grabs a heavy wrench as Richard moves in on him--

WHAM! Clay clubs him across the face--

Richard spits blood! Instantly drops to a knee.

Clay charges him, swinging the wrench again--

Richard throws a hard punch to the inside of Clay's knee, making him buckle and drop the wrench.

Now also on one knee, Clay throws a punch with his good arm--

But Richard catches it--

Crushes Clay with an elbow to the face and then--

CRACK! He snaps the other arm!

Clay squirms frantically on the ground while SCREAMING in pain, tears in his eyes, utterly helpless, both arms rendered useless and bent completely wrong.

Richard nabs a pitchfork off the wall, flips it in his hand--

THUNK! Stabs the pitchfork down into Clay's throat!

Clay tries getting the pitchfork out, gurgling blood...

But falls silent. Dead.

A hush...

Until RUNNING FOOTSTEPS!

Richard looks up, startled--

But it's just Oz, a gash above his eye.

Oz looks down at Clay's body. Grimaces in disgust.

EXT. OZ'S JUNK YARD - MOMENTS LATER**AT THE SCRAP PROCESSOR--**

Oz and Richard toss Clay's body-- bloody chunks spit out the other side, into a dumpster.

INT. OZ'S TRAILER HOME/KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Richard sits at the counter, downing a swig of whiskey straight from the bottle.

He passes it to Oz, his eye now bandaged up.

Oz takes a swig.

OZ

I see you haven't lost your touch.

He studies Richard, his perpetually stoic expression.

OZ (CONT'D)

You seemed much happier when you stopped doing hits.

RICHARD

I stopped for one reason. And she's not around anymore.

OZ

You could kill every motherfucker on the planet... ain't gonna change nothing.

(a beat)

Once all this is over, then what, huh? What purpose do you have?

Richard stares off, lost in thought.

INT. DALLAS'S APARTMENT/SARAH'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Sarah asleep next to her, Dallas wakes up to the DOORBELL.

INT. FRONT DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Holding her robe closed, Dallas opens the door--

Detective Foster smiles, shows Dallas his badge.

FOSTER
Hi, I'm Detective Foster.
(a beat)
Mind if I come in?

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Dallas brings Foster coffee, sits across from him.

FOSTER
Thank you.

He takes a sip, savors it.

FOSTER (CONT'D)
Long night.

He looks over his note pad, pen in hand.

FOSTER (CONT'D)
I understand your place of
employment is Gideon's Den?
(looks across to Dallas)
The gentleman's club?

DALLAS
(reluctant)
Yes.

FOSTER
And I understand Bud was there a
few nights ago?

DALLAS
He was.

FOSTER
I was told there was an altercation
between the two of you. He forced
you into his car?

Reluctant and nervous, Dallas nods.

DALLAS
Nothing out of the ordinary.

Foster nods, studying her very closely.

FOSTER
That makes you the last person to
see him alive.

Tense silence, Dallas feels Foster's suspicious stare.

INT. BREAKFAST DINER - MORNING

Richard sits alone at a booth, eating breakfast.

He looks across the dining room, to a HAPPY COUPLE at a table. Richard studies their interaction, transfixed...

Until a NEWSPAPER hits the table.

Richard looks at the front page headline: **"CRIME BOSS, SON MURDERED"**.

An FBI AGENT (early 40s, black suit and tie, ominous-looking, the type who could blend in easily) sits across from him.

They stare at each other.

FBI AGENT

Long time, no see, Richard.

Points to the NEWSPAPER.

FBI AGENT (CONT'D)

This wasn't part of the deal.

Richard wipes his mouth with a napkin, clearly bothered.

FBI AGENT (CONT'D)

Been hanging out at Gideon's Den lately?

RICHARD

You've been following me?

FBI AGENT

You're supposed to be dead, Richard. Dead people don't go to strip clubs. Are you TRYING to blow your cover?

RICHARD

No. I just don't care.

FBI AGENT

I get that, Richard, I do. But I bent over backwards to give you a regular life. You almost blew your cover once and I did everything I could to help you while you were locked up. Half the New York mob is just itching to find you. And if you blow your cover again, end up in jail again, they WILL find you.

(MORE)

FBI AGENT (CONT'D)

And I won't be able to protect you anymore.

RICHARD

Only reason I made that deal was to protect my wife.

(a beat)

There's nothing left to protect.

FBI AGENT

Yeah, for now, Richard. But if that ever changes and you decide to move on with your life... you're gonna be on your own.

INT. GIDEON'S DEN/AT THE BAR - NIGHT

Richard knocks back a glass of whiskey on the rocks.

Then turns, looks to the stage--

Where Dallas seduces the crowd with her sexy dance routine.

DALLAS--

Spots Richard at the bar. Unable to take her eyes off him as she works the stage.

INT. AT THE BAR - LATER THAT NIGHT

Richard takes a sip from his whiskey glass. As he sets the glass down on the bar...

Dallas pulls up a bar stool and sits right next to him.

DALLAS

Look who's back.

Richard turns, caught off guard.

DALLAS (CONT'D)

You're not some kinda creep, are you?

RICHARD

Do I look like a creep?

DALLAS

I dunno, I get a lot of them. They play it all quiet and cool, sitting alone at the bar, acting all innocent, wearing their wedding rings. Next thing I know, I'm running into them at Trader Joe's.

RICHARD

I shop at Whole Foods, so you got nothing to worry about.

Dallas can't help but smile.

A moment as they meet eyes.

DALLAS

Come on...

She takes his hand-- the moment lasts a lifetime.

And she takes him through the crowd, Richard just following her lead...

BACK OF THE ROOM

Her signature aviators over her eyes, Nikki scopes the club.

Foster stands next to her, ogling the SEXY DANCERS on stage.

FOSTER

Heard about Gideon. I'm sorry for your loss.

A single tear emerges from under her shade as she just gazes off at the stage.

Noticing, Foster lies a comforting hand on her shoulder.

But she turns, looking at his hand. Then at him.

Foster quickly retracts his hand-- he knows that look.

NIKKI

Don't ever do that again.

Nikki scopes the crowd again and spots Dallas. She watches her escort Richard to the back-- he walks with a limp.

IN THE CROWD

As Nikki guides Richard to the back...

She spots Nikki. Then raises her eyebrow suspiciously when she sees Foster with her.

BACK OF THE ROOM

Nikki watches Dallas and Richard disappear into the back.

NIKKI (CONT'D)
 (to Foster)
 I want you to keep an eye on her
 for me.

INT. LAP DANCE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Surrounded by other DANCERS giving lap dances, Dallas entertains Richard seductively, on his lap.

But Richard seems out of it.

DALLAS
 You okay?

Snapping out of it, he looks up at her. Nods.

DALLAS (CONT'D)
 Are you sure? You look like you
 just got back from a funeral.

Richard eyes the scars on her wrists.

RICHARD
 Who did that?

He touches the scars. Gently running his finger along them. She allows it. But she still manages to keep her guard up.

DALLAS
 Your wife know you come to places
 like this?

He shakes his head somberly.

RICHARD
 She's not around anymore.

DALLAS
 When my parents got divorced, my
 Dad still kept his ring on, too.

RICHARD
 We didn't get a divorce.

Dallas nods, catching on. Biting her tongue a bit.

DALLAS

Sorry.

Richard stares up at her, curious.

RICHARD

Do you like it here?

DALLAS

I'm good at what I do.

RICHARD

You don't have to like something to be good at it.

DALLAS

I like money.

RICHARD

What if you didn't have to worry about money?

She gives it some thought.

DALLAS

I don't live by hypotheticals.

ACROSS THE ROOM

Nikki puffs a cigarette by the curtain, watching Dallas and Richard from afar.

A BOUNCER stands next to her.

NIKKI

Who is he?

BOUNCER

Just another lonely soul falling under Dallas's spell.

Thick smoke pours from her lips.

NIKKI

Looks pretty mutual to me.

DALLAS--

Continues dancing for Richard, on his lap, face to face. Clear sexual tension between them. Maybe something even more.

She caresses the back of his neck, her hands reaching the back of his head. But she feels something hard back there. Feels around some more.

RICHARD
It's a metal plate. Had an accident
back in the day.

DALLAS
Must be a bitch getting through
airport security.

INT. RESTAURANT - THE NEXT DAY

Business slow, Richard sits alone at a booth, his back to us.

SLOW ZOOM ON the scar on the back of his head.

An empty plate with crumbs on it at the center of the table,
Richard looks over his notebook.

ON NOTEBOOK--

So far, the names OFFICER HAYDEN, BUD FRITZINGER, CLAY
FRITZINGER and GIDEON are all crossed out.

The only names remaining are LEWIS LYNCH and TOMMY
FRITZINGER.

--BACK TO SCENE

The WAITRESS comes over, takes Richard's plate.

WAITRESS
How was everything?

RICHARD
Great.
(beat)
Can you do me a favor and send my
compliments to the cook?

WAITRESS
(smiles)
Sure, thing. He'll like that.

Richard watches her disappear into the kitchen, approaching
the cook at the line-- LEWIS LYNCH (mid 30s). A big, thick
beast of a man covered in prison tats.

The WAITRESS points to Richard from the kitchen.

Grinning, Lewis looks to the dining room. But his expression
falls when he sees Richard.

INT. STATE PRISON/WEIGHT ROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Richard knocks out some reps on the pull-up bar, his vascular arms rippling with muscle.

The room pretty empty, he sees Officer Hayden and a few other PRISON GUARDS watching him, whispering amongst each other suspiciously.

Soon, they file out of the room, shutting the door. Officer Hayden watching from outside through the door's window.

Richard bangs out one more pull-up. Then drops to his feet--

Lewis Lynch creeps up from behind, a shank in his hand.

Before Richard can turn--

Lewis shanks him in his back, under his ribs!

Richard ROARS in pain, throwing an elbow back into Lewis's face--

Lewis staggers back, Richard staggering forward, the shank sticking out from his back.

Lewis rushes him, tackling him onto a weight bench.

A bench-press bar with a shit-ton of weights on each end sitting above Richard--

Lewis easily lifts the bar into the air with two hands, letting it drop down!

But Richard kicks Lewis back with both feet, rolls off the bench just in the nick of time--

CLANK! The bench-press barbell nearly collapses the weight bench as it slams down onto it!

Richard squares up to him, putting up his fists, in boxing stance, ready to throw hands.

But Lewis grabs 25-pound dumbbells in each hand, charging at Richard, throwing a vicious assault of punches--

Moving backwards, Richard's excellent head movement dodging the series of blows, the dumbbells just missing him.

Richard grabs a 25-pound plate from a rack, nails Lewis right inside his knee, making him buckle and bend over.

But Lewis keeps upright, smashing the dumbbells together, as if clapping his hands, trying to crush Richard's head--

But Richard moves back just as-- CLANK!

Richard tosses the plate like a frisbee at close range--

WHAM! Nailing Lewis right in the face, knocking him down.

Grimacing in pain, Richard pulls the shank out of his back, his sights on Lewis. Ready to perform the coupe de grace...

But the doors to the weight room open--

Officer Hayden watches, arms crossed, as TWO PRISON GUARDS march towards Richard with clubs.

Facing them, Richard drops the shank. Raising his arms into the air in submission.

But behind him--

Lewis gets up, gripping a big dumbbell tightly in his fist--

WHAM! He crushes the back of Richard's head with the dumbbell, dropping him hard.

INT. RESTAURANT/BOOTH - MORNING (BACK TO PRESENT)

Lewis slowly approaches Richard at his table. Then stops. Keeping a distance.

They stare at each other. Finally:

LEWIS

And here I thought someone actually liked my cooking.

RICHARD

(a beat)

The steak was actually pretty good. What's your secret?

LEWIS

The seasoning.

Lewis sits down across from Richard.

LEWIS (CONT'D)

Look. What I did... it was a very long time ago. They promised me early release. You would've done the same thing.

RICHARD

Who's The Doctor?

LEWIS

(a beat)

What does it matter? He's just another guy who got paid. Gideon Fritzingler's dead.

RICHARD

I don't care. I want to know everyone who was involved.

Brief silence.

LEWIS

It's fucked up what they did to your wife. I got a lady at home, myself. I'm just trying to get my shit together.

(beat)

What happened to your wife, I had nothing to do with. And coming here, trying to fuck up my shit ain't gonna bring her back. So, my suggestion to you... is to let sleeping dogs lie and move on with your life.

Richard only gives him the thousand-yard stare.

RICHARD

That's not gonna do it for me.

Another silence.

LEWIS

What do you wanna do?

RICHARD

I wanna fight.

Lewis CHUCKLES. But nods, studying Richard.

LEWIS

Okay.

EXT. BACK OF RESTAURANT - MOMENTS LATER

Back by the dumpsters...

Richard and Lewis stand about ten feet apart, Lewis stretching his arms, CRACKING his knuckles.

Richard waits. Eyes locked on his opponent.

LEWIS
You don't need to stretch?

Richard simply CRACKS his neck.

LEWIS (CONT'D)
Okay.

His fists up, Lewis moves forward like Mike Tyson...

He throws a punch--

But Richard easily dodges it, kicking Lewis in the nuts.

LEWIS (CONT'D)
Fuck!

As Lewis is bent over in pain--

WHAM! Richard throws a leg-kick to Lewis's inner thigh--

Lewis drops to a knee--

WHAM! Richard punches him in the nose--

Following it up with a fluid elbow to his face crushing his nose flat, blood gushing--

Every strike fluid and immediate, Richard pushes Lewis's chin back, exposing his throat, ready to deliver the death blow--

But he stops-- his opponent barely conscious.

Richard just tips him over, pushing him to his back.

Sparing his life, Richard tosses cash onto him.

RICHARD
I really did enjoy the steak.

As he turns to walk away, Lewis gaining his wits while on all fours...

LEWIS
Wilbur.

Richard stops. Turns, faces him curiously.

Lewis wipes blood from his nose. Looks up at Richard.

LEWIS (CONT'D)
I don't know what he looks like, I don't know who he is. It's just a name I heard.

Some level of respect for Lewis, Richard nods.

Then turns and walks off, back to his car.

EXT. SPECIAL NEEDS HOME - LATER THAT DAY

NURSES accompany PATIENTS, taking them for walks through the courtyard out front.

One NURSE in particular pushes Tommy Fritzingler around in his wheelchair.

EXT. AT THE CURB - CONTINUOUS

RICHARD'S MUSCLE CAR pulls up out front, at the edge of the property grounds.

INT. SPECIAL NEEDS HOME/TOMMY'S ROOM - LATER THAT DAY

Tommy stares out his window from his wheelchair. In the background--

Richard appears behind him. Just standing there ominously.

Tommy slowly turns. Looks up at Richard, his eyes wide.

INT. SPECIAL NEEDS HOME/HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Richard leaves the room, hurrying down the corridor passing a NURSE on her way to Tommy's room.

She stops. Turns.

NURSE

Excuse me, sir? Can I help you with something?

But Richard continues to walk away.

NURSE (CONT'D)

Sir!

Richard disappears around the corner.

The NURSE hurries into Tommy's room.

INT. SPECIAL NEEDS HOME/TOMMY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

But Tommy is fine. Just staring out the window.

INT. RICHARD'S MOTEL ROOM - LATER THAT DAY

Richard stares down at his list in his notebook.
 Frustrated, he tears the page out. Crumbles it into a ball.
 Then ponders to himself. *What now? What's left?*

INT. GIDEON'S DEN - NIGHT (DREAM SEQUENCE)**AT THE BAR--**

Richard watches Dallas on stage.

Despite there being a FULL CROWD gathered around the stage,
 it's like she's dancing just for him.

A surreal, dreamlike sequence, suddenly the room is empty and
 it's just Richard and Dallas, a ROMANTIC SONG playing.

INT. NIKKI'S HOME/LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Nikki smokes a cigarette, cell phone to her ear.

NURSE (V.O.)
 (filtered)
 Only patients we have on record
 with gunshot wounds over the past
 week were fatalities.

NIKKI
 No leg wounds?

NURSE (V.O.)
 (filtered)
 Sorry.

Nikki hangs up. Thinks. But picks up her phone again and
 dials a number.

EXT. OZ'S TRAILER HOME - CONTINUOUS

The SOUND of a CELL PHONE RINGING...

CRANE SHOT slowly rising above the trailer home...

Until we're looking at the SHED in the backyard.

INT. SHED - CONTINUOUS

Clay's cell phone, cracked and with dried blood on the screen, RINGS on the floor, illuminating in the dark. The battery almost dead.

The caller ID reads: "NIKKI".

INT. NIKKI'S HOME/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nikki reaches voice-mail. She hangs up, disappointed. Pondering to herself...

EXT. OZ'S JUNK YARD - DAY

SOUNDS of METAL BANGING as WORKERS go about there day, crushing scrap metal, organizing them in piles.

There's an OFFICE opposite the TRAILER HOME, right by the gate out front.

INT. OZ'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Oz sits behind his desk, rolling up a joint. A bandage over his gash from the other night.

OZ

I don't know what to tell you,
Nikki, been a while since I've
played doctor. Nobody came by.

A beat.

NIKKI

Nobody?

OZ

Just me and a couple old buddies:
Jack Daniels and Mary Jane.

Nikki exhales, disappointed as Oz lights up a joint.

NIKKI

Remember that spiffy-looking Dodge
Challenger you had in your garage?

OZ

What about it?

NIKKI

You still have it?

OZ
Sold that off a few years ago.

Nikki nods, still staring at Oz closely.

NIKKI
To who?

Oz pretends to think back. Shaking his head.

OZ
It was so long ago. I'd have to go
through the books.

A JUNKYARD EMPLOYEE enters the office.

JUNKYARD EMPLOYEE
Grabbing some lunch. You want
anything?

Oz sits up, grabbing some cash from his desk.

OZ
No, but get something for
everybody, on me today.

As Oz hands a hundred dollar bill to JUNKYARD EMPLOYEE, Nikki
sees a RED MARK drawn along the edge of the bill.

JUNKYARD EMPLOYEE takes the bill and leaves.

Nikki stares at Oz again, onto him. Holding a gaze on him.

NIKKI
What happened to your face?

UNDER HIS DESK-- We see Oz keeping a shotgun attached to the
bottom of his desk secretly pointed at Nikki.

OZ
I work with scrap metal all day.
Shit happens.

NIKKI
It certainly does.
(beat)
Well, I won't waste anymore of your
time.

She stands up.

NIKKI (CONT'D)
Keep an eye out for me, huh?

Oz forces a smile.

OZ

Always.

UNDER HIS DESK-- He takes his finger off the trigger.

INT. GIDEON'S DEN - NIGHT

Several DANCERS, including Dallas, work different areas of the stage, entertaining different sides of the room.

RICHARD--

Watches from the bar.

NIKKI--

Sips a martini at the other end of the bar, also watching.

DALLAS--

Sneaks Richard a wink from across the room, on stage.

NIKKI--

Notices. Looking to the other end of the bar and finding Richard.

ON STAGE

As Dallas bends over during a dance move, a ROWDY DRUNK pulls on her G-string and snaps it hard.

Appalled, she turns around, gives ROWDY DRUNK the stink-eye.

RICHARD--

Stands up, ready to beat the guys ass.

NIKKI--

Notices Richard standing. Growing even more suspicious.

DALLAS--

Also notices Richard standing.

She moves to a different area of the stage as BOUNCERS escort the ROWDY DRUNK out of the club.

But she glances back at Richard and can't help but smile.

RICHARD--

Sits back down. But looks to the other end of the bar and notices Nikki staring right at him.

INT. NIKKI'S OFFICE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Dallas cashes out, sets Nikki's cut on the desk.

But Nikki doesn't even acknowledge the money. She only stares at Dallas.

NIKKI

How's my granddaughter doing?

Dallas senses something off about Nikki's tone. Ill at ease.

DALLAS

Good.

NIKKI

Been a while since I've seen her.
Was thinking maybe sometime next
week, I can come by, visit.

Dallas forces a smile. Nods.

DALLAS

Sure.

Unsettled, Dallas stands up. Leaves.

Nikki's smile fades as she watches Dallas walk out the door.

EXT. GIDEON'S DEN - NIGHT

Dallas waits for her Uber ride at the curb.

RICHARD'S MUSCLE CAR pulls up. Window rolled down.

DALLAS

(smiles)

Hey.

Richard smiles. But hesitates. Until he finally grows balls.

RICHARD

I know it's late. But did you wanna
grab something to eat with me?

Dallas looks to the Uber ETA on her phone. Then at Richard.

INT. 24-HOUR DINER - LATER THAT NIGHT

Richard and Dallas sit across from each other at table right next to the window, talking over coffee.

DALLAS

So, what is it that you do for work, Richard?

Richard thinks of a good lie.

RICHARD

I'm in sales.

Dallas chortles just a bit.

DALLAS

Took a while to answer that.

(beat)

You don't look like a salesman.

RICHARD

I get that all the time.

She studies him for a moment.

DALLAS

You're not from here, are you?

RICHARD

What makes you say that?

DALLAS

Because everybody here knows each other. Ever been to one of them shitty towns where everybody who lives there is from there? Well, that's what this place is.

(beat)

No offense, but I'm not sure why anyone would want to come to a place like this. Unless they wanted to disappear. The people here are either criminals, crackheads... or people who are just stuck.

RICHARD

(a beat)

You're here.

She nods, wearing a somber expression.

DALLAS

Yeah. I am
 (a beat)
 It's like there's some kind of
 force-field keeping everyone here.
 One big, giant butterfly net.

Richard sympathizes with her, learning more and more.

RICHARD

Do you like the way they treat you
 there?

She eyes him curiously.

DALLAS

You're very protective, aren't you?
 Of women?

Richard only stares at her. She stares back. A cute silence.

But something else crosses Richard's mind. Something serious.

RICHARD

The lady I see there...

DALLAS

Nikki? The owner?

RICHARD

Yeah. What's her story?

DALLAS

Her story? Well, she's a miserable
 cunt, pardon my English. She's also
 sorta my mother in-law. Stepmother
 in law. Well, she used to be.

Richard nods. Thinking.

DALLAS (CONT'D)

Why do you ask?

RICHARD

I don't like her.

Dallas finds that peculiar.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

You never answered my question the
 other night.

DALLAS

Which one?

Richard leans in slightly, for a little more emphasis.

RICHARD

If you didn't have to worry about money, what would you do? Would you still be there?

Dallas thinks. Smiling as if imagining a better life.

DALLAS

Before my daughter, I had no reason to leave this town. I didn't even care. The only reason I'm working there is so I can take care of her. But if I didn't have to worry about money? I'd get as far away from this fucking place as I can get. Just me and her.

EXT. 24-HOUR DINER - CONTINUOUS

As Dallas and Richard continue to converse by the window...

INT. FOSTER'S CAR (PARKED) - ACROSS THE STREET - CONTINUOUS

Detective Kane Foster watches them from his vehicle.

He takes a few SNAPSHOTS of them with his cell phone. Then takes a few SNAPSHOTS of Richard's car parked out front. Capturing the license plate.

EXT. DALLAS'S APARTMENT BUILDING - LATER THAT NIGHT

RICHARD'S MUSCLE CAR pulls up to the front.

INT. MUSCLE CAR (PARKED) - CONTINUOUS

Richard and Dallas turn, looking to each other.

DALLAS

Thanks.

As she reaches out to the door to leave--

RICHARD

What's your name?

Dallas turns, looks at him.

DALLAS
You forgot already?

He shakes his head, staring at her sincerely.

RICHARD
I mean your real name.

There's a part of her that wants to tell him. Trust him. But--

DALLAS
I'll see you around, Richard.

And she gets out of the car.

Richard watches her head to the front entrance. She looks back, smiles at him... but unsure. She then disappears into her building.

EXT. MOTEL - MOMENTS LATER

Richard approaches the front entrance. But as he's about to open the door...

FOSTER'S CAR cruises past on the street behind him.

Richard stops. Turns.

And he curiously eyes FOSTER'S CAR as it drifts off further down the street. Something not right.

INT. RICHARD'S MOTEL ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Richard sits at the edge of the bed, staring down at the black duffel bag on the floor. Zipped open.

Staring at the pile of cash stuffed inside of it, RED MARKER lining the edges of the green stacks.

INT. DIVE BAR - LATER THAT NIGHT

A dimly lit Irish pub. A place Nikki would never go. Not her crowd. Not her ambiance.

Yet, here she is. Sitting at the bar next to Foster. Sticking out like a sore thumb in her flashy clothes.

Foster shows her the SNAPSHOTS of Richard and Dallas at the diner on his cell phone.

NIKKI

Who is he?

FOSTER

His vehicle's registered to a Richard Beaumont. He's staying at the Montgomery Motel right across the street from her.

Nikki swipes to the NEXT PHOTO: a snapshot of Richard's car parked outside the diner.

She zooms in on the car, seeing that it's a Dodge Challenger.

NIKKI

And who the fuck is Richard Beaumont?

FOSTER

I could do some digging...

Nikki gives him a condescending, sarcastic look.

NIKKI

Yeah, do that.

She stands up to leave.

FOSTER

You're not gonna stay for a drink?

Nikki lets out a sharp, sarcastic chortle and leaves.

INT. LAUNDROMAT - THE NEXT DAY

Richard stands at a washing machine, loading it.

He stops for a moment as he loads. Staring down at a blood-stained shirt in his hands.

Richard stuffs it into the washing machine. Uses a pre-paid laundromat card to start the wash cycle.

EXT. LAUNDROMAT - CONTINUOUS

Dallas pushes a wheeled laundry cart across the street, towards the laundromat. Her daughter, Sarah, tagging along.

In mid conversation while walking:

SARAH

He called me ugly. And then, at recess, he hit me really hard with a frisbee.

DALLAS

Well, next time he does something like that, I want you to kick him right in the balls.

Sarah laughs.

SARAH

Kate said he probably has a crush on me.

DALLAS

If that's the case, I'LL kick him in the balls.

They disappear into the laundromat.

Across the street sits...

INT. FOSTER'S CAR (PARKED) - ACROSS THE STREET - CONTINUOUS

Eyes bloodshot from lack of sleep, Detective Foster sits behind the wheel, watches her.

INT. LAUNDROMAT - LATER

As Dallas loads a washing machine, Sarah stares at a toy machine full of cheap, plastic trinkets.

Sarah has her eye on a pink, plastic toy ring.

SARAH

Mom, can I have a dollar?

DALLAS

I don't have a dollar on me, sweetie.

Sarah frowns, staring at the ring-- she wants it even more.

NEXT AISLE - MOMENTS LATER

Richard reads a newspaper.

Sensing something, he lowers the newspaper--

Sarah stands right in front of him, staring at him.

RICHARD

Hi.

SARAH

Do you have a dollar?

Caught off guard at first, Richard goes through his pockets. He fishes out a dollar and hands it to her.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Thank you!

DALLAS (O.S.)

Sarah? Sarah, where are you?

Dallas enters the aisle, desperately searching for Sarah. Finally, she spots her. Hurries over. But she slows as she notices Richard sitting there.

DALLAS (CONT'D)

Hey.

Richard seems surprised to see her.

DALLAS (CONT'D)

Do you... live around here?

RICHARD

(a beat)

I'm in the motel next door.

Dallas nods. Somewhat bothered.

DALLAS

Okay.

SARAH

He gave me a dollar!

Dallas snatches the dollar away from her. Gives it back to Richard, who doesn't take it back right away.

RICHARD

She can have it.

SARAH

(snippy)

No, thanks.

Sensing a little hostility, Richard takes the dollar back.

SARAH (CONT'D)
But he gave it to me!

Dallas takes Sarah's hand, tugs her along, back to the opposite aisle.

DALLAS
(hisses)
You can't just go up to strangers
asking for money!

Sarah glances back at Richard with a sad face. But Dallas keeps tugging her along by her hand.

Dallas glances back at Richard, unsettled that he's there.

After they disappear into the next aisle--

Richard catches something outside that grabs his attention.

He stands up slowly. Eyes locked on FOSTER'S CAR parked across the street-- he recognizes it from the night before.

As he draws closer to the front entrance, eyeballing FOSTER'S CAR through the storefront windows...

FOSTER'S CAR pulls out...

EXT. LAUNDROMAT - CONTINUOUS

Richard marches out, watching FOSTER'S CAR take off down the street.

INT. SPECIAL NEEDS HOME - DAY

FRONT DESK--

Nikki writes her name in the sign-in book.

As the RECEPTIONIST gives her a visitor's pass, the NURSE appears behind the counter, spotting Nikki.

NURSE
Oh-- hey, Mrs. Fritzingler!

Nikki forces a smile.

NURSE (CONT'D)
Did your husband get any of my
messages?

NIKKI

(a beat)

No. Why?

NURSE comes closer, making it a private conversation.

NURSE

There was someone here the other day. I saw him coming out of Tommy's room. Never seen him here before. Tommy's okay but I just found it odd.

NIKKI

What did he look like?

INT. SPECIAL NEEDS HOME/TOMMY'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Tommy sits by the window in his wheelchair, gazing out.

Nikki stands behind him, staring down at him. Her tone somber. Dour.

NIKKI

Sorry to tell you this, Tommy...
but your father's dead.

Tommy slowly turns. Looks up at her.

Then grabs her wrist suddenly, startling her. Pulls her closer to his level.

He moves his lips as if he were trying to speak. Struggling to get the words out due to his impediment.

TOMMY

(with a deep rasp)
Ri... Ri-chard.

Her eyes widen as if a switch just turned on in her head.

INT. GIDEON'S DEN/STAGE - NIGHT

Dallas works the stage. But she lacks her usual gusto. She looks to the bar and sees Richard there. Watching her.

Looking away, clearly weird about it, she focuses on the PATRONS at the side of the stage.

INT. AT THE BAR - LATER THAT NIGHT

Dallas approaches the bar, leans over it. As Scarlet pours herself and Dallas a shot a shot:

RICHARD

Hey.

Dallas CLANKS glasses with Scarlet, knocks back her shot.

DALLAS

How's the motel treating you?

She turns. Faces him. Waiting impatiently for an answer. But Richard only studies her, sensing something off.

DALLAS (CONT'D)

Why are you staying there?

RICHARD

I need a place to stay.

DALLAS

So, you're a TRAVELING salesman.

(beat)

Of all the motels you could've stayed at in this town, why that one? There's a Holiday Inn right by here, a Howard Johnson...

Richard reads her hostility.

RICHARD

Did I do something wrong?

Nikki interrupts their conversation.

NIKKI

Dallas!

Dallas turns to her, Nikki getting in the middle of them.

NIKKI (CONT'D)

I have a party who wants to reserve the VIP room. They requested YOU.

Dallas looks to a GROUP of sleazy, self-entitled YUPPIES standing at the other end of the bar, ogling Dallas from afar. Everything about them is unsavory.

NIKKI (CONT'D)

They have very, very deep pockets.

RICHARD

I already asked for the VIP room.

Nikki turns to Richard. Staring him coldly in the eye.

NIKKI

Is that so?

Richard nods, trading a glance with Dallas.

NIKKI (CONT'D)

Richard, is it?

This catches Richard off-guard. *How does she know my name?*

Dallas also finds it peculiar. Sensing tension between them and confused by it.

NIKKI (CONT'D)

You can't afford the VIP room.

Never taking his eyes away from Nikki's, Richard fishes into his jacket and brings out a thick stack of cash.

He hands the cash to her.

RICHARD

I think that should cover it.

Nikki reluctantly takes the money. Eyes the RED INK marking the edges of the stack. Then looks up at Richard.

Richard takes Dallas's hand, nods his head to the back, signaling her to come with him.

Miffed, Nikki watches them move through the crowd.

She gazes at the scar on the back of Richard's head as they disappear into the back-- her expression darkening.

FOSTER (V.O.)

The guy's a fucking lunatic...

INT. NIKKI'S OFFICE - LATER

Nikki flips through the contents of a manila folder, Detective Foster sitting across from her.

FOSTER

He killed his father when he was fucking 12. Bounced around from foster home to foster home, in and out of juvi...

Nikki flips to an old military PHOTO of Richard posing with FELLOW MARINES.

FOSTER (CONT'D)

Joined the marine corps under his birth name, Richard Zielinski.

As Nikki looks closer at the PHOTO, she focuses on a Hispanic soldier posing beside Richard: it's a younger Oz.

FOSTER (CONT'D)

Gets court-martialed for God knows what. Comes back, starts doing hits for the fucking New York mob. Then, all of a sudden, he's off the grid. Until he's charged for first degree felony assault under the name Richard Beaumont. Nearly beat a man to death with his bare hands.

(a beat)

Tommy fucking Fritzingler.

She looks at Foster, her full attention now his.

FOSTER (CONT'D)

Coincidentally, his wife gets whacked while he's locked up. And then he's released from Graterford Prison seven years later.

(a beat)

He just got out two weeks ago.

Rage in her eyes as she puts everything together.

FOSTER (CONT'D)

Listen, I talked to some people I know in New York. There's money on this guy's head. He whacked a boss. But everyone I've talked to, some pretty bad fucking people... they say this guy's no joke.

She gazes at her surveillance monitor, watching camera footage of Richard and Dallas in the VIP room.

INT. HOSPITAL/DELIVERY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The Doctor stands crouched at the end of a hospital bed, ANOTHER PREGNANT WOMAN in the midst of labor, breathing in and out, GROANING in pain.

Other NURSES and DOCTORS around the PREGNANT WOMAN.

THE DOCTOR
Keep breathing for me...

Suddenly--

BEEP-BEEP.

The Doctor takes a moment. Checks his beeper. Smiles.

INT. HOSPITAL/HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

The Doctor speaks on a pay phone hanging from the wall.

THE DOCTOR
Hello, Nikki. Was wondering when I
was gonna get a call.

INT. NIKKI'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Nikki continues to watch Richard and Dallas on her surveillance monitor, a lit cigar sitting in an ashtray, wisps of smoke rising up around her.

NIKKI
Busy tonight?

INT. HOSPITAL/HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The Doctor looks at his watch, curls his lip.

THE DOCTOR
I'm sure I can clear my schedule.

A beat.

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Heard about Gideon. That's too bad.

INT. NIKKI'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

A long silence as Nikki puffs her cigar.

THE DOCTOR (V.O.)
(filtered)
I've been waiting.

NIKKI
Good things come to those who wait.
(a beat)
(MORE)

NIKKI (CONT'D)
 Get ready to have fun. Because I
 need you to kill A LOT of people.

INT. HOSPITAL/HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The Doctor smiles, glad. Even giddy.

THE DOCTOR
 Well. I am just tickled pink to
 hear you say that.

He hangs up, barely able to contain his excitement. Until:

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)
 Woooooh!

INT. VIP ROOM - CONTINUOUS

CAMERAS in the ceiling corners...

Dallas dances uncomfortably for Richard, only putting up
 appearances for the cameras watching her.

DALLAS
 You and Nikki have some kind of
 history?

RICHARD
 (delayed)
 In a way.

Richard looks up, spots a camera watching them. A sense of
 urgency, he sits up, holding her by the shoulders to
 emphasise the importance of what he's about to say.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
 (urgent)
 Listen to me, you need to get out
 of this place, like now.

Dallas shoves his hands off of her.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
 (firmly)
 It's not safe here.

She gets off his lap, staring down at him, analyzing him.

DALLAS
 Who are you?

Tense silence as Dallas stares daggers into Richard.

DALLAS (CONT'D)

You just show up here and... try to come into my life? To what, save me or something? Let me tell you something, Richard, I work here because I choose to. I choose to take care of that little girl I got at home. And this place? When I'm here, I'm here. When I go home, I leave this shit behind. Everything that happens here, everyone I meet, only thing I take home with me is the fucking money.

RICHARD

You're not listening to me. I'm doing this to help YOU, help your daughter--

SMACK! Dallas slaps him hard across the face.

DALLAS

(measured)

Don't you dare talk about my daughter.

RICHARD

You said if you didn't have to worry about money, you'd get as far away from this place as possible. Right? I'm offering you that opportunity, right now. RIGHT now.

Tears in her eyes, she feigns laughter, mockingly.

DALLAS

You're just like every other lonely, pathetic incel that comes in here, waving around money, offering to take me away with them. Well, just like I tell everybody else-- fuck off. I don't need you.

Dallas turns to leave, but Richard grabs her wrist, keeping her there.

She turns, looking to his tight grip, stunned.

Devastated by his own knee-jerk reaction, he takes his hand away from her wrist.

A moment as they stare at each other.

DALLAS (CONT'D)

Just because you couldn't save your wife doesn't mean saving me's gonna make up for it.

And she storms out in a huff, Richard staring at that BUTTERFLY TATTOO on her back as she leaves.

He sits there alone. In his thoughts.

INT. OZ'S TRAILER HOME/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Oz hits a bong, cartoons playing on his television.

The water at the base of the bong bubbling as he sucks up thick, yellow-ish smoke filling the bong.

He pulls the slide--

And sucks all the smoke out of the bong.

Coughing, beating his chest, he exhales a massive cloud.

Clearing his throat, he laughs at the cartoon, Elmer Fudd trying to shoot Bugs Bunny-- but Bugs Bunny plugs the barrel with his finger, causing the shotgun to backfire on Elmer.

But Oz stops laughing suddenly. Listening.

He mutes the television. Listens some more.

Oz stands up.

EXT. OZ'S TRAILER HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Oz opens the door. Comes outside with his pistol.

He looks around, carefully scanning the perimeter.

After a few moments, he turns, heads back to his door.

But stops again. Looks back, giving his property another quick yet thorough scan.

Still unsure, he heads back inside.

INT. OZ'S TRAILER HOME - CONTINUOUS

He shuts the door. But stays there, facing his door. Still listening out.

Until sensing something behind him--

POP! Oz ducks, GUNSHOT narrowly missing, blowing a hole through his door.

Oz spins around, seeing The Doctor in all black, hoodie on, ducking behind the counter in the kitchen--

POP-POP-POP! Oz unleashes bullets, but misses, shattering pots and glasses sitting along his counter. POP! POP! He tries forcing The Doctor out from behind the counter.

The Doctor pokes his head up--

POP-POP-POP! Oz FIRES more SHOTS, missing again.

POP! The Doctor returns a SINGLE SHOT, hitting Oz in the gut--

POP-POP! Oz immediately returns GUNFIRE--

Until CLICK. CLICK. He's out of bullets.

A hush as Oz realizes he's fucked.

The coast clear, The Doctor emerges from behind the counter.

He cautiously moves towards Oz...

Not ready to give up, Oz snatches his bong, tries to use it as a weapon, swinging it--

POP! The Doctor shoots through it, blowing shattered glass into Oz's face like shrapnel, blinding him!

Blinking his eyes, Oz staggers back. Pulling glass shards out of his eyeball...

The Doctor stands over him. He knows he's won. The song "Africa" by Toto can be heard faintly coming from the earbuds lodged into his lobes.

He unsheathes a massive hunting knife.

INT. MUSCLE CAR (MOVING) - LATER THAT NIGHT

Richard drives, pondering deeply to himself...

FLASHBACK--

In SLOW-MOTION, an image of Nikki puffing her cigar, staring directly at him...

--BACK TO SCENE

A determined anger now crosses his face.

He shifts into high gear--

Hits the gas hard.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

RICHARD'S MUSCLE CAR whips into a parking spot, SCREECHING to a sudden stop.

INT. MOTEL/HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Moving with aggression and focused determination, he marches to his room.

INT. RICHARD'S MOTEL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Standing over the table by the window--

Richard loads cartridges into his shotgun--

CHA-CHUK! One ready in the chamber.

He sets the shotgun on the table. Goes to the black duffel bag, opening it--

Startled, he flinches back. In disbelief.

Then slowly opens the duffel bag again--

Oz's severed head sits inside of it, all the cash gone.

He looks up, at his reflection in the window--

And he sees The Doctor standing behind him, in all black, hoodie, gloves and plastic around his feet. Pointing a gun at Richard's head from a safe distance.

The Doctor holds Richard's mask in his other hand, giving it a look-over, smirking at it, mocking it.

But he focuses on Richard, who remains very still.

The Doctor tosses the mask to the bed. Carefully takes out his phone, never taking his eyes off Richard.

Scrolling through the phone, he stops.

THE DOCTOR
 People like you and me, Richard, we
 all have our rituals. You wear a
 mask...

The song "Africa" by Toto kicks in from his phone.

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)
 ... I need my tunes.

A still silence as they stare each other down, Richard eyeing
 The Doctor through the window reflection.

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)
 I know what you're thinking. But
 I'm not the monster everyone makes
 me out to be. You know what my day-
 job is?
 (chuckles)
 I'm an obstetrician. I deliver
 babies. The irony kills me just as
 much as it's probably killing you.
 Bringing life into the world by
 day... then I taketh away by night.

As "Africa" continues to play...

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)
 Your wife was one of the more
 difficult ones for me. Never killed
 a pregnant woman before.

Richard eyes the shotgun on the table. Then looks to the
 reflection in the window with hate in his eyes.

RICHARD
 Do YOU have a wife, Wilbur?

The Doctor narrows his eyes -- *How does he know my name?*

RICHARD (CONT'D)
 Children?

Slowly turns his head slightly.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
 That IS your name, isn't it?
 Wilbur?

The Doctor gives him a smirk while holding him at gunpoint as
"AFRICA" continues to play.

THE DOCTOR

I DID have some good news for you,
Richard. But I don't think I'm
gonna tell you--

Richard quickly goes for his shotgun--

POP! The Doctor SHOOTS Richard in the back of his head,
dropping him.

The back of his head bloodied, forming a puddle on the floor
beside him as The Doctor calmly draws towards him. Standing
over him, looking down at his handy work.

The Doctor kills the music. Throws his hoodie on.

He pulls Oz's severed head out of the duffel bag, dropping it
and letting roll on the floor.

And then leaves with the duffel bag full of money.

INT. DALLAS'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Dallas tiptoes in, sees the BABY-SITTER asleep on the couch.

Setting her purse on the coffee table, she sits next to her,
shaking her shoulder to wake her.

Dallas looks to the floor and sees blood dripping down.

Eyes wide, she turns the BABY-SITTER'S body--

Dallas SHRIEKS in horror at the sight of the BABY-SITTER, her
throat slit from ear to ear.

DALLAS

Sarah!

She stands up, runs to her daughter's room.

DALLAS (CONT'D)

SARAH!!!

Kicks the door open--

The Doctor sits on the bed, holding Sarah on his lap. A gun
in his free hand.

Sarah crying, The Doctor keeps his other arm wrapped around
her, keeping her from running.

He looks up at Dallas and smiles creepily at her.

THE DOCTOR

Hi.

CUT TO BLACK:

FADE IN:

INT. THE DOCTOR'S HOUSE/BASEMENT/SECRET ROOM - THE NEXT DAY

DALLAS'S EYES -- Flutter open.

DALLAS'S POV--

Vision blurred at first, her eyes eventually adjust to the bright lighting from overhead.

The Doctor sits in a rocking chair, sipping a beer with a double barrel shotgun on his lap.

--BACK TO SCENE

Dallas dangles from the ceiling by her hands bound together with rope, her toes a few inches off the floor.

She looks around. Panics suddenly.

DALLAS

Sarah! SARAH!!!

BOOM! The Doctor FIRES a SHOT into the soundproof wall, just missing Dallas.

THE DOCTOR

Let's take it down a few decibels,
huh?

DALLAS

Where's my daughter!

THE DOCTOR

Your daughter's fine. What do you
think I am, some kinda sicko? I
don't hurt kids.

DALLAS

Where is she?

THE DOCTOR

She's upstairs, watching cartoons.

DALLAS

(firmly)
Let me see her.

THE DOCTOR
 You've had your time.
 (looks at his watch)
 She's gonna have a good life.
 She'll be well taken care of.

The fear of God in her, she stares at The Doctor.

DALLAS
 What are you gonna do?

The Doctor smiles at her. Pats her cheek.

THE DOCTOR
 I'm gonna torture you. Until you
 die.

He turns, goes to what looks like a dartboard cabinet hanging
 from the wall in front of Dallas.

But he opens the cabinet--

Revealing an array of sharp torture weapons and objects.

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)
 And believe me, sweetie...

He turns back to her with a smile.

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)
 ... I'm gonna take my sweet time.

Dallas wiggles around, dangling from the ceiling frantically.

DALLAS
 You don't have to do this.

The Doctor takes a very sharp blade from the display case.

Then slowly approaches Dallas with it.

THE DOCTOR
 I'm highly compulsive. So, yes, I
 DO have to do this.

As he gets closer to her--

MARGARET (O.S.)
 (from upstairs)
 WILBUR!

Annoyed, The Doctor looks to the opened door.

THE DOCTOR

Yes, DEAR!

MARGARET (O.S.)

Can you please come up here and shut this kid up! She's ruining lunchtime!

The Doctor sighs. Looks to Dallas.

THE DOCTOR

To be continued, dot-dot-dot...

He drops the blade on the floor. Leaves the room.

Dallas is left dangling by her bound wrists.

She takes a few deep breaths. Thinks. Eyeballing the blade on the floor. The shotgun sitting on the rocking chair.

Dallas shuts her eyes for a moment. Thinking. Clearing her mind...

She opens her eyes. A newfound determination.

Dallas kicks her legs forward, again and again... until she starts to swing by her wrists...

She kicks her legs forward harder, as if on a swing, going back and forth, back and forth...

Another hard thrust with her legs, she swings forward... then backwards... kicking her legs forward again...

As if she were working the pole at work, she uses the forward momentum to flip the front of her body upside down, gripping the rope with both hands.

She gets to work on the complex knot around her wrists...

INT. THE DOCTOR'S HOUSE/CHILDREN'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The Doctor enters, Sarah immediately trying to escape.

But he easily blocks the doorway, keeping her back.

She kicks and slaps at him.

SARAH

I want my Mom!

He shoves her hard to the floor. Shuts the door behind him.

THE DOCTOR

I'm sorry. But you gotta keep it down in here, okay? You're making my wife angry. And when you make her angry, she makes ME angry, you understand?

Sarah wipes her eyes.

SARAH

(softly)
I want my Mom...

THE DOCTOR

Well, we can't always get we want, kiddo. BUT... your gram-gram will be here very soon to pick you up! How's that sound?

SARAH

I want my Mom.

THE DOCTOR

Trust me, you could do much worse. Gram-gram's rich. She could probably buy you a fucking pony if you wanted. I don't know about you, but I'd take the consolation prize.

INT. BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

The Doctor comes downstairs, en route to his secret room, the door hanging open.

SECRET ROOM

But he freezes when he looks up and sees that Dallas has pulled herself up to the ceiling and is untying the knot.

Dallas sees him--

They both look at the blade on the floor--

The Doctor goes for the blade--

Dallas gets the tie loose--

She drops down from the ceiling, THUDDING hard to the floor, beating him to the blade--

Dallas slashes The Doctors chest with the blade!

THE DOCTOR
 FUCK!!!

He staggers and then stumbles, falling to his back.

Dallas goes for the double-barrel shotgun, picks it up--

BOOM! She FIRES a SHOT--

But misses, The Doctor getting up and making a run for it!

BASEMENT STAIRWAY

Dallas chases after him...

BOOM! Misses again as he runs up the stairs.

She continues after him.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The Doctor runs up from the basement, rushing past his wife, MARGARET and TWINS having lunch at the table.

Dallas comes out, chasing after The Doctor. MARGARET and the TWINS act like nothing is wrong about this.

INT. FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Just as Dallas enters the hall, she sees The Doctor disappear into a bedroom, shutting the door.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dallas kicks the door open, keeps the shotgun pointed.

But she softens when she see The Doctor holding Sarah in front him, using her as a shield.

DALLAS
 Let her go.

THE DOCTOR
 (shrugs)
 Okay.

The Doctor shoves Sarah hard into Dallas, momentarily distracting her--

POP! The Doctor, in possession of a handgun, shoots Dallas in the shoulder, sending her flying backwards, into the--

INT. FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Dallas falls back into the wall, then drops to her rear, dropping the double-barrel shotgun.

Badly wounded, bleeding through her shirt, leaned back against the wall behind her.

Sarah runs over to her side, hugging her while crying.

SARAH
(crying)
Mom!

Dallas hugs her back.

DALLAS
It's okay, baby, everything's gonna
be okay...

The Doctor pulls Sarah off her, tossing her like a rag doll. Kicks the double-barrel shotgun away.

Wincing, he feels the slash across his chest. Then grits his teeth in anger, pointing his gun down at Dallas.

THE DOCTOR
I REALLY, REALLY wanted to torture
you...

About to pull the trigger--

The opening notes to "Africa" by Toto stop The Doctor.

Confused, he hears the song play out in the kitchen.

Curiosity getting the better of him, The Doctor follows the sound of the MUSIC.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Richard stands in the middle of the kitchen, staring at The Doctor through that terrifying death mask.

A stand off. Richard with his shotgun, The Doctor with his handgun.

THE DOCTOR
Well, this is awkward.

Richard has the shotgun aimed at The Doctor.

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)
You stole my song.

The Doctor points his handgun--

But-- BOOM! Richard SHOOTS The Doctor's hand, making him drop his handgun to the floor.

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)
FUCK!!!

Most of his fingers blown off, The Doctor clutches his bloodied hand, hopping up and down in pain.

Richard marches up to him methodically.

Until standing right in front of him.

MARGARET and the TWINS sit at the table in silence, watching the whole thing. Frozen still.

Bent over in pain, The Doctor looks up at Richard. Laughs.

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)
What are you gonna do? Kill me in front of my family--

BOOM! Richard SHOOTS him in the knee, dropping him to his good knee, HOWLING in pain.

But The Doctor lets out an evil chuckle. Looks up at Richard.

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Don't you wanna know where the kid is?

Richard cocks his head, curious.

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)
(grins)
You didn't know, did you?

Richard lowers his shotgun for a moment, completely blindsided by this revelation.

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)
She was born nice and healthy, I made sure of it.

But The Doctor's good hand slowly reaches down, inching towards to his pistol...

THE DOCTOR (CONT'D)
See? I'm not a monster...

Just as his hand gets close to his pistol on the floor--

BOOM! The Doctor's head completely explodes, blood splattering everywhere!

Sans head, The Doctor tips over, revealing--

Dallas behind him, pointing the double-barrel shotgun, smoke still coming out of it.

Richard slowly turns to MARGARET and the TWINS. Sees the black duffel bag full of cash on the table.

He goes to the table. Opens the bag. Takes out some cash and tosses it on the table for MARGARET and the TWINS.

Then takes the duffel bag and the rest of the money.

Dallas, clutching her bleeding shoulder, enters with Sarah under her other arm. Looking at Richard cautiously. Unable to recognize him.

Richard removes the mask. Tosses it to the floor.

THE BACK OF HIS HEAD -- Bleeding. Skin hanging off. The sun reflecting off the metal plate in his skull.

RICHARD

Let's go.

He reaches out his hand to Dallas.

She looks at his hand. Hesitates. But drops the double-barrel shotgun and allows him to take her by the hand.

Sarah seems scared. But Dallas smiles at her, ensuring her everything is fine.

They follow Richard to the front door--

Dallas stepping over Richard's mask lying on the floor.

MARGARET and the TWINS just watching them, frozen still, in silence.

Richard leads them to the--

FRONT DOOR

Richard opens it--

Revealing Nikki just arriving at the doorstep.

She freezes. Richard, Dallas and Sarah all staring back at her from the doorway.

Baffled, Nikki isn't sure what to do or say. But she looks down at little Sarah. Smiles. An awkward moment.

NIKKI

Hi, Sarah. Remember me? Grandma Nikki?

A beat. Dallas never taking her eyes off Nikki:

DALLAS

(to Sarah)
Baby? Cover your eyes.

Sarah covers her eyes with her hands.

Nikki goes for her rose-gold pistol in her purse--

Dallas snatches the shotgun from Richard--

BOOM! She SHOOTS Nikki in the kneecap!

EXT. THE DOCTOR'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Nikki SCREAMS in horrid pain, dropping to her good knee.

CHA-CHUK! BOOM! Dallas shoots her in the shoulder, Nikki's arm hanging off--

Dallas stands over her--

CHA-CHUK! She SHUCKS the shotgun again. Points it directly at Nikki's face as she writhes in pain...

But she doesn't pull the trigger. Instead, she lowers the shotgun. Then crouches down, closer to Nikki's level.

Looking Nikki dead in the eye, Dallas SNAPS her fingers.

DALLAS

Just like that, Nikki. I could take everything away from you.

Dallas hands the shotgun back to Richard. Lifts Sarah, carrying her. Passing Nikki, who continues to writhe in pain on the walkway outside.

INT. MUSCLE CAR (PARKED) - CONTINUOUS

Dallas comforts Sarah in the backseat as Richard gets behind the wheel.

EXT. THE DOCTOR'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

As RICHARD'S MUSCLE CAR leaves, we linger on Nikki SHRIEKING in pain on the ground.

Moments later...

FOSTER'S CAR pulls up in front of the house.

Foster gets out. Sees Nikki SHRIEKING, blood dripping from her horrific wounds.

He hurries over, stands over her, trying to help her.

INT. MUSCLE CAR (MOVING) - MOMENTS LATER

As Richard cruises along, he looks to the PHOTO of he and his wife Cassandra in the sun visor.

Dallas stares at the back of Richard's head, the metal plate visible under the blood and damaged skin.

She then looks to the mirror, studying his face.

DALLAS

Nicole.

Richard looks at her through his mirror.

DALLAS (CONT'D)

You asked me what my real name was.
It's Nicole.

Richard stares at her. Sharing a moment. Though keeping stoic.

He looks ahead to the road again.

As Richard drives, tears well up in his eyes. Manly tears without even changing his stoic expression.

He looks to the PHOTO of Cassandra hanging on the visor again as they stop at a light.

Suddenly, a **BUTTERFLY** lands on the windshield. Its wings colorful and bright. They all stare at the BUTTERFLY, sharing a moment. Pleasantly mystified.

Richard looks to his mirror and smiles when he sees little Sarah smiling at the sight of the BUTTERFLY.

Sarah sees him looking at her through his mirror. She smiles softly at him.

But as he stares at Sarah's smiling face through his mirror, he looks to CASSANDRA'S PHOTO again -- Cassandra's smile.

Curious, he looks at Sarah in the mirror again. Back at CASSANDRA'S PHOTO. Back at Sarah again. Staring at her...

They look an awful lot alike. Same facial features, bone structure. Same smile.

It's at that moment that Richard has a realization.

CUT TO BLACK:

THE END