

A Free and Open Society

Created & Written by

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A Modernization of the Story of Passover

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FADE IN

INTERIOR. MODEST MIDDLECLASS HOME. KITCHEN.

MIKE HYDE (70) sits at a kitchen table drinking coffee with his daughter AMANDA DRAKE (35). A small flat screen is tuned into a game show and there's a small dressage rider's helmet on the table.

MIKE

Y'think she'll like it?

Amanda picks up the small dressage helmet.

AMANDA

And how am I supposed to wrap this?

MIKE

Um, I dunno. Just twirl some paper around it and boom, you're good to go.

AMANDA

Why do you always throw away the box?

MIKE

Chillax, she won't care.

AMANDA

70-year-old men don't say chillax.

MIKE

This one does. (beat) Too bad Patrick can't be here. What's this, the third birthday he's missed?

AMANDA

The Army doesn't care about birthdays dad. You should know that.

MIKE

I was in the Marines honey. The corps cares a lot about birthdays.

Amanda stands, rubs her belly, shows a profile.

AMANDA

Next year we'll have two to celebrate.

MIKE

I don't see a bump. You sure you're pregnant?

AMANDA
Yes dad, I'm sure.

MIKE
Eat more pasta. I wanna see a bump.

Amanda laughs, goes to pour more coffee.

AMANDA
Ruth plane gets in, in the morning.

MIKE
So, how's my granddaughter's
grandmother doing?

Amanda returns to the table, picks up the little helmet.

AMANDA
She's fine. Ashley thinks you two
should get married.

MIKE
Ruth's a great lady but I've been
married to your mom and there ain't no
replacing that chick.

Amanda rubs Mike's arm tenderly.

AMANDA
I know daddy, I miss her too.

MIKE
Yeah, well, last day of school, right?
She comes home early?

AMANDA
Yep. We pick her up at one.

MIKE
She'll sure be surprised to see me.

AMANDA
Dad, she knew you wouldn't miss her...

The program on TV is interrupted by a bulletin.

STATION ANNOUNCER
We interrupt this program with this
special news bulletin.

Mike and Amanda turn toward the TV.

INSERT: THE TV

"A newscaster reports the story."

NEWSCASTER
 Reports of a shooting at Sinclair
 Elementary School in Terre Haute...

Amanda and Mike freeze, stare at the screen.

NEWSCASTER (CONT'D)
 Police and emergency personnel are on
 the scene. We have no information
 regarding injuries or fatalities...

A BANGING at the door. Voice of a NEIGHBOR LADY.

NEIGHBOR LADY
 (frantic)
 Amanda! There's been a shooting! We
 have to get to the school!

Mike and Amanda stare in stunned silence, rush to the door.

FADE

TRANSITION

EXTERIOR. SUBURBAN HOME/BACKYARD. NIGHT.

Ordinary backyard, chain link fence, small screened in back porch with a light on. A grim-faced Mike digs a hole. Prominent USMC Tattoo on his arm: "*Semper Fi 1968-1972*"

AUDIO BED of The STUART ROONEY TV News Talk show plays over.

STUART ROONEY (VO)
 Our guest is Florida Senator James
 Carpenter. Welcome senator.

SENATOR (VO)
 Thanks Stuart. As always, a pleasure.

STUART ROONEY (VO)
 Senator, the liberal clamor to
 capitalize on the grief of the
 families of twenty-seven slain third
 graders to rewrite the second
 amendment has already begun.

Mike stops digging, crushes an empty can of beer, tosses the can into the hole.

STUART ROONEY (VO, CONT'D)
 What have you to say to those who may become constitutionally blinded by the emotion of this tragic event?

Mike plunges the shovel into a pile of dirt next to the hole and walks toward the small back porch.

SENATOR (VO)
 First of all, my wife Cindy and our daughter Kelly are praying for the loved ones affected by this tragedy.

STUART ROONEY (VO)
 Yes Senator, as are we all.

Hinges on the porch door squeak.

SENATOR (VO)
 It's at times like these when we must focus on the real issue and not be distracted by partisanship.

INTERIOR. BACKPORCH. NIGHT.

A folded American Flag, old U.S.M.C. uniform, framed photo of a younger Mike posing with other Marines, a Bronze Star, two Purple Hearts and a framed copy of an honorable discharge sit in a pile on a chair on the back porch.

STUART ROONEY (VO)
 Exactly what do you mean Senator?

Mike picks up the pile of stuff.

SENATOR (VO)
 Until we can come together and address the issue of mental illness in this country events such as these, as tragic as they may be...

Cold, emotionless Mike heads back to the hole in his yard carrying the pile of patriotic stuff.

SENATOR (VO, CONT'D)
 ...will simply be a price we must pay...

Mike dumps the stuff in the hole and unzips his pants.

SENATOR (VO, CONT'D, CONT'D)
 ...to live in a free and open society.

INSERT: HOLE IN THE GROUND.

"A stream of urine sprays on the contents of the hole."

FADE

TRANSITION:

INTERIOR. MIDDLECLASS HOME. LIVING ROOM.

RUTH DRAKE (65) is on the phone talking to Mike. Amanda sits in a chair, dangling a string of young in front of a kitten.

RUTH
 She's doing better, how are you doing?
 (pause) Okay, hold on.
 (to Amanda)
 Honey, your dad wants to say hi.

AMANDA
 (monotone)
 Okay.

RUTH
 Okay Mike, you're on speaker.

MIKE (ON SPEAKER)
 Hi honey, how you doing today?

AMANDA
 (childish)
 Hi daddy! I'm fine! Ruth and I went to the shelter and got a kitten!

MIKE (ON SPEAKER)
 That's nice baby.

AMANDA
 Her name is Ashley. She's a girl.

Silence.

AMANDA (CONT'D)
 Tomorrow's balloon day!

MIKE (ON SPEAKER)
Balloon day?

RUTH
We go to the park on Thursday's so she
can send up a balloon.

Moment of silence.

MIKE (ON SPEAKER)
(emotional)
You bringing the kitten with you
honey?

Amanda clutches the kitten to her breast.

AMANDA
(fear)
No! She might run away and get hurt!

MIKE (ON SPEAKER)
Good point honey. You take good care
of that kitten.

AMANDA
You want me to send a balloon up for
you daddy?

MIKE (ON SPEAKER)
Sure honey, that'd be great. Yeah!

AMANDA
What do you want it to say?

Silence.

RUTH
The balloon has to have a message.

AMANDA
(matter-of-fact)
I always just write, 'happy birthday.'

Silence.

AMANDA (CONT'D)
Daddy? (beat) You want to say happy
birthday too?

MIKE (ON SPEAKER)
Yeah sweetie, she'd like that.

RUTH

You know, Mike, I was thinking. It might be good if Amanda came to be with you for a while. You know how much she loves the beach and...

MIKE (ON SPEAKER)

Um, now's not a good time Ruth. I've got something I've got to do and...

RUTH

(to Amanda)

Honey, I have to talk to your dad alone.

AMANDA

Okay. (hollers) Love you daddy!

MIKE (ON SPEAKER)

Love you too honey.

Ruth steps outside with the phone. Takes it off speaker.

RUTH

(rant)

Damn it Mike, what more important than the only family you have left in the world? (pause) She's your daughter! How dare you... (pause) You're going to fix things? What the fuck does that mean? (pause) Mike? (pause) Mike, what are you going to do? (pause) Well, whatever it is, get it done fast! I can't take much more of this!

FADE

TRANSITION:

INTERIOR. SPORTING GOODS STORE.

Mikes at a counter in the firearms section holding a shoebox. A pudgy, pasty CLERK arrives with boxes.

CLERK

Here y'go Mr. Hyde. Two Smith & Wesson MP Shield nine mills, one hundred FMJ and two hundred hollow points.

The Clerk see's the *USMC 1968-1972* tattoo on Mike's arm.

CLERK (CONT'D)
Jarhead, huh?

Mike ignores the Clerk, puts the shoebox on the counter.

MIKE
Can I pay for these here?

CLERK
Sure.

The Clerk tabulates the bill.

CLERK (CONT'D)
If you'd come in two months ago you
woul'da-hadda gone through a background
check, get a conceal permit and...

MIKE
Yeah, I know all about that.

The clerk bags things up.

CLERK
Oh, and you get one of these.

The Clerk hands Mike a plastic card. Mike reads it.

MIKE (CONT'D)
What's this?

CLERK
(enthusiastic)
Welcome to Willie's Sporting Goods
Well-Regulated Militia Society! You
get 15% off all ammo purchases and a
free gun cleaning kit.

Clerk puts a kit in the bag. Mike tosses the card on the
counter and leaves.

FADE

TRANSITION:

INTERIOR. INDOOR SHOOTING RANGE.

Wearing soundproof headphones, Mike prepares to fire at a cardboard target shaped like a bad guy. A MAN standing behind a counter selling accessories glances up from time to time. Mike talks quietly to the pistol as he inserts a clip.

MIKE

(murmurs to self)

You're lighter than my old .45. That damn thing had the kick of a mule.

He repeats the process with the clip from the second pistol.

MIKE (CONT'D)

(murmur to self)

Just as well. At my age a forty-five would probably tear my arm off. (beat)
Okay, let's see what you got...

He inserts clips into the second pistol. Pulls the slide to load a shell into both chambers, aims and fires all shells from both pistols into the target nearly tearing it in half. The Man behind the counter is impressed.

Mike packs up the weapons, goes to the Man at the counter.

MIKE (CONT'D)

I'll take a box of 9 mil rubber bullets, cheapest you got.

The Man hands Mike the rubber bullets.

MAN

Okay, uh, say, that was some pretty righteous shooting.

MIKE

A hell of a lot more convincing than turning a stick into a snake.

The man behind the counter looks confused, Mike leaves.

FADE

TRANSITION:

INT. PRIVATE SCHOOL. HALLWAY. DAY.

With a visitor's badge clipped to his shirt, Mike walks the hallway of Excalibur Academy with Director of Admissions CLAIRE SPRINGS (40). A few students and a pair of husky SECURITY GUARDS in crimson blazers linger about.

CLAIRE

I think you'll find Excalibur Academy an ideal place for your granddaughter Mr. Hyde.

MIKE

I was very impressed with the website.

CLAIRE

You noticed our overall national ranking among private academies?

MIKE

Uh huh, but actually I'm mostly interested in the security.

CLAIRE

Oh! Aren't we all these days? So many shootings. So terrible. In our over 100-year history, Excalibur has never had a single incident!

MIKE

Impressive.

Clair leads Mike to CARLOS ORTIZ, a dangerous looking man in a crimson blazer with a star on it.

CLAIRE

There's Carlos Ortega, captain of the Excalibur Security Force. He'll tell you all about it. Carlos, meet Michael Hyde. He's considering enrolling his granddaughter, Ashley.

CARLOS

Nice to meet you Mr. Hyde.

MIKE

Hi Carlos. Please, call me Mike.

CLAIRE

Mr. Hyde was inquiring about our security precautions.

CARLOS
Okay, well, first off, the Excaliber
Academy Security Force consists of
twelve armed...

Carlos opens his jacket to show a holstered pistol. Mike
nods, pretends to be impressed.

CARLOS (CONT'D)
... highly trained professionals, all
former law enforcement or military.

MIKE
Or both, right?

CARLOS
(chuckles politely)
Exactly. There are metal detectors at
every entrance and visitors have to
sign in and sign out.

Mike points to a cc security camera mounted on the ceiling.

MIKE
Video?

CARLOS
We have cameras located every fifty
feet in the halls, at every entrance,
parking lots, athletic fields,
cafeteria, library and classroom.

MIKE
I dunno, some of these lunatics always
seem to find a way.

CARLOS
In the event of an incident, every
classroom door double bolt locks
immediately and can only be opened
with from inside.

MIKE
Very good.

CARLOS
Wait, there's more! The grounds are
protected with motion detectors and
electric razor wire. And if someone
did get past all that after hours,
they'd have to deal with the dogs.

MIKE

Dogs?

CARLOS

Six very unfriendly Belgian Malinois.

MIKE

I'm familiar with the breed.

Carlos notes the *USMC 1968-1972* tattoo on Mike's arm.

CARLOS

Marines huh? Nam?

MIKE

Two tours.

CLAIRE

Thanks for your service.

Carlos pulls up a sleeve to show his tattoo.

CARLOS

Airborne. Afghanistan. Two tours.

MIKE

Thank you for yours.

CLAIRE

Well, I hope that satisfies your security concerns Mr. Hyde.

MIKE

Yes, I think Ashley will like it here.

CLAIRE

So, you've decided?

Mike pats Carlos on the shoulder.

MIKE

Carlos here sealed the deal.

CARLOS

Thanks Mr. Hyde.

MIKE

Please, call me Mike.

They shake hands. Mike turns to Claire.

MIKE (CONT'D)

I have a tee time at Bluewater Bay at ten, is there a way I can come by early to do the paperwork?

CARLOS

We can meet in the east parking lot at seven-thirty and you can come in with me and the others.

MIKE

I'll bring the donuts.

CARLOS

(small laugh)

That'll make you a real popular guy!

CLAIRE

I'll make it a point to be in my office, Carlos will show you the way, uh, after you've had a donut.

CARLOS

Sure, sure, no problem.

MIKE

That's great, thanks a lot.

CARLOS

Hit 'em long Mike

MIKE

At my age Carlos, I'm grateful I can hit 'em at all. (laugh)

FADE

TRANSITION:

INTERIOR. EMPTY MOTEL ROOM. NIGHT.

The pistols are on the dresser, boxes of ammo opened, a bottle of Jack Daniels, a Bible and an almost empty plastic motel room cup sit on the bedside table. Mike enters with a pizza, puts it on the bed, rushes to the bathroom. SOUND of pissing. Mike returns in his shirt and boxer shorts, sits, turns on the TV and eats a slice. An old TV show rerun is on TV (Andy of Mayberry, Dick Van Dyke, Gunsmoke).

Mike glances at the almost empty cup, pours Jack into it. Drinks. Changes the TV channel to the left-leaning DENISE TAYLOR SHOW. Her guests are FRED WARREN, the father of a high school girl killed in a shooting and Senator SAM O'NEILL of Massachusetts.

DENISE

What is it going to take to get something done about guns in this country Senator O'Neill?

Mike glances over at the Bible.

O'NEILL

We're making real progress towards meaningful gun and mental health regulations, uh, believe it or not.

MIKE (TO HIMSELF)

I choose, 'not.'

DENISE

Fred Warren, you lost your daughter Chelsea in one of these, uh, events. You've since started an organization, Dad's Against Guns.

MIKE (TO HIMSELF)

How's that working out Fred?

FRED

Denise, we've testified before Congress, marched on Washington and raised millions to raise awareness...

MIKE (TO HIMSELF)

There's someone who's not aware?

Mike turns the TV off, wipes his hands on his shirt, opens the Bible.

INSERT: BIBLE PAGES

"The Book of Exodus, verses 11:13. The Passover. Mike reads to himself, nods. Shuts the Bible. Takes a drink."

MIKE (TO HIMSELF)

I can't believe no one's ever thought of this. (bites pizza) Incredible.

FADE

TRANSITION:

EXTERIOR. EXCALIBUR ACADEMY. PARKING LOT. DAY.

The crimson-blazered Excalibur Security Force wait in the parking lot. Mike stands among them, holding a box of donuts. An SUV drives in fast, parks. Carlos hurries out.

CARLOS

(frantic)

Sorry, sorry, sorry. Have the dogs been cleared?

SECURITY PERSON

Over an hour ago.

CARLOS

Have y'all met Mr. Hyde?

SECURITY PERSON

Yeah, he's holding out on the donuts until you got here.

CARLOS

(laughs)

Good man, Mike. Sorry I'm late. I went out to the car, and it had a flat.

MIKE

I hate it when that happens.

Carlos leads the group, to the door. Enters a security code. They file in and walk past un-activated metal detectors. Each guard takes a walkie-talking from a wall mount.

CARLOS

Andy, activate the detectors. Kay, take the first video shift. Everyone else, to your stations.

SECURITY PERSON (ANDY)

What about the donuts?

CARLOS

(To Mike)

Andy's one of the former law enforcement guys.

MIKE

It shows.

Mike hands the box of donuts to Andy.

CARLOS

(to Andy)

Bring those to the break room and save me a chocolate honey dip. I've gotta bring Mr. Hyde to admissions.

Carlos begins to lead Mike away the suddenly stops.

CARLOS

Opps, I forgot something.

Mike flashes a moment of concern. Nervous smile.

MIKE

What's that?

Carlos picks up a clipboard.

CARLOS

Y'gotta sign in!

MIKE

Absolutely!

Mike signs in and Carlos clips a visitors badge on his jacket. Carlos waves to the others and leads Mike away.

CARLOS

I saw Mrs. Springs car in the staff lot so she's definitely in her office.

MIKE

Great.

CARLOS

First class is in half an hour. Uh, no offense, but I Googled you last night.

MIKE

You Googled me?

CARLOS

One can never be too careful, right?

MIKE

Right.

CARLOS

Silver Star, two Purple Hearts. Man, you're like a for-real war hero! Your granddaughter must be very proud.

MIKE

We've never really talked about it.

They come to an intersection of halls. Mike stops.

MIKE

I think I can take it from here.

CARLOS

You sure?

MIKE

You better get back before all the chocolate honey dips are gone.

CARLOS

Okay. Thanks. Don't forget your cars parked in the east lot.

MIKE

Got it. Thanks.

Carlos leaves. Mike SIGHS, wipes his brow, walks the hall toward Claire Springs office.

FADE

TRANSITION:

INTERIOR. CLAIRE SPRINGS OFFICE.

Claire at her desk, shuffles paperwork. A KNOCK on the door.

CLAIRE

Come in.

Mike enters. Claire stands, greets him.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Mr. Hyde! Good morning. Can I get you a cup of coffee?

MIKE

That would be nice. I take it black.

CLAIRE
(calling out)
Cora? (pause) Cora?

MIKE
There was no one in the outer office.

CLAIRE
Oh, uh, well, I guess I'll have to get
it myself.

MIKE
No, no. Don't bother. It can wait.
Let's get started on the paperwork.

CLAIRE
As you wish.

Claire pulls a small stack of forms from her desk, gives them
to Mike along with a pen. Mike admires the pen.

MIKE
Nice pen.

CLAIRE
We had those pens made up special for
the centennial.

Mike half-listens to Claire, as he fills out forms.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Here at Excaliber Ashley will not only
receive the highest education she'll
learn alongside children from some of
the finest families in Florida.

MIKE
You don't say.

CLAIRE
Oh yes. We have the children of movie
stars, corporate executives and even
the daughter of a U.S. Senator.

MIKE
Which senator is that?

CLAIRE
Senator James Carpenter.

MIKE

Really, I'm a big fan! (beat) I have
all his bumper stickers.

Claire laughs. Mike glances at a framed desktop picture of
Claire with her husband and daughter.

MIKE

Nice looking family.

CLAIRE

Yes. Hank and I were high school
sweethearts.

MIKE

How old's your daughter?

CLAIRE

Amy's eighteen.

MIKE

She's beautiful.

CLAIRE

She'll be attending Brown in the fall.
That's in Rhode Island. (beat)
Providence. We're very proud of her.

MIKE

I'm sure you are.

Mike reviews the forms, makes sure he hasn't missed anything.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Providence is a nice town. A big
Portuguese influence.

CLAIRE

(concerned)
Portuguese?

Mike hands the forms and pen back to Claire.

MIKE

Here you go.

CLAIRE

Keep the pen. As a souvenir.

Mike smirks, puts the pen in his pocket.

MIKE

Thanks.

Claire scans forms. Office assistant CORA pokes her head in.

CORA

Hi Claire. Sorry I'm late.

CLAIRE

That's okay Cora. Do you remember Mr. Hyde from yesterday?

CORA

Good to see you again Mr. Hyde.

MIKE

Good to see you.

CLAIRE

Cora, be a dear and get Mr. Hyde a cup of coffee, black. I'll have my usual.

CORA

Okay, be right back.

Cora leaves.

CLAIRE

What would I do without Cora?

MIKE

Yes.

CLAIRE

So, as I was saying, the Excaliber experience isn't just about what you learn but who you learn it with.

MIKE

Yes.

CLAIRE

One can never be too young to start networking with others who might prove helpful along the way.

MIKE

Absolutely.

Cora returns with coffee.

CORA
Here you go.

CLAIRE
I was just telling Mr. Hyde about the
pedigree of our student body.

CORA
Oh?

CLAIRE
(to Mike)
Cora serves as a sort of student
counselor and she knows these kids...

School bell RINGS. SOUND of kids rushing into the school.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Oh, excuse me, I'll be right back.

Claire rushes out.

CORA
Karen must be in the hallway, every
day, to greet the kids.

MIKE
Karen? I thought her name was Claire?

CORA
All the kids call her Karen because,
well, she is one.

MIKE
Oh. Um, about the kids...

CORA
Right, well most of them are fine but
there's still plenty who think their
shit doesn't stink.

MIKE
(surprised)
Excuse me?

CORA
Carlos tells me you were a Marine.

MIKE
That's right.

CORA
You've never heard that expression?

MIKE
Um, well, uh, sure but I...

CORA
She's a Karen, I'm a phony but the pay's good.

Claire returns.

CLAIRE
Sorry about that. Now, where were we?

MIKE
Um, I was about to give you a check.

CLAIRE
Oh, yes.

MIKE
I got it right here.

Claire gives the forms and check to Cora.

CLAIRE
Cora, please enter Ashley's info into the database and bring the check to accounting.

CORA
See you later Mr. Hyde.

MIKE
Count on it.

SOUNDS of kids in the hall has settled.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Sounds like the coast is clear.

CLAIRE
Yes, I'll call for Carlos.

MIKE
Actually, I was wondering, could I possibly meet the senator's daughter?

CLAIRE
Kelly?

MIKE

Just to say hi and maybe take one of those pictures, you know...

CLAIRE

A selfie?

MIKE

Right! A selfie! My daughter, Ashley's mom, a big fan of the senator too. The idea of her little girl knowing...

CLAIRE

No problem Mr. Hyde, right this way.

Claire and Mike exit.

FADE

TRANSITION:

INTERIOR. CLASSROOM. DAY.

Upscale classroom with PC monitors at each desk. A large video monitor on the wall behind the teacher's desk plays an animated waving American Flag accompanied by an instrumental version of 'The National Anthem.' STUDENTS, ages 15-16 stand facing the monitor with hands over their hearts being led by teacher FRANK TILMAN.

ALL IN CLASS

... one nation, under God, with liberty and justice for all.

As students take their seats, Mike and Clair enter.

FRANK

Mrs. Springs, to what do we owe the honor?

CLAIRE

Mr. Tilman, class, I want you to meet Mr. Hyde. Mr. Hyde's daughter Ashley will be joining us next semester.

FRANK

Welcome to the family Mr. Hyde!

Mike's sweating. He manages a weak smile and nods.

CLAIRE

Mr. Hyde was hoping Kelly would...

Mike reaches behind and under his jacket. Struggles for a moment. Gets one pistol free with a shaky hand.

MIKE

Everybody be quiet! Don't move!

CLAIRE

Oh my God!

Some kids SCREAM. Others dive to the floor. Mike gets the second pistol free, appears nervous, jittery.

MIKE

Shut up!

FRANK

Do as the man says! Quiet down.

MIKE

(calmer)

Thanks. Uh, what's your name?

FRANK

Frank Tilman, what do you want?

MIKE

Well, for now I just want everyone to be quiet.

FRANK

Okay, class you heard the man.

Mike aims the pistol at Claire.

MIKE

Lock the door!

Claire bolt locks the door. Mike smiles.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Wow! That was easy.

The others look at each other nervously.

MIKE (CONT'D, CONT'D)

(nervously giddy)

I guess they forgot to donut proof this place, huh?

FRANK

We'll have to talk to Carlos about that, right Claire?

CLAIRE

Uh, right.

Mike notices the drawer opening, aims a pistol at Frank.

MIKE

Stop! What's in the drawer?

Frank slowly raises his hands, steps back from the drawer.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Take it out, real slow. By the barrel.

Frank cautiously reaches in and removes a .357 revolver. Students look surprised. TAYLOR CONNERY (15) reacts.

TAYLOR

You have a gun Mr. Tilman!?

MIKE

Empty the shells! Put it on the desk!

Students flinch at the sounds of bullets hitting the tiles.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Okay, which one of you is Kelly, Senator Carpenter's daughter?

Students look around nervously. A GIRL (GLORIA) whimpers. Mike aims the pistol at Gloria.

MIKE (CONT'D, CONT'D)

Are you Kelly?

GLORIA

No! No! She's Kelly!

Gloria points to KELLY CARPENTER (15). Mike aims at Kelly.

MIKE

Get up! Stand over by the window.

KELLY

(nervous)

Please don't shoot me.

MIKE
Just do it.

Kelly stands by the window. Mike looks around the class, points to Taylor.

MIKE
Okay, you, go stand next to her.

TAYLOR
Why me?

MIKE
Do it!

FRANK
Taylor, do as the man says.

Taylor rushes to Kelly by the window.

CLAIRE
(pleading)
Please, tell us what you want?

MIKE
You to stand by the window too and uh,
lower the blinds and close the slats!

Claire joins Kelly and Taylor and closes the blinds. Mike picks out three students; WALTER SISSON, LUCAS KREEGER and WENDY HAAS.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Okay, uh, you, you and you, over by
the window.

Walter and Wendy obey. Lucas remains seated with arms folded, defiant. Mike points the gun at him.

MIKE (CONT'D, CONT'D)
You! Get over there!

LUCAS
(arrogant)
I don't think so. Pick someone else.

FRANK
(concerned)
Lucas! Get over there!

LUCAS

Screw that. This old fart's not going to shoot. He's shaking like a leaf.

Lucas walks toward Mike who appears confused.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

Have you any idea who you're messing with pops? My dad could buy and sell you ten's times over.

Lucas stands real close, smirks.

LUCAS (CONT'D, CONT'D)

He happens to be the CEO of Kreeger Supermarkets!

Mike punches Lucas in the face. Lucas drops.

MIKE

(mean)

Clean up in aisle seven.

A couple of kid's giggle. Mike aims a gun at Frank.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Take the others and get out of here!
Be quick about it.

Frank calmly takes charge.

FRANK

Alright, just like we've practiced in the drill. One row at a time. Form a line by the wall...

GLORIA cries.

MIKE

Shut her up!

FRANK

Gloria, come here with me. Come on.

Gloria rushes to Frank. He embraces her.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Okay, now, this row first, single file. This row, behind them. Just like we've practiced.

The students file out of the class calmly. Mike bolt locks the door behind them. SOUNDS of the students running away and screaming. Mike turns, points a gun at Walter.

MIKE

You, pick up supermarket boy and take him to the window.

Walter helps Lucas up. SOUNDS of sirens approaching. SOUNDS of ALARM in school. SOUND of dead bolts locking the door.

WALTER

C'mon Lucas, just do as he says.

SOUNDS of students in the hall screaming, running. Mike points to the circular lens mounted into the ceiling.

MIKE

Is that the only camera in the room?

CLAIRE

Yes.

MIKE

Okay, everyone, sit at these desks in the front.

Siren SOUNDS getting closer. As the hostage's head for the desks, cell phones RING.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Wait! Claire, get all the cell phones, turn 'em off and put them on the teacher's desk. Yours too!

The students give their phones to Claire who turns them off then places them on the teacher's desk. All hostages take a seat in the front row of student desks. Mike's phone RINGS. He looks at the caller I.D.

INSERT: CALLER I.D. SCREEN.

"It reads 'RUTH.'"

Mike, unsure what to do, turns the phone off. SOUNDS of SIRENS arrive outside the school.

MIKE (CONT'D, CONT'D)

The cavalry has arrived.

Mike picks a cellphone off the desk, offers it to Kelly.

MIKE (CONT'D, CONT'D)
Call your mother.

KELLY
My mom?

MIKE
Yeah.

KELLY
What do I tell her?

MIKE
Tell her what's happening.

Kelly nervously dials.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Put it on speaker. What's her name?

KELLY
Cindy.

CINDY (ON SPEAKER)
(annoyed)
Hello? Who is this?

KELLY
(whimpering)
Mom it's me. Uh, there's a man here.

CINDY (ON SPEAKER)
Kelly? What man? Whose phone is this?

A BANGING at the door.

MIKE
(to the door/annoyed)
Go away!

CARLOS (O.C.)
Mike it's me, Carlos!

CINDY (ON SPEAKER)
Carlos? Who's Carlos?

MIKE (CONT'D)
(annoyed)
Damn it Carlos, get lost!

CINDY (ON SPEAKER)
 (panic)
 Kelly, what the hell's going on?

CARLOS (O.C.)
 You won't get away with this!

Claire rushes to the door.

MIKE
 Get away from the door Clair!

CINDY (ON SPEAKER)
 Kelly!

CLAIRE
 Damn it all Carlos! Go away!

KELLY
 (crying)
 Mom?

CARLOS (O.C.)
 Are you okay Mrs. Springs?

CINDY (ON SPEAKER)
 (afraid, crying)
 Kelly? What's going on?

CLAIRE
 (crying)
 Please Carlos, just go.

CARLOS (O.C.)
 Okay Mrs. Springs.

SOUND of Carlos's scurrying away in the hall.

CINDY (ON SPEAKER)
 Kelly! Damn it!

KELLY
 Mom, there's a man with a gun.

CINDY (ON SPEAKER)
 What? God, no!

Mike stands closer to Kelly and the phone.

MIKE
 Mrs. Carpenter (beat) Cindy?

CINDY (ON SPEAKER)
Who's this?

MIKE
I'm the man with the gun, uh, actually
two guns. (beat) You can call me Mike.

CINDY (ON SPEAKER)
Mike?

MIKE
I'll explain later. First things
first, get here as fast as you can.

CINDY (ON SPEAKER)
Don't hurt my daughter!

MIKE
I'll only accept calls from your
phone, understand? So, you need to...

SOUND of FBI Agent ALEX GRIMM calling out on a bullhorn.

ALEX (O.C. BULLHORN)
Mike! This is special agent Alex Grimm
with the FBI. We need to talk.

MIKE
Hear that, Cindy? You better get down
here and give Agent Grimm your phone
before he decides to rush the place.

CINDY (ON SPEAKER)
I'll be there in five minutes!

Call ends. Mike rubs the back of his neck.

MIKE
(to himself)
So far so good.

Mike scans the nervous, frightened faces of the hostages.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Hi.

The hostages stare back. Wendy manages a weak wave.

MIKE (CONT'D, CONT'D)
Um, I'm Mike.

WALTER
Yeah, we got that.

MIKE
(points at Lucas)
You. What's your name?

LUCAS
Lucas.

MIKE
Sorry I hit you Lucas, but it's
important for everyone to know, I'm
serious.

TAYLOR
Are you going to kill us?

Mike sits up on the desk, stretches his neck.

MIKE
What's your name?

TAYLOR
Taylor Connery.

MIKE
Well Taylor, I'm still thinking about
it.

WALTER
It there something you want? Money?

MIKE
Money? Nah! I just want to talk to
Kelly's mom and dad.

KELLY
My parents? Why?

MIKE
I want 'em to know how it feels.

WENDY
How what feels?

MIKE
(intense)
How it feels to feel like me!

Seeing the fear on the kid's faces, Mike calms.

MIKE (CONT'D)

A few weeks ago, some guy, he called himself an Incel, killed twenty-five second graders with a gun bigger than mine. One of those kids was my granddaughter. Her name was Ashley.

The hostages gasp, go slack-jawed.

MIKE (CONT'D, CONT'D)

He killed 25 seven-year-olds because he couldn't get laid. Isn't that a kick in the ass? Anyway, I had to identify the body because my pregnant daughter, who wound up having a miscarriage was in shock.

Mike points to his tattoo.

MIKE (CONT'D, CONT'D)

I was in the Marines a long time ago and I got to see up-close-and-personal what a .223 Remington shell can do to a man with a helmet. I didn't want my daughter to see what one did to her little girl.

WENDY

I'm sorry for your loss.

MIKE

Afterwards Ruth, my son-in-law's mom had to call him, he was deployed, in Poland. Anyway, after hearing his daughter had been murdered and he lost his future son and his wife had lost her mind, he shot himself.

WALTER

Oh my God.

MIKE

So, after all of this, I'm staring at the tube and Kelly's dad says, that this is all something he have to accept to live in a free and open society.

KELLY

My dad's an asshole.

MIKE

That may be but he had a point.

KELLY

He only says what he's told to say,
like some kind of fucking puppet.

MIKE

Anyway, I was thinking maybe he'd
change his mind about things if he and
your mom had a little taste of the tax
I had to pay to live in this free and
open society.

CLAIRE

That's insane.

MIKE

Careful Claire, it wasn't my idea. It
was God's.

WALTER

God told you to do this?

MIKE

Uh, not exactly. Any of you guys ever
read the Bible? Exodus? 3:11?

The hostages shrug.

MIKE (CONT'D)

It's the story of Passover. I'm not
Jewish but it's a helluva yarn.

TAYLOR

What's it about?

Mike thinks for a moment. Walks closer to the camera and
speaks right to it.

MIKE

The FBI will know, right agent Grimm?
You know what I'm talking about. The
Angel of Death. The first born. The
tenth plague. A very convincing
argument.

Mike takes aim at the camera and FIRES. The kids scream. The
phone RINGS. Mike looks at caller I.D.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Your mom made good time Kelly, Hello?

EXTERIOR. SCHOOL FRONT.

Uniformed deputies and EMT standing around. News cameras trained on the school. FBI Agents ALEX GRIMM (Black/50) and GREG WHITESTONE (White/40) face the school window with blinds drawn. Alex on the phone. Attractive trophy-wife CINDY CARPENTER (40) is screaming into the phone.

CINDY
Kelly!! Are you alright? Kelly?
(pause). He wants to talk to you.

Cindy hands the phone to Alex Grimm.

ALEX
Mike, this is Special Agent Alex Grimm

Alex presses the phone against his chest.

ALEX (CONT'D)
He wants to go on speaker.

GREG
That's against procedure.

CINDY
Procedure? Screw procedure.

ALEX
(to the deputies)
Get those reporters back! Set up a media area across the street by the trailer!
(on phone)
Hold on Mike.

Alex waits for the media to clear.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Okay Mike, you're on speaker.

MIKE (ON SPEAKER)
Hello Alex, I just killed the camera.

ALEX
Why'd you do that Mike?

MIKE (ON SPEAKER)

I'm shy.

ALEX

Mike, please be serious.

MIKE (ON SPEAKER)

Serious? Alex, I just may be the most serious man you've ever met. It would be a big mistake to think I'm bluffing, okay?

ALEX

Okay, Mike. We understand.

MIKE (ON SPEAKER)

Now, to save us both of a lot of time I just explained to the class why I'm doing this so all you have to do is play back the video of the last few minutes, okay?

ALEX

Okay Mike but I'd still like you to...

MIKE (ON SPEAKER)

Here's what I want. I want Cindy to get husband to get his ass here right away.

CINDY

He's in Washington!

MIKE (ON SPEAKER)

I don't give a shit if he's on Mars. He's got two hours. And I want Stuart Rooney and his clown show to be here too. There's going to be a special edition of his show airing tonight.

ALEX

Mike, be reasonable!

MIKE (ON SPEAKER)

Reasonable? I'm sick of fucking reasonable Alex. Kid after kid after kid massacred and afterwards, all the reasonable people cry and pray and pound their fists and what do the fuckin pharaohs do? Nothing!

GREG

Pharaohs?

MIKE (ON SPEAKER)

That's right agent whoever-you-are. No more sticks into snakes! No more swarms of locust! It's time to fast forward to the happy ending.

Silence

ALEX (CONT'D)

Mike?

MIKE (ON SPEAKER)

(slow, threatening)

Everyone's here in two hours, the show goes on in three or say bye-bye to your first born.

Two SHOTS ring out. Sound of hostages screaming.

CINDY

Noooo! Kelly!

ALEX

Mike! What did you do?!

MIKE (ON SPEAKER)

Chillax Cindy, hold on.

Silence.

KELLY (ON SPEAKER)

(sobbing)

Mom, please, get daddy. Please, just do as he says.

MIKE (ON SPEAKER)

That's just an appetizer. A preview of coming attractions, so to speak.

ALEX

Okay Mike, it would help if you could release one of the hostages as a sign of good faith.

MIKE (ON SPEAKER)

I already let twenty-three of them go and their teacher, that's good faith enough.

ALEX

Mike, what happened?

MIKE (ON SPEAKER)

Look at the tape damn it! I hate repeating myself!

ALEX

Okay Mike, we'll look. Just don't do anything crazy, okay?

MIKE (ON SPEAKER)

I'm pretty sure that horse has already left the barn Alex. Anyway, get to work on what I want.

ALEX

We're on it Mike.

MIKE (ON SPEAKER)

If I'm not on the air with the senator in three hours, you can start digging the holes.

CINDY

No! Please, no!

MIKE (ON SPEAKER)

Time's a wasting Cindy. We'll talk later.

A SHOT rings out from the classroom.

CINDY

Nooooo!

INTERIOR. CLASSROOM.

Kelly quivers in shock as Taylor comforts her. The PC on Kelly's desk has been shot.

MIKE

Alright kids, now you know the score.

Kelly, whimpering and gasping, can't talk. Walter stands.

WALTER

Look mister, we're sorry for what happened to you, really, we are.

MIKE

What's your name?

WALTER

Walter, Walter Sisson.

MIKE

You're different from the rest. I sense some rough edges.

WALTER

My dad's a truck driver. I got a scholarship.

MIKE

Football? Baseball?

WALTER

Golf.

MIKE

Really? What's your handicap?

WALTER

Three.

MIKE

Three? Wow. Best I ever had was a nine. You must be pretty good.

LUCAS

For crissake! Enough of the golf shit. How much do you want?

MIKE

Lucas, I take it back.

LUCAS

Huh?

MIKE

I'm not sorry I hit you and I'd appreciate an excuse to do it again.

EXTERIOR. PARKING LOT.

Cindy's on the phone.

CINDY

This is his wife and I need to talk to him right now...

Greg confers with Alex.

GREG

We've secured a perimeter and are connected with video. The chief of campus security is in the command trailer.

Alex and Greg walk away, Cindy follows, still on phone.

CINDY

I don't care about his freakin' caucus, get him on the phone!

TRANSITION:

INTERIOR. FBI COMMAND TRAILER.

Carlos sits at a table. FBI Technical Specialist SOPHIE MARKS sits at a control panel, a video monitor on the wall. Two State Troopers drink coffee in a small kitchen area. Alex, Greg and Cindy (still on the phone) enter. Alex and Greg go to Sophie, Cindy sits at the table across from Carlos.

SOPHIE

The video's cued. This guys on a mission.

ALEX

We'll check it out in a minute.

CINDY

Get his ass to the phone and have him call me back asap!

Cindy hangs up. Carlos, hands folded, acting like a kid who got caught with his hand in a cookie jar, looks at her.

CARLOS

(sheepish)

Hello Mrs. Carpenter.

CINDY

Who are you?

Alex and Greg join Cindy and Carlos at the table.

CARLOS

Carlos Ortega, head of security.

CINDY

(angry)

You! How could you let this happen!?

CARLOS

I didn't let it happen Mrs. Carpenter!

GREG

Okay Carlos, so tell us about it.

CARLOS

(stammering)

He came in yesterday because he wanted to enroll his granddaughter...

CINDY

His granddaughters dead!

CARLOS

We didn't know that! Anyways, we were talking...

GREG

Who's we?

CARLOS

Me and him and Mrs. Springs. He's got her in there too! Anyways, he said he had a tee time and asked if he could come back in the morning, which is this morning, you know, before the classes started.

GREG

And?

CARLOS

I told him he could hook up with me and the team in the parking lot and...

ALEX

And you just walked him into the building?

CINDY

You just let him in?

CARLOS

He brought donuts. Whoever heard of a terrorist bringing donuts?

All stare blankly at Carlos.

CARLOS (CONT'D)
I did a background check!

GREG
What kind of check?

CARLOS
Um, I, uh, Googled him.

ALEX
That's just wonderful.

CARLOS
He's a war hero man! Purple Hearts,
Silver Star, Marine Recon, Vietnam...

SOPHIE
Um, we did a background check too.
Michael Hyde, born Lynn, Mass, July 2,
1952. Served with the Marines, two
tours. He ran an electrical contractor
business, no record, civil or
criminal, married 36-years. Wife Kathy
passed, Christmas Eve 2020 of cancer.
One daughter, Amanda, first-grade
teacher, married to Patrick Grant, one
grandchild, Ashley, age eight,
deceased. Uh, she was killed in the
shooting in Indiana.

ALEX
There's the trigger.

CINDY
What's all this about the Bible?

GREG
Exodus 11:13.

SOPHIE
The tenth plague. (beat) The Passover.

CINDY
What about it?

ALEX
Moses tried everything to get the
Pharaoh to free his people.

SOPHIE

Turned sticks into snakes, made the rivers burn, stuff like that.

ALEX

The pharaoh didn't budge. So finally, God sent the Angel of Death...

SOPHIE

The Jews put lamb's blood on their doors so it would pass over them, thus the name.

CINDY

And?

ALEX

The angel took the lives of all the first born of Egypt.

SOPHIE

It worked! They let the people go.

CINDY

So, he thinks Jim's a pharaoh and if he kills our first born he'll change his mind?

CARLOS

Wait'll CNN gets a load of this!

Cindy leans across the table, screaming at Carlos.

CINDY

CNN?! You moron, that's my daughter in there!

ALEX

Carlos, you're not talking to anyone.

CARLOS

But I promised the lady from CNN...

ALEX

(to troopers)
Take him in.

The troopers take Carlos by the arms.

CARLOS

What's the charge?

GREG

No charge. You're a material witness.

The troopers drag Carlos from the table.

CARLOS

Huh! Wait! I have my rights!

GREG

Trooper, make sure he gets a donut.

SOPHIE

Alex, ready for the playback?

ALEX

Greg, contact the Indianapolis office. Have them pick up the daughter and bring her here. And Greg...

GREG

I know, make sure one of the agents is female...

ALEX

And...

GREG

...and get Rooney here too.

ALEX

Mrs. Carpenter, we don't normally allow victim's family members to imbed themselves into an investigation.

CINDY

You'll need more than two troopers to drag me away, Alex.

SOPHIE

I think she should stay.

ALEX

Okay Sophie, let's see the playback.

INTERIOR. CLASSROOM.

Mike sits on the teacher's chair, looking at the big monitor on the wall at the front of the class. He turns in the chair.

MIKE

Which one of you is a computer genius?

All students slowly raise hands. Mike smiles.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Okay. Who can fix it so I can see the hall outside on this big screen?

None of the hostages respond.

MIKE (CONT'D, CONT'D)

Look, guys, if I hear one noise outside that door, I start shooting.

Hostages look nervously at the door. Mike raises a pistol, Walter raises a hand.

WALTER

I can do it.

MIKE

Atta boy, Walter.

FADE

TRANSITION:

INTERIOR. OFFICE OF STUART ROONEY.

TV Awards and framed certificates on the shelves and walls. A poster of TV News-celebrity STUART ROONEY posing arrogantly with arms crossed. Rooney sits at a desk, thumbing through documents. Production manager LUCIE YEATS (35) enters.

LUCIE

(urgency)

Stuart! We're going to Niceville!

STUART ROONEY

There's a place called Niceville?

LUCIE

It's in Florida.

STUART ROONEY

Even weirder.

LUCIE
Some whack-job's holding five
student's hostage.

STUART ROONEY
Yeah, so?

LUCIE
One of the hostages is Senator
Carpenter's daughter!

STUART ROONEY
Let's roll!

Stuart leaps from his chair, grabs a jacket and is out the door. Lucie follows.

INTERIOR. NETWORK OFFICE HALLWAY.

Rooney and Lucie walk at a quick pace down a hall.

LUCIE
He wants us to do a special broadcast.

STUART ROONEY
Who?

LUCIE
The whack job. He wants to debate
Carpenter live.

STUART ROONEY
Wow! Is the Gulfstream ready?

They get to an elevator.

LUCIE
We're loading it up now.

STUART ROONEY
What do we have on this guy?

Elevator door opens. They get in.

INTERIOR. ELEVATOR.

Lucie reads from a document.

LUCIE
Michael Hyde. He's a Vietnam War hero.

STUART ROONEY
Beautiful!

LUCIE
His granddaughter was killed in that
shooting in Indiana...

STUART ROONEY
Awesome!

LUCIE
His daughter went into shock,
miscarried and his son-in-law
committed suicide.

STUART ROONEY
No!

Elevator doors open to the underground parking garage.

INTERIOR. PARKING GARAGE.

LUCIE
And, he was an Army captain deployed
to Poland!

STUART ROONEY
I'm getting a hard-on!

LUCIE
The senator's wife is at the scene and
the senators on the way.

STUART ROONEY
Does Henry know about this?

LUCIE
The whole office does.

STUART ROONEY
Hook up with production. We'll do a
couple of live promos from the plane.

LUCIE
What are we going to say?

STUART ROONEY
Say? Shit Lucie, this fucking story
speaks for itself!

TRANSITION:

INTERIOR. CLASSROOM.

Mike sits at the front of the class in the teachers swivel chair. Walter works on the computer at his desk.

WALTER

I got it.

Mike spins. Looks at the big monitor. All hostages watch too.

INSERT: BIG MONITOR.

"The hall is empty. The helmeted head of a SWAT officer peeks out from an alcove."

Walter rolls his eyes, shakes his head.

MIKE

What's in there, where that cop is?

WALTER

Vending machines.

Mike dials the phone, puts it on speaker.

MIKE

Alex?

ALEX (ON SPEAKER)

Good news Mike. The senator and Stuart Rooney people are on the way.

MIKE

I'm afraid we might have to cancel the show, Alex.

ALEX (ON SPEAKER)

What's the matter?

MIKE

Well, there seem to be some cops hanging out by the vending machines.

Mike waits for a response. Smiles when he doesn't get one.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Hello?

ALEX

We're pulling 'em out.

MIKE

Thanks Alex, appreciate it.

Call ends. Mike looks at the PC Monitor.

INSERT: PC MONITOR

"Nothing for a few seconds. Six heavily armed SWAT officers exit the alcove, march down the hall toward the exit. The last one gives the finger to the camera."

Mike smiles. Walter looks over to Taylor, shakes his head.

MIKE

I doubt if they'll try anything like that again but just to be safe, leave the hall up on the screen.

WALTER

Sure. Uh, Mike?

MIKE

Yeah?

WALTER

Would it be okay if we called our parents?

CLAIRE

My husband and daughter must be worried sick.

Mike scans the faces.

MIKE

My daughter and I didn't get a chance to worry. We went straight to sick and that's where we've been ever since.

Mike swivels, turns his back to the hostages.

Taylor SIGHS, lowers her head. Wendy starts to cry. Mike eyes are fixed on the big monitor, doesn't turn around.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Claire. Get the phones, pass 'em out.

Claire rushes to the desk, gathers and distributes phones to the students. Mike still has his back turned.

WENDY

Thanks Mike.

MIKE

Five minutes from hello to good-bye,
understand?

The hostages nod (even though Mike's back is still turned)

TAYLOR

Do we have to put it on speaker?

Mike spins to face the hostages.

MIKE

No and uh, if you want, you can spread
out for some privacy.

Lucas notices the phone he has isn't his. Taps the screen.

INSERT: SMART PHONE SCREEN.

"Image of Amanda and Ashley posing for the screen save."

It's Mike's phone. He taps for 'recent calls'. Ruth's name
comes up as the last caller. He taps redial, goes to a far
corner of the room and whispers into the phone.

LUCAS (ON PHONE)

Hello? Who's this? (beat) I'm Lucas.
(beat) Well Ruth, some batshit crazy
old man is threatening to kill us.

INTERIOR. AMANDA'S HOUSE.

Amanda naps on the sofa with the kitten curled on her chest.
Ruth sits in an easy chair and is on the phone. TV shows
coverage of hostage situation, volume on mute.

RUTH

(whisper)

Let me talk to him. (beat) Well, what
do you want me to do about it?

INTERIOR. CLASSROOM.

Lucas on the phone.

LUCAS

(whispering)

I don't know. He told us what happened. Is there anything we can say or is he a diabetic, is he on meds?

The figure of Mike looms in behind Lucas. Lucas side eyes.

MIKE

That's my phone Lucas.

Without turning to look, Lucas passes the phone to Mike. Mike looks at the phone screen then talks.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Ruth?

INTERIOR. ASHLEY'S HOUSE.

RUTH

Mike, please don't do it. (beat) Think of what it would do to Amanda.

INTERIOR. CLASSROOM.

MIKE

What's done to Amanda can't be undone. Frankly, I doubt if she'd notice if we never talked again.

Mike's agitated state and raised voice troubles the others.

TAYLOR (ON PHONE)

It's complicated mom, real complicated.

WALTER (ON PHONE)

When you talk to him tell him I'm sorry for being such a pain-in-the-ass...

KELLY (ON PHONE)

Did you talk to daddy? Does he know what to say?

WENDY (ON PHONE)

When will she be back from location?

CLAIRE (ON PHONE)

I love you too honey, so much. Look, no matter what happens you have to promise me...

MIKE (ON PHONE)

Tell her I re-enlisted to fight the Russians in Ukraine! Tell her whatever you want! (beat) But be sure to tell her I love her.

Mike hangs up, turns to the others.

MIKE (CONT'D)

That's it! Time's up.

The others say their good-byes.

MIKE (CONT'D, CONT'D)

Turn the phones off, keep 'em in your pocket.

Mike hands a phone to Lucas.

MIKE (CONT'D, CONT'D)

This one's yours.

FADE

TRANSITION:

INTERIOR: FRONT HALLWAY OF AMANDA'S HOUSE.

Doorbell rings. Ruth answers. FBI Agents MONICA HERBERT and GEOFFREY SWAIN at the door. Monica flashes credentials.

MONICA

I'm FBI special agent Monica Hebert, this is agent Geoff Swain. We're looking for Amanda Drake.

RUTH

Come in.

Agents follow Ruth into the den. Coverage of events at the school on the TV (muted). Ruth prods Amanda to wake up.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Honey, there's people here to see you.

Amanda stirs. Holds the kitten.

AMANDA

People?

She sits up, petting the kitten.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

Hello? Are you TV people? I don't want to talk to TV people.

GEOFFREY

No, uh, no. We're from the FBI.

AMANDA

Oh, that's nice.

MONICA

Mrs. Drake, do you know what's going on with your father?

AMANDA

Daddy? Daddy use to be in the Marines. He's a hero.

The agents look at Ruth, she head-motions for them to follow her to the kitchen.

RUTH

Amanda, I'm going to make the agents some coffee, okay?

AMANDA

Okay, can I have some juice?

RUTH

Sure, I'll get you some juice.

The agents follow Ruth into the kitchen and take a seat at the table. The little dressage helmet is still there. Ruth opens the fridge for a bottle of orange juice.

GEOFFREY

We we're hoping she might come back to Florida with us.

Ruth pours a glass of juice.

RUTH

And do what? Excuse me.

Ruth leaves with the juice leaving Geoff and Monica alone.

MONICA

She's still in shock. She won't be any good to us.

GEOFFREY

Yeah, who's this other woman?

Ruth returns.

RUTH

I'm Ruth Drake, Amanda's mother-in-law or at least I used to be.

MONICA

How do you mean, use to be?

RUTH

After Ashley was shot, Amanda miscarried and my son shot himself.

The agents sit in stunned silence. Ruth matter-of-factly continues.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Mike was here when it happened, he had to identify what was left of Ashley's body. And, uh, well, it changed him.

MONICA

Yeah, I'm sure it did.

RUTH

It changed me, it changed everyone except for the ones who need to change.

GEOFFREY

You mean, like Senator Carpenter?

RUTH

I can't understand how they can do it. I mean, what kind of people are they?

MONICA

It's complicated.

RUTH

Children are being slaughtered. What's complicated about it?

GEOFFREY

Is there anything you can tell us that might help?

RUTH

I wouldn't bring up the war or thank him for his service if I were you.

GEOFFREY

Is there anything else?

RUTH

He use to have a good sense of humor and, uh, he likes Tito's martini's.

MONICA

Mrs. Drake, Ruth, six lives are at stake here.

RUTH

I wonder who the gun and ammo companies are rooting for?

The agents don't answer.

RUTH (CONT'D)

(sarcastic)

Is it true that every time an AR blasts Remington makes more cash?

Amanda appears in the doorway with the kitten.

AMANDA

Ruth? Is everything okay?

RUTH

Every thing's fine Amanda. Why don't you say good-bye to the FBI.

AMANDA

Good-bye FBI.

FADE

TRANSITION:

INTERIOR. CLASSROOM.

Mike scans the anxious, nervous faces of the hostages.

MIKE

How many of you kids have an older brother or sister?

Wendy's hand goes up.

WENDY

I have an older brother, um, actually he's a half-brother.

MIKE

So, your mom remarried?

WENDY

Divorced. My mom's Cheryl Lincoln, the actress.

MIKE

How about your dad?

LUCAS

(sarcastic)

Which one?

WENDY

Shut up Lucas.

LUCAS

She's had three, or is it four? Her mom's a reeeal popular actress, if you get my drift.

WALTER

Shut up Lucas!

LUCAS

Screw you, Walter!

MIKE

What's your problem Lucas?

LUCAS

Fuck you.

A moment of awkward silence. Lucas stands up.

LUCAS

That's it. I've had it!

WALTER

Sit down Lucas.

LUCAS
I'm not going to take this shit from
some crazy old boomer anymore!

MIKE
Sit down Lucas.

LUCAS
Whattaya gonna do, shoot me 'cause
some limp-dick offed your grandkid?

TAYLOR
Lucas, stop!

LUCAS
Up yours, whore.

MIKE
(to Lucas)
You're exactly what I expected.

LUCAS
Blow me.

Lucas heads for the door.

MIKE
Lucas!

Lucas turns.

LUCAS
What?

Mike FIRES. The impact causes Lucas to spin, slam against the wall and crumble to the floor. Walter and Wendy rush to Lucas. Others SCREAM. Mike, pissed off, turns on his phone.

MIKE
(to himself)
Stupid, dumb, punk.

DIANE
You killed him!

MIKE
I didn't kill him.

Lucas MOANS in pain, rolls on floor.

WALTER
He's alive!

MIKE
(on phone)
Relax Alex. (pause) One of the kids
acted up. I popped him with a rubber
bullet. He's ok. Maybe a cracked rib.

Mike hangs up.

CLAIRE
Madness.

Walter and Wendy help Lucas to his feet. Mike removes the
clip from the pistol and reloads.

LUCAS
That really hurt!

MIKE
That's the last of the rubber ones
Lucas. Next time I have to make a
point...

Mike holds up a bullet.

MIKE (CONT'D)
... it'll be a hollow one.

Mike slides a new clip in.

INTERIOR. FBI COMMAND TRAILER.

The others watch anxiously as Alex lowers the phone.

ALEX
He shot a kid with a rubber bullet.

CINDY
Maybe he's bluffing!

GREG
No. He had to prove to himself he has
the balls to do it.

CINDY
I don't understand.

GREG
Firing a round, even a rubber one, at
a defenseless kid takes something not
too many people have.

CINDY
(sarcastic)
Oh, courage?

ALEX
Something even deadlier. Conviction.

Door to the trailer opens. A DEPUTY sticks his head in.

DEPUTY
Agent, the press conference is in ten
minutes. The mayor wants you over in
the media area.

ALEX
Greg, prep the mayor, make sure she
doesn't say something stupid.

GREG
(sarcastic)
Ha, I take it you've met?

Alex rolls his eyes, Greg leaves.

INTERIOR. CLASSROOM. BIG WINDOW.

Mike looks out through the slats.

MIKE
Hm, something's going on. Claire, come
over here. What do you make of this?

Claire comes over, looks through the slats.

INSERT: VIEW THROUGH SLATS

"Activity in a far corner. Lights on stands, people
gathering, media vans."

CLAIRE
Looks like they're setting up for a
press conference.

MIKE
Can we get TV on these computers?

WALTER
Sure.

MIKE
Do it.

EXT. PARKING LOT. MEDIA AREA.

Reporters, camera operators, moving about. Greg is talking with Niceville Mayor LORRAINE KELLOGG (50ish), a heavily decorated police chief and a redneck-type Sheriff. Alex and Cindy arrive. Greg excuses himself to talk to Alex.

ALEX
Problem?

GREG
(sarcastic)
The mayor's a Stuart Rooney groupie.
She can't wait to meet him.

ALEX
Great.

GREG
(to Cindy)
She asked me to ask you to ask your
husband to see if she can be on the
show too.

INSERT: POLICE CHEIF, SHERIFF & MAYOR

"The mayor smiles, winks at Cindy and waves."

CINDY
You're shitting me.

ALEX
Is she prepped for her statement?

GREG
She said you should go first since,
uh, you're the grim one.

ALEX
She actually said that?

CINDY

God save us. (beat) Jim will be here
in about 45 minutes.

The Mayor approaches.

MAYOR

Agent Grimm, I'm Mayor Kellogg.

ALEX

Yes Mayor, nice to meet you.

MAYOR

We'll be starting any minute now and I
thought it'd be best if you go first.

ALEX

Um yes, I'm sure you appreciate the
seriousness of the situation...

The Mayor ignores Alex.

MAYOR

You must be Mrs. Carpenter. I'm so
sorry for what you and your family
must be going through. I just don't
understand people these days.

The phone rings. Alex head motions Greg to get rid of the
Mayor. Greg ushers the Mayor away.

GREG

Madam Mayor, let's go over your
talking points again.

MAYOR

But I need to ask the senator's wife
to ask her husband if... (fade)

ALEX (ON PHONE)

Mike, um, it'd be a real bad idea to
put you on speaker right now. (beat)
Yes, it's a press conference. (beat)
That's fine. (beat) Oh, the senator
and the Rooney people are on board.
You're getting everything you asked
for, okay? (beat) Uh, sure, I guess.

Alex presses the phone to his chest.

ALEX (CONT'D)
(to Cindy)
He wants to talk to you.

CINDY
Okay.

ALEX
Take it somewhere the media can't
overhear.

Cindy takes the phone.

CINDY
(to Mike)
Give me a minute to get to my car.

Cindy walks away. Alex turns to where Greg is talking to the Mayor, Chief and Sheriff.

ALEX
Oh yeah, may God help us.

INTERIOR. CLASSROOM.

Mike, on the phone, looks through slats in the blinds.

MIKE
Cindy, is the senator ready to talk?

INTERIOR. CINDY'S CAR.

CINDY
He knows what's going on.

MIKE (ON SPEAKER)
Let me put it this way, is he ready to
listen?

CINDY
I think you have the wrong idea about
Jim. He was a football coach. He
doesn't know anything about politics.

MIKE (ON SPEAKER)
He's about to get a crash course.

CINDY

He says what the party tells him to say. Half the time he doesn't even know what he's talking about.

MIKE (ON SPEAKER)

Too bad he didn't stick to coaching.

CINDY

We were happier then.

MIKE (ON SPEAKER)

Welcome to my world Cindy. You won't find no happiness here.

CINDY

(sobbing)

Mike, please...

MIKE (ON SPEAKER)

You seem like a nice lady. Kelly seems like a good kid.

CINDY

Mike, you don't have to do this. You've made your point.

MIKE (ON SPEAKER)

This isn't the kind of point you make with words. You've got to feel it Cindy. You both do.

CINDY

(sobs)

I don't want to feel it, Mike. (beat)
I don't want to feel like you.

MIKE

No one does but so many do and so many more will and until the pharaoh's feel it too, nothing's going to get done.

CINDY

Jim's not a pharaoh or even a senator!
He's a fucking football coach!

MIKE

I guess he made a bad career choice. Like it or not, he's a pharaoh now.

CINDY

Please Mike, I beg you. Don't kill our daughter.

Silence.

MIKE (ON SPEAKER)

We'll see how it goes.

CINDY

What does that mean?

MIKE (ON SPEAKER)

It means your husband has to convince me he's a father first and a puppet second! Screw the base, screw the party, screw the job. Swear to God Almighty he'll do something to stop the madness.

CINDY

He's just one man, Mike. He can't change the others.

MIKE (ON SPEAKER)

You think I'm the only granddad or dad or uncle or brother whose thought of this? Once they see this, the others will change their minds, or their kids will get a visit.

CINDY

Mike, that's madness.

INTERIOR. CLASSROOM.

Mike's standing over Kelly with the phone in one hand a pistol in the other.

MIKE

Columbine, Uvalde, Sandy Hook, Marjorie Stoneham Douglass, Robb Elementary, Sinclair Elementary all incubators for madness. Thousands of us, tired of having the scab ripped open every time it happens again.

CINDY (ON SPEAKER)

I don't want to be one of you.

MIKE

Like I said Cindy, we'll see. Before
you go...

Mike puts the phone in front of Kelly and presses the pistol
to the side of her head.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Say good-bye to your mom.

KELLY

(weeping)

Mom. (beat) I love you mom.

EXTERIOR. MEDIA AREA.

Alex stands at a row of microphones.

ALEX

I'm Special Agent Alex Grimm with the
FBI. Before getting into details, I
want to express our thanks to the
rapid and professional response of
Sheriff Roy and Chief Braxton and
their deputies and officers as well as
those of the Florida State Patrol and
Niceville emergency services. Mayor
Kellogg will provide an official
statement from the city in a moment.
Now, I have a pretty good idea what
some of your questions may be...

INTERIOR. CLASSROOM.

Hostages sit at desks watching the press conference.

ALEX (CONT'D, ON MONITOR)

Six hostages, five students and
Excalibur Academy director of
admissions Claire Springs are
currently being held hostage and yes,
one of the students is Kelly
Carpenter, daughter of Senator James
Carpenter. Mrs. Carpenter has been
assisting in the negotiations and the
senator will be here shortly.

Kelly watches as her mom, wiping away tears, steps into the scene in the background and stands next to Greg.

KELLY

Mom?

ALEX (CONT'D/ON MONITOR)

The man holding the hostages is Michael Hyde of Pensacola, Florida. Three weeks ago, Mr. Hyde's granddaughter Ashley was one of twenty-seven children killed in the assault on an elementary school in Bloomington, Indiana.

The press goes into a question frenzy.

REPORTERS

Is there any truth to the rumor Stuart Rooney will be broadcasting a special edition?

Is his weapon an AK or AR?

Does the senator's wife still support his assault weapons policy?

REPORTERS

Is this man claiming he's spoken to God?

Does he have a bomb?

We heard he was a Navy Seal!

Are there any fatalities?

Alex raises a hand to quiet the reporters. Mike sneers at the screen.

MIKE

Maggots.

ALEX (ON MONITOR)

Stuart Rooney is enroute, Mr. Hyde hasn't claimed to have spoken to God, he is not armed with a semi-automatic military-grade weapon, there is no bomb and Mr. Hyde served in the Marines.

REPORTER ONE (O.C.)

Desert Storm?

ALEX (ON MONITOR)

Vietnam. He's the recipient of two Purple Hearts and a Bronze Star.

Walter looks back over his shoulder at Mike.

WALTER
You're a war hero?

MIKE
Not anymore Walter.

REPORTER THREE (O.C.)
Does he suffer from PTSD?

ALEX (ON MONITOR)
Mr. Hyde has no history of mental illness and no criminal record. However, this is not to say he isn't capable of carrying out his threats.

The Mayor and Police Chief roll their eyes in the BG.

TRANSITION:

EXTERIOR. PARKING LOT. MEDIA AREA.

ALEX (CONT'D)
We believe the killing of his granddaughter triggered him into taking this action. We're doing everything we can to secure the safe release of the students and Mrs. Springs. While we're grateful no blood's been shed so far, we continue to take this matter very seriously.

Alex looks back at the mayor as if to make the point to her.

ALEX (CONT'D)
We're dealing with a dangerous man. This is a very volatile situation! Now, I'll hand it over to the mayor.

The mayor smiles pleasantly. Alex backs away, joins Greg and Cindy. Mayor Kellogg steps to the microphones with a smile and easy-going attitude. In the background, Greg whispers to Alex. He looks concerned.

INTERIOR. CLASSROOM.

Mike and the hostages watch the press conference. The mayor steps up to the microphone.

MAYOR (ON TV)

Thank you, agent Grimm. I must say, you certainly have lived up to your name. (light laugh)

Police Chief smirks. Alex and Greg looked concerned.

MAYOR (CLASSROOM MONITOR)

Yes, this is a delicate situation but thanks to the efforts of Agent Grimm, the FBI and the excellent work of the Niceville PD, our County Sheriff's office and Florida State Patrol I am confident matters are well in hand.

MIKE

That's the mayor?

MAYOR (CLASSROOM MONITOR)

This man has no history whatsoever of violence.

MIKE

Really? Where were you in 1969?

MAYOR (CLASSROOM MONITOR)

He's quotes scripture and as agent Grimm has pointed out, he's a decorated U.S. Marine war hero. Mr. Hyde has a grievance...

Mike takes a couple steps toward the big screen at the front of the classroom.

MIKE

(tense)

Grievance?

TAYLOR

Mike, she's just the mayor.

Mike glares angrily at the Mayor on the screen.

MAYOR (CLASSROOM MONITOR)

... he'll get his audience, a rather sizable one, I'm sure.

MIKE

You bitch!

Mike grabs Claire, heads toward the window.

EXTERIOR. PRESS AREA OUTSIDE SCHOOL.

The Mayor continues.

KILGORE

We're honored to have with us today
Cynthia Carpenter, wife of Senator
James Carpenter and mother...

Phone RINGS. Cindy, turns toward Alex. Alex answers.

ALEX

(urgent)

Okay! Okay! I'm coming!

Alex dashes off, Greg and Cindy follow. Deputies hold the
media back, but some make it through.

REPORTER

What's going on? What's happening?

Alex, Greg and Cindy rush to an area in front of the window.
Alex on the phone.

ALEX

Okay Mike, we're here. (pause) Mike?

The venetian blinds rise slowly.

CINDY

Look!

All stare anxiously. Claire is pushed in front of the window
by unseen hands. She screams toward an unseen person then
looks out the window at Alex, Greg & Cindy. A pathetic,
hopeless expression.

ALEX

(on the phone)

Mike? What are you doing Mike?

SOUND of a SHOT. Cindy's head explodes and her body recoils
violently. Blood splatter all over the window. SCREAMS.

Venetian blinds slowly drop. Alex, Greg, Cindy stand
paralyzed with shock. Alex brings the phone up slowly.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Damnit Mike! This changes everything!

INTERIOR. CLASSROOM.

Taylor and Wendy hold each other crying. Lucas is in the corner puking. Kelly sits quivering in stunned shock. Mike is on the phone.

MIKE

I hope so Alex. I'd hate to have to do
that again.

Walter glares angrily at Mike. Whispers angrily to himself.

WALTER

You no good piece of shit.

Mike, focused on talking to Alex, is unaware of Walter.

MIKE

(ranting rage)

What's the matter with the stupid
mother-fuckers who keep voting for the
dumbest pieces-of-shit they can find?!

Walter picks a paperweight off the teacher's desk. Mike, consumed with rage, doesn't notice. The others do.

MIKE (CONT'D)

A publicity stunt?! A Jesus freak?
Y'think they're taking me seriously
now Alex? Huh? Y'starting to feel it,
Cindy!!!?

ALEX (ON SPEAKER)

Mike, that was wrong. That was...

Walter lunges at Mike from behind. Wendy screams. Mike turns. Walter's blow glances off the side of Mike's head. The phone and one of the pistols fall to the floor. Mike wobbles, a bleeding head wound. Walter lunges at Mike again.

WALTER

Get the gun! The gun!

Mike grabs Walter's arm before he can hit him with the paperweight again.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Lucas! The gun!

INSERT: THE PHONE ON THE FLOOR

"Alex's voice on speaker."

ALEX (ON SPEAKER)
Mike! What's happening? Mike?

Mike spins and slugs Walter across the face. Walter recoils back and falls. Mike pulls the second pistol from his belt and aims it at Walter on the floor.

MIKE
Man! Walter, that was great!

ALEX (ON SPEAKER)
Mike? (beat) Mike?

Walter, blood coming from his mouth, looks up at Mike.

WALTER
(confused)
What?

Mike picks up the fallen revolver and phone.

MIKE
(to Alex)
Hey Alex, it's all cool. I got this kid in here, his name's Walter. Tough cookie, man. I think you'd like him.

ALEX (ON SPEAKER)
I'd like to meet him, Mike.

Mike scans the student hostages. Taylor, on her knees, prays. Wendy tends to Walter's wounded face. Kelly stares down at Claire's body. Lucas glares angrily back at Mike.

MIKE
They're not what I thought they'd be.

ALEX (ON SPEAKER)
Kids are kids, Mike.

MIKE
I saw her face a thousand times, Alex.

ALEX (ON SPEAKER)
I know.

MIKE
But the only one I can remember is the last one.

EXTERIOR. SCHOOL PARKING LOT.

Alex on the phone.

ALEX
Don't torture yourself Mike.

MIKE (ON SPEAKER)
You know what a .223 can do, right?

ALEX
Yeah, I know.

MIKE (ON SPEAKER)
Half of her head was gone.

Alex doesn't answer.

INTERIOR. CLASSROOM.

Mike on the phone, he and Kelly lock eyes.

MIKE (CONT'D)
I bought her a dressage helmet for her birthday. It wouldn't have made any difference.

ALEX (ON SPEAKER)
Be careful, Mike. Please, be careful.

MIKE
Ten-four, copy that.

Call ends.

EXTERIOR. PARKING LOT OUTSIDE SCHOOL

Greg joins Alex.

ALEX
Get snipers into position. Give 'em a green light at the first clear shot.

GREG
The senator will be here in five.

ALEX
Find Cindy.

INTERIOR. CLASSROOM.

Kelly stares absently down at Claire's dead body.

KELLY

She wasn't a bad person.

MIKE

They made me do it, Kelly.

WENDY

Bullshit! You wanted to do it!

MIKE

They had to know! I told them for crissake to take me seriously.

LUCAS

You're as crazy as the rest of them.

TAYLOR

Can I do a video for my little brother?

MIKE

Sure, go ahead. The rest of you can to, if you want.

The student-hostages turn on their phones.

EXTERIOR. PARKING AREA IN FRONT OF SCHOOL.

Senator JAMES CARPENTER has arrived, dressed neat as a pin, walks through reporters.

REPORTER ONE (O.C.)

Senator! Why has this man decided to hold your daughter hostage?

REPORTER TWO (O.C.)

Is it true you'll be debating him on the Stuart Rooney Show?

SENATOR

We're going to have a conversation, I wouldn't necessarily call it a debate.

REPORTER THREE (O.C.)

Have you spoken with your wife?

Cindy stands smack-dab in his path, with Greg.

SENATOR

Uh, yes, and it looks like I'm about to, again.

CINDY

James, we have to talk.

SENATOR

Of course, (to reporters) folks, you all know my wife, Cynthia.

CINDY

(angry)

Now James!

The senator turns Cindy aside, moves close to her ear.

SENATOR

(whisper)

Let's take this inside, away from the media.

CINDY

The media? You think I give a damn about the media? My daughter, OUR daughter is in there with a pissed off old man with guns!

SENATOR

Cindy, calm down, I've got this.

CINDY

You've got this?! Look! Here, let me show you something.

Cindy pulls the senator onto the lawn in front of the school, the media, camera's rolling, follow.

CINDY (CONT'D)

See that window senator? The one with all the blood on it!? Next time it might be Kelly's!

Greg, noticing slats in the venetian blinds parting, talks into a microphone on his wrist.

GREG

Do we have a shot?

The sniper response is muted by his earpiece.

RESPONSE

(muted)

Negative.

INTERIOR. CLASSROOM.

Mike peeks through slats at Cindy reading her husband the riot act.

MIKE

(to himself)

Nice suit senator.

EXTERIOR. LAWN IN FRONT OF SCHOOL

Enraged Cindy's practically spraying spit.

CINDY

I want my daughter and I want her alive! Do you understand?

SENATOR

(dismissive)

Cindy, we'll get through this.

CINDY

(stunned)

We? There's no 'we' anymore Jim. Your ambition has destroyed us. I want nothing to do this nightmare you call a dream.

GREG

Uh, senator, Cindy, whattaya say we take it into the trailer?

SENATOR

Yes let's, thank you agent.

Cindy releases the senator's lapels, walks away. As Greg escorts the Senator, the Mayor appears.

MAYOR

Senator, I'm Mayor Lorraine Kellogg and I've authorized access to our city hall for you and Mr. Rooney to broadcast your show...

INTERIOR. CLASSROOM.

Mike's been watching through the slats.

MIKE

Now *that*, was interesting.

He slowly returns to the teacher's desk. Lucas is standing in the back of the room.

MIKE (CONT'D)

What are you doing Lucas?

LUCAS

I have to pee.

MIKE

Go ahead, pee.

Mike walks slowly toward the desk. Taylor raises her hand.

MIKE (CONT'D)

What?

TAYLOR

Can I move to another desk?

MIKE

Why?

INSERT: CLASSROOM FLOOR.

"Blood from Claire's body oozes toward Taylor's feet."

MIKE (CONT'D)

They spend a fortune on computers and cameras, hire a second-rate contractor to build the place and the foundation's out of whack.

TAYLOR

Can I move, please?

MIKE

Sure, take the desk behind you.

Hostage's eyes track Mike as he makes his way to the teacher's desk. Mike casually scans the top of it.

INSERT: TOP OF DESK

"The revolver is gone."

Mike spins, aims both pistols at the students.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Where's the gun? Whose got it!?

Students, frozen in fear, don't respond. Mike aims guns on the students, feels his way around the desk. Looks down.

INSERT: THE FLOOR

"Three of the six bullets are missing."

Mike aims at Walter. Cocks the hammer.

MIKE (CONT'D, CONT'D)

Walter?

Walter glares back at Mike defiantly. Mike side-eyes the others. Turns to Lucas.

MIKE (CONT'D, CONT'D)

Lucas?

Lucas shakes nervously and a wet stain forms over his crotch. He's pissing his pants.

MIKE (CONT'D, CONT'D)

Feeling better Lucas? Good. Now put the gun on the floor, kick it to me.

Lucas shakes.

INSERT: LUCAS'S BACK.

"The revolver is tucked into the back of his pants."

MIKE (CONT'D, CONT'D)

Uno (pause) dos (pause)...

LUCAS

Don't!

Lucas reaches back.

MIKE

Nice and easy, put it on the floor.

Lucas removes the revolver. Bends to place it on the floor.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Kick it over.

Lucas does as he's told. Mike picks up the revolver, spins the cylinder. Glances at Walter.

MIKE (CONT'D, CONT'D)

Gee Walter, how come you didn't go it?

WALTER

Lucas was closer.

MIKE

Makes sense.

FADE

TRANSITION:

INTERIOR. MAYORS OFFICE.

Large office with tropical plants, coral colors, big fish tank, official seal of the town and a cliché rattan ceiling fan. A couple of crew members carry reflectors into the office. The Senator sits at the mayor's desk looking at documents, a meeting table in the center. Rooney and Lucie look the place over as the mayor gushes.

MAYOR

As you can see, it's quite large and there's plenty of light.

LUCIE

We bring our own lights Mayor.

MAYOR

Yes, of course.

LUCIE

What do you think Stuart?

Stuart Rooney picks up a small, pink flamingo desk ornament.

STUART ROONEY

I bet the mayor of Margarittaville has an office just like this.

MAYOR

(giggles)

Oh, Mr. Rooney, you're too much.
Please feel free to make whatever
adjustments to the feng shui you
please.

STUART ROONEY

It'll do fine.

The Mayor offers a document.

MAYOR

Oh, I've written a little something
for the broadcast. You and the senator
might want to review it, you know, to
make sure it's not too, you know,
controversial.

The Senator interrupts.

SENATOR

Excuse me mayor, uh, Stu, we need to
talk.

STUART ROONEY

Sure, uh, Lucie why don't you hear
what the Mayor, um, out in the hall.

Lucie's jaw drops at the suggestion.

STUART ROONEY (CONT'D)

(to the Mayor)

Lucie's job is to vet statements for
continuity purposes.

MAYOR

Oh yes, of course.

As Lucie walks the Mayor away, she raises a hand to flip
Stuart the bird. The Senator pulls Stuart aside.

STUART ROONEY

What is it, Jim?

SENATOR

Is there any way we can do this, um,
without anyone seeing it?

Stuart pulls the Senator even further aside. The speak in
whispers to each other.

STUART ROONEY

(whisper)

Are you kidding? This is a freaking ratings bonanza!

SENATOR

(whisper)

We can tape it now and air it later, during the usual time slot. You'll still get your ratings.

STUART ROONEY

We've aired the promos! Everything's in place for us to go live!

SENATOR

Stuart, I can't tell this guy what he wants to hear on live TV! I lose my base, my campaign will have to refund millions, my NRA rating will tank.

Stuart ponders the dilemma.

SENATOR (CONT'D)

If I don't, he'll kill Kelly and Cindy will take me for every dime I've got!

STUART ROONEY

I tell you what we'll do. We'll tape it and then, after he lets the kids go, we'll go live with their release.

SENATOR

Yeah, good.

STUART ROONEY

We'll tell everyone that we agreed to the live debate to play for time. No one's going to blame us for lying to a psycho to save some kids.

SENATOR

I love it.

STUART ROONEY

Me too. We'll wind up smelling like the Rose Garden and we can use it as a teaser to hype tonight's broadcast.

A happy Senator pumps Stuarts hand.

SENATOR

Great Stuart! Thanks! I won't forget you for this!

STUART ROONEY

Neither will I um, Mr. President.

SENATOR

God, I love how you think.

STUART ROONEY

I fill Lucie in when she gets back with Mayor Plumpbottom.

FADE

TRANSITION:

INTERIOR. AMANDA'S HOUSE.

Ruth and Amanda sit side-by-side on the sofa, looking at a broadcast of the stand-off at Excalibur Academy. Ruth talks to Mike on the phone.

RUTH

Mike, please, don't hang up. Amanda wants to talk to you.

She hands the phone to Amanda who hands the kitten to Ruth.

AMANDA

Daddy? (beat) I'm okay daddy. I'm getting better dad, really, I am!
(beat) Are you going to be on TV daddy?

INTERIOR. CLASSROOM.

Mike on the phone.

MIKE

I don't want you to watch, okay? It wouldn't be good for you. (beat) I love you too. (beat) Yes, I miss her too.

INTERIOR. AMANDA'S HOUSE

Amanda on the phone. She sobs lightly.

AMANDA

I didn't want to have to think about her but now I am because (beat), no daddy, don't cry daddy.

(to Ruth)

He's crying. I don't want to talk any more, okay?

Ruth nods, sighs, takes the phone. Amanda takes the kitten from Ruth and pets it.

RUTH

Hello Mike. (beat) I'll turn it off.

INTERIOR. CLASSROOM.

Mike on phone, eyes red and swollen. The hostages stare at him then look at each other, worried.

MIKE

I gotta go Ruth. Take care of her, okay? Please? And Ruth, I should've told you this a long time ago, I love you.

Mike hangs up, folds his arms and shivers.

MIKE (CONT'D)

It's cold in here.

Kelly raises her hand.

MIKE (CONT'D, CONT'D)

What?

KELLY

Can I talk to my dad?

TRANSITION:

INT. FBI COMMAND TRAILER

Alex works with Sophie at the control panel, image on the big monitor is of the mayor's office being set up for the broadcast. Cindy, Amanda and Greg sit at the larger table.

The phone on the table rings. Alex gets it.

ALEX

Yeah, Mike? Hey, they're almost (beat)
Oh, yeah, hold on. (to Cindy). It's
your daughter, she wants to talk to
the senator.

CINDY

Give me the phone.

Alex hands the phone to Cindy.

CINDY (CONT'D)

Hi sweetie. Your dad's getting ready
to go on TV. (beat) Hold on, we'll try
and connect you.

(to Alex)

Can we do that?

Alex looks to Sophie.

SOPHIE

I'll call Lucie.

INTERIOR. MAYORS OFFICE.

The Senator and Rooney are having touches of make-up applied. Crew and camera operators are tending to last second details. Lucy, wearing headphones, hears a message, turns to the Senator.

LUCIE

Senator, it's the FBI. They say your
daughter wants to talk to you.

SENATOR

Tell her we'll talk after.

LUCIE

(to Sophie)

Hold on Sophie.

Lucy leans over the table into the Senator's face. Surprising Stuart Rooney with her aggressiveness.

LUCIE (CONT'D)

Senator, think you should find the
time to talk to your daughter, now!

The Senator turns to Stuart for support, Stuart shrugs.

STUART ROONEY
It's probably a good idea.

SENATOR
Yeah, of course, what was I thinking?

Senator turns on his phone. Lucie talks on the microphone attached to her headset.

LUCIE
(to Sophie)
Okay, she can call him now.

The Senator looks around awkwardly. The phone rings.

SENATOR
Uh, I'll take this in the hall.

Lucie sits next to Stuart.

LUCIE
The better I know this guy the more I don't like him.

STUART ROONEY
He serves a purpose. Did you work everything out for the taping?

LUCIE
We'll be streaming live to the FBI trailer and classroom only.

STUART ROONEY
(surprised)
We can do that?

LUCIE
We can do anything.

INT. CLASSROOM.

Kelly on the phone. Mike stands behind her.

KELLY
Daddy, I'm scared, we're all scared.
(beat) Dad! You can't handle this guy!
(beat) Dad! He's not like that!

Mike takes the phone.

MIKE

Senator Carpenter? This is Mike Hyde.
(long pause) What? What do you mean?

INTERIOR. CITY HALL HALLWAY

Hallways empty. Some TV crew gear stacked against the wall.
Senator Carpenter on the phone.

SENATOR

(whisper)

Mr. Hyde, I'm quite sure we can work something out here. You're upset. You're not thinking straight. (beat) My people tell me your daughter's not well (pause). Wait! Don't get excited. All I'm saying is, I can get her help. The best money can buy. As far as that woman you killed goes, I'm sure we can chalk it up to some kind of mental defect. You're a war hero for Pete's sake! My brother served in the first Gulf War and (pause) Mr. Hyde? Mr. Hyde, are you there?

INTERIOR. CLASSROOM.

Mike hands the phone back to Kelly.

MIKE

You were right.

KELLY

What do you mean?

MIKE

He is an asshole.

Mike's phone rings.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Yeah? (beat) Okay, I'm listening.

INT. FBI COMMAND TRAILER.

Alex stands behind Sophie looking at the big screen image of the Mayor's office and the final touches before going on air. Lucie is in the foreground on the screen with the headset and microphone. Alex talks to Mike on speaker.

ALEX

Mike, before they can start, you have to do a couple of things on your end.

MIKE (ON SPEAKER)

Okay.

ALEX

The next voice you'll hear is of Sophie York, she's an FBI technical analyst.

SOPHIE

Mike, can you hear me?

MIKE (ON SPEAKER)

Yes.

LUCIE

Do any of the PC's in the class have the ZOOM app?

MIKE (ON SPEAKER)

Uh, hold on. I'll put you on speaker.

INTERIOR. CLASSROOM.

MIKE

(to hostages)

Listen up.

(to Sophie)

Okay, go ahead.

SOPHIE (ON SPEAKER)

Um, do any of the PC's have ZOOM?

TAYLOR

The one at the teacher's desk does.

SOPHIE (ON SPEAKER)

Can you access your remail at that unit?

TAYLOR

Yes. It's TayTay46 at gulfmail.com.

SOPHIE (ON SPEAKER)
 Okay, we're going to email you a link
 so you can hook Mike into the show.

TAYLOR
 I can do that.

SOPHIE (ON SPEAKER)
 Um, what's your name?

TAYLOR
 Taylor.

Pregnant pause.

SOPHIE (ON SPEAKER)
 Good luck Taylor.

TAYLOR
 Thank you. Bye.

Mike turns off the phone, motions for Taylor to go to the
 teacher's desk.

MIKE
 Okay Taylor, get to work.

Taylor goes to the teacher's desk to set things up. Mike's
 phone rings again. He answers.

MIKE (CONT'D)
 Now what?

INTERIOR. MAYORS OFFICE.

Lucie on the phone.

LUCIE
 Mike, I'm Lucie, producer of the
 Stuart Rooney Show.

Lucie waits for a response, gets none.

LUCIE (CONT'D)
 Uh, Stuart would like to talk to you
 before we go live.

Lucie hands the phone to Stuart.

LUCIE (CONT'D, CONT'D)
Here he is, I think.

STUART ROONEY
Mike, before we get started, I need to go over a few things. You cool with that? (pause) Mike? (beat) Good. You'll appear in a box on the screen. They'll be no commercials so take your time. Before I introduce you I have to do a short set-up for the viewers then the Mayor of Niceville has a few things she'd like to say.

INTERIOR. CLASSROOM.

Mike's on the phone.

MIKE
The bitch who said this is a PR stunt? Screw her! (pause) I don't give a damn what you promised her! She isn't going to go on at all! She *provoked* me Rooney! You don't want her to *provoke* me again, do you? (long pause) Then again, maybe you would. That would make for some pretty damn good TV wouldn't it, Stuart?

INTERIOR. FBI TRAILER.

The scene at the Mayor's office is on the big monitor. Sophie, Greg, Alex and Cindy watch Rooney talking to Mike.

CINDY
What do you suppose he's saying?

STUART ROONEY (ON MONITOR)
Okay Mike, we'll eight-six the mayor.

GREG
That's a good idea.

SOPHIE
I don't think Mike like's the mayor.

Rooney glances to the side getting a signal from Lucie. The senator sits down next to Rooney.

STUART ROONEY

Alright Mike, we're almost ready.

ALEX

Sophie, get that woman Lucie on the line now.

Sophie flicks a switch.

SOPHIE

Lucie, agent Grimm would like a word.

(to Alex)

Okay Alex she can hear you.

ALEX

Tell Mike to give me a call, now.

LUCIE

Got it.

On the screen, Lucie gestures to Rooney who passes the message along and then he hangs up. Alex's phone rings.

ALEX

Hello Mike, you're getting everything you've asked for. Now, I want you to do something for me.

INTERIOR. CLASSROOM.

Mike's on the phone

MIKE

Yeah, let a hostage go, right?

ALEX (ON SPEAKER)

I'd prefer two.

MIKE (ON SPEAKER)

Don't push your luck. And remember, I got eyes on the hall.

Mike puts the phone to his chest, scans the faces of the hostages, each looking eager to go.

MIKE (CONT'D)

You're not going anywhere Kelly. Walter, I need you for all this technical shit.

LUCAS

Let me go! I've been the biggest pain-in-the-ass, right?

MIKE

Precisely the reason you're staying. Okay ladies, that leaves you two.

TAYLOR

I'll stay, let Wendy go.

WENDY

What?

Taylor hands her phone to Wendy.

TAYLOR

Give this to my parents, I did a video I want them to see.

WENDY

Show it to them yourself. You're going to be okay, right Mike? You're not going to hurt Taylor.

Mike shrugs.

MIKE

I hope not.

Taylor strokes Wendy's cheek.

TAYLOR

We'll talk about it outside after, okay Wendy?

WENDY

I knew how you felt. I'm sorry I was such a bitch about it.

Wendy gives Taylor a gentle, brief kiss.

LUCAS

Gimme a break!

Mike scowls at Lucas.

MIKE

My God Lucas, what did they do to you?

Lucas shrugs.

MIKE

Go ahead Wendy, get out of here.

Wendy goes to Walter, kisses him.

WENDY

Thanks for asking me to the prom.

WALTER

But I didn't ask.

WENDY

Yeah, but you were gonna.

Wendy gives Kelly a hug.

WENDY (CONT'D)

You're the best friend I ever had even though your dad is an asshole.

KELLY

Kick him in the balls for me, will ya?

WENDY

(to Lucas)

Anything you want me to tell your parents Lucas.

Lucas slowly shakes his head sadly.

MIKE

You have to go, now.

Mike, standing at the door, unbolts it. Wendy walks up.

WENDY

Mike, I don't think Ashley would be very happy with you right now.

Mike bows his head. Wendy leaves. Mike bolts the door behind her. Mike brings the phone up.

MIKE

She's on the way out.

INSERT: BIG MONITOR ON CLASSROOM WALL SHOWING THE HALL.

"Wendy runs toward the exit."

EXT. FBI COMMAND TRAILER.

Alex and Cindy watch from the door of the trailer as Wendy exits the school and into the arms of her NANNY who's with a couple of State Troopers.

CINDY

At least there's one happy mom.

ALEX

That's her nanny. Her mother's on location in Australia.

CINDY

Oh.

ALEX (ON PHONE)

Thanks Mike.

MIKE (ON SPEAKER)

Yeah. Walter's setting everything up. We're ready.

ALEX

Mike, do you really think all of this is going to change anything?

MIKE (ON SPEAKER)

It'd sure suck if it didn't huh Alex? Anyway, I gotta go.

Call ends.

INTERIOR CLASSROOM.

Walter sits at the teacher's desk, Mike looks over his shoulder at the PC screen.

WALTER

It's all set up. Your face will be in a little box in the corner. The rest of the screen will be them.

MIKE

Where's the camera?

WALTER

It's this little hole in the PC. Here, I'll show you.

Walter hits a key and his face appears on the PC Screen.

WALTER (CONT'D)

See? Just look into that little hole.

MIKE

Got it.

WALTER

Looks like it's going live in three minutes.

MIKE

You, Lucas and Taylor go stand in front of the window. Open the blinds.

LUCAS

What? Why?

MIKE

I want them to see what's on the line here. I want them to see your faces.

KELLY

What about me?

MIKE

You come up here.

TRANSITION:

INT. MAYORS OFFICE

TV Show crew puts final touches with lights, reflectors, camera positions, etc. Rooney and the Senator are at the meeting table being wired for sound. The Mayor feeds the fish in the tank as Lucie tries to calm her down.

MAYOR

(upset)

Well, I don't understand it! All I wanted to do was share a personal prayer for the safe release of...

LUCIE

Yes Mayor, it's a beautiful prayer.

MAYOR

That crazy man blames me for killing that woman?!

LUCIE
Careful, you're overfeeding the fish.

MAYOR
You know, I have half a mind to not
let you use my office!

LUCIE
Do that and he might kill the kids.

MAYOR
I suppose that'd be my fault too! I'm
to blame for the woman, the children,
even the fish! You just can't win in
this world, you just can't win.

ROONEY
Lucie, what's the problem?

Lucie joins Rooney and the Senator.

LUCIE
This woman's driving me nuts.

ROONEY
Set her up at her desk, aim a camera
at her face and let her do her thing.

LUCIE
But the guy said...

ROONEY
This is my show! Tell her we'll find a
way to work it in after the kids are
let go, that should shut her up.

LUCIE
Right.

ROONEY
Do it now, we'll be ready in five.

LUCIE
Got it.

Lucie returns to the Mayor.

SENATOR
(to Rooney)
Everything set?

ROONEY

Don't worry, no one's going to see this except us, the whack job and the Feds in the trailer.

SENATOR

If Cindy ever finds out, I'm toast.

ROONEY

Relax, she'll get over it as soon as she gets her kid back.

SENATOR

Yeah, I hope so.

Lucie is setting the Mayor up at her desk to tape her prayer.

LUCIE

Quiet on the set! Okay Mayor, let's try to nail this with one take.

MAYOR

I'll do my best.

LUCIE

Okay, ready and action!

MAYOR

Heavenly Father, please be with our children on this day, guide and protect them, look over them with all your blessed power and grace...

INSERT: FISH TANK.

"As the Mayor recites her prayer, one of the larger tropical fish in the tank floats to the top."

TRANSITION:

EXTERIOR. EXCALIBUR ACADEMY

Media, deputies and others look toward the school as the venetian blinds are raised. Lucas, Walter and Taylor stand in the window, facing out toward the crowd. Camera operators raise their cameras. Reporters talk into microphones.

Alex, Greg and Cindy look out the open trailer door.

ALEX
What the hell's he doing?

INSERT: THE WINDOW.

"Walter, his face swollen and bruised, stares straight ahead with no emotion. Taylor, tired and sweaty, has her eyes closed and is muttering a prayer. Lucas is crying."

Sophie's voice calls from inside the trailer.

SOPHIE (O.C.)
One minute.

INTERIOR. FBI COMMAND TRAILER.

Alex, Greg and Cindy return, sit at the table. Eyes glued to the scene at the Mayor's office that's on the big screen.

LUCIE (O.C.)
One minute.

Cindy bow's her head, clutches Alex's arm.

CINDY
God please don't let anything happen
to my baby.

Lucie enters frame on the monitor with a slate.

SOPHIE
What's with the slate? This is live.

LUCIE
We're ready in three, two and...

INSERT: MONITOR IN FBI TRAILER

"Stuart Rooney fills the screen."

STUART
Good evening, I'm Stuart Rooney and
welcome to a special live edition of
the Stuart Rooney Show.

A live shot of the classroom window with the three student/hostages staring out.

STUART (CONT'D, O.C.)

Just moments ago, the blinds were raised in the window of a classroom at Excalibur Academy in Niceville, Florida. Standing in the window are three of the four remaining students being held hostage by Michael Hyde, a Vietnam War hero and grandfather of a student killed in a school shooting in Terre Haute, Indiana over a month ago.

CHRISTMAS PHOTO OF ASHLEY WITH MIKE ON SCREEN

STUART (CONT'D, O.C.)

Ashley Grant, age seven, was one of twenty-five elementary school children killed in that shooting. This is a photo of Ashley, posing with her grandfather Michael Hyde taken during happier times.

Rooney and the Senator sit at the table, side by side.

STUART (CONT'D, O.C.)

We're joined today with Senator James Carpenter of Florida. Senator, we understand your daughter Kelly is in that classroom.

SENATOR

Yes, she is Stuart and today I am not a U.S. Senator, today I am not a representative of the Republican Party. Today, I am a father.

STUART

According to report, it was something you said after the shooting in Indiana that triggered this mostly peaceful senior citizen into taking these measures.

SENATOR

Yes, I said them on this program.

STUART

Yes, you did. Let's replay that moment for our viewers.

INTERIOR. FBI TRAILER.

Cindy, Alex and Greg watch the big monitor as the replay from a previous broadcast airs.

SENATOR (VO)

It's at times like these when we must focus on the real issue and not be distracted by partisanship.

STUART ROONEY

Exactly what do you mean Senator?

SENATOR

Until we can come together and address the issue of mental illness in this country events such as these, as tragic as they may be, are a price we must pay to live in a free and open society.

CINDY

Stupid bastard.

Rooney and the Senator at the table.

STUART ROONEY

Now, joining us from inside the classroom is Michael Hyde.

Instead of Mike, Kelly appears with the barrel of a pistol pressed against her head. Mike's mid torso stands behind her.

CINDY

Oh my God! Noooo!

MIKE (O.C.)

This is the senator's first born.

SENATOR

Kelly? Oh no.

MIKE (O.C.)

This is just a sample of what it tastes like to be one of us senator. How do you like it?

SENATOR

Mr. Hyde! Please, I'm sorry for what I said. I take back every word.

CINDY
(under her breath)
Gotta do better than that you son-of-a-bitch.

INTERIOR. CLASSROOM.

Mike stands behind Kelly with a gun to her head.

MIKE
No need to apologize senator. It's the truth. Obviously. Grocery stores, churches, schools, playgrounds, the whole damn country's nothing but one big shooting gallery.

ROONEY
Mr. Hyde, mental illness clearly plays a big role...

MIKE
And don't I know it! Look at me. I just killed a woman, Stuart. Took away a man's wife, a daughter's mom. If that ain't crazy, what is?

SENATOR
Mr. Hyde, I intend to propose new mental health legislation on Monday to invest billions...

Mike presses the pistol hard into Kelly's head. She winces in pain and gives a soft cry.

MIKE
That's a good start now, what about those guns? Don't give me any shit, you know the guns I mean.

SENATOR
That's where things get a little more complicated Mr. Hyde. You see, we have this little thing called the second amendment and...

MIKE
And I once had a little thing called Ashley Drake!!

Kelly whimpers, cries. Mike presses the pistol harder into Kelly's head.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Kelly's fifteen! She's already lived twice as long as my Ashley did!

INTERIOR FBI TRAILER.

Cindy watches anxiously.

CINDY

No, please, no!

MIKE

Look at all the bonus time you and Cindy got to spend with her!

SENATOR

Damn it man! What do you suggest?

MIKE

I suggest you do your Goddamn job! Screw your Rambo-wannabe base! Grow a pair asshole!

KELLY

(whimpering)

Daddy, please, help me.

INTERIOR. MAYORS OFFICE.

SENATOR

Wait! Please, Mr. Hyde. Wait! One idea we've considered is taxing the ammunition, taxing it big, like we did the cigarette companies.

MIKE (O.C.)

You're getting warmer.

SENATOR

It's possible some in our party would consider a federal buy-back program, stringent background checks...

MIKE (O.C.)

Sounds like your dad's starting to feel it now Kelly.

INT. FBI COMMAND TRAILER

Mike on the big screen with a pistol to Kelly's head. Cindy's feeling encouraged.

CINDY

Yes, that's it.

MIKE (O.C.)

The only question now is, are you really going to follow through or is this just more political bullshit?

SOPHIE

Something's wrong.

ALEX

What?

Mike presses the gun so firmly Kelly's forced to bend her head softly.

KELLY

Mike, that hurts.

MIKE

Could be I'm just the tip of the iceberg here. There's a lot of daddy's and granddaddy's out there watching right now...

Sophie's discovered what's going on.

SOPHIE

No one's watching right now. They're just taping it!

CINDY

What?!

ALEX

(panic)

Get that woman! What's her name?

Sophie tries.

SOPHIE

Lucie? Can you hear me, Lucie? (beat)
She must've turn off her headset.

CINDY

Dammit Jim! What are you doing?

ALEX

Greg, we got to get over there!

Greg and Alex run from the trailer.

INTERIOR. CLASSROOM

Mike leans down so his face shares the screen with Kelly and the gun. He presses the pistol into Kelly's head.

MIKE

The way I see it is, if you go back on your word today a whole bunch of far less reasonable men than me will...

SENATOR (ON MONITOR)

Mike! Stop! You have my word. I swear on everything I hold dear. I'll lobby our caucus to support the bill. We'll do to gun manufacturers what we did to the tobacco companies!

SOUND of a phone buzzing in Lucas's pocket. He takes it out. Lucas looks at the screen and CHUCKLES. Taylor and Walter hand gesture for him to put it away. Mike notices.

MIKE

What? What are you doing?

SENATOR

Mr. Hyde, what's wrong?

MIKE

Hold on.

INT. FBI COMMAND TRAILER.

Sophie, Cindy and watch as, on the big monitor, Mike leaves the frame. Kelly looks to the side to see what Mike's doing.

MIKE (O.C.)

What's that?

LUCAS (O.C.)
It's nothing. Just my phone. I left it
on. Sorry.

MIKE (O.C.)
Let me see it!

EXTERIOR. CITY HALL.

Alex and Greg get out of a dark SUV and rush up the steps.

INTERIOR. FBI COMMAND TRAILER

Cindy, hand over her mouth, stands behind Sophie looking at
the big screen. Kelly puts a hand over her mouth.

KELLY
No! Mike! Don't!

MIKE (O.C.)
You double crossing cock-suckers! No
one's watching!!!

EXTERIOR. CLASSROOM WINDOW.

Media, Wendy and others watch as a bullet rips through Lucas'
chest. Taylor's scream is muffled by the glass. Wendy
screams. Two rounds go through Taylor. Blood sprays all over
the window. Walter runs toward Mike. Two SHOTS ring out. More
blood splatters on the window.

INTERIOR. MAYORS OFFICE.

Alex and Greg barge into the office. All inside sit in
shocked silence. Alex looks to a monitor showing Kelly's
blood splattered face in the classroom, tears, quivering,
terrorized silence.

MAYOR
He shot the kids! It's not my fault!

Mikes blood smeared hand reaches in and grabs Kelly.

MIKE (O.C.)
You come with me!

EXTERIOR. FRONT OF EXCALIBUR ACADEMY.

Screaming, chaos. The blood splattered and smeared window is empty. Kelly is pushed to stand behind it. Mike's arm, holding a pistol raises and aims at Kelly's head.

Cindy comes running from the FBI Trailer.

CINDY

Noooo! Mike! No, please God no!!!

She runs toward the window. Kelly, expressionless, stands on the other side of the window and watches her panic-stricken mother run towards her.

CINDY (CONT'D)

Kelly! Honey! Noooo...

INTERIOR. CLASSROOM.

Mike, standing behind the wall beside the window, aims the gun at Kelly's head.

MIKE

This is it kid.

KELLY

My turn?

MIKE

No. I want you to live.

Cindy shifts her eyes from her screaming mother to Mike.

MIKE (CONT'D)

You'll remember this day. Your friends. Their bodies. Your dad. For the rest of your life, you'll feel it.

Mike steps toward Kelly, in front of the window. Turns and sees Cindy out the window. They lock eyes.

A sniper's bullet explodes through the window, into Mike's head, he falls to the floor. Cindy, on the lawn in front of the window, stares slack-jawed, looks over at Kelly. They both cry.

INTERIOR. MAYORS OFFICE.

Everyone stunned.

SENATOR
Destroy that tape!

ALEX
No good senator. We have a copy too,
back in the trailer.

SENATOR
I'll talk to your superiors! I'll talk
to the attorney general himself!

ALEX
Dig up J. Edgar fucking Hoover if you
want. Talk to him. Whattaya think
Greg, any chance this tape winds up on
YouTube?

GREG
Damn FBI has more leaks than the
Titanic.

ROONEY
That's my show! My property!

GREG
Sue us.

ALEX
Let's go Greg. We've got a report to
write.

FADE

TRANSITION:

EXT. PUBLIC PARK.

People riding bikes, walking, old lady on bench tosses bread
to pigeons. The shapes of Ruth and Amanda appear on a walking
path in the distance. Amanda is holding two balloons. As they
walk, the voices of TWO CHILDREN recite the open two verses
of God Bless America

CHILD ONE (VO)
While soft clouds gather, far across
the sea, let us swear allegiance to a
land that's free...

Ruth and Amanda walk off the path into a field.

CHILD TWO (VO)

Let us all be grateful, for a land so
fair! As we raise our voices, in a
solemn prayer...

Ruth and Amanda pause, look to the sky. A CHOIR of CHILDREN
SING 'God Bless America.'

CHILDREN'S CHOIR (SING/CO)

God Bless America, land that I love.

Amanda releases the two balloons. They slowly float away.

CHILDREN'S CHOIR (SING/CO)

Stand beside her and guide her,
through the night with the light from
above.

One balloon reads, 'Happy Birthday Rachel' the other, 'Semper
fi 1968-1972'. The children become a full-blown CHORUS.

CHILDREN'S CHOIR (SING/CO)

God Bless America, my home sweet home.

Ruth and Amanda watch the balloons drift away in the wind and
they walk away. CHILDRENS CHORUS CONTINUES OVER CREDITS.

CHILDREN'S CHOIR (SING/CO)

God Bless America, land that I love.
Stand beside her and guide her through
the night with the light from above.

CREDITS

FADE OUT

THE END