

Love & Happiness

by

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FADE IN:

INT. POLICE STATION/SQUAD ROOM - DAY

DAVID LOWRY(30s). Disheveled, exhausted, heavy bags under eyes, nasty two day shadow. He meets with LAPD Detectives CHRIS HAUSER(40s), and KEVIN WHITNEY(40s), African American. With David is STEVE WALKER(30s), who appears very concerned.

DET. WHITNEY

Well, Mr. Lowry...

(slight chuckle)

This is some situation we have here.

DAVID

Believe me. I know it sounds crazy. If it wasn't happening to me, I wouldn't believe it myself.

(beat)

But everything I've told you is the truth.

DET. HAUSER

I'm sorry, Mr. Lowry, but the most we can do with this situation is make a report.

DAVID

A report? That's it? Are you kidding me?!

DET. HAUSER

No sir, at the moment that's all we can do.

DAVID

(stressing point)

There's a hired killer after me.

DET. WHITNEY

You have to be reasonable, Mr. Lowry. You've given us absolutely nothing to go on. You have no proof, and there hasn't been any attempt on your life.

DAVID

I'm telling you the truth, and I need your help.

DET. HAUSER

To put it bluntly, we don't have the proof, manpower, or the time to stay with you twenty-four seven to investigate something that might not be happening.

STEVE

There has to be something you can do?

DET. WHITNEY

If an attempt is made on Mr. Lowry's life, then we can act. But I'm afraid that is what it's going to take.

DAVID

(sullen)

Then you're looking at a dead man.

(lowers head)

How did I end up in this situation?

INT. TRUCK - MORNING

David is appears happy. Unassuming. He drives down Riverside Drive in Toluca Lake. He taps his steering wheel to a song on the radio.

He pulls to the curb in front of a small coffee joint. A female BARISTA comes out and hands him a cup of coffee.

DAVID

Thanks, Jessica.

David pays her. She smiles. He accelerates. He turns into an upper-class neighborhood. An insanely gorgeous WOMAN walking her dogs smiles and waves at him as he pulls into a large estate.

EXT. HUTTON ESTATE - MORNING

David parks next to a truck from Vineland Nursery.

BACKYARD

David passes a pleasant looking elderly woman watering plants. She's BETTY HUTTON(60s).

DAVID

Good morning, Betty.

BETTY

Good morning, David.

David walks to the backyard. Two WORKERS are planting budding shrubs in pre-dug holes. David pulls out a tape measure. He kneels down and measures the depth of the holes.

He hears the menacing growl of a dog. He slowly looks to his left. He's face-to-face with a white FRENCH POODLE.

The poodle looks like a cotton ball with teeth. She barks, growls, darts around him like she has overdosed on speed.

David reaches out to pet her. She attacks. He shoots to his feet. The poodle pounces on his right shoe. He gently pushes her away. The poodle comes at him again.

David picks up a tennis ball from the grass and throws it back over his head. The poodle runs after it. He turns his attention back to work.

David suddenly hears a slight splash, which is quickly followed by a brief yelp and odd sucking sound. His eyes widen. He slowly turns his head toward the sound.

DAVID

Oh, shit!

He leaps over shrubs to a near empty jacuzzi. The front legs and head of the poodle have been sucked down into the broken drain of the jacuzzi. Her hind legs and puffy tail stick straight up through the remaining nine inches of water.

JACUZZI

David jumps in. He grabs a hold of poodle and pulls as hard as humanly possible. No luck. He keeps trying. There is a sudden pop as he frees the deceased poodle from the drain. The tennis ball is clenched in her mouth.

The sudden release of pressure knocks David back. The poodle goes flying over his head. He climbs out of the jacuzzi.

BACKYARD

David looks around. No poodle. The two oblivious workers slide a shrub into the nearest hole. David starts to say something, but relents. He just stares hard at the hole.

INT. STEVE'S BAR & GRILL - DAY

David eats lunch with Steve. Eating with them is impeccable dresser and GQ wannabe MATT LIPMAN(28).

MATT

Hey, what about the Chargers game Sunday?  
I have sideline passes.

STEVE

I'm there.

DAVID

I can't.

MATT

I did say sideline... didn't I?

STEVE

You did.

MATT

You know just how hard it is to land sideline passes to a Chargers game?

DAVID

I appreciate the invite, but our anniversary is coming up soon and I haven't bought Cynthia anything yet.

David gets up and drops a twenty on the counter. Matt hands it back to him, then throws down a fifty from a wad of cash.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Thanks, Matt. I'll catch you guys tomorrow. I have a meeting in Encino with a new client.

David leaves. Matt turns to Steve.

MATT

Workin' man.

INT. MEDINA REAL ESTATE - DAY

A detailed residential model covers a large conference table. David looks at the model with LUIS MEDINA(50s).

LUIS

So David, as you can see the plan is for a sixty unit private subdivision. We are keeping with a Southwest theme. What we are looking for is a landscaper who can not only establish, but also maintain, all the landscaping. It pays five thousand per month. We break ground on the first house in about a month or so.

DAVID

I'm excited to have the opportunity.

INT. TRUCK - DAY

David eases to a stop sign. He eyes the realtor sign on the door of an SUV parked in front of a house for sale.

A slightly overweight WOMAN and a smiling COUPLE are on the porch. The couple kiss and embraces.

EXT. LEYLAND ESTATE/BACKYARD - DAY

KENT LEYLAND(80s), is a dominating presence. Walks with a cane. He greets David in his backyard. They shake hands.

MR. LEYLAND  
Hi, David.

DAVID  
Mr. Leyland.

They walk down to a fancy KOI Pond.

MR. LEYLAND  
I need you to design and install a stone path from the end of my patio to the pond. A bench down here would do as well.

DAVID  
No problem, sir.

MR. LEYLAND  
Good, good. You never disappoint.

DAVID  
Only my in-laws, sir.

INT. LIPMAN INVESTMENTS/MATT'S OFFICE - DAY

Matt reads the closing stock quotes on his computer. Disgusted, he turns it off. He grabs a stack of mail.

LOBBY

Matt drops the mail in a basket on his secretary's desk. He spots two WISE GUYS out in the parking lot.

MATT  
Shit.

EXT. REAR OF BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Matt bolts out a rear exit, and bumps into two WISE GUYS. One is FRANCO DONZINETTI(40s). He grabs a hold of his shirt.

FRANCO  
Going somewhere, shithead?

Franco turns to TOMMY LEYLAND(20s). Slightly off.

FRANCO (CONT'D)  
Tommy, go let Anthony and Nick in.

INT. LIPMAN INVESTMENTS/MATT'S OFFICE - DAY

Joining Franco and Tommy are ANTHONY MUNOZ(30s). Muscular and intimidating, and NICK LAZZARI(50s). Very ominous presence.

Tommy holds a golf club from Matt's golf bag. Matt trembles as sweat runs down his face.

FRANCO

You've missed your last two payments.  
Mr. Leyland doesn't appreciate that.

MATT

I just need three weeks.

NICK

That's very good to know, Matt.

Anthony punches Matt. He then grabs him by the hair and yanks him up into a sitting position. He forces Matt's left-hand, palm down, onto the desk. Franco nods to Tommy.

MATT

Please... Don't do this.

Tommy rears the club back. He swings down hard. Matt screams and jolts in his chair, but Tommy misses his hand.

Tommy rolls his eyes and rears the club back once again. Matt grows anxious. Tommy swings the club down hard, but misses Matt's hand yet again.

FRANCO

You gotta be fuckin' kiddin' me?!

Nick yanks the club away from Tommy. He motions to Anthony, who let's go of Matt's hand. Nick leans in close to Matt.

NICK

If you move your hand, you're dead.

Nick rears the club back. Sadistic hesitation. Then swings it down hard. The club bashes into Matt's hand. He screams out, bowls over forward, and cries loudly as he clutches his badly broken hand.

Franco nods his approval. He then firmly grips Matt's shoulder and leans close to his ear.

FRANCO

You will pay Mr. Leyland thirty thousand dollars for this inconvenience.

INT. LOWRY APARTMENT - MORNING

David sits at the kitchen table. He drinks coffee and reads a landscaping supply catalog. Also at the table is his lovely wife, CYNTHIA(30s). She feeds their son, BRYAN(18 months). Across from David is his adorable daughter, AMBER(6).

Amber colors in a coloring book. She mimics David's every move. David turns a page. Amber turns a page. David grins. Amber grins. David sips his coffee. Amber sips her milk. David shoots Amber a look.

DAVID

Gotcha!

Amber bursts out in laughter.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Time for daddy to get to work.

He gets up. He kisses Cynthia. Gives Amber and Bryan a peck on the forehead.

CYNTHIA

Have a good day.

INT. HOUSE FOR SALE - DAY

David is shown the house by real estate agent ANGIE McBRIDE (40s). Slightly overweight. Pleasantly perky. He looks at Angie and shakes his head no. Angie smiles.

INT. SECOND HOUSE FOR SALE - DAY

David looks it over. Shakes his head no. Angie smiles.

INT. THIRD HOUSE FOR SALE - NIGHT

David rejects it. Angie forces a half-smile. Frowns.

INT. FOURTH HOUSE FOR SALE - DAY

David shakes his head. No smile from Angie this time.

INT. FIFTH HOUSE FOR SALE - DAY

David looks at Angie and nods. Big smile from Angie.

EXT. LOWRY HOUSE - DAY

David pulls into the driveway of his new house. He gets out of his truck. He removes the SOLD sign, and walks up to the front door, keys in hand.



INT. LOWRY HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

David enters. The house is empty, quiet, peaceful. He walks through it, glancing into each room. He ends up back in the living room. He runs his hand along the fireplace mantle.

David is beaming with pride. He hears a car door shut. A moment later the front door opens. Steve enters.

STEVE

Very nice, man. But can you afford this?

DAVID

It'll be real tight for a while, but once I start the Medina account it'll be okay.

INT. ELEGANT RESTAURANT - NIGHT

David and Cynthia are at dinner with Cynthia's parents, RICHARD and MARJORIE, both late-50s.

RICHARD

All I am saying is you two can improve your situation with a little more effort.

CYNTHIA

Dad, we're fine, and we're happy.

DAVID

Cynthia and the kids are well provided for.

RICHARD

I think you can do a lot better.

DAVID

Than who? We're not in competition here.

RICHARD

I just think you've settled.

DAVID

Settled?

RICHARD

Why don't you come work for me, David? Cemetery plots are big business. After all, everybody dies.

DAVID

(sotto)  
Some not soon enough.

INT. TRUCK - NIGHT

DAVID  
What the hell was that about?

CYNTHIA  
You know my father. He's the way he is.

DAVID  
Being that we've SETTLED and all.

CYNTHIA  
Don't let him get to you.  
(looks around)  
Where are we going?

DAVID  
Steve's. We won't stay long.

EXT. LOWRY HOUSE - NIGHT

David pulls into driveway. He and Cynthia get out.

CYNTHIA  
I thought Steve lived in Burbank?

They approach the front door. David opens the door.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)  
What are you doing?

David enters the house. Cynthia reluctantly follows him.

INT. LOWRY HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

David and Cynthia enter the living room. The fireplace is lit. A picnic blanket is laid out with a full picnic basket and a bottle of champagne. Tony Bennett plays from an iPod.

CYNTHIA  
What is all this?

David slowly pulls out the house keys. He jiggles them.

DAVID  
Happy anniversary.

Cynthia screams. She hugs David as tears stream down her face. Cynthia disappears down the hall. She yells to David as she checks every room. She returns to the living room.

CYNTHIA  
How can we afford this?

DAVID

It won't kick in for about another month,  
but I landed that big new account.  
Combined with what I already make, we're  
more than fine.

They kiss passionately, gently sliding down onto the blanket.

EXT. LOWRY HOUSE - MORNING

Angie's SUV is parked in the driveway.

INT. LOWRY HOUSE - MORNING

Angie walks in with a fruit basket and bottle of wine.

ANGIE

Hello... Mr. Lowry?

She enters the living room. She stops! Gasps! Stumbles back!  
David and Cynthia are making passionate love.

ANGIE (CONT'D)

Oh, my!

She drops the fruit basket and bottle of wine.

Surprised, David shoots to his feet, baring all. He  
frantically puts his pants on.

Wide-eyed and near shock, Angie stumbles back, putting her  
hand on her chest.

DAVID

Mrs. McBride. Hello.

Laughing hysterically, Cynthia can only bury her face in the  
pillow. David rushes over to Angie.

ANGIE

I just wanted to welcome you to your new  
house.

(looks at Cynthia)

But I see you've already started  
celebrating.

She begins to wobble. David holds her up. He helps her walk  
back to the front door. She quickly steps outside.

DAVID

Thanks for stopping by.

Angie makes a quick retreat. David shuts the door. Laughs.

INT. LOWRY HOUSE - NIGHT

David and Cynthia have moved in. Cynthia sits on the sofa. She finishes brushing Amber's hair. David enters.

CYNTHIA

Time to brush your teeth and go to bed.

Amber jumps off her lap. She gives Cynthia a kiss and a hug.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

Daddy will tuck you in after you brush your teeth. Sweet dreams.

AMBER

Goodnight, mommy.

Amber goes down the hall. David joins Cynthia on the sofa.

AMBER'S BEDROOM

Amber turns on the bedroom light. Her young imagination runs wild. The bedroom looks frightening. The dolls, her closet, the huge tree outside the window. She rushes out of the room.

LIVING ROOM

Amber rushes back into the living room.

AMBER

Bryan can sleep in my room. His crib will fit in there.

CYNTHIA

You have your own rooms now.

AMBER

I don't mind if he sleeps in my room.

DAVID

Why don't you show me your room.

AMBER'S BEDROOM

Amber leads David in to her room.

DAVID

Can I look around?

AMBER

Sure.

David kneels down and looks under the bed.

DAVID

Well, there's nothing under here.

He goes to the window. He casually pulls down the blind and shuts the curtains. He points to the closet.

DAVID (CONT'D)

What's in there?

AMBER

My closnet.

He opens the closet door. He looks inside then shuts it.

DAVID

Nothing in there but clothes.

(beat)

Come on, jump into bed.

Amber climbs into bed. He tucks her in. She holds onto a plush puppy. He pulls out a Tinkerbelle night light.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I found this night light.

AMBER

You can turn it on in here.

DAVID

Good idea.

(kisses her)

Good night, pumpkin.

He plugs in the night light. As he leaves the bedroom he leaves the door ajar.

INT. LIPMAN INVESTMENTS/MATT'S OFFICE - DAY

Matt is battered. His left-hand is in a cast. Face bruised.

MATT

(into phone)

What the hell are you telling me?

MAN (V.O.)

(thru phone)

CXM Labs big cancer drug Axtrium is not going to be endorsed by the food and drug administration. They'll announce the refusal on March twentieth.

Matt repeatedly slams down the receiver. His beautiful secretary enters his office. She's WENDY COOKE(20s).

WENDY

You okay?

MATT

(screams)

Do I look okay to you?!

WENDY

Screw you!

She storms out of his office. Slams the door.

EXT. LOWRY HOUSE/BACKYARD - DAY

Amber and her friend LISA(6) lay on the back covered patio, and draw in their coloring books.

David holds a drawing of the back yard. He has several X marked on the paper with notes - Tree. Shrub. Plants.

Using his drawing and notes as a guide, he spray paints different size X's around the yard.

INT. LOWRY HOUSE/AMBER'S BEDROOM - DAY

Amber's bedroom walls have been vividly painted with cartoon animals and characters. Her ceiling has a rainbow painted across it.

There is also a toy chest made to look like an underwater sea chest, and a small desk for her to color and draw. Cynthia and her friend, RACHEL MARTELLI(30s) work on a princess bed with a princess canopy.

CYNTHIA

I can't thank you enough for giving me all this stuff and help.

RACHEL

Actually you're helping me. We took this out of Tracy's room when she turned eleven, and Lisa has her own set up. All this was just cluttering our basement.

EXT. LOWRY HOUSE/BACKYARD - DAY

David takes a pickaxe. He lines it up over a red X on the grass and swings down at the lawn. A geyser of water shoots up at his chin and face. He flails his arms.

DAVID

Turn it off! Turn it off!

Cynthia and Rachel run out into the backyard.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
Turn it off!

Cynthia runs over and turns off the main water valve. David is completely drenched.

Agitated, he throws the pickaxe. It hits a small stone wall and ricochets back into his shin. He grabs his shin and hops around in agony. Amber and Lisa laugh hysterically.

INT. LEYLAND ESTATE/STUDY - NIGHT

Mr. Leyland meets with Anthony, Franco, and Nick.

MR. LEYLAND  
Matt is a pissant. I trust that you explained the seriousness of his situation to him?

FRANCO  
He understands perfectly.

ANTHONY  
It was the damndest thing I ever saw. He was suddenly and viciously attacked by his number four iron.

MR. LEYLAND  
Have you been teaching Tommy the ropes?

FRANCO  
Yeah, boss. I mean, it's taking some time, but he's getting the hang of it.

ANTHONY  
We're getting him involved.

MR. LEYLAND  
Get him MORE involved. That's the only way I can make a man out of my grandson.

INT. LIPMAN INVESTMENTS - DAY

Nick enters the office. Wendy is at her desk.

NICK  
Hey, toots.

WENDY  
(annoyed)  
Can I help you?

NICK  
I'm here to see Matt.

WENDY  
Do you have an appointment?

NICK  
No, but aah, he's expecting me.

WENDY  
He isn't in.

NICK  
Okay. I'll be back

WENDY  
Gee... I'll go alert the media.

Nick winks at Wendy and leaves. Wendy mouths the word "Toots" with an annoyed look.

EXT. MATT'S HOUSE - DAY

Matt's expensive house is a nicely landscaped two-story English Tudor. David's truck is parked out front.

EXT. MATT'S HOUSE/BACKYARD - DAY

The backyard is elaborate in design with a stone jacuzzi and pool. David works on a fire pit.

INT. MATT'S HOUSE/DEN - DAY

Matt looks out into his backyard. He sees David finishing up for the day. He goes to his desk, takes out a presentation folder and a business check book.

Matt writes a four thousand dollar check to David. Looks at a calendar. Puts a month old date on it. He slips it into an envelope. He leaves the room with the envelope and folder.

EXT. MATT'S HOUSE/BACKYARD - DAY

Matt comes out. David reacts to Matt's appearance.

DAVID  
What the hell happened to you?

MATT  
It's nothing. I fell off my ladder.

DAVID  
Stick to what you know, Matt.



MATT  
Speaking of which... You got a minute?

DAVID  
Sure. What's up?

They walk over and sit at Matt's patio table.

MATT  
Remember that three hundred dollars you  
invested with me?

He hands David the envelope. He pulls out the check.

DAVID  
(reacts)  
Wow, all this from that one investment?  
(shakes head)  
Man... If only my job would pay this  
easily.

MATT  
About that. I think it is time to get you  
something much more substantial.  
(stressing point)  
But listen. You can't repeat what I'm  
about to tell you. It's insider trading  
information. Jail time.

DAVID  
Understood.

Matt hands David the presentation folder. He opens it.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
What is this?

MATT  
David, I've made you a nice profit on  
both your prior investments, so you know  
I'm not going to bullshit you.  
(beat)  
I have a can't miss proposition. I'm  
talking big turnover here. In about six  
weeks the FDA is going to announce the  
approval of a new cancer drug called  
Axtrium. CXM Labs owns the patent. Once  
the announcement is made CXM stock is  
going to skyrocket. If you get in right  
now, you end up being a millionaire when  
you sell.

DAVID

Matt, I understand what you're saying, but I just don't have the money right now. I'm barely covering our bills, and my new account hasn't kicked in yet.

MATT

I didn't buy this house with chump change. You know how much this cost me?

DAVID

No... no idea.

MATT

One point five million. I paid for it in cash, David... cash. And where am I every time you show up at Steve's?

DAVID

At Steve's.

MATT

That's because I get off at one-thirty everyday with weekends off. I know my business, so you need to trust what I am saying. You need to buy stock at it's current value. But you can't buy it too close to the announcement or the SEC will be on our ass. NOW is the time to buy.

DAVID

Sounds tempting, but...

MATT

Tempting? Tempting? For a thirty thousand dollar investment, you'll secure the future for your family.

DAVID

(reacts)

Thirty thousand dollars?!

(laughs)

I can't afford five hundred dollars.

MATT

David, I'm trying hard to make you money, a LOT of money.

DAVID

Matt, I have to think of my family. I can't risk a huge financial investment.

MATT

I understand your reluctance. But you just bought a house, so you have a mortgage, insurance, taxes, and more expensive bills. Plus you have two kids. You gotta start thinking about their futures... Private school, braces, and college. How are you going to afford all that on what you make as self-employed one man landscaping company?

DAVID

(gestures)

Okay, okay. I get it.

MATT

At least let me take the four grand and roll it over for you.

DAVID

(reluctant)

I don't know, I need the money.

MATT

Exactly! That's what I'm saying. You never have enough money. And I'm trying hard here to make you MORE money. At the very least let me roll it over and get you a nice fat return. You'll thank me.

Matt reaches for the check. Indecision. David finally relents. Matt takes the check back. Matt puts his arm around David's shoulder.

MATT (CONT'D)

(faux sincerity)

I'm just looking out for you, buddy.

DAVID

Yeah...

(nods)

I know.

(beat)

Look... I gotta get goin'.

MATT

Read that, but don't be too long.

DAVID

I'll think about it.

David slides the folder under his arm. He grabs his equipment and leaves. As soon as David is gone, Matt rips up the check.

INT. LOWRY HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

Amber strolls in carrying a two-month old PUPPY. Cynthia is busy washing vegetables.

CYNTHIA  
Hey, pumpkin.

AMBER  
This is Buster.

Cynthia turns to see the puppy. She kneels down.

CYNTHIA  
Honey, where did you get this puppy?

AMBER  
Miz Miller. She has a whole bunch. She says Buster broke into her house.

CYNTHIA  
I think she means he's house broken.  
(beat)  
I don't think we can keep him, honey.

AMBER  
Please mommy. I'll take care of him.

CYNTHIA  
We'll see. I'll have to talk to your father. Until then keep him in your room. Right now, how about some lunch?

AMBER  
I want an aptle. I'm trying to watch my clestol.

CYNTHIA  
(chuckles)  
Go watch cartoons. I'll bring it to you.

LIVING ROOM

Amber sits on the sofa with Buster. She's watching cartoons. Bryan sleeps in his crib. Cynthia brings in a plate with the sliced apple on it. She sets it down.

AMBER  
Thank you, mommy.

Amber starts eating the apple, sharing with Buster.

INT. LOWRY HOUSE/MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

David wakes up. He can hear rain. He climbs out of bed.

STUDY

David sits at his desk. The only illumination his desk light. He grabs his bills and a calculator. He starts adding up his bills. He compares his bills with his current income. His leftover monthly cash is only four hundred dollars.

INT. MATT'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - MORNING

Matt walks into the kitchen. He pours himself a cup of coffee. Glances out at the rain. He turns to find Nick standing in front of him.

Startled, Matt jumps back, splashing coffee all over himself and the floor. Nick just stands motionless without saying a word.

MATT  
Jesus Christ!

Nick stares hard at Matt.

NICK  
Tick... Tock. Tick... Tock. And I don't  
mean the app.

Nick leaves. Unnerved, Matt lets out a tremendous sigh.

INT. LOWRY HOUSE/KITCHEN - MORNING

Cynthia cooks breakfast.

STUDY

David sits at his desk as it rains outside. He pulls out Luis Medina's business card. He calls. He gets a "This number is no longer in service" message. He appears very concerned.

AMBER'S BEDROOM

Amber plays with Buster. She dresses him up in doll clothes.

INT. LIPMAN INVESTMENTS/LOBBY - MORNING

Matt enters. A Tylenol pill box suddenly whacks him in the face. Annoyed, he looks over to see Wendy.

WENDY

Your accident came looking for you, and it wasn't a social call. From the looks of him, you're gonna need a lot more pain killers.

MATT

What are you talking about?

WENDY

How much trouble are you in?

MATT

I'm not in any trouble.

WENDY

Bullshit. You're lying, and I don't appreciate being put in this kind of situation.

INT. LOWRY HOUSE/DINING ROOM - MORNING

David tries Luis Medina on his cellphone, but gets the same message. Cynthia brings him breakfast.

DAVID

Thanks, babe.

CYNTHIA

(concerned)  
You okay?

DAVID

Yeah, just tired.

AMBER'S BEDROOM

Amber has Buster dressed in doll clothes. As she plays with her tea set, she doesn't notice Buster slip away. He reaches the bedroom door.

AMBER

No, Buster!

HALLWAY

Buster quickly makes his way down the hallway, shedding the doll clothes along the way.

DINING ROOM

Buster stops at the edge of the dining room. He zeroes in on David's bare feet under the table.

ANGLE ON

David, as he suddenly leaps out of his chair. His coffee and food go flying everywhere. He arms himself with a heavy vase. He frantically searches for the culprit.

Both Amber and Cynthia rush into the dining room just as David spots Buster.

                                AMBER  
No, daddy!

Amber quickly picks Buster up.

                                AMBER (CONT'D)  
It's Buster!

Cynthia steps in front of David, taking the vase from him.

                                CYNTHIA  
It's just Amber's puppy. Mrs. Miller gave him to her.

                                DAVID  
(livid)  
A dog! No! We're not keeping a dog!

                                AMBER  
(crying)  
Daddy, he's my puppy.

                                DAVID  
(yells)  
No!

                                CYNTHIA  
Amber, take Buster to your room.

Amber, crying hysterically, makes a quick exit with Buster.

                                CYNTHIA (CONT'D)  
Are you proud of yourself?

                                DAVID  
What are you thinking? I told you money's tight. We can't afford a dog.

                                CYNTHIA  
It's only a puppy. And Amber needs a pet.

                                DAVID  
(shakes head)  
Why, exactly, does Amber need a pet?

CYNTHIA

We moved her away from her friends, and she hasn't had time to make new ones. And for the first time she has her own room. This is a lot for her to get used to.

DAVID

She'll adapt!

Cynthia points toward the hallway.

CYNTHIA

If you don't want her to keep the puppy, then YOU go tell her.

DAVID

No problem!

AMBER'S BEDROOM

David enters. Amber and Buster are nowhere to be seen. He hears crying and sniffles from under the bed. He kneels down and looks under the bed.

Amber is lying under the bed with Buster cuddled up next to her. Their faces side by side. Both look up at him with sad, tear-filled eyes. David sits up on his knees. He sighs, shakes his head, and looks up.

DAVID

(sotto)

You gotta be kiddin' me... What is this, a fuckin' Disney movie?

After a moment, David lies on his stomach. Tears stream down Amber's face.

AMBER

Daddy, are you going to take Buster away?

DAVID

So, you really like him, huh?

AMBER

He's my friend.

DAVID

He looks like a good puppy.

AMBER

He is.



DAVID

If I let you keep him, you have to take care of him. You'll have to feed him every day, walk him in the backyard, and give him a bath every week.

Amber nods, then wipes the tears from her face.

AMBER

I'll take care of him. I will.

DAVID

Well then, looks like you have a puppy.

Buster crawls forward and licks David's face.

DINING ROOM

David comes back into the dining room. Cynthia is cleaning up the mess. She shoots him a grin. He grabs his jacket.

DAVID

I'll be back later.

CYNTHIA

(smiles)

Don't forget Puppy Chow.

EXT. MEDINA REAL ESTATE - DAY

David comes to the office. It is empty. There is a large FOR LEASE sign in the window.

DAVID

Oh, shit. No.

The PROPERTY MANAGER comes out of the nearby leasing office.

DAVID (CONT'D)

What happened to Medina Real Estate?

PROPERTY MANAGER

Went bankrupt. The contractor stole the money and fled to Guatemala.

Davis looks at him with a blank stare.

DAVID

Did what?

INT. DAVID'S TRUCK - DAY

Heavy rain falls. David sits in his truck. Shell shocked.

INT. BANK - DAY

David hands the TELLER a transfer slip, transferring five thousand dollars from his savings account into his checking account. The teller hands him back a receipt.

INT. LIPMAN INVESTMENTS/LOBBY - DAY

David enters. Wendy shoots him a smile.

WENDY  
Hi, David.

David points to Matt's office door.

DAVID  
He in?

WENDY  
Yeah, the asshole's in.

MATT'S OFFICE

David enters. Matt quickly puts away paperwork.

MATT  
David.

They shake hands. David sits down.

DAVID  
(points over shoulder)  
So... What's going on?

MATT  
I think it's her time of the month.

DAVID  
Look, I'm in trouble. Real trouble.

MATT  
What kind of trouble?

DAVID  
My deal fell through. Without that account I'm gonna lose the house. I don't know what I am going to tell Cynthia? Things are a lot more expensive than I thought they would be.  
(sighs)  
When did life get so damn expensive?

MATT

The moment you took on a mortgage.

DAVID

I could really use that four grand back.

MATT

Can't do it. Already invested. You won't see any it for another three months.

DAVID

I don't know what to do?

MATT

I gave you a can't miss investment proposal.

DAVID

(frustrated)

Have you been listening to me at all? I'm broke. I jumped in over my head with the house. And you want me to invest thirty grand that I don't have?

MATT

I can secure you the money.

DAVID

How?

MATT

You have your own business. You have good credit. And you have a house. That is enough to secure you a bank loan. Now, just as a fail safe, all I need to do is buff up your investment portfolio.

DAVID

I have an investment portfolio?

MATT

No.

DAVID

But you're going to buff it up?

MATT

Exactly.

DAVID

I'll pass. I don't want to get involved in anything illegal.

MATT

Nobody is doing anything illegal. The portfolio will be yours, just based on future earnings, which will be marked as current earnings.

Matt gets up and paces the office.

MATT (CONT'D)

You have two choices here. Number one, you let me get you out of this mess. Number two, you suffer the complete and total humiliation of Cynthia going to her father and having him bail you out... Which, as you already know, they will never let you live down. Nagville until the day you kick.

DAVID

(long beat)

What do I have to do?

MATT

We can do your portfolio and loan application here online. It's quick and painless. Then you post date me a check for thirty grand, and once the money is direct deposited into your account I can deposit the check.

DAVID

NO! No direct deposit. Cynthia sees that money and you have a roommate.

MATT

Fine. Bank check then.

DAVID

But I really need money like now.

MATT

Once we get your money invested I can transfer four grand a month from your investment account into your bank account. That will get you by until the stock hits.

Matt sits at his computer.

MATT (CONT'D)

Remember to thank me when you and Cynthia are sitting on a beach in Hawaii tanned and sipping those drinks with little umbrellas in them.

INT. LOWRY HOUSE/KITCHEN - NIGHT

David comes home. He goes into the kitchen. Amber is helping Cynthia prepare dinner. Bryan is sitting in his highchair drinking from his bottle.

AMBER

Daddy!

She runs over to David. He picks her up.

AMBER (CONT'D)

I'm in a play.

DAVID

You are?

Amber nods enthusiastically.

AMBER

I'm a bee.

DAVID

A bee huh? That's pretty good.

AMBER

And mommy's going to make my costume.

DAVID

Can't wait to see you as a bee.

David sets Amber down. She goes back over and starts helping Cynthia again. David grabs a beer out of the refrigerator.

CYNTHIA

Dinner will be ready in a minute.

DINING ROOM

David takes a swig from the beer. He notices a deluxe doghouse. A double bowl. And six puppy toys out on the back patio. His mood instantly changes.

DAVID

What the hell is that?

Cynthia enters the dining room. David points at the patio.

CYNTHIA

I picked up a few things for the dog.

DAVID

A few things for the dog?

CYNTHIA

Why is this such a big deal?

DAVID

Are you stupid or something? What don't you get? I told you money's tight.

CYNTHIA

(angry)

What did you just say to me?

DAVID

What the hell does it matter? You don't listen to me anyway.

David walks out of the room. Cynthia is near tears.

STUDY

David sits at his desk. He takes a big swig from his beer. He goes over bills. A clearly angry Cynthia calls to him.

CYNTHIA (O.S.)

Dinner's ready.

A plate of food suddenly flies into the study, slamming into David. He's covered in chicken breasts smothered in fettuccini with a creamy Alfredo Sauce, and broccoli.

DAVID

Thank you. Appreciate it.

EXT. LEYLAND ESTATE/BACKYARD - DAY

David works on the stone path leading to the KOI pond. His cellphone rings. He pulls it out. Looks at the screen. Answers.

DAVID

(into phone)

Hello...

(beat)

Yes, this is David.

(beat)

Oh great. When?

(beat)

Okay, I'll be there tomorrow.

He ends the call. Presses a few keys. Holds the phone back up to his ear.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
 (into phone)  
 Matt, this is David. The bank called. My check will be ready tomorrow.

INT. MATT'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Matt sits in his living room, drink in hand. The curtains are closed. He looks at his phone. Listens to David's voicemail.

DAVID (V.O.)  
 (thru phone)  
 I'll meet you at your office tomorrow at one.

INT. LIPMAN INVESTMENTS/LOBBY - DAY

Matt enters. Wendy is already there. She hands him a stack of messages without saying a word.

MATT  
 I don't want to be disturbed.

Wendy sarcastically mouths his exact words. Matt skims through his messages. He unlocks his office door.

MATT'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Matt enters. He shuts and locks his door then turns on his light. A golf ball hits his shoe. He looks up to see Anthony, Franco, and Nick.

Franco is holding Matt's putter. Matt's desk has been searched. A plane ticket sits on his desk.

FRANCO  
 You weren't planning to take the money and run were you?  
 (stern)  
 Sit your ass down.

INT. BANK - DAY

David sits at the loan officer's desk. An ASSISTANT MANAGER comes over and hands the loan officer a \$30,000.00 cashiers check. He double checks it, then slides it into an envelope. He hands the envelope to David.

INT. LIPMAN INVESTMENTS/MATT'S OFFICE - DAY

Anthony, Franco, and Nick all stare directly at Matt, who appears very self-conscious and extremely uncomfortable.

MATT

Your money will be here at one.

Everyone looks at the clock. It reads 12:46.

FRANCO

You better pray to God that it is.

INT. DAVID'S TRUCK - DAY

David drives on the 101 Freeway. The traffic quickly jams. He starts searching his cab.

DAVID

Where the hell did I leave my phone?

INT. LOWRY HOUSE/STUDY - DAY

David's cellphone sits on his desk.

INT. LIPMAN INVESTMENTS/MATT'S OFFICE - DAY

The clock reads 1:15. Matt sits nervously. Sweat begins to bead on his forehead. Anthony, Franco, and Nick continue to stare directly at him. Matt's intercom suddenly sounds, startling everyone.

WENDY (V.O.)

I'm going to lunch.

Franco gestures to him. Matt presses the intercom.

MATT

Fine.

Franco gestures again.

MATT (CONT'D)

Take an extended lunch.

EXT. TRUCK - DAY

David sits in the middle of a freeway traffic jam. California Highway Patrol cars whiz past in the emergency lane.



INT. LIPMAN INVESTMENTS/MATT'S OFFICE - DAY

The clock reads 1:50. No David. Tension filled silence. Franco gets up. He grabs the putter, takes seven golf balls, and drops them on the floor. Everyone looks at Franco. Then the clock. The tension is overwhelming.

Franco hits a golf ball full-force at Matt. It whizzes past Matt's head and shatters a plaque on the wall. Matt jumps to his feet. Franco looks at him.

FRANCO  
You're out of time.

MATT  
Your money's coming.

FRANCO  
What part of stupid is written on my  
face?

Franco hits another golf ball at Matt. This one barely misses him. It puts a hole in the wall. Matt frantically paces behind his desk.

MATT  
He'll be here.

Franco unloads a rocket of a shot. The ball hits Matt in the ribs. Baaam! Matt cries out in pain as he grabs his ribs. Franco hits another ball. It slams into Matt's chest, knocking him back.

MATT (CONT'D)  
Please...

Franco hits another ball. It strikes Matt in the shoulder.

MATT (CONT'D)  
Stop...

Franco hits one more ball. Whomp! The ball strikes Matt in the face, breaking his cheek. His head jerks violently as he collapses to the floor. Franco turns to the others.

FRANCO  
Get him to the car.

Anthony and Nick yank the dazed Matt to his feet.

NICK  
Let's go for a ride, shithead.

EXT. TRUCK - DAY

David is finally able to move past a three car wreck.

INT. CAR - DAY

Anthony drives. Franco sits in the front passenger seat. Matt sits in the backseat next to Nick. He's barely conscious. His face swelled.

INT. LIPMAN INVESTMENTS/LOBBY - DAY

Wendy returns. She intercoms Matt.

WENDY  
I'm back from lunch.

No reply.

INT. CAR - DAY

Anthony drives up Angeles Crest Highway in the Angeles National Forest. He pulls off the highway onto a secluded dirt road.

INT. LIPMAN INVESTMENTS/LOBBY - DAY

David enters just as Wendy is getting ready to leave.

DAVID  
Hey, Wendy. Is Matt in?

WENDY  
His car's here, but I got no reply when got back from lunch. He said he didn't want to be disturbed when he came in today and told me to take an extended lunch.

Wendy presses the intercom.

WENDY (CONT'D)  
David Lowry is here to see you.

No reply.

WENDY (CONT'D)  
He may have left with someone else for a meeting while I was at lunch.

David hands her the envelope containing his cashier's check.

DAVID

I was supposed to drop this off over an hour ago. Got caught in traffic.

WENDY

You're just in time. I'm about to leave for the weekend.

DAVID

Thanks, Wendy. Have a good weekend.

David leaves. Wendy writes David Lowry on the envelope. She unlocks a desk drawer. She sets the envelope inside the drawer. She locks the drawer, grabs her purse, and leaves.

EXT. BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

As Wendy gets into her car, she notices Matt's parked car. There is a flyer on his windshield. She drives away.

EXT. ANGELES NATIONAL FOREST - DAY

Anthony stops the car. He, Franco, and Nick get out. Matt is slumped in the backseat. Franco pops open the trunk and pulls out two shovels, handing one to Anthony.

FRANCO

(to Nick)

Get him.

Nick goes to pull Matt from the backseat, but he's gone.

NICK

(reacts)

Shit!

(to others)

He's gone!

FRANCO

(stern)

Find him.

The three of them pull their guns and head out in different directions.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Matt runs hard through the woods. He appears exhausted, sweats profusely, and breathes very hard. He stops for a moment and appears disoriented.

He spots Anthony as he climbs on a boulder and scans the area. He ducks behind a large tree trunk.

After a few moments Matt slowly peeks around the trunk. Anthony is gone. Matt runs for his life through the woods.

EXT. CAR - DAY

Anthony, Franco, and Nick all return to the car. Franco is boiling with anger.

FRANCO  
Boss ain't gonna like this one bit.  
(beat)  
Let's go.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Matt is drenched with sweat. Appears to be in extensive pain. He starts to climb up a steep embankment to the dirt road.

INT. CAR - DAY

Anthony drives down the dirt road.

EXT. FOREST DIRT ROAD - DAY

Matt reaches the dirt road. He is badly struggling. He glances up and sees an approaching car. He frantically waves it down.

INT. CAR - DAY

Franco leans forward. He takes a hard look. Reacts. A disoriented Matt is waving their car down.

FRANCO  
I don't fuckin' believe it. Punch it!

Anthony pushes the accelerator to the floor.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY

The car speeds directly at Matt. Baaam! Matt is launched into the air. His lifeless body slams hard into the shoulder, then rolls down into a heavily overgrown ravine.

EXT. LOWRY HOUSE - DAY

David arrives home. He gets out of his truck, pulling out a dozen roses. He walks around the side of the house to the back yard. He enters the side gate and finds Amber and Lisa are playing together with Buster.

AMBER  
Daddy!

She runs over to him. He scoops her up with one arm and kisses her on the cheek.

DAVID  
Hey pumpkin. Is mommy inside?

AMBER  
(nods)  
She's mad at you.

DAVID  
We'll see if daddy can make her happy.

INT. LOWRY HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Cynthia sits on the sofa reading a novel. Bryan lies asleep in his crib. David enters. Cynthia glances up at him, then turns her attention back to her reading.

David walks around the back of the sofa. He pulls out a single rose. He carefully drops it over her right shoulder, and leans in close to her ear.

DAVID  
I'm sorry.

Cynthia moves the rose and continues reading. David drops two more roses over her left-shoulder, and leans in close again.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
I'm really sorry.

David comes around to the front of her and sits on the coffee table, facing her. He sets the rest of the roses on the table and takes her right foot into his hands. He starts giving her a serious foot massage.

Cynthia doesn't acknowledge him, but the foot massage starts to get to her. She tries to continue reading, then loses her place altogether. She relaxes. The novel slips off her lap. She leans her head back, closing her eyes.

CYNTHIA  
Don't ever talk to me that way again.

DAVID  
I overreacted. I don't know why.

CYNTHIA  
Are we in trouble with this house?

DAVID

No. It was a little rough there for a while, but we're okay now.

David slides off the coffee table onto his knees. He gives her a long, passionate kiss. She wraps her legs around his waist. David moves down to her neck, arousing her even more.

He then moves down. A few moments later, Cynthia starts to pant, and run her hands through her hair.

INT. LEYLAND ESTATE/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

FRANCO

Matt is no longer an inconvenience.

MR. LEYLAND

You sure he didn't have the money?

FRANCO

He had a plane ticket. If he had the money, he would have already split.

MR. LEYLAND

If he had a plane ticket, then he was expecting the money.

INT. ANIMAL SHELTER - DAY

As David waits, a WORKER brings out an unconscious white French Poodle. The worker lays the poodle on the counter.

DAVID

What the hell is wrong with her?

WORKER

We gave her a sedative.

DAVID

(chuckles)

You drug the animals?

WORKER

She's a little high strung, and doesn't like to ride in cars, so we sedated her. Just keep your windows down.

INT. TRUCK - DAY

The unconscious poodle lays next to David.

DAVID  
(looks at poodle)  
They're old. They'll never know the  
difference. Just slip you over the wall  
and it's like it never happened.

David stops at a red light. Looks at poodle again.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
Roll over, dog.

Nothing. David raises one of the poodle's hind legs. Holds it, then lets it go. The leg flops back down. David chuckles then points out the window.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
Sick 'em!

The poodle suddenly shoots to her feet startling David. The poodle is in a frenzy... Barking, growling, jumping around. She suddenly leaps out of the passenger window.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

The poodle lands on the curb grass. She rolls, then comes up on all fours in front of a WOMAN who is walking two dogs. In a frenzy the French Poodle charges the two dogs.

The two dogs break free from the woman and run off yelping as the French Poodle gives chase. The confused woman cries.

INT. DAVID'S TRUCK - DAY

David sits stunned. Drivers behind him start to honk their horns. The light is green. He accelerates. He looks for the dogs, but they are long gone.

EXT. BUILDING - MORNING

Wendy pulls into her parking space. She gets out of her car. She looks at Matt's car with concern. It hasn't been moved, and the flyer is still stuck on the windshield.

INT. LIPMAN INVESTMENTS/LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Wendy enters. She picks Saturday's mail from the floor and sets it on her desk. She moves over to Matt's office door. She knocks four times. No response. Using her key, she unlocks the door.

## MATT'S OFFICE

Wendy enters. She sees Matt's destroyed office. She spots the blood splattered on his desk and the wall behind it.

## HOURS LATER

Detectives Chris Hauser and Kevin Whitney run the show. A Police PHOTOGRAPHER is taking photographs. Fingerprints from the desk are being taken.

## LOBBY

Detective Whitney comes out of Matt's office. He skims through his notes. He goes over to Wendy who sits nervously, a cup of coffee in her hand.

DET. WHITNEY

Ms. Cooke... When was the last time you saw or talked with Mr. Lipman?

WENDY

Friday morning here. Last time I saw him he went into his office. His car hasn't been moved.

DET. WHITNEY

Is Matt planning a trip?

WENDY

Not that I know of. Why?

DET. WHITNEY

We found a one-way plane ticket to Paris. Either all this was staged, or someone wanted something?

WENDY

There has been a scary man here looking for him. He's tough-looking, a real prick. Gave me the creeps.

DET. WHITNEY

We still haven't determined if a crime has been committed. A check on Mr. Lipman came up with no address or information on him. The car is registered to a Larry Hammond. It is registered to a post office box. And the plane ticket is under the name Bryan Ewell. Do you recognize any of those names?



WENDY

No.

DET. WHITNEY

Ms. Cooke, until we complete our investigation, we ask that you please not disturb or remove anything from this office.

(beat)

And we're also going to need Matt's address from you.

WENDY

Sure.

INT. STEVE'S BAR & GRILL - DAY

A man sits at the bar. He's GEORGE(40s). Steve serves a drink to a customer, then comes over to George. They shake hands.

GEORGE

The place looks great. How's business?

STEVE

I'm doin' real good.

GEORGE

It just got a little better. I'll take a hot roast beef.

Steve writes down the order and sends it to the kitchen.

STEVE

You still working on that residential development over in Valencia?

GEORGE

Big job. They got me working overtime.

STEVE

Remember my friend David Lowry?

GEORGE

The landscaper guy, right?

Steve grabs a couple beers.

STEVE

Let's go talk.

INT. MATT'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - DAY

Nick carefully searches the room. He wears gloves, and puts everything back exactly where it was. He hears car doors shut. He quickly move over to the bedroom doorway.

EXT. MATT'S HOUSE - DAY

Detectives Hauser and Whitney approach the front door. Detective Hauser knocks. No response. Detective Whitney tries the door, it is unlocked. They draw their weapons.

INT. MATT'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Detectives Hauser and Whitney cautiously enter the house. They aim their guns.

DET. WHITNEY

Matt?... Matt? LAPD... We're coming in.

They split up and search the first floor. They meet at the foot of the stairs.

DET. HAUSER

It's clear. Let's check upstairs.

They slowly make their way up the stairs. Once upstairs, they motion to each other and split up.

BEDROOM CLOSET

Nick hides in the closet. He peers out the closet door slots and sees Detective Whitney enter the bedroom. As Detective Whitney moves over to the closet doors, Nick aims his gun. Detective Hauser suddenly comes into the room.

DET. HAUSER

The house is clear.

The detectives leave. Nick steps out of the closet.

INT. LOWRY HOUSE/MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Cynthia is asleep. David gets out of bed and leaves the room.

AMBER'S BEDROOM

David checks on Amber. Buster is asleep next to her.

## BRYAN'S BEDROOM

Bryan lies in his crib. He's awake, and his bottle is empty beside him. David picks Bryan up and gives him a fresh bottle.

DAVID

There you go, buddy.

## INT. POLICE STATION/SQUAD ROOM - MORNING

Wendy sits at Detective Whitney's desk. She drinks a cup of coffee. Detective Hauser and Whitney enter the squad room. Detective Whitney sets a file in front of her.

DET. WHITNEY

This might interest you, Ms. Cooke.

Wendy opens the file. A stunned look engulfs her. There are multiple mug shots of Matt. His real name is Greg Whitman. Born and raised in Brooklyn.

He was arrested multiple times in New York for investment fraud, perjury, embezzlement, and grand larceny. His broker license was also revoked.

She reads a second case file. Numerous mug shots, altered appearance. This time, he used the alias Craig Williams, and was arrested in Miami for milking seven investors out of their money. He fled with the money before going to trial.

WENDY

I can't believe it.

DET. HAUSER

He's good, and it looks like he's done another disappearing act. At this point, he could be anywhere. He's probably got a new alias, and set up shop again.

WENDY

What about his office? The blood?

DET. WHITNEY

When he was indicted in New York on securities fraud, he faked his own death by driving his car into the Hudson River. It wasn't until he was arrested in Miami that New York authorities realized the scam. In Miami, he made bail and it is believed he fled Florida immediately, ending up here in Los Angeles.

DET. HAUSER

That's how these people work. They use aliases, gain people's trust, and leave nothing behind that can be traced back to them. That way they can disappear on a moment's notice.

DET. WHITNEY

Ms. Cooke, what we need from you at the moment is his client list. We need to review the records and interview the investors so we can determine the extent of the fraud.

DET. HAUSER

We're waiting for a search warrant. Once we secure it, we'd like you accompany us down to your office.

INT. LIPMAN INVESTMENTS/MATT'S OFFICE -DAY

As Wendy stands by, the detectives collect all the files from Matt's office.

INT. POLICE STATION/SQUAD ROOM - DAY

Detectives Hauser and Whitney have investor names, their files, and their phone numbers laid out. They are calling the investors.

DET. WHITNEY

(into phone)

Mr. Lowry, this is Detective Kevin Whitney with the Los Angeles Police Department Van Nuys division. We need to interview you concerning a case that we are currently investigating. Please give us a call at 818-555-8371. Thank You.

HOURS LATER

David sits at Detective Hauser's desk with Matt's arrest file open in front of him. David looks shell shocked.

DET. HAUSER

Mr. Lowry?

David does not respond.

DET. HAUSER (CONT'D)

Mr. Lowry, you okay?

DAVID

I gave him thirty thousand dollars.

DET. WHITNEY

To be honest with you, the chances of getting you your money back are very slim at best. Even if we do make an arrest, it is a solid bet that the suspect has already spent the money.

DAVID

I took a second loan on our new house. I wiped out our savings account. I'm seven hundred eighty thousand dollars in debt, and now I can't pay it back. I'm beyond screwed. I'm going to lose my house, my business... everything.

DET. HAUSER

We're very sorry, Mr. Lowry.

EXT. POLICE STATION - CONTINUOUS

David walks out of the police station a broken, depressed man. His dreams and his soul have been shattered. His downward spiral begins.

INT. STEVE'S BAR & GRILL - EVENING

David enters and sits at the bar. The bartender, ADAM (20s), comes over.

ADAM

Hey, David.

DAVID

Steve around?

ADAM

(shakes head)  
Off at three.

DAVID

Give me a beer with a whiskey chaser.

ADAM

Rough day?

David chuckles and shakes his head.

DAVID

You have no idea.

INT. LOWRY HOUSE - NIGHT

David enters the house. It is late. He goes into the kitchen and opens the refrigerator, the light illuminating his depressed state. He grabs a beer and twists off the cap.

CYNTHIA (O.S.)

Where in the hell have you been?

David turns to see a very unhappy Cynthia.

DAVID

Workin'.

Cynthia crosses her arms and shakes her head.

CYNTHIA

Since when do you drink on the job?

DAVID

I went by Steve's and had a couple drinks.

(sarcastic)

Is that okay with you? Do I need your permission to have a few drinks after I've worked all day?

CYNTHIA

It's ten o'clock. Amber has her play tomorrow. She wanted you to see her costume. She tried to stay awake until you came home.

He slams the refrigerator door shut. Startled, Cynthia takes a few steps back.

DAVID

I'm not doing this, Cynthia. I'M NOT! So get off my back!

Cynthia's eyes swell up with tears. David pulls out his truck keys, and angrily leaves the house.

INT. TRUCK - NIGHT

David cruises up Angeles Crest Highway, drinking beer. Clearly intoxicated he slams his hand on his dash. He grabs the steering wheel and grips it hard as he feverishly shakes it, causing the truck to swerve all over the highway.

DAVID

How could you be so stupid?!

MUSIC UP:

Neil Diamond's SONG SUNG BLUE comes on the radio. David enthusiastically cranks up the radio volume and sings along.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
That's right, Neil, that's right!

He pulls into a turnout and parks. He finishes signing along with the song with drunken enthusiasm.

MUSIC DOWN.

He cuts the engine and headlights.

EXT. ANGELES CREST HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

David gets out of the truck, a beer in hand. He stands at the edge of the steep hill and looks at the twinkling lights of downtown Los Angeles in the distance.

He finishes the beer. As he throws the bottle out into the darkness he loses his footing. He tumbles off the ledge and disappears down into the dark abyss.

EXT. CAMPING AREA - DAY

David slowly opens his eyes.

INSERT - DAVID'S POV

Five CHILDREN are looking down at him. Four of them run off. A boy eating a sandwich remains. His face and shirt are dirty. He has a southern accent.

BOY  
Hi.  
(beat)  
Are you sick?

BACK TO SCENE

DAVID  
(heavy sigh)  
Oh, shit. It's worse than I thought.  
God's a kid from Mississippi.

BOY  
Don't be stupid, mister. You're not dead,  
you're in California.

David slowly sits up. He appears confused. He looks around. He's in a camping area. The boy's PARENTS quickly come over.

BILLY  
Hey partner, you okay?

Points back up hill.

BILLY (CONT'D)  
That was a helluva tumble you took there.

David looks up the hill.

DAVID  
Yeah, yeah, I'm okay. Thanks.

Billy points to David's truck, which is parked nearby.

BILLY  
I brought your truck down.

DAVID  
Truck?

Still groggy, he slowly stands up. Sees his truck.

BILLY  
You know, you really shouldn't leave your keys in the truck like that.

ROSALIE  
(concerned)  
You need a doctor?

DAVID  
No ma'am. Thank you both very much. I appreciate your kindness, but I really have to go now. Really. And thank you.

David gets in his truck. He starts the engine. Gives a slight wave. Drives off. Billy and Rosalie just wave goodbye.

INT. LOWRY HOUSE - DAY

David in the shower...

David brushes his teeth and slaps on some deodorant...

David gets dressed.

INT. SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - DAY

David enters the auditorium. The play has started. He walks down the aisle looking for Cynthia. He finally spots her and her mother, Marjorie. There is an open seat next to Cynthia.



David slides down the row of seats. Cynthia shoots him a nasty look. She sets her purse in the empty seat.

David moves to the back of the auditorium. He stands against the back wall and watches the play.

INT. LOWRY HOUSE/DINING ROOM - NIGHT

David, Marjorie, and Amber sit at the dining room table. Cynthia brings out a bowl of mashed potatoes. She serves Marjorie and Amber, but passes by David. She sets the bowl down and goes back into the kitchen.

David sighs and serves himself. Amber laughs. Cynthia comes back out with a serving plate stacked with fried chicken. Again, she serves everyone except David. He serves himself.

MASTER BEDROOM

David enters. Amber is asleep in the bed. Cynthia comes out of the bathroom, brushing her hair.

CYNTHIA

No. You have to sleep on the sofa. My mom is sleeping in Amber's room. And I don't want to be around you right now.

DAVID

I went to Steve's and got a little sauced... so what?

CYNTHIA

It's not just that. I went to the bank this morning. What the hell happened to all our savings?!

DAVID

I told you it was rough for a while. I needed that money to save this house.

CYNTHIA

You lied to me.

DAVID

I didn't lie to you.

CYNTHIA

You didn't tell me you cleaned out our savings account. It's a good thing you never invested our money, because you probably would have lost it all too.

Bull's-eye. David turns and leaves the room.

## LIVING ROOM

The house is dark and quiet. Clock reads 11:30. David sits in the living room recliner, drinking Jack Daniels... A lot of Jack Daniels. Buster lies on the floor near him.

## EARLY MORNING

The clock reads 6:10. David is still drinking. There are huge bags under his eyes, his hair is slightly a mess, and he badly struggles to stay awake. He stumbles out of the chair.

## KITCHEN

David pours out an entire bottle of pills and crushes them with a mallet. He mixes them with the powdered coffee creamer. He turns on the coffee maker.

DAVID

I'll just drink my coffee and die.

## LIVING ROOM

David sits in the recliner. He sets his cup of coffee on the end table. He closes his eyes... and quickly falls asleep.

## EXT. LOWRY HOUSE - MORNING

Amber and Bryan leave with Rachel and her daughters.

CYNTHIA

Be good at the zoo.

## INT. LOWRY HOUSE/DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Cynthia heads into the dinning room, where Marjorie is pouring two large mugs of coffee.

CYNTHIA

At least he made us coffee.

Marjorie spoons creamer into each mug.

MARJORIE

I need to take my pill.

Marjorie takes a pill bottle out of her purse. She takes one pill out, swallowing it with a drink of coffee.

MARJORIE (CONT'D)

(winces)

He really needs to improve his coffee making skills.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - MORNING

Wendy drives out of the parking garage. As she turns the corner, Nick gets out of a parked car. He disappears around the side of the apartment building.

INT. CYNTHIA'S CAR - DAY

Cynthia and Marjorie drive to the store. They are loaded out of their minds after drinking the spiked coffee. As Cynthia drives, she props her face against the steering wheel.

CYNTHIA  
(slurring words)  
Momma... I can't lift my head.

Marjorie is having trouble sitting up. She holds onto the dashboard. She looks out her window, seeing two severely hungover METAL HEADS in the other lane.

MARJORIE  
Hey, boys.

Marjorie struggles badly to pull up her top. It is beyond comical. She enthusiastically exposes herself to the boys, then slumps face-first against the dash.

INT. METAL HEADS CAR - DAY

DRIVER  
Oh, dude.

PASSENGER  
Baah... This is so uncool.

INT. CYNTHIA'S CAR - DAY

Cynthia tries to lift her head from the steering wheel, but it flops against the drivers side window. She tries to lift it again, but can't. She continues driving in that position. She turns into a supermarket parking lot.

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Cynthia stumbles up an aisle, unable to keep her head up. She attempts to grab packages of food, but her coordination is way off.

She swings her arms wildly and either misses the shelves completely, or knocks items off them. She swings her arm wide, and accidentally floors a passing SHOPPER.

Marjorie pushes the cart. She's having trouble feeling the floor. She brings her knees up very high and steps extremely awkward. She looks down at the floor like she's searching for something.

MARJORIE  
Where's the floor?

She kneels halfway and extends her arms straight out, moving them parallel to the floor.

MARJORIE (CONT'D)  
Someone took the floor.

They clumsily move around to the produce section. In an aisle in-between produce bins a profusely sweating Cynthia starts twerking as only a white woman in her 30s loaded out of her mind can.

Marjorie flops over onto the orange bin. While laying the upper half of her body on the oranges she attempts to twerk, her legs and thighs slamming against the orange bin.

Dozens of SHOPPERS gather and shoot Cynthia and Marjorie looks. Cellphone videos recording. Coming immediately to Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube.

EXT. SUPERMARKET - CONTINUOUS

Cynthia and Marjorie are escorted out of the supermarket in handcuffs by two POLICE OFFICERS. Marjorie's awkward walk is more pronounced.

INT. LOWRY HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

David's cellphone rings. He is startled awake. Groggy, he answers it.

DAVID  
(into phone)  
Hello  
(beat)  
Who?  
(beat; reacts)  
Jail?! Where?

INT. POLICE STATION/LOBBY - NIGHT

David waits in the lobby. Severe hangover. Cynthia and Marjorie are escorted out. Embarrassed and humiliated, Cynthia shoots David a searing glare.

Cynthia and Marjorie sign for their possessions and get them back. They walk past David without saying a word. The female desk OFFICER just looks at David and shakes her head.

DESK OFFICER  
Hmmm... Hmmm... Hmmm.

EXT. POLICE STATION - CONTINUOUS

Cynthia and Marjorie walk in front of David.

DAVID  
Cynthia, it was an accident. I didn't...

Cynthia spins around to David.

CYNTHIA  
Don't talk to me ever again! EVER!

Cynthia and Marjorie get into an Uber.

EXT. LOWRY HOUSE - NIGHT

David pulls up. Cynthia's car trunk is open. David gets out of his truck and looks inside Cynthia's trunk. It is filled with suitcases. He goes into the house.

INT. LOWRY HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

David enters. Cynthia is buttoning Amber's coat. Marjorie holds Bryan.

MARJORIE  
I'll go put Bryan in the car.

Marjorie walks past David. She says nothing.

CYNTHIA  
(to Amber)  
Say goodbye to your father, then go get in the car.

Amber walk over to David. He picks her up.

DAVID  
Hey, pumpkin.

AMBER  
Mommy says we're going to stay at grandma and grandpa's for a while. Will you take care of Buster?

DAVID

(nods)

I'll take care of him, but I want you to be good over there and help your grandparents.

AMBER

Is mommy still mad at you?

DAVID

Just a tiny bit, but it will be okay. Now give me a hug.

Amber gives David a hug with all her might. David kisses her and sets her down. She goes out to the car. David follows Cynthia outside.

EXT. LOWRY HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

DAVID

What's going on, Cynthia?

CYNTHIA

(livid)

I can't stand to be around you right now, and I don't want the kids around you either.

DAVID

You don't have to leave.

CYNTHIA

Yes we do. Something is going on with you. I don't know what it is, but you're scaring the hell out of me.

Cynthia leaves. David is left standing alone in the driveway.

INT. LOWRY HOUSE/DINING ROOM - NIGHT

David looks badly disheveled. A different air about him. Exhausted. He looks through his insurance papers. He reads over his two million dollar life insurance policy.

INT. WENDY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Wendy enters. As she turns on her lights she notices her drapes moving from a breeze. A look of fear engulfs her.

She darts into the kitchen, grabbing a butcher knife. She searches the apartment, not noticing an empty picture frame. She peeks out onto her patio.

EXT. LEYLAND ESTATE/BACKYARD - DAY

David appears extremely disheveled and exhausted. Cold demeanor. He hasn't shaved or changed his clothes. He finds Mr. Leyland in his backyard practice putting. GARDENERS are working.

MR. LEYLAND

Hello...  
(reacts)  
David.

DAVID

Hello, Mr. Leyland.

MR. LEYLAND

You okay?

DAVID

(beat)  
I need a job done...  
(nervous)  
And I thought you might be able to help me.

Mr. Leyland lines up a putt.

MR. LEYLAND

Okay, David. What do you need?

David takes two deep breaths. He fidgets nervously.

MR. LEYLAND (CONT'D)

What is it, David?

DAVID

Aah, I need someone k... k... k...  
killed.

Mr. Leyland shoots David a surprised look.

MR. LEYLAND

You need someone k... k... k... killed?  
(chuckles)  
What makes you think I could do that?

DAVID

I don't mean any disrespect by this, but the rumor is you're the guy to go to for these type of matters.

MR. LEYLAND

David, I've known you for twelve years. You are without a doubt the most honest and law abiding man I know. Who could you possibly want killed?

Mr. Leyland lines up his putt. He's ready. He swings.

DAVID

(beat)

Me.

Mr. Leyland lets go of his club mid-swing. The club slams into the face of a gardener, who collapses.

MR. LEYLAND

What?! You? Is this a joke?

DAVID

I know this sounds crazy, but this is no joke.

Mr. Leyland's expression changes.

MR. LEYLAND

You're serious?

DAVID

I'm afraid so.

MR. LEYLAND

This is ridiculous. Nothing could be so bad that you would want to kill yourself.

DAVID

That's what I used to think.

MR. LEYLAND

What's the problem, David? Whatever it is, we'll fix it together.

DAVID

Unfortunately, that's not possible.

MR. LEYLAND

What is it? Is it your marriage? Money? If it's money, I can loan you some.

DAVID

No. That would only make matters worse. I've made my decision. If you won't help me, then I'll find someone else who will.



MR. LEYLAND

What about your wife? Your children? How would they cope if you were gone?

DAVID

I'm trying to help them.

MR. LEYLAND

You cannot help them by being dead.

DAVID

Actually... I can.

MR. LEYLAND

David, you're talking crazy things. Listen to yourself... Are you absolutely sure that this is what you want?

DAVID

(nods)

Yes. Absolutely.

MR. LEYLAND

What you are asking me to do is very serious. Once it is done, there is no coming back.

DAVID

It's the only way.

MR. LEYLAND

You're tired and upset... and you're not thinking clearly. Why don't you take a few days to clear your mind and think all this over. I am sure you will come to a different conclusion.

DAVID

(shakes head)

No!

(defensive)

I don't need to think about it.

(adamant)

I'm sure.

MR. LEYLAND

I don't know what to think about this, David. But you've been very good and honest to me over the years, so I'll see what I can do.

They shake hands. David walks away. Mr. Leyland stares at him as he disappears down the driveway.

INT. STEVE'S BAR & GRILL - DAY

David enters. Steve reacts to his appearance.

STEVE

I'm afraid to ask.

DAVID

Hmmm, let's see. Matt took my thirty grand and split. Turns out he's a wanted fugitive from New York, and Matt's not even his real name. That house of his, he was just housesitting. I'm seven hundred eighty thousand dollars in debt which means, since I won't be able to pay it back, I'm going to lose my house, my business, and I have to declare bankruptcy. Oh yeah, and Cynthia left me.

EXT. LEYLAND ESTATE/BACKYARD - DAY

Anthony and Franco sit with Mr. Leyland on the bench at his KOI pond.

MR. LEYLAND

I need a hit carried out.

FRANCO

I'll get Nick right on it.

MR. LEYLAND

No. I want Tommy for this.

Anthony and Franco shoot each other concerned looks.

ANTHONY

Excuse me, boss, but are you sure you want Tommy for this?

FRANCO

Yeah... No offense, boss, but Tommy isn't too fuckin' bright.

Mr. Leyland shoots Franco a nasty look.

MR. LEYLAND

He's been around. He knows how it's done, but he'll never learn unless he does it on his own. He gets the hit.

INT. LEYLAND ESTATE - CONTINUOUS

Anthony and Franco enter the house.

FRANCO

I got a bad feeling about this.

ANTHONY

I think the boss went on vacation in his head and didn't invite anyone else along.

INT. STEVE'S BAR & GRILL - DAY

David and Steve work on their sixth beers.

DAVID

The guy's good. I'll give him that. He fucked me big time.

STEVE

Does Cynthia know?

DAVID

Not yet.

STEVE

Oh man, she's going to flip.

DAVID

You think? That's putting it mildly. She's going to lose her shit.

STEVE

You're going to have to swallow your pride on this one and tell her. If you hide this one from her, she'll divorce you. If you come clean, she's still going to be really pissed, but at least you'll have been honest with her and told her the truth.

DAVID

The problem is being taken care of.

STEVE

What do you mean?

DAVID

I'm taking care of it.

STEVE

How?

DAVID

That's all I can say.

STEVE

But you haven't said anything.

DAVID

And that's all I'm saying.

INT. LEYLAND ESTATE/STUDY - DAY

Tommy comes into the study. Mr. Leyland is already there.

MR. LEYLAND

(gentle)

Tommy, I have something very important  
for you to do.

TOMMY

(concerned)

What is it?

MR. LEYLAND

It's a job. An important one. So you need  
to pay attention.

TOMMY

What kind of a job? I don't want to work  
in the dog food plant again.

MR. LEYLAND

Franco will tell you all about it. Listen  
to what he says, and you do it right,  
okay?

TOMMY

Sure.

MR. LEYLAND

I mean it, Tommy. It's very important  
that you do this right.

TOMMY

I will.

MR. LEYLAND

That's what I like to hear.

INT. LOWRY HOUSE - NIGHT

David comes home to the darkened house. He does not turn on  
the lights. The house is too quiet. Buster comes up to him.  
David picks him up.

DAVID

It's just you and me, buddy.

David wanders through the house.

He goes into Bryan's room and looks into the empty crib.

He goes into Amber's room. He straightens up the stuffed animals on her bed.

He enters the master bedroom. He looks at the empty bed.

He returns to the living room. He lays down on the sofa and closes his eyes. Buster lies on the floor next to him.

INT. LEYLAND ESTATE/DINING ROOM - MORNING

Anthony and Franco sit at the dining room table, drinking coffee. A 9mm automatic machine pistol and a silencer sit in front of them. Tommy is with them.

FRANCO

Don't forget what I told you. One shot to the head, then get out. And remember the three T's. Don't take anything. Don't talk.

(stresses point)

And don't touch nothing.

INT. VAN - CONTINUOUS

Tommy exits the house and gets into a van. He aims the gun around carelessly. It accidentally fires and blows a hole through the roof of the cab.

Startled, Tommy tightens his grip on the trigger. The gun fires wildly, shattering the windshield, blasting out the passenger window, and obliterating the interior of the cab.

EXT. LEYLAND'S ESTATE - MORNING

Anthony and Franco rush out of the house with their guns drawn. Tommy gets out of the van. He hands the gun to Franco.

TOMMY

It slipped.

Tommy disappears inside the house. Anthony and Franco glance at each other, then look inside the destroyed cab.

ANTHONY

(shakes head)

He ain't gonna do too fuckin' good.

INT. LOWRY HOUSE/KITCHEN - MORNING

Buster wanders into the kitchen. He starts sniffing at a grocery bag full of trash sitting on the floor. He knocks it over. He disappears into the bag, eating pizza scraps.

INT. LIPMAN INVESTMENTS/LOBBY - MORNING

Wendy enters the office. She scoops up all the mail and sets it on her desk. She starts to sort through the mail.

INT. LOWRY HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

David is asleep. He's dreaming. He mumbles, slight jerky movements, profuse sweating. He's suddenly jolted awake. He quickly sits up and looks around the living room.

KITCHEN

David stumbles into the kitchen, half asleep. He looks like a bum on skid row. He sees the grocery bag knocked over, and trash strewn on the floor.

He lets out a sigh and quickly scoops the trash back into the grocery bag. He opens the trash compactor and drops the grocery bag in. Turns it on.

He turns on the coffee maker. He gets his mug ready. He hears a faint yelp. He glances around the kitchen. Sees nothing.

DAVID  
(long beat)  
Where's that dog?

He looks at the trash compactor. Freezes. His eyes widen. The compactor automatically turns off. David paces feverishly. He nervously looks at the trash compactor.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
Oh shit! What have I done?!

He slowly moves over to the compactor. He leans down close. He puts an ear to it. He hears nothing. He moves away from it, grabbing his head with both hands.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
Amber's never going to forgive me.

He moves over to the trash compactor once again. He opens it. Looks inside. All of the trash is tightly compacted. He peels back the trash, carefully digging through it.

A startled Buster suddenly leaps out into David's arms. Shaking, he feverishly wags his tail and licks David's face. He pees a river. David slides to the floor.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
We both need a bath.

INT. LIPMAN INVESTMENTS/LOBBY - DAY

Wendy unlocks her desk drawer and pulls out some paperwork. She notices David's envelope and sets it aside.

INT. LOWRY HOUSE - DAY

A showered David washes Buster in the kitchen sink. He looks up at David, shivering. David rinses him off, then thoroughly towel dries him. He looks at Buster, and gently pets him.

DAVID  
We better get you some place safer.

INT. LIPMAN INVESTMENTS/LOBBY - DAY

Wendy has David's envelope. She dials her phone.

INT. LOWRY HOUSE/STUDY - DAY

David's business phone rings. His answering machine activates.

WENDY (V.O.)  
(thru phone)  
David, this is Wendy from Matt's office. I have something for you. I'll be here at the office until four. If I don't hear back from you by then, I will stop by the bar & grill down the street where you and Matt always hang out.

INT. CYNTHIA'S PARENTS HOUSE - DAY

Buster sleeps on the carpet. Richard sits in a recliner and reads a newspaper. Marjorie watches television.

Amber sits on the sofa and looks out the curtains into the backyard, where David and Cynthia are having a heated conversation. Amber slaps her forehead and shakes her head.

AMBER  
Uh oh, mommy's mad again.

EXT. CYNTHIA'S PARENTS HOUSE/BACKYARD - DAY

DAVID

Will you please calm down?

CYNTHIA

Calm down?... You want me to calm down?

DAVID

Yes, I do. You screaming isn't helping.

CYNTHIA

I want to know what in the hell you were thinking?! Really!

(very animated)

Please tell me what was going on in your head?! You invest thirty grand with Matt and not talk to me about it first?!

DAVID

I was just trying to save our house.

CYNTHIA

Well you did a helluva job! Our savings is wiped out, we're ANOTHER thirty grand in debt, and we're gonna lose the house! Nice job, asshole!

Cynthia turns and heads for the back porch.

DAVID

(enraged)

I put up with not measuring up to your parents! I am constantly badgered that I can do better, have to provide more, make more money, be more successful!

(louder)

I'm not perfect, but I'm doing my best!

Cynthia stops at the porch. She turns to David.

CYNTHIA

(chuckles)

Perfect?

(sarcastic)

You don't even rate!

She turns on the sprinklers, drenching David. Then goes in the back door. David loses it. He clenches his fists and wildly swinging at the air.



INT. CYNTHIA'S PARENTS HOUSE - DAY

Cynthia stands still. She trembles.

CYNTHIA  
I didn't mean that.

She turns and looks out into the backyard. David is gone. She starts to cry, burying her face in her hands.

INT. TRUCK - DAY

Soaking wet, David checks his messages. He glances at his watch, then speeds off.

INT. LIPMAN INVESTMENTS/LOBBY - DAY

Wendy takes David's envelope. She slides it into a side pocket in her purse. She grabs a stack of outgoing mail and heads for the door. She opens the door.

Just as she starts to step out, Nick appears in front of her. Startled, Wendy stumbles back into the office. She drops the mail. Nick steps in.

NICK  
I told you I'd be back.  
(looks around)  
So, where's the media?

Wendy is genuinely scared. She starts to pick up the mail. Nick leans down and also picks up several pieces of mail.

WENDY  
We're out of business. Matt skipped town,  
and nobody knows where he's gone. So you  
better look elsewhere.

NICK  
He was supposed to leave a package for  
me. Any packages lying around here?

The two of them stand up.

WENDY  
No.  
(sarcastic)  
But if you leave me your name, I'll be  
sure to call if one shows up.

Nick hands Wendy back several envelopes.

NICK  
 That's alright...  
 (eerie smile)  
 We'll see each other again.

Nick leaves. Wendy skims through the mail Nick handed back to her. A photograph of Wendy and her mother is stuffed between two envelopes. It is the missing picture from her dresser. Wendy looks truly terrified.

INT. STEVE'S BAR & GRILL - DAY

David enters. The place is crowded. He waves to Steve, then spots Wendy sitting alone at a rear table. He goes over and joins her. Wendy barely forces a half-smile. Her eyes swell up with tears.

DAVID  
 You okay?

Wendy shakes her head. David flashes two fingers to Steve.

WENDY  
 Matt's got me involved in something. I don't know what it is.

DAVID  
 Whatever it is, it can't be good.

WENDY  
 Some man has been coming by the office. He's looking for something that Matt was supposed to give him. But he won't tell me his name or what it is he's looking for.

(beat)  
 The other day I came home, and my sliding glass door was open. I didn't notice anything disturbed, so I thought I just left it open. But this guy showed up at the office a while ago, and he left this.

She shows him the picture.

WENDY (CONT'D)  
 This picture was taken off my dresser. He's been in my apartment.

The WAITRESS brings two beers over.

DAVID  
 Thanks, Debbie.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Matt, or whatever his real name is, was involved in some real crooked shit. So whoever this guy is, he's bad news. Don't waste any time. Go to the police and report him.

Wendy nods. She takes a big swig of beer. She's trying hard not to break down.

WENDY

(realizing)

Oh, I have something for you.

She pulls out the envelope. She hands it to him. He looks at it, then opens it. He reacts, almost leaping out of his seat as he pulls out the thirty thousand dollar cashier's check.

DAVID

(hyper)

You never gave this to Matt!

WENDY

I left it in my desk. Why, what is it?

DAVID

My life!

He downs his beer, then tosses a ten on the table.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I don't mean to be rude, but I have something I need to take care of.

He starts to walk away.

WENDY

I can't go home.

He stops and turns to her.

WENDY (CONT'D)

He said I would see him again.

He sees genuine fear and vulnerability on her face.

WENDY (CONT'D)

He's been to my apartment and the office. I have nowhere I can go.

DAVID

Alright... Hold on.

David looks back at the bar. Steve is talking to Adam. He pushes his way through the crowd, making his way to the bar.

STEVE

Hey Buddy, who's the babe?

DAVID

I need you to do me a favor. I need you to take her to the police.

STEVE

Police? Why? Who is she?

DAVID

(frustrated)  
Just do it, okay?

STEVE

What's going on?

DAVID

I'll see you at your place later. Just keep an eye on her.

David rushes out.

INT. LEYLAND ESTATE/STUDY - NIGHT

David rushes in. Mr. Leyland is sitting at his desk. He's wearing a heavy sweater and a scarf. He has a cough. His eyes are red and watery.

MR. LEYLAND

David, nice to see you're still alive.

DAVID

That's what I need to talk to you about, Mr. Leyland. I need to cancel our arrangement.

MR. LEYLAND

Cancel? You begged me to arrange it. You said you were sure.

David is very animated in his gestures.

DAVID

I was sure, but things have changed.

MR. LEYLAND

What's going on, David?

DAVID

It's a long story. I made a serious mistake. I just need it canceled.

MR. LEYLAND

Are you absolutely sure this time?

DAVID

(nods repeatedly)

Yes, Mr. Leyland. Absolutely, positively.

MR. LEYLAND

(long beat; sigh)

Okay, David. For you I'll cancel it. But I got my main man on it, and I'm gonna have to locate him.

DAVID

Thank you, Mr. Leyland. Thank you.

Mr. Leyland reaches for the phone. He grabs the receiver, then sits perfectly still. Thousand yard stare. He's dead. David looks at the phone, Mr. Leyland, back at the phone.

David waits, fidgets, gives a friendly smile. He glances directly at Mr. Leyland. He then slowly leans forward and looks closely at him. He gently shakes him.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Hey, Mr. Leyland? You okay?

Mr. Leyland slides to his left. The receiver drops from his grip. David quickly moves over to him. He puts the receiver back into Mr. Leyland's hand, but it falls out to the floor. David is growing more frantic.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Come on, Mr. Leyland, make the call.

David slides Mr. Leyland back into an upright position. He vigorously shakes him.

DAVID (CONT'D)

What's the main man's number?!

No response. No movement. David frantically paces the room. He pleads with Mr. Leyland, his arms extended.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Give me a fuckin' break!

Mr. Leyland slumps forward. His face hits the desk. David is more frantic. He paces feverishly, then rushes from the room.

EXT. LEYLAND ESTATE - NIGHT

David speeds out of the driveway.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Anthony drives. Franco and Nick are with him. David speeds past them.

FRANCO

Wasn't that David Lowry?

NICK

He's going somewhere fast.

INT. LEYLAND ESTATE/STUDY - NIGHT

Franco, Anthony and Nick enter to find Mr. Leyland slumped over. They rush over to him. They prop him back up into a sitting position. Franco quickly checks his pulse.

ANTHONY

What's wrong with him?

FRANCO

He's dead.

INT. TOMMY'S CAR - NIGHT

Tommy sits in his car a few houses down from David's. He has a handgun with a silencer attached to it sitting on the seat next to him.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Wendy talks with Detective Whitney. Detective Hauser talks to Steve.

DET. HAUSER

Ms. Cooke is afraid to go home. Do you have a place she can stay?

STEVE

Whatever she needs.

DET. HAUSER

We're going to need her back here to look at some mug shots.

STEVE

Yeah, sure. No Problem.

EXT. LOWRY HOUSE - NIGHT

David pulls in, parking askew. He rushes into the house, leaving his driver's side door open.

INT. TOMMY'S CAR - NIGHT

Tommy perks up when he sees David.

INT. LOWRY HOUSE/MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

David pulls out a 9mm Barretta.

EXT. LOWRY HOUSE - NIGHT

David jumps back into his truck and speeds off.

INT. TOMMY'S CAR - NIGHT

Tommy follows David.

INT. TRUCK - NIGHT

David's face and shirt are drenched with sweat. He's trembling. He pulls to the curb in front of Steve's house.

INT. TOMMY'S CAR - NIGHT

Tommy pulls to the curb several yards behind David. He sees David go into Steve's house.

INT. STEVE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Steve is furious with David and paces incessantly. Wendy is with them.

STEVE

(ranting)

You put a hit out on yourself?! Are you out of your fucking mind?!

DAVID

I was desperate and I didn't know what else to do. I panicked and made mistake.

STEVE

A mistake?! No! No! No! A mistake is not wearing your seat belt. THAT'S a mistake! What you've done is crazy! CRAZY!

David puts his head in his hands. Holds it. Looks up.

DAVID

It's done, and there's nothing I can do about it.

(somber)

Leyland's dead, and I have no idea who he hired to kill me.

STEVE

I really can't believe you did this! What were you thinking?!

DAVID

It's my problem. I got myself into it, and I'll deal with it my way.

He pulls out his gun. Looks at it. Steve grabs it away from him, swinging his arm wildly. The gun fires. David and Wendy duck and react.

EXT. STEVE'S HOUSE/FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

Just as Tommy creeps up to the front door, he's hit in the right-leg by the bullet. His eyes bulge. His face is twisted with intense pain. He looks down at his wounded leg. He whimpers and slowly limps away.

INT. STEVE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Steve holds the gun up to him.

STEVE

Your way? No! You've already done it YOUR way, and look at what happened! Who do you think you are, Jason Bourne?

(paces; stern)

We're going to the police station first thing tomorrow, and you're going to tell them what you've done. At least they'll be able to help you.

David looks at Wendy and Steve. There is a long pause. He finally lets out a big sigh and nods his head.

INT. TOMMY'S CAR - NIGHT

In intense pain, Tommy drives to the end of the block. He turns left then stops at a stop sign. He grabs a T-shirt from the backseat and starts wrapping it around his wounded leg.

He winces and whimpers loudly as he does this. Grits his teeth. His face drenched with sweat. The driver behind him honks his horn.



TOMMY  
 (yells)  
 Hold on!

He continues wrapping his leg, gritting his teeth from the pain. The driver behind him honks his horn again.

TOMMY (CONT'D)  
 (frustrated)  
 Yeah! Yeah!

Tommy almost has the shirt secured around his leg. The driver behind him honks once again. Tommy is out of patience. He grabs his gun and gets out of the car.

EXT. TOMMY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Tommy limps out of his car. He spins around and aims his gun at the car behind him.

TOMMY  
 Get off my case assho...  
 (shocked)

Tommy freezes. The car behind is a LAPD squad car. Both OFFICERS jump out and aim their weapons at him.

OFFICER  
 Drop your weapon!

He drops his gun and raise his hands. The bloody T-shirt dangles from his leg.

INT. LEYLAND'S ESTATE/DINING ROOM - NIGHT

An angry Franco tosses his cellphone. He turns to Anthony and Nick.

FRANCO  
 Tommy's been arrested.

ANTHONY  
 What the hell happened?

FRANCO  
 He apparently shot himself in the leg...  
 (sigh)  
 And pulled his gun on the police.

Nick chuckles and shakes his head.

ANTHONY  
 How did he manage that?

Franco looks at Anthony with an "Are you kidding me?" expression. Anthony shakes his head and gestures.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)  
How we gonna handle it?

FRANCO  
We need to get to him. Tell him to keep his mouth shut.

ANTHONY  
I'll take care of it.

Anthony leaves the room. Franco turns to Nick.

FRANCO  
Lowry's all yours.

Nick pulls out his gun. He checks it.

NICK  
About time.

FRANCO  
Look, get it done. Lowry is the only link between boss and what Tommy was doing with a gun. We don't need cops sniffin' around our business.

NICK  
I know a nice secluded spot up Mulholland.

INT. POLICE STATION/SQUAD ROOM - DAY

Wendy looks through numerous mug shot books. David talks to Detectives Hauser and Whitney. Steve is with them. Both detectives have taken extensive notes.

DET. WHITNEY  
Well, Mr. Lowry...  
(slight chuckle)  
This is some situation we have here.

DAVID  
Believe me. I know it sounds crazy. If it wasn't happening to me, I wouldn't believe it myself.  
(beat)  
But everything I've told you is the truth.

DET. HAUSER

I'm sorry, Mr. Lowry, but the most we can do with this situation is make a report.

DAVID

A report? That's it? Are you kidding me?!

DET. HAUSER

No sir, at the moment that's all we can do.

DAVID

(stressing point)

There's a hired killer after me.

DET. WHITNEY

You have to be reasonable, Mr. Lowry. You've given us absolutely nothing to go on. You have no proof, and there hasn't been any attempt on your life.

DAVID

I'm telling you the truth, and I need your help.

DET. HAUSER

To put it bluntly, we don't have the proof, manpower, or the time to stay with you twenty-four seven to investigate something that might not be happening.

STEVE

There has to be something you can do?

DET. WHITNEY

If an attempt is made on Mr. Lowry's life, then we can act. But I'm afraid that is what it's going to take.

DAVID

(sullen)

Then you're looking at a dead man.

(lowers head)

How did I end up in this situation?

EXT. POLICE STATION - CONTINUOUS

David storms out of the station. Steve is close behind.

STEVE

David! Hold on!

David stops and turns to Steve.

DAVID  
Can you believe that?!

STEVE  
We'll get you some help.

DAVID  
Where?  
(stressing point)  
If the police won't help, who will?

David walks away.

STEVE  
Where are you going?

DAVID  
It doesn't matter.

David keeps walking. He doesn't turn around.

STEVE  
We can go to the FBI.

David doesn't acknowledge. Steve heads back into the station.

INT. SQUAD ROOM - DAY

Wendy brings a mug shot book over to the detectives. She points to a mug shot of Nick.

WENDY  
This looks like the guy.  
(looks again)  
I'm positive this is him.

Detective Hauser looks at the mug shot. He writes down the information.

EXT. POLICE STATION - CONTINUOUS

Wendy and Steve are escorted out by Detective Whitney.

DET. WHITNEY  
(to Wendy)  
We're running a check on this guy.  
Hopefully we'll get an address on him,  
and then we'll go see what his story is.  
(beat)  
Look, a little advice. If I were you I  
wouldn't stay at your place until we  
locate him. Do you have a relative or  
friend you can stay with?

WENDY

(nods)  
My parents in Arizona.

DET. WHITNEY

Let us know where you'll be. We'll call you when we get something.

WENDY

I will. Thank you.

Steve and Wendy walk away.

EXT. CYNTHIA'S PARENTS HOUSE - DAY

David is parked at the curb in front of the house. He looks at the cashier's check. He slips it back into the envelope along with a note. He gets out of his truck.

As he approaches the house, he can hear Amber laughing in the back yard. He walks up the side of the house. He looks over the wall. He sees Richard pushing Amber on the swing.

AMBER

(laughing)  
Higher, grandpa!

Cynthia lies on a blanket with Buster and Bryan. Marjorie is sitting on a lawn chair reading a catalog. David watches them for several moments.

He looks depressed. He sighs and walks back to the front of the house. He looks at the envelope, then slips it inside the mail slot.

INT. POLICE STATION/SQUAD ROOM - DAY

Detective Whitney brings a file to Detective Hauser. He tosses Nick's picture and his long rap sheet onto the desk.

DET. WHITNEY

Nick Lazzari. Did seven years for the murder of Mickey "The Lizard" Gravano. He did another three for possession of illegal firearms. And he's the prime suspect in the murders of mob informant Sammy Rodriguez and Federal Justice Edwin Whitmore. His last known job is listed as a chauffeur for the West Hills Country Club which is owned by Kent Leyland.

DET. HAUSER

Gets better. A Tommy Leyland, Kent Leyland's grandson, was arrested last night. Seems he pulled a gun on two officers. But here's the kicker, the gun was rigged with a silencer.

DET. WHITNEY

Sounds like someone ready to carry out a hit.

(beat)

Where they keeping him?

DET. HAUSER

The Twin Towers hospital ward. The stupid son-of-a-bitch shot himself in the leg.

DET. WHITNEY

Doesn't sound like Lowry is so crazy after all.

INT. WENDY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Steve enters first. He takes a quick look around. Wendy then enters.

WENDY

Want something to drink?

STEVE

Sure.

Wendy pulls a beer. She hands it to Steve.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Thanks.

Steven opens his beer. Wendy gets on her cellphone. Steve leans against the wall and works on his beer. His eyes are locked on her.

WENDY

(into phone)

Hey mom.

(beat)

I thought I'd come visit you and dad for a couple of weeks.

(beat)

Probably tomorrow.

(beat)

Okay. I'll see you tomorrow. Love you.

Wendy hangs up. She turns to Steve.

WENDY (CONT'D)  
I'll just be a few minutes.

STEVE  
Take your time.

Wendy goes into her bedroom. Steve finishes his beer.

BEDROOM

Steve comes into Wendy's bedroom. He leans against the door frame. He watches her as she packs her bags.

STEVE (CONT'D)  
So, your parents live in Arizona?

WENDY  
Tucson.

STEVE  
Long drive.

WENDY  
I'm gonna fly.

STEVE  
Expensive.

WENDY  
I don't have a choice.

STEVE  
Very hot in Tucson.

WENDY  
You adapt.

STEVE  
I don't mind if you stay at my place.

WENDY  
I appreciate the offer, Steve, but you have enough to deal with already, and you don't need to get involved in all this drama and mess.

Steve moves over to her. She's momentarily surprised.

STEVE  
Don't go.

Their eyes lock on each other.

WENDY

I... aah... I already promised my mother.

STEVE

Call her back.

WENDY

She'll be upset.

STEVE

She'll get over it.

WENDY

Look, Steve...

STEVE

Stay with me.

WENDY

I don't think that would...

STEVE

When I first saw you I said there is the most beautiful girl I have ever laid eyes on. My life would not be complete unless I was with her.

Steve leans in and kisses her. Wendy is surprised. Their eyes lock on each other. Wendy's knees wobble.

WENDY

Aah...

Wendy flings her arms around Steve. They kiss passionately.

INT. CYNTHIA'S PARENTS HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Marjorie brings the envelope to Cynthia.

MARJORIE

I think this is for you.

Cynthia opens the envelope. She pulls out the cashier's check. She reads a note that is in the envelope with it.

MARJORIE (CONT'D)

What is it?

Cynthia slips the envelope into her purse. She pulls out her keys and kisses Marjorie on the cheek.

CYNTHIA

I have to go. I'll be back later.



INT. JAIL HOSPITAL WARD - DAY

Detectives Hauser and Whitney approach Tommy's bed. Tommy is dressed in jail garb. His right-leg is wrapped, and slightly raised in a splint. The detectives show their badges.

DET. HAUSER

Hello, Tommy. I'm Detective Chris Hauser, and this is my partner, Detective Kevin Whitney. We just need to ask you a few questions.

TOMMY

I'm not supposed to talk to anybody.

Detective Whitney takes both hands and casually leans on Tommy's wounded leg. Tommy reacts to the intense pain.

DET. HAUSER

That's okay, you don't have to talk.

EXT. LOWRY HOUSE - DAY

Cynthia pulls into the driveway.

INT. LOWRY HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The front door opens. Cynthia walks in, skimming through the mail. She shuts the door and looks up. She drops the mail and stumbles back against the door. Nick is sitting in the recliner. He aims his gun at her.

NICK

Hello, Cynthia.

INT. STEVE'S HOUSE - DAY

David comes in. Steve and Wendy are not there. Exhausted, he lays on the sofa. He closes his eyes, quickly drifting off to sleep.

INT. TWIN TOWERS JAIL - DAY

Detectives Hauser and Whitney leave the hospital ward.

DET. HAUSER

I'll be damned. Lowry was telling the truth.

DET. WHITNEY

We better get to him before the hit is carried out.

INT. STEVE'S HOUSE - DAY

David is in a deep sleep. He briefly opens his eyes and sees a voicemail from Cynthia on his cellphone. He plays it. Cynthia's voice sounds desperate.

CYNTHIA (V.O.)  
(thru phone)  
I really need you to come home.

David sits up. He sits for a moment. He gathers his bearings, then grabs his truck keys and leaves.

EXT. LOWRY HOUSE - DAY

David pulls into the driveway. He parks the truck to the right of Cynthia's car.

INT. LOWRY HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

David opens the door and steps inside. Cynthia rushes over to him. She's very upset. Her eyes are red and swelled from crying.

DAVID  
Hey, babe, you okay?

Cynthia shakes her head no. She hugs him tight, crying into his shoulder. David holds her. He takes another step inside. Nick bashes him over the head with his gun. BLACK.

INT. STEVE'S HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

Steve and Wendy return to the house. Steve carries Wendy's suitcases in.

WENDY  
He's not here.

Steve looks around. David isn't there.

STEVE  
(concerned)  
Something's wrong. I'm going over to David's.

Steve starts back out the door. Wendy grabs his arm.

WENDY  
I'm going with you.

INT. LOWRY HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

David slowly regains consciousness, his face twisted in pain. He regains focus. He finds himself lying on the sofa. His head is on Cynthia's lap.

He carefully sits up, holding the back of his head. He looks over and sees Nick sitting across from them. Nick is relaxed. His gun resting on his lap.

NICK  
(smiles; gestures)  
David! David! David!  
(looks around)  
You've done wonders with this place.

DAVID  
Who the hell are you?

NICK  
No one special. Just your assigned executioner.

Cynthia clutches onto David. She's badly trembling.

DAVID  
Let my wife go. She doesn't have anything to do with this. The hit was ordered on me, not her.

NICK  
Hey buddy, if you're looking for sympathy, you can find it in the dictionary between shit and syphilis.

DAVID  
She doesn't deserve to die because of me.

NICK  
Shut up. It won't do you any good. She knows my face, so she takes the ride.

Nick aims his gun at them.

NICK (CONT'D)  
Let's go.

EXT. LOWRY HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

David and Cynthia come out of the house. Nick is directly behind them. He presses his gun against Cynthia's back.

INT. DETECTIVE UNIT - LATE AFTERNOON

Detectives Hauser and Whitney pull in to the driveway behind David's truck. They see David and Cynthia, but not Nick.

EXT. LOWRY HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Detectives Hauser and Whitney approach David and Cynthia.

DET. WHITNEY

Mr. Lowry...

They spot Nick, but too late. Nick quickly fires two shots. The detectives are seriously wounded before they can even draw their weapons.

Cynthia starts crying. Nick grabs her by the neck, jamming the gun harder into her back.

NICK

In the car.

They quickly move to Cynthia's car. David gets behind the wheel. Nick forces Cynthia into the front passenger seat. He gets in the rear passenger seat.

INT. CYNTHIA'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Nick points the gun at the back of Cynthia's head.

NICK

Move it. If you pull any shit, I'll pop her.

David backs out of the driveway. Cynthia sees the two wounded detectives attempting to get up. David accelerates.

EXT. LOWRY HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

NEIGHBORS immediately rush to aide of the detectives. Detective Hauser slowly sits up. He manages to prop himself against the front wheel of the detective unit.

INT. CYNTHIA'S CAR - LATE AFTERNOON

DAVID

Where we going?

NICK

Up Mulholland.

INT. STEVE'S CAR - LATE AFTERNOON

Steve spots Cynthia's car as it passes them going in the opposite direction. He looks back out his side window.

STEVE

That was David and Cynthia.

Steve whips a U-turn in the middle of the block, cutting off oncoming traffic. Steve and Wendy can see Cynthia's car about six cars ahead.

WENDY

There's someone in the car with them.

INT. CYNTHIA'S CAR - LATE AFTERNOON

NICK

So, David. What did you do to Mr. Leyland to make him put a hit on you?

DAVID

(sotto)

I put the hit on myself.

David brakes for a red light.

NICK

I'm sorry, I didn't get that. You did what?

DAVID

I put the contract out on myself.

NICK

You put it on yourself?

Nick starts laughing.

NICK (CONT'D)

Who does that? You must be a fuckin' idiot.

The light turns green. David quickly reaches across Cynthia's lap and flings her door open. He shoves her out of the car. He floors the accelerator. The sudden acceleration knocks Nick back in his seat.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Cynthia quickly gets to her feet as David speeds away.

CYNTHIA  
(screaming)  
David!

Steve screeches to a stop. She realizes it is Steve, and jumps into the backseat. Steve accelerates.

INT. STEVE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Cynthia is hysterical. Wendy does her best to comfort her.

CYNTHIA  
He's armed! He killed two detectives! Now  
he's going to kill David!

INT. CYNTHIA'S CAR - LATE AFTERNOON

Nick is furious. He presses his gun against David's head.

NICK  
That wasn't too bright.

DAVID  
You fell for it.

David turns onto Mulholland Drive and presses down on the accelerator. The car picks up speed. It starts coming dangerously close to the steep cliffs. Nick becomes alarmed.

NICK  
Slow down.

David accelerates even more. He straps on his seatbelt.

INT. STEVE'S CAR - LATE AFTERNOON

David is going so fast that Steve loses sight of him.

STEVE  
Damn't, David.

INT. CYNTHIA'S CAR - LATE AFTERNOON

The car hits the dirt shoulder several times, coming within only a few feet of the steep drop off. Nick presses his gun against David's right-ear.

NICK  
Slow down!

DAVID  
You're the asshole with the gun.

David slams on the brakes, losing control of the speeding car. Nick violently flies over the backseat, his face slamming into the dashboard and windshield

EXT. MULHOLLAND DRIVE - LATE AFTERNOON

The car comes to a stop just a few feet from a steep cliff.

INT. CYNTHIA'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Nick is seriously dazed. Blood drips from his broken nose and badly cut lip. David keeps his foot on the brake as he unhooks his seatbelt. He tries to open his door, but Nick aims his gun at him.

David eases up on the brake. The car starts to roll towards the cliff. Startled, Nick grabs a hold of David, who presses the brake once again.

NICK  
You ain't goin' nowhere.

INT. STEVE'S CAR - LATE AFTERNOON

Steve speeds up to the scene. He grabs a tire iron and turns to Wendy and Cynthia.

STEVE  
Stay here.

WENDY  
Please wait for the police.

He gets out of the car. Wendy is very upset. Her and Cynthia clutch each other.

WENDY (CONT'D)  
Be careful!

EXT. MULHOLLAND DRIVE - CONTINUOUS

Steve cautiously walks toward Cynthia's car, the tire iron grasped firmly in his right-hand.

STEVE  
(yells)  
David!

INT. CYNTHIA'S CAR - LATE AFTERNOON

Nick's attention is momentarily averted by Steve's voice. David grabs a hold of Nick's wrist.

The two men wrestle for control of the gun. David struggles to keep his foot on the brake at the same time. The gun fires twice.

EXT. MULHOLLAND DRIVE - LATE AFTERNOON

Steve drops to the asphalt. Staying low, he quickly scurries toward the driver's side of Cynthia's car.

INT. CYNTHIA'S CAR - LATE AFTERNOON

David pulls away. He spots Steve in the driver's side mirror, crouched down against the car. Nick has regained control of the gun. He has David dead to rights.

NICK

Put the car in park, NOW!

David looks Nick directly in the eyes.

DAVID

Whatever you say, asshole.

David flings his door open and rolls from the car. Steve grabs a hold of him, and quickly pulls him away from the car. Two SHOTS ring out, bullets hitting the asphalt.

The car starts rolling towards the steep cliff. Nick frantically attempts to get out of the car, but has no time.

EXT. MULHOLLAND DRIVE - LATE AFTERNOON

As David and Steve look back, Cynthia's car disappears over the steep cliff with Nick inside. David bends over, trying to regain his composure. Steve lets out a sigh of relief.

STEVE

You okay?

David nods repeatedly. He pats Steve on the shoulder.

DAVID

Thanks, man. I owe you a big one.

STEVE

That was way too close.

Overwhelmed with emotion, Wendy and Cynthia quickly climb out of Steve's car. Wendy rushes up to Steve.

Cynthia stands motionless for several seconds. Her and David lock eyes. Cynthia runs over to him. They embrace. They don't let go. Cynthia cries. They kiss repeatedly.



Steve and Wendy walk over to the steep cliff. They look over edge. Cynthia's car is a hundred feet down, and is nothing more than a twisted hunk of metal.

Two California Highway Patrol units speed up code three.

WENDY  
 (to Steve)  
 So, how are you on a date?

EXT. LOWRY HOUSE - DAY

David waits out on the porch. Richard and Marjorie pull into the driveway. Amber climbs out of the backseat. She runs to David and leaps into his arms.

AMBER  
 Daddy!

Buster jumps out of the car and runs over to them wagging his tail. Cynthia gets out of the car. She's holding Bryan.

Cynthia waves to Richard and Marjorie. Richard puts on his sunglasses and just shakes his head. He backs out of the driveway and drives off.

Cynthia walks over to David. They kiss. David puts his arm around her. He has his family back. They go into the house.

INT. STEVE'S BAR & GRILL - NIGHT

Steve and Wendy sit at the end of the bar. Adam handles the bar. David and Cynthia sit in a booth and talk with George, the contractor and residential planner. They shake hands.

EXT. LEYLAND ESTATE - DAY

LAPD Detectives swarm all over the house. Anthony and Franco are hustled out in handcuffs. Detective Hauser walks with crutches. Detective Whitney's right-arm is in a sling.

EXT. HUTTON ESTATE - DAY

David pulls up to the house. Betty and her husband WALTER (60s), come out of the house. David gets out of his truck.

WALTER  
 Hello, David.

BETTY  
 We weren't expecting you.

DAVID

I'm here because I have a confession to make, and I don't think you're going to like it very much.

(beat)

I'm sorry it took me this long.

David paces nervously. Scratches the back of his head. He turns back to Betty and Walter.

DAVID (CONT'D)

A while back, I aah, I accidentally killed your dog. It was an accident.

Betty and Walter look at each other, then at David.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I'm really sorry. And I apologize for not telling you sooner.

David reaches into the cab of his truck. He lifts out a white French Poodle. Betty is very surprised.

WALTER

David, I'm afraid there's been a grievous error. We've never owned a dog.

BETTY

There was a loose dog running around who was sneaking into the yard through a gap in the fence. She hasn't been around for some time.

David holds out the poodle to Betty.

DAVID

Take the dog, Betty.

BETTY

David, I don't thi...

DAVID

Take the dog.

BETTY

(flustered)

Aah... alright.

Betty takes the poodle. David gets back into his truck. As he drives away, Betty just stands there, holding the poodle straight out at arms length.

EXT. VALENCIA MEADOWS - DAY

David pulls up to the guard gate of the upscale Valencia residential community. Buster is with him. David shows his identification. The guard checks it, then presses a button. The gate opens.

Buster lets out a single authoritative bark. David shoots the guard a slight wave, and accelerates into the residential community.

MUSIC UP: Tony Bennett's FROM RAGS TO RICHES.

Slowly pull back to a rising ARIEL shot as David accelerates into the newly built residential community. Over one hundred eighty homes and a large community park.

FADE OUT.

ROLL CREDITS.

THE END